

Resource Consent submission

To: The Chief Executive
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Section 53

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 Regrettably, I am opposed to the joint resource consent application by Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Department of Conservation, and Environment Southland.

Background:

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The lagoon has been a large part of my life, fishing, duck hunting, floundering etc for decades. I have even water-ski-ied on the lagoon in my earlier years. I was involved in early management agreements through Federated Farmers in relation to Ramsar etc.

I will be adversely affected if the proposed resource consent is granted at a level of 2.5m. It would be hugely upsetting to see the lagoon badly affected, and that is what I believe will happen – the events of late 2023, early 2024 are an example of what happens when the lagoon is held at 2.3m and above for longer than 20 days. It became algal dominated and the reactive response was nearly too slow to save it.

The consent holder needs to be pro-active, not reactive, and certainly not slow reactive.

I am opposed to the proposed term of the consent:

There is no justification for a 20 year consent, particularly when the applicants are seeking a level of 2.5m. They have not fully investigated the adverse effects such a high level will have on the lagoon and surrounding area. The consent should be for a 5 year term.

I am opposed to the joint consent holders:

The applicants themselves are not a good fit. They do not have the same culture and they have clearly battled to reach agreement during the application process. Initially they announced to the catchment that their application would be a 3 way consent. Then it reverted to a 2 way (without ES) and now, it is back to a 3 way.

I don't believe that the joint applicants have a suitable structure in place to ensure a decision is made in a timely manner, not individually and certainly not jointly together. One of the parties (DOC) can dictate and over-ride any potential decision that is made.

I am opposed to the proposed level of 2.5m:

There's no scientific justification for this level and the events of 2023-24 would show that prolonged periods of a closed lagoon at these heights will create issues and have adverse effects on the lagoon and surrounding area.

The higher water level will bring about increased erosion from waterlogged creek banks which will result in increased silt and sedimentation in the lagoon. At 2.5m the lagoon would be

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opened less often and any flushing effect would be limited.

At a level of 2.3m water lies on the bridge on Waghorn's Road and the road is closed to the public. Access to the walking track is lost.

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

That the consent be granted to the joint applicant, but the lagoon trigger level should not exceed 2.2m, with the proviso that it **MUST** be opened when the level of 2.2m is reached, and as soon as practicable.

The lagoon should be opened at varying levels (up to 2.2m), depending on the length of time it has been closed for, upcoming weather events etc. There needs to be flexibility in regard to opening levels and location of opening.

If it is opened at lower levels, such as 1.8m in the winter it could prevent algal domination in the summer. And, if opened at lower levels then the lagoon can be manually closed. Therefore, this consent should also permit/incorporate the closure of the lagoon.

The length of the consent should be five years, definitely not 20 years.

We have seen how quickly the lagoon can deteriorate. It is less than two years since the Lake Waituna Control Association relinquished its resource consent and already the health of the lagoon has reached an all-time low.

Hearing details

I wish to be heard in support of my submission

Yes

I would consider presenting a joint case if others make a

Yes

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similar submission

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

Confirmation

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

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