

Special Tribunal – Hurunui River Water Conservation Order
c/- Alex Miller
Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
Wellington 6143

SUBMISISON ON PUBLICALLY NOTIFIED APPLICATION FOR WATER CONSERVATION ORDER

Name of Submitter: John and Catherine Costello

This is a submission on an application from the *New Zealand and North Canterbury Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association* for a water conservation order for the Hurunui River.

The application seeks a Water Conservation Order for the preservation and protection of outstanding features held by the following waters:

- The mainstem of the upper Hurunui river and all of its lakes, tributaries and contributing waters (including hydraulically connected groundwaters) from its source in the Main Divide of the Southern Alps down to immediately above its confluence with the Mandamus River (Upper Hurunui Waters).
- The mainstream of the lower Hurunui River from immediately above its confluence with the Mandamus River down to the sea (Lower Hurunui River).

It is stated within the application as applied for that the Applicants consider that the amenity and intrinsic values of the Hurunui River and its associated lakes and tributaries are nationally outstanding and should be recognized and sustained by a Water Conservation Order.

It is also stated that the Hurunui River and its associated lakes and tributaries are under increasing threat from major irrigation and hydro-electricity proposals and therefore the Hurunui River needs robust and durable statutory protection to ensure that future generations are able to continue to experience its outstanding values.

The specific parts of the application that my submission relates to are:

- The whole application.

My submission is:

I oppose the order for the following reasons:

- We own a sheep farm just north of Waikari
- A water harvesting project would improve farm viability by providing opportunity for a variety of different agricultural ventures. These would provide a greater economic return than that currently generated and strengthen the district and

regional economy. It would also provide more employment opportunities in our region.

- I do not believe the characteristics of the Upper Hurunui as outlined in the Application can be considered outstanding. The same characteristics are present on a number of other rivers in the Canterbury region.
- I do not believe the characteristics of the Lower Hurunui as outlined in the Application can be considered outstanding. Again the same characteristics are present on a number of other rivers in the Canterbury region and this is also a modified environment.
- There are no outstanding amenity or intrinsic values afforded by the Hurunui River in its natural state as the values afforded by the river are present in most, if not all, Canterbury rivers. This also applies to areas of the Hurunui River where it is not in its natural state. I do not believe that the Hurunui River satisfies s199(1) of the Resource Management Act.
- I do not believe the Hurunui River provides any outstanding habitats for terrestrial or aquatic organisms; outstanding fisheries; outstanding wild, scenic or natural characteristics, outstanding scientific or recreational values; or is used for outstanding recreational, historical, spiritual or cultural purposes. I believe the Hurunui River does not satisfy s199(2) of the Resource Management Act.
- Having investigated other rivers that have been protected by a Water Conservation Order and the reasons why this protection was necessary, I do not believe the Hurunui River would fall in the same group as these rivers because it lacks the necessary 'outstanding' values. Furthermore, when comparing the Applicant's reasons justifying a Water Conservation Order on the Hurunui River with reasons justifying a Water Conservation Order on protected rivers, the reasons submitted by the Applicant as to why a Water Conservation Order is necessary on the Hurunui River appear to fall far short of warranting a Water Conservation Order.
- If it is finally determined that the characteristics outlined by the Applicant are outstanding for both or either of the Upper and Lower Hurunui River, the final Conservation Order to be issued on the Hurunui must take into account the needs of primary and secondary industry, and of the community under s207(b) of the Resource Management Act. Prohibiting the ability to develop the Hurunui water resource is contrary to the requirement as outlined in s207(b) of the Resource Management Act. The needs of primary and secondary industry would be satisfied by the economic and social benefits of the development of the Hurunui River.
- The Application submitted by the applicant is unclear on how the outstanding features supposedly present are to be protected. The Application provides no detail on any water allocation regime to be implemented. It does not provide for any of the factors under s199(2) of the Resource Management Act.
- The Application is an additional process to the proposed Natural Resources Regional Plan, the Hurunui District Plan, the Hurunui River Management Plan and the Canterbury Strategic Water Study. All of these processes have considered

the values that need protecting and how they should be protected. It is a waste of taxpayer resources to consider further protection of the Hurunui River.

I seek the following decision from the special tribunal:

- That the application for a Water Conservation Order on the Hurunui be declined.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing.

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