

17 September 2013 Bay of Plenty Regional Council

A Farmers Perspective - Stuart Morrison

To follow on from the explanation you have just heard, and drawing on the detail already with you in the content of the papers tabled, I would like to highlight a few points:

From the analysis done for the FSP, the impact on farmer balance sheets through loss of income earning ability and loss of equity of the whole exercise could be of the order of \$70m to \$80m. That is after the \$45.5m.

The 100t and 140t split is about sharing the challenge. Neither the 100t nor the 140t will be easy to achieve. The 140t of farmer operation improvement in the collective proposal has illustrative figures of 35kg/ha for dairy and 13kg/ha for drystock but the reality could be different dependent on a number of factors.

What is clear is that support will be needed to make this programme work.

Viability is important. There is little to be gained by stressing farm operations to the point of collapse. It is viability and indeed bankability that will allow farmers to make the changes needed and undertake the investment required.

The 140t target is beyond best or good practice and not without risk of social and economic damage.

However there is a near 20 year timeframe and I believe with the right support, with focus, effort and investment, over time we can make good progress.

We have seen some of that support come through at this level.

From Council; you have chosen to go down the collaborative path. I think it has provided all involved with a valuable forum to share our concerns and suggestions and inform the process.

From staff from your CEO down; in a willingness to assist, to fund and to facilitate the work required to get to this point.

DairyNZ have been with us from the start. Their water scientists are helping on the TAG. Ollie is here today.

We will all know a lot more about farm plans, Overseer, and what tools to best use - with their help and the help of – Beef and Lamb NZ, Agresearch, Scion, Federated Farmers and many others.

Councils continuing support with this will prove to be essential for the programmes success.

No doubt farmers and farmer groups will question and challenge aspects along the way. If those challenges and questions continue to be met with transparency and openness and explanations backed with a willingness to find the best available answers, then I believe farmers will continue to be engaged.

The proposed framework is a map of the continuing journey around the rules and incentives.

Working with that framework, in the wider context of the management of the lake, the nutrients in it and the nutrients going into it, I hope we can find that mix of adaptive management and certainty that move us towards our twin objectives of a clean lake and a vital contributing rural economy.

