

# Resource Consent submission

To: The Chief Executive  
Environment Southland  
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**Date** 03/09/2024 14:50  
**Online reference number** RC240905920

**Full name of submitter** Nadine Caroline Paterson  
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**Contact phone number**  
**Email**

## Applicant details

**Name of applicant** Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Department of Conservation, and Environment Southland.  
**Activity location** Waituna Lagoon  
**Application number** APP-20242456

## Submission details

**My submission relates to the whole application** Yes  
**Details of my submission** I am opposed to the joint application by Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Department of Conservation, and Environment Southland.  
  
I am adversely affected as a farmer in the Waituna Catchment and I am concerned the 2.5m level will have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the lagoon, surrounding land holdings,

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visitor access to and from the lagoon, as well as infrastructure that has already been in place to fortify banks in feeder creeks.

I am submitting this application not only as a farmer, farming in the Waituna catchment but as a concerned community catchment member, who - for more than a decade, has attended a significant number of meetings, particularly The Lake Waituna Control Association as well as a very passionate farmer who believes in the very important environmental and cultural obligations we have as a farming entity within this catchment - formulating environmental plans in conjunction with Environment Southland staff - to uphold water quality standards and the control of sediments in our waterways.

**My concerns are:**

**1. A 20 year term to be held by the consent holder regarding the opening of the Waituna Lagoon:**

The proposed level of 2.5M has only been sought within the last 2 years when the old consent expired and there most certainly is not enough evidence to support that this is the correct course of action. No body knows how the lagoon, long term is going to react. There is already evidence of rotting vegetation due to the designated and desired lagoon level of 2.5M which, will, in itself increase sediment levels in the lagoon.

The fact that 3 bodies are going to be joint consent holders - who is going to be in charge of the decision making when there is a crisis that needs immediate intervention as per the emergency Lagoon Opening in January 2024 when there were signs of degradation occurring in November 2023. Would that emergency opening have happened if a member of our community did not voice concerns regarding the visual unhealthy look of the lagoon? An interim consent of 5 years or less should be put in place to monitor what effects the desired and increased lagoon level is going to have - not only on the lagoon but on network of waterways and surrounding farm land close to the lagoon.

**2. Concerns regarding the ruppia health and natural existing birdlife with a desired level of 2.5M:**

How is the most important attribute to the ruppia's health and procreation - sunlight - meant to filter through a natural "wading bog" at 2.5M. Wading birds cannot "wade" in levels at 2.5M. It is my personal experience, for example - black swans who naturally migrate to the lagoon, now seem to be migrating to farm lands outside of the lagoon itself. I have personally witnessed in excess of 50 swans seen in grass paddocks on our farm - closest to the lagoon - destroying them and looking more

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like a winter grazed paddock, resulting in a muddy mess and the defecation causing sour pastures. This has only happened within the last two years.

3. I applaud the important mana of community well-being, and scientific research but not at the detriment of the community itself, including the lagoon as mentioned above and us personally. We have been through land value drops - the need to revalue the farm due to the associated risk of being in the Waituna area - caused by media coverage of the Waituna Lagoon in 2012. Water quality monitoring stations - above and below our farm boundary which I was most interested to see the data for, but was never able to.

My concerns are, that present and future actions of others, impact our family and others in our community. Community consultation is extremely important with the applicants but the joint applicants do not seem to value the fact that there is a wealth of knowledge in our community regarding the lagoon, its unique habitat and the importance of accurate and timely actions.

**Submission uploaded**

No

**I am a trade competitor of the applicant (for the purposes of section 308B of the Resource Management Act 1991)**

No

## Outcome sought

**I wish Environment Southland to make the following decision**

To oppose the application.

**Why I wish Environment Southland to make this decision**

I want them to grant the resource consent to open the lagoon but at the level of 2.2m or lower.

The consent should make it mandatory that the lagoon is opened when it reaches the trigger level.

If the trigger level is 2.2m or less then it would be appropriate for the consent to be for 20 years.

If the consent is granted for 2.5m then the consent should only be for 5 years.

## Hearing details

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**I wish to be heard in support of my submission** Yes

**I would consider presenting a joint case if others make a similar submission** Yes

**I wish to be involved in any pre-hearing meeting that may be held for this application** Yes

## Request for independent commissioner/s

**I request pursuant to section 100A of the Resource Management Act 1991, that Environment Southland delegates its functions, powers, and duties to hear and decide the application to 1 or more hearings commissioners who are not members of Environment Southland**

**I understand I will be liable to meet or contribute to the costs of the hearings commissioner or commissioners**

## Confirmation

I have served a copy of my submission on the applicant and I confirm all of the above information is correct

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