

# Notes of the Waimea Community Dam Submissions Hearing

*Tasman District Council Golden Bay Service Centre meeting room, Tuesday 12 December 2017*

9.00am Meeting reconvened

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

**Apologies and Leave of Absence:**

Councillors: King and Hawkes.

Cnrs Sangster and Brown were noted for lateness due to GB Community Board Meeting

Moved: Cnr Ogilvie/ Cnr Tuffnell

**In Attendance:** Engineering Services Manager (R Kirby), Corporate Services Manager (M Drummond), CEO (L McKenzie), Environment and Planning Manager (D Bush-King), Contractor Policy Advisor (M Tregurtha) and Student Support Officer (S O'Connor).

## **Submitter 16444, Ms Brookes**

In her submission Ms Brookes view was that storage ponds were the best option for environmental reasons, and that they had not been explored properly. She expressed concern that rate increases might be greater than advertised, and said they were already too high. She discussed slumps and infill problems with reference to the Maitai Dam. Ms Brookes mentioned future weather patterns of increased rainfall in winter, which she believed were in line with requirements for tanks. She expressed concern of financial security and questioned the irrigators' ability to provide this. Overall, she was strongly opposed to the dam.

Councillors clarified that there was no plan to sell shares of the airport as suggested by Ms Brookes in her submission, and that Council would instead use special dividends to help fund the dam.

## **Submitter 17021, Mr Brouwer**

Mr Brouwer stated in his oral submission that more water was required for irrigation than urban areas. He declared his opposition to subsidising an industry that used artificial chemicals and products, and believed those industries should pay for the dam themselves. He referred to glasshouses in the Netherlands, and smaller district water supplies and communities which grow their own food products as required. Mr Brouwer called for a referendum. Clarification was sought regarding Mr Brouwer's position on water tanks. Mr Brouwer stated that lots of small water storage units would be financially feasible as it would encourage more awareness of how water is used.

**Submitter 17007, Ms Burness**

Apologies were received from Ms Burness who was unable to attend. She sent an email saying she still believed strongly that the dam should not go ahead, and that the water supply for Tasman was adequate for many decades. Her submission discussed NIWA's predictions of increased rainfall on the Waimea Plains, and that Tasman District would get 10 - 15 percent wetter by year 2100. Ms Burness believed there was clear evidence that the dam was of no benefit to Golden Bay or its ratepayers. She believed it was of little benefit to other ratepayers in Tasman, except a very few with vested interests. She was also of the view that there would be little benefit to the river ecology.

*The committee broke at 9:32am and reconvened at 10:14am.*

**Submitter 17529, Ms Moranui**

Ms Moranui spoke to her own submission and on behalf of Ms Foreman (Submission 17568). Ms Moranui referred to current problems surrounding farming and pollution as reasons for their opposition to the dam. The submitters were of the view that the majority of ratepayers were not being listened to. She stated that her opposition to the dam was on principal, not the money, which was the fundamental issue.

*The committee broke at 10:22am and reconvened at 11:10am.*

**Submitter 17011, Mr Pearson**

Mr Pearson spoke on behalf of himself and his wife (Submission 17012). Mr Pearson acknowledged that the dam was an option for mitigating poor river health and low flows, stating their full support toward the river health and flow maintenance. Their view was small reservoirs and other examples might be better options than a dam. Mr Pearson expressed some concern over seismic issues, nitrates, and inadequate development. His view was that there was a problem with ratepayers covering the cost overruns. He said Council should have encouraged distributed storage and new residential properties should be required to have water tanks.

*The committee broke at 11:17am and reconvened at 12:24pm.*

**Submitter 17549, Ms Virtama**

Ms Virtama stated her strong opposition to the dam as she believed it would not benefit Golden Bay and would increase rates significantly. She agreed with a previous submitter that water was a valuable resource. She suggested there needed to be infrastructure and water management improvement throughout the Region. Ms Virtama believed the dam would only benefit a few businesses on the Waimea Plains, and not the ratepayers in Takaka.

**Submitter 17018, Mr Werner-Lehr**

Mr Werner-Lehr stated that his main concern with the dam proposal was the costs and risks involved. He referred to an Oxford University study which indicated dams cost much more than predicted. He was opposed to ratepayers underwriting the loan to WIL and stated that, although he was not against the dam, he was against this underwriting and likely cost overruns.

