

# **Review of Central Plains Irrigations Scheme SIA**

I have been engaged by Selwyn District Council to assist in its task of assessing the social effects of the proposed scheme

Managing Director of Corydon Consultants Ltd – an independent consultancy specialising in SIA, social research and community consultation.

- ❑ Masters in Public Policy
- ❑ Bachelors in Sociology
- ❑ Full member of NZPI since 1989
- ❑ Also member of EIANZ, and IAIA and
- ❑ Member of NZ Association of Impact Assessment from its formation in 1984 to 2007

To assess the social impacts of the scheme and the adequacy of the SIA submitted by the applicant, I undertook the following tasks:

- ❑ Review of applicant's SIA for Section 92 request
- ❑ Met with the social impact assessors to agree on information gaps to be filled
- ❑ A site visit in May 2007
- ❑ An analysis of submissions (597)
- ❑ Review of the revised SIA for Section 42A report
- ❑ Reviewed evidence of Dr Nick Taylor and other evidence and submissions
- ❑ Undertook a further site visit July 2008

## **Focus of my comments at this hearing**

- ❑ Impacts on directly affected parties.**
- ❑ Social and psychological effects of the threat of dam or canal malfunction**
- ❑ Housing of the workforce**
- ❑ Impacts of demographic changes as a result of land use change**
- ❑ Reliance on Management Plans, produced after the hearing, to mitigate adverse effects**

# Impacts of directly affected parties

In my view effects have been exacerbated by:

- ❑ **Applicant's Requiring Authority status (most commonly raised issue in the submissions)**
- ❑ **Quality of the consultation process**
- ❑ **Difficulty affected parties have encountered in obtaining adequate information.**

**I concur with Mr Taylor's evidence on the social and psychological impacts the development has had on the local community, and the family and community impacts likely to arise from loss of homes and property.**

# Impacts of directly affected parties

- ❑ **The visual and psychological impact of the dam face is likely to have detrimental impact on land values in Colgate**
- ❑ **This impact will not be confined to just the construction period.**
- ❑ **Reduced values will particularly affect the retired and the elderly**

# Mitigation

Mr Taylor recommends several mitigation measures:

- ❑ **Opportunities for the community to contribute to design of landscape mitigation and enhancement plans**
- ❑ **A fair and open process for property purchase**
- ❑ **The involvement of local communities in the development of impact management plans**
- ❑ **A social monitoring programme**
- ❑ **A community liaison committee for discussing and dealing with social issues**
- ❑ **Information sheets, newsletters and briefings to local residents**

# Mitigation

- In my view these measures will do little to alleviate the more serious affects of the proposed scheme on affected parties.**
- I agree these measures would constitute an improvement to the applicants community consultation process to date**
- I agree these measures will give some affected parties some sense of control over their situation**
- I agree they may go some way to mollify some of the parties most affected.**

# Mitigation

- ❑ **The company's clarification of purchase price will help some affected landowners to come to terms with the project**
- ❑ **But, money cannot compensate for the loss of family and social history, community coherence and treasured landscapes.**
- ❑ **In my view, the mitigation process must be more than payment above market price – it should include assistance in finding suitable alternative locations and support through the settling period.**
- ❑ **Negotiations on the reconfiguration of remaining parcels of land should be undertaken by an independent skilled arbitrator.**

# Mitigation

The recreational use of the reservoir cannot in my view be regarded as compensation because:

- ❑ **It will introduce new and unwanted noise into a tranquil rural environment.**
- ❑ **It will result in loss or reduction of recreational opportunities for existing users.**

# Mitigation

The applicant has proposed a condition that the consent holder will provide a community fund of \$300 000 over 3 years to compensate the Colgate community and affected landowners.

It is for the effected parties to decide if these allocations are sufficient but given the scale of impacts, I do not believe these funds will be sufficient

The projects for which funding will be provided are to be approved by CPWT. I consider this to be inappropriate

The funds should be put into a trust, administered by an independent body to which community groups and individual landowners apply for funds to address adverse effects.

# **Social and psychological effects of the threat of dam or canal malfunction**

Mr Taylor notes there is considerable anxiety among Colgate and other local residents about the dangers of a breach or overtopping.

