

Top cop steps up to new challenge



With more than 20 years' experience in the Police force and working as a peacekeeper in East Timor, Peter Burt has taken on a different challenge with Environment Canterbury.

Peter is the new delivery lead for the southern zones (Upper Waitaki and Lower Waitaki), meaning his work is varied, but generally entails working to achieve greater connectivity between the zone team and the community it represents.

He drives and supports a multi-disciplinary team and, together with zone manager Chris Eccleston, works to make gains with the community and environmental outcomes.

Days are varied, Peter said, but there are some constants.

“Having good relationships with TAs (territorial authorities) is the first thing and it is an expectation of everything we do at ECan.

“And not only to facilitate those relationships, but to offer direction and advice too.

“That’s a challenge, to help get their expectations to align with ours while making them realistic and in line with the CWMS (Canterbury Water Management Strategy) and how that all fits into the local area,” he said.

Born and raised in Christchurch, Peter spent much of his youth on family farms in Leeston, learning on-farm equipment and tasks during school holidays from the age of about 12.

“I have great memories and a good understanding of the rural space.

“My sister ended up marrying a farmer and is out in Leeston too. You could describe me as a townie with a reasonable understanding of the rural sector,” he laughed.

After his lengthy career in the police force, and various roles in the private sector, a job opportunity presented itself at Environment Canterbury in the Timaru office and he grabbed it.

“The appeal was in part that I already had relationships within ECan from my previous employment. In the environmental management area, planning and preparing

consent applications were a large part of my portfolio, so it was a natural transition.

“I had an idea of the compliance environment and knew some of the crew in ECan and the feedback was that they were a great team,” he said.

Peter plans to utilise all his policing knowledge and experience to his advantage in the role.

“I learned how to evaluate circumstances and situations pretty quickly – analysing the environment around me, working in with people and reading their body language, and to quickly set plans in place based on the skill sets and people that you have around you.



“In the police, it’s quite an extreme environment in most cases. So, to have time and consideration to be able to take a step back and consider things now, makes it much easier to get long lasting successful outcomes,” he said.

Peter’s expertise lies in compliance and monitoring and also leadership, and he’s happy to help Waitaki stakeholders with anything air, water or land-related issues and opportunities.

“I do feel privileged to be in the role I am right now. To be in ECan, it’s a special environment and to work with a team that you can influence and build capability with, it’s great. I am really looking forward to getting into the zone and delivering,” he said.

To get in touch with Peter, contact him through this email:

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Better winter grazing to improve water quality

During summer it can be easy to forget about winter feed issues, like muddy pugging and sediment loss.

However, summer is one of the best times to prepare for winter by getting your paddocks set up properly. You should be checking you have water troughs in place to allow for top-down strategic grazing and gateways ready for shifting stock in wet weather. Don't forget about planning your grass buffer strips as well to help reduce run-off. Here's a full overview of what you need to think about before winter arrives.

Protect your waterways while winter grazing

Canterbury's varying soil types, topography can make farming areas high risk for phosphorus and sediment loss into our waterways. This can lead to poor water quality.

Good winter grazing practices can help reduce run-off and also help with better soil productivity.



Research undertaken by AgResearch and funded by the Pastoral 21 programme has shown that good winter grazing can reduce sediment and phosphorus losses in run-off by up to 80%



Plant & Food Research scientists have found yield benefits for subsequent crops in soil where pugging does not occur

Strategic winter grazing is a low cost good management practice that should be part of your Farm Environment Plan.

Are you aware of the rules relating to winter grazing?

Environment Canterbury has strict rules in place under the Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan requiring farmers to manage environmental effects of winter grazing.

- > **Keeping stock out of the beds of rivers and lakes**
Cattle and deer that are break-fed on winter feed crops, pigs and all dairy cows are not able to access the bed of a river, lake or wetland without a resource consent. Our rules do not allow farmers to cause pugging or sediment loss to water where there is a change in water quality or clarity, no matter what livestock is involved.
- > **Nutrient rules** require all farmers to implement good management practices on their farm. Some farmers require a farming land use consent and a Farm Environment Plan that needs to be regularly audited if their winter grazing area exceeds plan limits.
- > **Discharges of sediment or drainage water**
There are a number of good management practices that can be used to manage the risk of sediment discharge into waterways.