**Submitter 17019, Mrs Werner-Lehr**

Mrs Werner-Lehr referred to her husband submission (Submitter 17018), stating she agreed with his points. She expressed concern regarding the responsibility on Council's liabilities. She suggested Nelson City Council should contribute more. Her view was that Council should not meet behind closed doors and all discussions should be conducted in public. Mrs Werner-Lehr said that money was not an issue, and if the dam was a good investment then she would be happy to pay her rates.

**Submitter 17032, Mr Wilson**

Mr Wilson outlined a number of safeguards that he believed should be in place including a stop gap level of protection, participating contractors having some level of expertise in building dams, and maintaining and improving the credit rating for the Region. He emphasised his concern that numbers may have been crunched and that reflected on the level of expertise. Mr Wilson believed the proposal might have been premature, and said he believed any projects of this magnitude where opinion was split should not progress.

**Submitter 17031, Mrs Wilson**

Mrs Wilson noted that there had been heightened negativity and anger within the community regarding the view of insufficient consultation. She suggested that Council should engage more with the community, and said she believed listening to people in the area was important. She expressed concern that the people who live on the land and their knowledge had not been included in reports. She discussed earthquakes, and stated that 30cm of uplifting had been recorded in the area, but wasn't considered in the proposal. She questioned if alternative options could be considered. Councillors clarified uplift had been discussed in detail, but requested information on 30cm specifically, which Mrs Wilson agreed to email through. Mrs Wilson questioned a 30% leakage within the urban water reticulated system, which she suggested might be more economical to fix. Councillors clarified it was 24% leakage and there was a program in place to reduce it. Councillors clarified that International figures average 36.1%, and said that 20-30% was normal in NZ, but that Council was trying hard to get that down.

**Submitter 16492, Ms Davis**

Ms Davis referred to the earthquake in Seddon during which she said the local dam was damaged and failed. She expressed concern that the same designers were proposed to build the Waimea dam. Ms Davis questioned whether Council were told not to accept WIN submission forms and asked which Councillors came to the WIN meetings. It was clarified

that this was not the case and all submissions had been accepted. Some Councillors confirmed they attended the WIN meetings. Ms Davis said she objected to all expenditure that had been used for the Dam. She asked Councillors whether land value would increase on the plains, to which they said they could not know. Ms Davis stated she was happy to pay for regional facilities and essential services, and suggested rectifying the over allocation system. Ms Davis said the \$70 million freshwater grant should be used to help everyone be self-sufficient. She was opposed to the dam proposal.

#### **Submitter 16498, Ms McCarthy**

Ms McCarthy was of the view that private water storage should be encouraged. She referred to her submission from the previous proposal and read out her responses. Ms McCarthy emphasised points from her written submission such as seismic and financial concerns.

#### **Submitter 16592, Federated Farmers**

Mr Langford spoke on behalf of Golden Bay Federated Farmers. He expressed their support of the proposed dam and funding model. Mr Langford said water was vital for the viability of the Region, and that they supported WIL and the majority of people were willing to invest. He stated that Federated Farmers had received concerns from members who were not wanting to pay the \$29 district wide rate, and worried money would be diverted from other areas of the budget. Mr Langford said he was personally willing to pay \$29 to have local produce. The major concerns for them were the possible cost overruns, and future intensification and associated pollution on the Waimea Plains. He believed the management of properties needed to be considered and referred to their submission for suggestions.

#### **Submitter 16167, Ms Healy**

Ms Healy raised a question over Council's experience with building dams of this scale and the environmental benefits of the proposed dam. She believed Council's commercial assets would be sold off to pay for the dam and that debts would still remain. Ms Healy emphasised her opposition to the dam throughout her submission.

#### **Submitter 16212, Mr Durkan**

Mr Durkan was opposed to the dam. He acknowledged water insecurity was increasing, and that he was self-sufficient. Mr Durkan asked if Council were aware of a rainwater tank solution, to which Councillors said three tanks were required in rural areas. He said he believed the dam costs presented were minimum costs, and requested Council release maximum costs. Mr Durkan's view was that commercial interests should fund the project independently.

