

Notes of the Waimea Community Dam Submissions Hearing

Tasman District Council Motueka Service Centre meeting room, Friday 15 December 2017

Hearings Meeting reconvened at 9:31am.

Present: Mayor Kempthorne, Councillors S Bryant, P Canton, M Greening, K Maling, D Wensley, D McNamara, A Turley, D Ogilvie, and P Hawkes.

Apologies: Cnr King and Cnr Tufnell.

Moved Cnr Hawke/ Cnr Ogilvie.

In Attendance: Engineering Services Manager (R Kirby), Community Development Manager (S Edwards), Strategic Policy Manager (S Flood), Contractor Policy Advisor (M Tregurtha) and Student Support Officer (S O'Connor).

Submitter 16593, Mr Besier

In his submission Mr Besier stated that he was aware of the importance of water, but doubted the economics and intention behind the dam. He expressed concerns over the financial obligation to ratepayers, and was particularly concerned about possible cost overruns. He believed the current proposal was a subsidy to irrigators. Mr Besier suggested night time irrigation and drip lines for mitigating poor water management. He questioned whether there was a water saving code for suburbs in the building code, and discussed water tanks. Mr Besier believed the long-term sustainability of the dam was questionable.

Submitter 16236, Mr & Mrs Upson

Mrs Upson spoke on behalf of herself and her husband and tabled a document. They objected to the joint venture proposal and were concerned about the financial proposal. Their view was that the proposal was heavily focused on privatisation, and that irrigators should fund the project independently. They believed that under the proposal there was an excessive charge for urban areas, and that there were many hidden costs in the proposal, including project diversion and GST. Mrs Upson discussed options of land use change for water availability throughout the areas, suggesting water use and management should be revised.

Submitter 16023, Mr Dowler

Mr Dowler believed the cost of the dam was not expensive and supported water augmentation for the Plains. He discussed the environmental problems facing the Waimea River and the benefits the dam would bring. Mr Dowler was unsure why people were opposed to the financials for the proposal and he believed \$29 per year was a fair price to pay as a District wide contribution by ratepayers.

Submitter 16604, Mr Hellyer

Mr Hellyer is a retired fruit grower in favour of water security but not of the proposal. He stated his preference for a private enterprise to build, own and manage the dam and for Council to purchase water from them. Mr Hellyer believed the possible cost overruns would prevent other infrastructural maintenance and development projects from occurring.

Submitter 16610, Mr Clifton

Mr Clifton tabled a handout which he referred to throughout his oral submission. He did not believe the proposal's figures, and expressed concern that the project had been included in the LTP. Mr Clifton was opposed to irrigators and believed the dam would encourage irrigation intensification and therefore pollution. He did not support the proposed loan underwriting and requested a referendum on the dam.

Submitter 16495, Mr Smart

Mr Smart referred to the NZIER report and sought that it be revisited using different consultants. His view was that the available information available to the public was poor, and that the economic analysis was incorrect. He expressed concerns over algal growth in freshwater and feared that toxins would make their way into the aquifers. Mr Smart believed water usage on the District was decreasing and would continue to do so. He requested that council address water management and over allocation. His view was that doing nothing was an option.

Submitter 16132, Easton Apples Ltd

Mr Easton spoke on behalf of Easton Apples Ltd which is located on the Waimea Plains. He discussed the need for security of water supply for their apple orchard. Mr Easton emphasised the extensive indirect and direct employment his business provides to the local economy, with a large direct wage bill of around \$1.4 million annually. Mr Easton expressed concern over environmental misinformation and said he had not used nitrogen for over fifteen years. Intensification of apples on the Plains would not increase nitrogen leaching, adding that he considered himself an expert in this area. Mr Easton said the only other viable option would be to cease apple growing and questioned the impact of that on ratepayers.

Submitter 16238, Mr Horn

In his submission Mr Horn discussed proportionality of benefit held by each shareholder, and suggested ratepayers would not benefit. He was concerned about the financial cost of the proposal and potential overruns and did not support the underwrite of WIL's loan. Mr Horn raised concerns about estimated population growth and the overcapacity and design on the dam.

Submitter 16052, Motueka Community Board

Mr Maru spoke on behalf of the Motueka Community Board, and referred to their submission. He believed the cost of \$29 per year to ratepayers was fair. He had concerns that an increase in debt might hinder future community investment and future projects. The Hearing Panel clarified the number of board members their support of the submission. Mr Maru said there were four and that the submission was unanimously supported by the Board.

