

Submission on an application for an amendment to the Kawarau River Water Conservation Order

To : Special Tribunal – Kawarau River Water Conservation Order
c/- Alex Miller, Ministry for the Environment,
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Name of submitter: My full name is **Robert Bruce Cathro**

This is a submission on an application from New Zealand and Otago Fish and Game Councils for an amendment to the water conservation order for the Kawarau River which relates to its tributary, the Nevis River. The application seeks to recognise the Nevis River's outstanding values – wild and scenic characteristics; back country trout fishery; natural characteristics, in particular outstanding natural landforms; trout spawning habitat; adult trout habitat (trophy trout); native fishery habitat; scientific – biogeographic river capture; historic and cultural values.

The application seeks to protect those outstanding values by adding a prohibition on damming and diversion of the river and adding a condition on water takes so as not to breach a minimum river flow.

I fully support the whole application.

My submission is that I support the proposed amendments to the order both to recognise those outstanding values mentioned above and to add a prohibition on damming and diversion of the river and conditions on minimum river flow.

The reasons for my submission:

My experience of the river dates back to about 1980 when a friend and I took our sons on a bicycle camping trip through the valley (via Garston and Bannockburn). The memories of that trip through such outstanding open grassland scenery backed by mountains and the free-flowing river, with stone cottage ruins and other relics of the past all around them, are still strongly and fondly held by our children. It is a valley frequently used for such journeys.

From about that date through to recent times, as a history teacher at Kaikorai Valley College in Dunedin, my staff and I annually took the senior history class into the valley for research purposes as part of their 7th form New Zealand history option. It has outstanding value for such projects. Each year the class spent a day working a small sluicing claim, searching the valley for evidence of gold-mining activities, and interviewing some of the elderly miners still there, as well as some of their immediate descendants who still have residences in the valley.

It was a highlight not only of their school days, but as many have latterly described, a major event in their lives. Their awareness of remoteness and landscape values, their

appreciation of the difficulties encountered for surviving and working in such an environment, and their heightened understanding of the need to preserve the remaining evidence of this important phase in the nation's history, all were enhanced by their visit to the valley.

They and I believe it would be vandalism of the worst kind to modify this area in the manner proposed, and for such a modest return. Future generations must have the chance to appreciate this unique place as we have.

I am also a fly-fisherman, and as such have spent much time there, sometimes with my wife or son, sometimes alone. Perhaps a non-fisherman may see little difference between a reservoir and a free-flowing river for fishing purposes. There is a world of difference! The range of challenges presented by a river are hugely more varied. There are already plenty of lakes!! Nor is the Nevis just an ordinary river. It is a trophy brown trout fishery and spawning ground. There are very few such rivers left.

Indeed this is one of the last free-flowing rivers of any consequence still remaining in Central Otago. It is the sort of place that makes New Zealand so special, and which makes us proud to be Kiwis when observing the mess that many other countries have made of their own back-yards.

Please do not let this beautiful river succumb to the demands of the power planners.