#### **Submitter 16462, Mr Shelly**

Mr Shelley said he had read reports by hydrologists and remained uncertain about the dam proposal. His view was that the best solution was piping and containing the water to reduce

wastage, but acknowledged that solution had been deemed too expensive. Mr Shelley expressed doubt over two main issues, water getting to its end use, and the cost of the project. He believed there must be trust in science. Mr Shelley raised concern regarding the equity distribution of cost overruns, saying irrigators had certainty and ratepayers did not.

*Cr Sangster left the meeting 2:18pm.*

#### **Submitter 16164, Mr Foster**

Mr Foster cited a handout seeking that Council commission an independent audit of the dam proposal, and of their description to ratepayers for the purpose of clarifying expenditure. He referred to the WIN submission analysis where he said over 80% of submitters were against the dam.

#### **Submitter 16515, Mr Lawton**

Mr Lawton stated that he was not against the proposal in theory, but had a problem with the funding model for ratepayers. He referred to investment theory to suggest the potential benefits were disproportionate to the risks. He believed that the actual costs Central Government would bear weren't huge, and said that the \$7 million Fresh Water investment fund should not contribute to the project. Mr Lawton held the view that Nelson City Council weren't investing enough. He believed there was a lack of information regarding allocation of cost to development levy. Mr Lawton suggested cost allocations be set so ratepayers were MPV neutral at all cost levels, and business and personal assets were used to guarantee irrigators. He believed Council should ask Central Government for more money, and negotiate the deal as though it was their own money.

#### **Submitter 16543, MsVaughan**

Ms Vaughan said she was in favour of the potential environmental benefits and believed security of water supply was important. It was her view that Nelson City council should contribute more. Ms Vaughan said she would be willing to pay the \$29 district wide rate even though she had an independent water supply. Overall, Ms Vaughan supported the proposal but believed accurate financial prediction was needed, saying people were fearful of potential cost blow outs.

#### **Submitter 15953, Mr Turner**

Mr Turner said he had attended previous Council meetings, and concluded that the fundamental issue was difference of opinion. He expressed his opposition to the dam proposal throughout his submission.

#### **Submitter 16516, Dr Toder**

Dr Toder was of the view that the project was too expensive and believed there were other options. He stated his financial concerns and referred specifically to the p95 confidence level and said it should have been inclusive of other project examples to obtain the mean and

standard deviation. Dr Toder referred to a handout which cited an Oxford University study. With regard to the underwriting of WIL's loan, he said it indicated unreliability. Dr Toder expressed concern regarding the financials of the proposal requested to see the term sheet.

*3:00pm: A resolution was passed that the meeting be extended until such time as all matters for consideration on the agenda have been dealt with. Moved: Cnr Ogilvie/ Cnr McNamara.*

*The committee broke at 3:02pm and reconvened at 3:20pm*

### **Submitter 16195, Ms McMahon**

Ms McMahon questioned the affordability of the dam, and expressed concern over the associated risks. She requested the dam project not be funded, and discussed environmental stress. Ms McMahon suggested changes to agriculture practices and more storage tanks as alternative options. She stated her opposition to using the \$7m Freshwater Improvement Fund grant for the dam. Ms McMahon discussed seismic activity and said she felt strongly about this risk in particular.

### **Submitter 16476, Mr Barker**

During his submission Mr Barker discussed the possible environmental costs to building a dam with regard to migratory species of fish. He expressed his concern over the financial costs and discussed an economics report. Councillors asked for clarification of downstream river bed erosion that Mr Barker stated would need repaired in his submission. In response he stated that heavy rain events could cause erosion in areas where there had been deforestation.

### **Submitter 16568, Mr Lee**

Mr Lee stated his opposition to the dam proposal and outlined his concerns regarding the quality, objectivity and independence of submissions. He was worried about potential cost overruns, and stated that the project lacked public support. Mr Lee questioned who owned the water, and whether Tangata Whenua had been consulted. Councillors clarified that Iwi had been involved since the start through the Resource Management process amongst other processes.