Follow these steps to graze better

> STEP 1

Buffer next to Critical Source Areas

- > Protect any CSAs: fence, leave grassed and have a generous ungrazed riparian strip between the crop and wet area
- > Recommended buffer distances can vary according to paddock topography but farmers should aim for 5 metres between CSA and stock.

> STEP 2

Graze strategically

- > Graze down towards a CSA - this leaves vegetation between bare ground and the CSA, reducing run-off
- > Back-fence once crop has been eaten if practical
- > Where soil conditions allow, sow a cool-tolerant catch crop, such as oats, as soon as possible after grazing. This soaks up nutrients from the soil and avoids them being leached into waterways
- > In wet conditions, practice on/off grazing to minimise pugging damage to the soil.



Strategically grazed catchment

What is a Critical Source Area?

Critical Source Areas (CSAs) are small, low-lying parts of farms, such as gullies and swales, where surface run-off accumulates in high concentration.



This paddock has large grass buffers around its CSA to help protect the waterway.

We can help

For resources and guidelines visit ecan.govt.nz/farmershub email ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz or call 0800 324 636 and ask to speak to a Land Management Advisor

Raising mahinga kai awareness in Waimakariri

Life has turned full circle for our Poū Matai Kō (mahinga kai facilitator) Makarini Rupene, as he moves his focus from Kaikōura to the Waimakariri area, where he grew up and still lives today.

Makarini's role centres on raising awareness of how to use the land and environment in a way that cultivates an understanding of mahinga kai and sustainability. He's excited about being back on home soil after spending the past 18 months working with farmers in Kaikōura.

"Being back in my tūrangawaewae (place of standing) is very special as I have a strong connection to the land and waterways of Waimakariri. I'm passionate about helping landowners to incorporate the enhancement of mahinga kai values into their daily practices."

What is mahinga kai?

Makarini explains that mahinga kai is a much broader concept than just food gathering.

"It's everything and there's no way to put it into a boxed definition. Thinking about it as the value of all the natural resources that sustain life is a helpful way to see how it is all connected. We share our history and culture through gathering resources and mana and manaakitanga – being able to welcome people with respect and hospitality."

Based on his interactions to date, Makarini says it's clear that most Waimakariri residents from children through to lifestyle block owners, farmers and those living in urban areas want to ensure that the land and water is healthy and supports life.

"I see cultural values as very aligned to sustainability and by protecting and enhancing these values we're seeing the bigger picture where biodiversity, cultural values and sustainability are all linked to the same overall idea which is the improvement of our entire environment."

"We're all connected to the land and the waterways – it's literally life and when we don't have a healthy eco-system, we are not healthy as a people, a community and a country. Unhealthy rivers impact us all and damage our sense of connection to the natural world."

Teaching mahinga kai values

Each day is different for Makarini as he continues to meet with a wide variety of people from all over Waimakariri.

"I might be giving a presentation to school children, then taking them out to see mahinga kai in action or visiting farmers to help them identify areas of mahinga kai to protect on their farms."

With the enhancement of mahinga kai now a requirement when implementing Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) in



Canterbury, Makarini says meeting face-to-face with farmers to look at opportunities for them to protect mahinga kai is an important part of his role.

"Some farmers are already ahead of the game on this and they may not realise that what they're already doing on farm such as fencing off streams and wet areas, along with planting projects could qualify for the mahinga kai protection aspect of their FEP."

"Others might not be sure where to start. I am very down-to-earth and approachable, so I am happy to meet with people who need a helping hand."

Sharing stories of the land and the environment with landowners is one of the most rewarding aspects of Makarini's role.

"I really enjoy going to see farmers in their space and hearing the stories of the different species they have spotted in their streams and rivers. It doesn't have to be a huge project. We can work together to make small changes that can have a really positive impact on the wider ecosystem and go from there."

Look out for mahinga kai "shed talks"

Makarini is looking forward to launching a series of "shed talks" where farmers can visit farms that have already started their mahinga kai enhancement projects so that everyone can learn from each other.

Dates and location for March are still being confirmed but keep an eye on the Environment Canterbury website in the news section for event details closer to the time.

"We're all on a journey together and helping landowners get ahead of the game while learning from each other is going to benefit all of us in Waimakariri. Healthy land and healthy water is our life force and we need to join forces to protect it for future generations." – Makarini Rupene