

(E-mail Submission)

I would like to make several points re the Annual plan.

Firstly - Cutting expenditure on services that matter to ordinary folk while the ADC is perceived to spend gloriously on its new office could be a public relations disaster. Secondly, using forestry money/resources to fund rural roading could equally be viewed as myopic and could be misconstrued by a hostile media. My advice is to have your PR ready. Thirdly, the ground water situation needs close attention. There is ample evidence that from time to time the levels of Chlorine et.al. in the town supply have been very high. When I came to Ashburton families, including mine, could play in the Ashburton River. Schools practised river crossings ... We even picked up many of the stones used in the facade of the present ADC office. To my knowledge, in its present state the local river is neglected. Did not three local mayors pull the teeth of ECAN when it tried to improve the water quality of Canterbury? It is no wonder that the present government is planning reform. It strikes me as strange that many regional councils, especially those who are going backwards on water management, want to spend scarce regional funds opposing sensible reforms. There are several related issues regarding the yet to be started second bridge. The 100 year flood event, that arguably was not, was arguably foreseeable. If the ADC does not move quickly on the matter it could face civil actions by those effected. The bridge fiasco was widely reported through the world news links and the 100 year flood argument didn't win universal support. In all events it did little to promote doing business in the South Island. Cast your eyes over to Australia and see some really unusual weather patterns resulting in flooding. Lastly, I continue to have grave reservations about how much consultation about water resources is being done with Ngai Tahu. NZ courts have ruled consistently on what is "consultation". The Maori Councils case (CA) has ruled on the versions and legality of the Treaty. Ngai Tahu could be powerful allies. They are reasonably resourced, experienced and moderate in their approach. Recently their spokespeople have criticised some councils for no consultation or inappropriately limited consultation. Once again it would be wise to have your PR ready if the issue of water management becomes contentious.

Regards  
Mark Gleason