



## News Release

**April 22, 2010 – for immediate release**

### **Irrigation NZ applauds commissioner appointments**

Irrigation NZ applauds government's selection of commissioners to oversee Environment Canterbury and fix Canterbury's water issues.

The good balance of academic, commercial business and political acumen is encouraging with a good mix of Canterbury-based people from a wide cross-section of the region representing a broad range of stakeholders.

"We are very pleased to see the good mix of people and wide stakeholder representation, it gives confidence that the challenges facing Canterbury's water management are in good hands going forward and the government is to be congratulated in that respect," Irrigation NZ chairman Graeme Sutton said.

Irrigation NZ encourages the building of effective and long term relationships with the Canterbury territorial authorities, seeking their advice on issues that impact on their roles, functions and powers with the opportunity for submitters to comment on the draft of the Natural Resources Regional Plan considered the sensible way forward.

Irrigation NZ continues to advocate the critical importance of building on the collaborative work of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy including reviewing and addressing matters as necessary for sound policy development and continued engagement with key stakeholders and the public in achieving optimal water management in Canterbury.

In particular Irrigation NZ is excited to see the appointment of Tom Lambie as a commissioner with his extensive involvement in South Canterbury's Opuha water storage project and in-depth understanding of the economic and environmental benefits of good water management seen as a real positive in moving ahead with optimal management of Canterbury's water resources into the future.

"Beside all his other abilities Tom (Lambie) understands the value of irrigation being achieved in a viable environmentally and sustainable way," Sutton said.

Mr Lambie owns a 415ha dairy farm at Pleasant Point in South Canterbury which is BioGro organic certified. He is Chancellor of Lincoln University, chair of Opuha Water Limited, a trustee of the Todd Foundation, chair of the Hikurangi Foundation and a trustee of Motu,

Economic and Public Policy Research Trust. He has a long history of farming politics and was national president of Federated Farmers from 2002-2005.

Also winning good favour with Irrigation NZ is North Canterbury vineyard owner and Enterprise North Canterbury chair David Bedford.

Bedford has an extensive history initially in human resources and change management and latterly in senior management of large enterprises. He was chief operating officer Australia for Telecom before retiring in 2003. He had previously held senior management roles in Telecom New Zealand and the former Electricity of New Zealand.

The commission is chaired by Dame Margaret Bazley with Electricity Commission chair David Caygill bringing a background in politics and law to the team in his capacity as deputy chairman. Lincoln University Pro-Chancellor Donald Couch, the Honorary Professor Peter Skelton former Environment Court judge and associate professor of Resource Management Law at Lincoln University and Canterbury University Chancellor and Water Rights Trust trustee Rex Williams complete the seven-strong team.

“Irrigation NZ respects Dame Margaret’s reputation and distinguished career in public service and her wealth of experience both in management and governance of large organisations. Right across the board there is spread of talent and ability clearly spelling success, this team of commissioners is definitely all positive,” Sutton concluded.

**For further comment:**

**Graeme Sutton – Irrigation NZ chairman: 0274 449673**

**Irrigation NZ – is a national body representing all irrigation interests in a unified voice to promote excellence in irrigation development and efficient water management based on the principles of responsible and sustainable water management throughout New Zealand.**