

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission

My wife and I farm sheep and beef on 300 ha at Clifden on the west bank of the Waiau River, The Horrell family purchased land at Clifden in 1891 and have been farming in the Waiau valley since

I declare an interest as Chairman of the Waiau River Liaison Committee, a sitting member of the Waiau Working Party and the joint Chair of the Waiau River Care Group which brings together the Tuatapere township and other stakeholders living below the Mararoa Control Structure operated by Meridian Energy

My concerns around this plan is that this hearing panel will oversee the introduction of regulations that reinforce the rights of Meridian Energy to breach Objective 9 of the Water and Land Plan due to the lack of minimum flow to manage aquatic ecosystem health and doesn't provide for water for my communities social, economic and cultural wellbeing

The Waiau River Care Group which met on 7/6/2017 overwhelmingly support an increase in river flow with the range of views from a minimum of 50 cumecs to those who want 150 cumecs, there was much concern about the Manapouri Development Act 1963 and the Water and Land Plans Objective 10 around National importance for Meridian's operation as it sets another legal precedent that imprisons the lower Waiau to another 35 years of degradation, some members of the public thought that national importance would include the lower Waiau as Meridian's spillway and to get recognition of this that the only way forward was litigation

Protecting water quality was high on the wish list for the community and Environment Southland Land Sustainability staff gave the public and farmers a good overview of what can be achieved collectively by best practice on farm

The Waiau Working party have been lobbying to increase the minimum flow for many years and there is much data that would suggest a 50 cumec minimum flow would get widespread support even though it is less than ten percent of the total flow

My communities only opportunity to renegotiate the next water right and resource consent for Meridian is in 2031 and these negotiations will be complex and much of the science is underway to provide the community with robust data to make decisions on how to improve the ecology of the Waiau River over the next 30 year consent term

The National Policy Statement on Freshwater NPS requires Environment Southland to complete implementation by 31 December 2025 with the latest amendments bringing that forward

The introduction of Freshwater Management Units, FMU, for the lower Waiau at this date will compromise my community's ability to negotiate an increase in the minimum flow, and find stakeholder based solutions with the best science available to find a sustainable balance between both, Meridian's continued operation of electricity generation and the

ecology of the lower Waiau River, this will require an engineering solution to the Mararoa control gates MLC to improve the flow regime, which will be a change from the current dry spill way over low rainfall periods

Any discussion around limit setting will require a combination of new thinking for all involved to find best practice from the farming community and an acknowledgement from Meridian that the status quo on the current flow regime is not sustainable, It is my view that this is unlikely to be negotiated before 2030

#### DECISION SOUGHT

Acknowledge the lower Waiau as a unique situation and invoke policy E1 (b) of the NPS and set back the full completion date until 31/12/ 2030 to align with Meridians operating consent renewal to get the best planning outcome for the environment

My last key issue for this catchment is water allocation as under Objective 11 water is to be used efficiently

Decision sought

Will the plan be able to assess efficient use of water that is fully allocated to Meridian ?

Will the plan create provisions for other water uses ?