

Submitter No: 797.

Submitter Name: TRONT

Date Received: 27/9 /17

*Dean Whaanga on behalf of Nga Runanga ki Murihiku*

*Summary Evidence 27 September 2017*

*Presented at hearing on Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan*

We have provided this evidence on behalf of Waihopai Runanga , Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Te Rūnanga o Oraka Aparima, Hokonui Runanga and Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu. My evidence relates to cultural values matters.

In our evidence we identify ourselves as Ngai Tahu, Ngati Mamoe and Waitaha. Our understanding is that we come from Nga Atua, The heavenly and earthly realms. That all things are connected through a common source. That there is order in this process. The order places humans or Ira tangata as subservient to Ira Atua, they being the forests ,air, animals, lands and water.

Therefore our inherited responsibility from our atua is to look after these realms through appropriate use and respect while ensuring the future needs or sustainability of the environments is maintained for us and future generations (this is tikanga and kaitiakitanga at work).

Water, Maku or dampness is mentioned as one of the first elements to come into existence. We come from water and the water is us, just as you have heard from our kaumātua. Water is central to life and healthy water results in healthy people.

Ailsa has summed up our Māori values and will talk to these next.

I will touch on section 4, our working relationship with Environment Southland (ES). The Water and Land project was undertaken as a partnership between Nga Runanga, ES, and Te Ao Marama Inc (Tami). We provided input into the plan at various engagement levels. There is an acknowledgement that the process we went through was valued, that there were some differing views and that as drafted there was a continuous compromise between Nga Runanga wants, while recognising other users wants or desires.

ES and Nga Runanga have worked alongside each other for 20 years through a relationship agreement with Tami. ES, planning documents have what we term the golden thread, or Maori views and policy embedded throughout them, not just in a separate Maori section. It has always been acknowledged that at the end of these planning processes Nga Runanga will always have the ability or right to submit to protect our values.

The video evidence of our people is a small example of how they feel and value water. There is an understanding of its importance in our own bodies for our health and wellbeing. There is an understanding of its Mana, its authority, its gift to humans and all species. There is an understanding of its whakapapa, the water cycle, from the tears of Rangi, onto Papatūānuku

to the sea (ki uta ki tai) and again through evaporation and mist rising as the tears of Papa back to Rangi.

Kaumātua and whānau have an aspirations to bring water back to a drinkable standard in places where this was once done. These negative changes have happened within their generation as some of our kaumātua tell us.

Our people shed tears when talking about our mother earth and water. This is not to be emotive for this submission, but represents the love and compassion, aroha, or sadness we feel when we know the water should not be like this. Our legacy use or misuse will be passed onto the next generation. We will fail as kaitiaki for this generation.

Ngāi Tahu has raised its concerns about the loss of mahinga kai and degradation of the environment since the mid-1800s. Whānau have watched for generations changes to water quality and quantity in Southland as well as the modification of water bodies. Arguments and concerns have been raised multiple times and whānau have been frustrated by the short timeframes that degradation is assessed and the incremental changes to the water bodies – each generation taking more, giving less to the next. Our people continue to ask us what we are doing to maintain and improve water quality, the loss of mahinga kai and also how we are maintaining our cultural values.

We say, Environment Southland has the Water and Land & Beyond project including the Water and Land Plan, we are partners in this. We have compromised some of your values to support the needs of others. But we have reached a place where the draft document if it is not weakened or becomes more permissive through this stage and the next stage of limit setting, then Southlands freshwater water quality should be maintained as a foundation for future improvement.

‘Unless we have got good clean water we just are going to continually lose all those connections we have with our past and we won’t have a future.’ For Southland and its people to have a strong and prosperous future, this pSWLP needs to focus on what its water bodies need to be healthy rather than short-term wants. Southland prides itself on its connections to the past but in the case of water, it seems to forget to treasure the life sustaining resource that allowed people to build their connections with this place.

Our stance today as kaitiaki is not new nor will it be of surprise to Environment Southland or the community. We look to Environment Southland to provide the leadership that ensures that the pSWLP will improve water quality where degraded and maintain where in natural state.

Ko au te wai, Ko te wai ko au, I am water the water is me, we are from water, wairua.

Tena Koutou