

Plan Change submission – Sharyn Hume hearing talking points 27 May 2025

Kia ora

I'm speaking today as a person who has a deep historical connection with Ohariu Valley and in particular the farm that has been in my family for what is now 6 generations – starting with Henry Hume purchasing a block of land here in 1868.

Ohariu Valley including our farm is not without its challenges as farmland... it's windy, steep and rocky. The soil does not naturally produce the lush pasture of other areas of NZ which means we need to farm animals in a low intensity way to be successful *and* we need to be innovative. In most cases around here farmers have other income streams and small business to help make our land economically viable. Luckily our proximity to the capital city assists this.

My family (and our neighbouring farmers) cares deeply for the local environment and our current plan for the farm is to create areas within the land that encourage the growth of native flora and fauna including Kiwi. Thanks to local financial support and hours of labour we are fencing and planting most of our low lying waterways.

My family alone planted over 800 trees last year and have at least 500 and counting waiting to pop in the ground this year. And I believe that locally, over 60,000 trees have been planted recently and 600 hectares of land retired.

All this without being **told!**

Now onto what we **are potentially being told** by GWRC in the proposed plan change

Most of the points in my original submission have been addressed in the section 42A Hearing report by Gerard Willis – which is pleasing. To this end I would like to support the following proposed changes:

I SUPPORT: That in terms of erosion control and risk mitigation, each farm in OV and Mākara is treated individually as oppose to a **one size fits all** approach. Compulsory retirement of areas seemingly only assessed from the view of someones computer in the city (as oppose to actual proper assessment) does not properly assess the **actual** erosion risk and also does not acknowledge the practicality of fencing/retirement of the land. All the large farms in our neighbourhood are managed by people who have generations of knowledge around the behaviour of the waterways, terrain and stock – this needs to be taken into account.
*On **our** farm, slips are actually extremely uncommon!*

The blanket approach also **doesn't** take into account **where the high levels of sediment are actually coming from**. Why should we all be subjected to prohibitive rules when we dont even know if our piece of land or livestock is contributing to the problem? Surely more targetted monitoring and a lot *more* **monitoring** of the problem sediment is required? It seems we don't actually know for sure that livestock from the large farms are the main cause of the problem – *so blaming this is just a guess – I would have thought that that's not very scientific!*

Official Farm plans (as oppose to the ones we do anyway as responsible business owners and custodians of land and livestock) are a necessity for most farmers in NZ these days.

Of course we are happy accept these - but I do hope that they will *assist* us in our planning ... and not incur yet another *substantial running cost to farmers and submit us to another red-tapey bureaucratic process.*

I SUPPORT: though, the recommendation that a **more flexible** approach to “**appropriate erosion control treatment**” is encouraged – and that individual farm plans will allow a higher degree of tailoring to appropriate solutions for each farm.

A little on STOCK EXCLUSION

I was pleased to read on page 47 (Point 295) section 42A Hearing report by Garerd Willis that – quote - “I accept that exclusion may not always be practicable on steeper land. I also accept that for some streams stock exclusion may be unnecessary due to the prescence of natural barriers meaning stock access is highly unlikely (this may occur for example, with streams in deeply incised channels)”

Simply put, stock will choose easy spots to get water (and graze) from. If there is an easy option like a trough, stock will wander there rather than risk life and limb on a steep slope.... we see it every day!

Likewise they actually won't venture into steep slopes if there is plenty of grazing on easy slopes.... this harks back to my point about low intensity farming – the steep slopes will not be compromised if stock levels are kept reasonable – which they are.

A quick word on COSTS

As eluded to earlier... we don't farm in Ohariu Valley to get rich. The cost implications of fencing, planting, water reticulation, farm plan consulting, and water testing will add up very quickly and may well quickly become prohibitive. **Targetted financial support to help us enhance local water quality and biodiversity will be imperitive to ensure it's done for the greater good...** for this to fall on the shoulders of local farmers alone, would seem very wrong.

Not to end on a negative but....Difficulty of the process –

It would be great if future consultation was done in a more accessible and meaningful way. It would then be easier to have your say. It would be really great if the prerequisite to engaging was *not* having to navigate a **350 page document**. I feel like you lost quite a few folks at this point...

Also, I really hope the maps are going to be readable. Currently the maps in the appendices are illegible. I couldn't even find where our farm is!!

In conclusion

We look forward to practical, workable and sensible solutions from GWRC to ensure our water quality and farm lifestyle is future proofed. I remember well the days of jumping off my horse and slurping a drink from our creek... let's hope together we get back there for future generations.