Submitter 16627, Mr Harvey

Mr Harvey outlined his qualifications and stated he was a water resource engineer. He referred to other dam projects he had been involved including dams in Alaska and Northeast Texas. Mr Harvey stated he was not anti-dam, but had questions about the project. His two main concerns were public safety and costs. Mr Harvey said that the project had been deemed high risk with regard to seismic dam failure. Mr Harvey cited an NGS report suggesting the financial costs of the project had been underestimated, and that Council hadn't asked for an assessment of vertical displacement in 2011 or 2015. . Mr Harvey believed the project had been under designed and was therefore under costed. He cited a peer review by OPUS which looked at a draft NGS report and said there was likely to be extensive damage or demolition costs, which he believed would be a liability to the ratepayers. Mr Harvey made an offer to be involved with the engineers.

Submitter 16628, Mr & Mrs Garland

Mr Garland spoke on behalf of himself and his wife. He wanted the situation in Park View to be understood where they were not in the urban water supply scheme and had invested heavily in water storage. Mr Garland was concerned that a large part of their subdivision had been included in the Zone of Benefit and he did not want to contribute to something which would have no benefit. Mr Garland believed the Zone of Benefit had been drawn up arbitrarily and that the northern boundary included properties that should not be.

Submitter 16007, Mr Walker

Mr Walker stated concerns with the formation of the questions in the SOP submission document. He believed there would be agricultural subsidies if the proposal went ahead, and that operations should be moved to where there was greater water availability. He referred to examples of water recycling in places such as London. He stated is lack of confidence in the cost estimates and asked for clarification on when the costs were estimated. It was clarified by the Hearing Panel that these were done five years ago.

The Hearing Committee broke at 11:30am and reconvened at 11:40am.

Submitter 16196, Mr May

Mr May stated his belief that irrigation was the reason for the Region's water shortage, and that irrigators would be the key beneficiaries of the dam. He expressed his concerned that

details had been excluded from the proposal. His view was the proposed allocation of costs and financial risk being imposed on ratepayers was unacceptable and should be revised. He requested that all further expenditure on the project be stopped until the WIL prospectus was made public. Mr May referred to river flow models and said they, along with the allocation of public and private costs, should be investigated.

Submitter 16754, Mr Davey

Mr Davey believed the rating system and dam costs per hectare would make it uneconomical to continue growing crops in the Waimea Plains area citing urban expansion and loss of crops. Mr Davey discussed his personal experience with grey water systems and water conservation. He did not support the proposed costs of the dam or the expectation of ratepayers to cover cost overruns. Mr Davey discussed seismic challenges and referred to a document. He believed that without the dividends from Council owned property, other community projects would miss out.

Submitter 17002, Mr Norris

Mr Norris, a past Councillor, discussed the background of the project. His view was that dam opponents were spreading misinformation. Mr Norris cited an example where Council had built a dam under budget and on time. He urged Councillors to vote for the dam if the project stacked up and was affordable. Mr Norris believed Nelson City Council should make an equal contribution to the project. He did not support money from Council enterprises going towards funding of the dam. Mr Norris stated that doing nothing was not an option. He was concerned about a no dam scenario and cited a poem he had written.

The Hearing Committee broke at 12:15pm and reconvened at 12:21pm

Cnr Mailing left the meeting at 12:21pm

Submitter 16429, Ms Olds

Ms Olds stated her opposition to the dam, and that she would not be able to fund her rates increase of \$29/year and would be forced out of her home. Ms Olds urged Council to investigate the other options suggested by submitters. She believed the process had not been transparent and that the costs had not been defined or disclosed. Her view was that the funding model which involved public ratepayers funding private business was not acceptable and that irrigators should underwrite their own loan and take more care with their water use. She believed it was an irrigation project. Ms Olds requested Council undertake a referendum.

Submitter 16589, Jane Wells

Ms Wells stated that she was unsure about the dam. She believed irrigators and Nelson City Council weren't committed to the project and it was her view that water users should catch and store their own water. Ms Wells expressed concern over the financial aspects of the proposal including the underwriting of WIL's loan. Her view was that Council should fix

the existing problems in the water system network. Overall Ms Wells believed the dam was not affordable, would store too much water, and would cause too much debt.

Submitter 16314, Morgan Williams

Mr Williams congratulated Council on their efforts to develop and implement a plan for water security. He believed the augmentation of river flows was well developed and future focused. His view was that Council had endeavoured to keep community well informed throughout the process. His belief was that WIL had secured significant and rare Central Government funding. He acknowledged the large number of people in opposition, but said he believed it was the substance and accuracy of opinions that was important. Mr Williams cited a newspaper article that discussed climate change. He believed the risks of not developing a robust system water supply system were vastly greater than any part of the dam proposal.

12:54pm: A resolution was moved to accept all additional late submissions that were not accepted on 11 December 2017. Moved Cnr Sangster/ Cnr Hawkes

Mayor Kempthorne thanked Councillors and submitters for their efforts over the past week and adjourned the hearings at 12:54pm with the meeting to resume with Deliberations beginning 1 February 2018.