

26 June 2019



Media Statement

EDS welcomes Horizons Plan Change

Horizons Regional Council has advised that it intends to publicly notify Plan Change 2 on 22 July. This plan change is intended to “fix” technical problems with the One Plan by adjusting an OVERSEER table and will provide a consenting pathway for intensive land uses.

“This is an important step forward for Horizons and has its genesis in declaration proceedings in the Environment Court which found profound deficiencies in the way the council was administering its plan,” said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

“Following delays in a response from the council, the Minister for the Environment intervened and Fish and Game and EDS, which had brought the court proceedings, met with council in his office to discuss the way forward.

“Now, more than 2 years after being heavily criticised by the Environment Court, Horizons is proposing a plan change to address some of the consenting issues that would potentially make farming lawful in parts of the region.

“So, the first observation to make is that it has taken far too long to get to this point, but it’s better late than never.

“Whether the plan change deals effectively with the issues remains to be seen after detailed analysis of the proposal. There are some concerning signs. It seems as if good management practice is intended to be a way of avoiding regulatory limits, which is unlikely to be enough to achieve good water quality.

“But let’s see what more detailed analysis reveals. At least the affected community will have something tangible to examine and submit on after an extended hiatus. Following submissions and cross-submissions the council intends to conduct a hearing, in 2020.

“Finally, and most importantly, given the council’s mishandling of its earlier plan implementation as revealed by the Environment Court, and the national importance of the issue, we favour the plan change being called in by the Minister for the Environment and referred direct to the Environment Court.

“That would enable a quicker and less costly resolution than the protracted schedule 1 process under the RMA,” Mr Taylor concluded.

Relevant council documents are here: <http://www.horizons.govt.nz/calendar/regional-council-meeting-2019-25-06.aspx>