NATO Science for Stability Program – study on managing dam risk concludes:

- ❑ **Local residents don't easily accept a risk imposed on them unless they perceive a direct benefit as a result – (eg irrigation or recreational opportunities).**
- ❑ **Residents living below a large dam can experience ongoing anxiety and fear and have greater awareness of the consequences of a break than people living further away**
- ❑ **Judgements of local residents about safety are based on confidence in the engineering and the particular characteristics of the dam (older dams tend to be seen as more trustworthy than newer ones).**

# **Social and psychological effects of the threat of dam or canal malfunction**

**This study concluded that people's fears should be taken seriously – no dam can be guaranteed safe in all conditions.**

**The study emphasised need for:**

- **Dam monitoring systems**
- **Emergency planning**
- **Effective warning and response systems.**

**All to be developed in consultation with the affected communities**

# **Social and psychological effects of the threat of dam or canal malfunction**

## **Guidance from MfE:**

- ❑ Recommends mitigation measures to reduce people's fear**
- ❑ Recommends actions to build people's trust in the structure and operational procedures**
- ❑ Recommends that these be enforced through conditions of consent.**

**“Dread risk” is likely to be particularly evident in Colgate**

**The social effects of major flood and residential areas are wide ranging and long lasting.**

# Mitigation

**The proposed Health and Safety Plan and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) recommended by Taylor and Tipler would comply with the NATO and MfE recommendations.**

**I endorse these recommendations provided:**

- ❑ The Health and Safety Plan is as comprehensive as Mr Taylor recommends**
- ❑ The company has the necessary resources and skills to comply with the EAP**
- ❑ The District Council has the necessary skills and resources to monitor compliance**

**These plans need to take into consideration the higher number of older residents in Colgate and Glen Tunnel**

**The Health and Safety Plan and the EAP will provide affected parties with some sense of control but in my view this will not be sufficient to address the adverse social and psychological effects of the risk of a malfunction.**

# Housing of the workforce

**The proposal does not include provision for housing the construction workforce.**

**Mr Taylor refers to the impacts of construction workers on host communities**

**In my view these impacts are due to lack of planning rather than to the increase in population per se.**

**Accommodating workers within sustainable limits can provide direct benefits to that community.**

**Measures to decrease the number of people needing to travel to the construction site by private vehicle should be encouraged. Busing could prove to be logistically impractical.**

# Housing of the workforce

**Providing accommodation for at least some of the workforce close to the construction site is likely to generate benefits to a wider range of affected people by:**

- **Increasing demand for local goods and services**
- **Opening up opportunities for wider social networks and social activities**
- **Increasing demand for properties available for rent (or sale)**
- **Relocateable accommodation units could be made available to the community at the end of the construction period as part of a mitigation package.**

# Mitigation

**In my view, consideration should be given (in consultation with the Colgate and Glen Tunnel communities) to accommodating a portion of the construction workforce in these communities.**

# Impacts of demographic changes as a result of land use change

Mr Taylor has comprehensively addressed these matters in his evidence. I concur with his conclusions and endorse his recommendations at paragraph 162

# Mitigation

I endorse the recommendation in the SIA that to manage the impacts of demographic change, a system of monitoring, information dissemination, consultation and support be established including;

- ❑ monitoring of changes in the local farming sector
- ❑ identifying business and employment opportunities
- ❑ ensuring local services have the information they need to plan for changes in demand, and
- ❑ helping new workers and families integrate into the community.

To ensure the process is able to deliver timely advice Council will need to take a comprehensive approach to the collection of information.

# Mitigating adverse effects through future management plans

There is a heavy reliance in the application on Management Plans to be developed in detail after the hearing, to mitigate adverse effects.

These plans should be presented in detail to the hearing so that the Commissioners and affected parties can scrutinise them in light of the adverse effects.

If found to be acceptable, they should be included as part of the conditions of consent to be enforced by the relevant Council.

# Conclusions

The mitigation measures proposed by the applicant should help to reduce adverse social affects.

Mr Taylor concludes that the likelihood and intensity of the effects will depend on CPW developing and implementing appropriate management plans, monitoring and mitigation and codes of practice.

I concur with this conclusion but in my view, the extent of mitigation is so dependent on the contents of the plans they should not be left to chance, they should be part of the evidence presented to the Commissioners

# Conclusions

In my view the adverse social effects cannot be mitigated to a level that complies with Part 2 and particularly Section 5 of the RMA.

The range of impact management and monitoring procedures proposed by the applicant will provide only partial mitigation, they will not avoid or remedy the effects.