### **Submitter 16474, Mr Houston**

Mr Houston referred to his written submission and emphasised his advocacy for a user pays system. Mr Houston stated his opposition to the proposed funding model. He referred to an irrigation scheme in South Canterbury to support his argument that many other schemes were self-funding and cost less. Mr Houston expressed his belief that if users couldn't afford the scheme then it shouldn't be done and, if this was the case, cheaper options should be explored. He concluded by suggesting that the proposal costs, profitability and overruns were not viable.

**Submitter 16531, Mr Wells**

Mr Wells supported a user pays funding model. He questioned what happened to alternatives such as weirs and storage tanks. He found it disappointing that the water tank option had been disregarded. Councillors asked for clarification on weirs where Mr Wells described them as relatively low tech and simple, which would cause little harm in a disaster.

**Submitter 16478, Bioversity SoNNoS Charitable Trust**

Mr Ursus Schwarz spoke on behalf of Bioversity SoNNoS Charitable Trust. Mr Schwarz requested a referendum for the dam. His view was that referendums should be asked at an early stage of the process.

**Submitter 16567, Calston Holdings**

Mr Lamb spoke on behalf of Calston Holdings and tabled a handout. He stated that Calston Holdings were neutral on the dam proposal, but believed the users should bear all costs. They were dissatisfied with the financial costs and dam consultation process. They believed cost overruns were imminent, and they did not support general ratepayer providing the underwrite for irrigators. Mr Lamb questioned why the hydropower aspect of the project had been taken out, to which Councillors clarified that it was being investigated.

*Cnr Mailing and Cnr Tuffnell left the meeting 4:27pm*

**Submitter 16450, Mr Lochner**

*Cnr Sangster returned at 4:34pm.*

In his submission Mr Lochner suggested that Council should repair the leaks in the current urban water system as an alternative option. Mr Lochner stated his concern about seismic activity. In response to a suggestion by Mr Lochner that the dam had been confirmed, Councillors clarified to that only the funding from Central Government was reported on the radio as confirmed. Mr Lochner emphasised his belief that the dam would be unsecure, unsafe and that it was not needed.

*The Hearing Committee broke at 4:45pm and reconvened at 5:05pm.*

*Mayor Kempthorne left the meeting at 4:45pm. Meeting Chair handed over to Cnr Brown.*

**Submitter 16496, Ms Coleman**

*5:05pm Cnr Mailing returned.*

Ms Coleman referred to a handout which she tabled. She stated that her views were based on the information she had reviewed, and acknowledged that it wasn't everything. In terms

of the funding model, Ms Coleman stated that the urban supply should be the most valuable element. She believed in a user pays model, but expressed her concern over the costing options. Her view was that the units were incorrect and therefore the costing was also. Ms Coleman believed incorrect information had been published, the process was not robust, and that the project costs were too high cost and risky to be the right choice. Councillors asked for clarification regarding information on the handout such as minimum flow factors. Ms Coleman referred to an NZIER report. Ms Coleman suggested emailing out more information, to which Councillors supported.

*5:21pm Cnr Mailing left the meeting.*

#### **Submitter 16190, Dr Roache**

Dr Roache tabled a handout and referred to Council data, which he said indicated declining water usage. He expressed concern with the process and Council's forecast debt and rates. With regard to earthquakes, Dr Roache believed Council's ability to respond to disasters would be hindered by the cost of the dam. He discussed seismic activity further, and referred to a GNS report. Dr Roache was of the view that the ENSOLD earthquake 2008 guidelines were what Council's costings were based on, not the 2015 guidelines. He tabled a letter from OPUS. Overall, Dr Roache believed the project was not well supported, would be subsidised a small group, and referred to water leakages to suggest bad Council Management.

#### **Submitter 16527, Mr Benson**

Mr Benson tabled a document which he cited throughout his oral submission. He referred to examples of environmental degradation and climate change, and said he believed building a dam would encourage intensification and increased community debt. He suggested Council reduce water leakages, and possibly introduce water tanks. Mr Benson concluded by stating that his view was that 85% of the submissions opposed the dam, so he believed Council had no mandate to continue with the project.

*The meeting was adjourned at 5.54pm to be reconvened in Richmond on Wednesday 13 December 2017.*