



Media information

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Local expert joins Wairarapa water project team

More than 20 years of in-depth experience with rural water systems and farmers in Wairarapa will be put to use by Greg Ordish who has been appointed to help co-ordinate investigations into what could be one of the largest economic development projects in the greater Wellington region.

Greg Ordish will take up his full-time role as technical co-ordinator for the Wairarapa Water Use Project next month. He will be employed by the project sponsor, Greater Wellington Regional Council.

The project aims to store excess water off-river in the winter and release it to meet a variety of community and agricultural needs during the dry season. Initial investigations have found that up to 50,000 hectares of land across the Wairarapa valley floor could be irrigated as part of the project. The water could also be used to meet environmental, urban and recreational needs.

In his new role, Greg Ordish will establish and liaise with water user groups, co-ordinate day-to-day operations and project consultants, canvas farmers and interest groups, respond to queries and assist the overall project manager.

“Born and bred in Wairarapa, Greg has strong local connections especially with local farmers,” said Wairarapa Water Use Leadership Group chair Fran Wilde. “He brings a vast amount of technical and practical experience with water and irrigation systems and excellent understanding of irrigation and farming issues.”

For the past 20 years Greg Ordish has worked in his family business, Ordish and Stevens which was sold in 2007. “My interest in this new position stemmed from the desire to see the Wairarapa region prosper,” he said. “This project has the potential to greatly increase the standard of living here through more reliable water supply, better farming returns, more jobs and improved environmental outcomes.”

Greg Ordish will be based in the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Masterton office and will work as part of the project team which includes Greater Wellington and Grow Wellington staff and consultants.

Extensive pre-feasibility work completed over the past four years has identified potential sites for storage and indicated a potential demand for water, with strong economic returns. The project plan for the next 12 months includes an assessment of the demand for water, and further engineering, environmental and economic studies.

The Wairarapa Water Use Project is overseen by a leadership group of representatives from Greater Wellington Regional Council, the three Wairarapa district councils, iwi groups Rangitāne o Wairarapa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, the Wairarapa Regional Irrigation Trust, environmental and recreational groups and Grow Wellington.