

Good afternoon, Commissioners and Chair

I'm Elisha Young-Ebert, Senior Policy Advisor for Federated Farmers and I thank you for this opportunity to present on the Federation's submission points regarding the Strategic Direction chapter of the proposed Selwyn District Plan.

Federated Farmers is an advocacy group, established by farmers, for farmers, that aims to promote and enable our members to thrive on their farms all over the country. The Federation's primary purpose is to ensure policies, at central and at local government, will yield workable solutions for everyone. The future of farming is contingent on the ability to address wider environmental issues, including climate change and protecting life-sustaining ecosystems we all depend on, and to meet population demand for food. It is a fragile and difficult balancing act, and we strive for solutions that allows farming to continue in the most efficient and environmentally responsible way possible.

We have a strong membership base in Selwyn, and their farming operations are as diverse as the land types in this large district. We have arable, sheep and beef and dairy farming members; some are located on the plains and others are up in the High Country. Our members have great interest in this PDP because this plan will inform and direct how they can use and develop their land for the next ten years. They have aspirations for their farms and for the Selwyn rural community they all play a part in.

My hearing statement responded to the recommendations the s42A reporter gave on our submission points about the Strategic Directions chapter in the PDP. I am open to discuss the content of my hearing statement with the commissioners, but I would like, at this point, to emphasise our request for a discrete Strategic Statement for the Selwyn rural community.

Selwyn district's total land area is about 6,500 km², and there are over 1,000 pastoral farms across this district that cover about 51% of this at approximately 3360km². The primary industries of agriculture, forestry and fishing collectively account for almost a fifth of the district's GDP (Ref: Infometrics), so we do believe their contribution to the wider social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the district should be acknowledged.

Federated Farmers also believes that Selwyn's own Development Strategy, alongside the provisions of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, reinforces this need to have a strategic statement for the rural community.

I have read the single objective in the General Rural Zone chapter, but I believe this objective relates only to how land should be developed in the rural zone. We are asking for a statement that reflects the importance of the rural community here in Selwyn and that the Council recognises their vision and place in the future of the district.

Thank you. Your questions, please?