

Appendix 1 Co-Chairmen's Report

Kia ora Koutou

Chairman Nicol, ES Councillors, Staff, fellow Ratepayers of the Waiau Special Rating District, Members of General Public. I acknowledge Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku as Mana whenua.

Welcome to the 2022/23 Annual General Meeting of the Waiau Catchment Liaison Committee.

We are pleased that the timing of this AGM has returned to February. Last year you will recall the AGM had been pushed out to 14 June.

In this report, we wish to cover off 2 key topics:

1. The Waiau Recommendations contained in the Regional Forum's Final Report to Environment Southland and Te O Marama, which were accepted as part of a suite of recommendation at their combined meeting on 13 July 2023.
2. On-going mediation between this Committee, Environment Southland and Meridian Energy Ltd, on the question of funding of erosion and flood damage on the main stem of the Waiau River.

We deal with each of those in turn:

1. The Regional Forum Recommendations were based around modelling of the impact of contaminants (phosphate, sediment and nitrogen e-coli) on the values of freshwater within our Waiau Catchment. We commented at the last AGM that the Forum's recommendations represented the most significant change to land use policy since the Soil and Water Conservation Act from the 1960's.

For the mainstem of the Waiau, the Forum also recognised that a significant gap in the science existed. We don't know how much water is required in the main stem of the River to ensure an ecologically vibrant in-stream habitat.

And that science needs to be done.

Once completed that science would then inform the specific question of what flow regime through the Manapōuri Lake Control Structure at Mararoa, would be required to provide that level of vibrancy. At the Forum's meeting in Te Anau in December 2020, Meridian offered to assist with the flow regime modelling.

The Forum recognised that until those pieces of work were completed, modelling of the impact of contaminants (phosphate, sediment and nitrogen e-coli) on the values of freshwater within the lower Waiau River itself, didn't make a lot of sense. 95% of the River is diverted to Doubtful Sound via the Manapōuri Power Station and that on the face of it increases the concentration of any given contaminant load in the lower Waiau, 20-fold.

But great news: ES advised us last week that the ES Science Budget for 2023/24 contains provisional funding to undertake the science required to address the first question. This work stream needs to be completed in time to inform Plan Change Tuatahi (2024).

2. Mediation between this Committee, Environment Southland and Meridian Energy Ltd, on the question of funding of erosion and flood damage on the main stem of the Waiau River has been running for 3 years and is yet to be resolved.

We are extremely frustrated that the 3 parties did not meet during 2022/23. At the last mediation session in October 2020 your representatives made a conditional offer to allocate \$1m from the Committee's Disaster Reserve, to partly fund a 10 year erosion and flood damage works programme. The condition was that there be an agreed funding formula which set the annual and on-going contribution from Meridian.

We received Meridian's response until 10 February 2023. Though late, the response was sufficiently encouraging to justify a further mediation session.

As always, your Co-Chairs will endeavour to reach a mediated settlement which protects the interests of the ratepayers of the Waiau Special Rating District. Should that prove illusive, we will call a Special General Meeting of this Committee to seek further guidance.

Peter Baker
Paul Marshall
Co-Chairs
27 February 2023