

**Speaking notes for hearing / Summary of planning evidence on behalf of the
Director-General of Conservation**

My name is Ashiley Sycamore. I am providing planning evidence for the notified resource consent and the submission by the Director-General of Conservation for the Titiroa river tide gates and associated infrastructure. The following is intended to be a summary of my planning evidence, with one tweak in response to the Applicant's proposal for a 10-year consent term rather than 15 years. I also note that I was able to complete a site visit to the tide gates on Thursday afternoon and my evidence has not altered as a result.

The current application was publicly notified in August 2023, and the Director-General of Conservation submitted in opposition, citing several concerns. These included insufficient information on the effects of the tide gates on indigenous freshwater species, and the lack of consideration for alternatives that might mitigate these effects.

I agree that the activity status of the application is a Discretionary activity overall. The applicant now seeks a 10-year consent term, but if the decision is to approve, a consent duration of no more than five years would be more appropriate from my perspective when considering Policy 40 of the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan, along with detailed conditions for monitoring and maintenance.

In terms of the statutory framework, I find the application inconsistent with some aspects of the relevant planning documents, particularly concerning the effects on fish passage and inanga spawning. In my opinion, the application also fails to align with some provisions of the NPS-FM and Policy 11 of the NZCPS.

The relevant provisions of the Southland RPS and the RCP for Southland have also not been fully addressed by the application. I have considered there is insufficient information to assess the application's alignment with several policies, including those related to the protection of habitats important for recreational and cultural purposes.

Lastly, Section 104(6) of the RMA allows for the application to be declined due to inadequate information. Given the gaps in the information provided, this option should be considered, or the hearing adjourned to gather the necessary information and allow submitters to respond. I am available to assist following today where helpful, for example either through expert conferencing, or reviewing and providing planning comments in response to new information.