

Submission on resource consent application

Online reference number: CA200403901
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Submitter's details

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Application to which submission relates

Name of applicant Opunake Power Ltd
Proposal (activity type and location) Relating to the Opunake Hydroelectric Power Scheme operation at Opunake
TRC Consent number/s 1795-5.0; 1796-4.0; 1797-4.0; 5581-2.0; 4744.3.0; 4563-3.0; 5692-2.0;
I am a trade competitor for the purposes of [section 308B](#) of the Resource Management Act 1991 No

The specific parts of the application this submission relates to are:

My submission relates to the whole application Yes

Submission details

Please provide details of your submission. If your submission is in a document, you can upload the document below.

I am a keen trout angler who has fished the Waiaua Stream and Lake Opunake extensively since October 2010. The stream in particular holds specific importance to me as it was this stream which began my love of dry fly and nymph fishing. Prior to this I used spinning lures and natural bait, such as creeper or the Dobson fly larvae, to catch my trout.

I hold this stream in such high regard that I have taken several anglers from Oregon and also from Seattle to fish these waters. One such angler was Richard Stoll who has written a number of successful books on fly fishing for salmon on the west coast of North America. All anglers I have taken to this stream have caught fish on their visits.

In my view the river fishery above the weir is enhanced by the operation of the power station as the lake provides a great

habitat for young trout to reach maturity and then move into the upper river. The rainbow trout fishery has deteriorated, I believe, since the lake has not been receiving a good flow of water through it for power generation. This has reduced the ability of the lake to rear rainbow trout to a size and age where they move up into the Waiaua. Prior to the power station ceasing to operate at least 70% of the trout caught were rainbow trout of which virtually all were hatchery reared fish released into the Opunake Lake. Now, above the weir wild brown trout predominate and the fishery has suffered as numbers of fish caught has been significantly reduced.

Below the weir water quality has improved as the result of the power station not being operated. However rainbow trout numbers have declined inline with the upper river. The lower river provides excellent fly fishing in the winter months as most of Taranaki rivers are closed for fishing during this period. It came obvious to me in summer months when the power station was operating that the residual flow of 180 litres/second was too low to maintain water quality. In the hottest months of summer fish kills have been observed in the lower river due to high water temperatures and low oxygen levels I suspect. I rarely fish the lower river in summer because of this. I personally think that the residual flow for the lower river needs to be at least double the 180 litre/second rate and probably closer to 400 litres per second for all fish life in the lower river to survive at sustainable levels during the summer months. My understanding is that 400 litres/second is half the 10 year low flow of 800 litres/second.

In conclusion, as a fly fisherman, I wish the power station should be allowed to operate as the Opunake Lake provides an excellent habitat for young trout to grow in and provide fishing opportunities both in the lake and in the nearby Waiaua Stream, when it is fully operating. I believe the residual flow below the weir in the Waiaua however should be maintained at levels at least close to 400 litres/second in order to provide suitable habitat to maintain native aquatic species and trout populations especially through the summer months.

NA

Upload submission details here

Outcome sought

I seek the following decision from the Council

If consent is granted, the conditions I seek are

To grant consent

That the residual flow below the Waiaua weir be maintained at a level of at least 400 litres/second or half its ten year low flow of 800 litres/second.

You can upload a document containing the conditions you seek here

NA

Attendance and wish to be heard at consent hearing

I/we wish to be heard in support of my/our submission

Yes

By answering yes, you will have the option to speak in support of your submission at any consent hearing.

If others make a similar submission, I/we will consider

Yes

presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.

Request for independent commissioner/s

Pursuant to section 100A of the Resource Management Act 1991, I request that the Taranaki Regional Council delegates its functions, powers, and duties required to hear and decide the application to one or more hearing commissioners who are not Taranaki Regional Councilors. Yes

Note: Such a request may be made (in writing) up to 5 working days after close of submissions. If you do make a request under section 100A of the Resource Management Act 1991, you will be liable to meet or contribute to the costs of the hearings commissioner or commissioners.

Provision of submission to applicant

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires you to send a a copy of the submission to the applicant.

Would you like the Applicant to be automatically sent a copy of this submission via email? Yes

Please enter the applicant's email address here

steve.osullivan@xtra.co.nz

Authorisation

By selecting this checkbox, you are confirming you are the person making submission, or person authorised on behalf of person making submission. Yes

Date

13/04/2020

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