

033

RECEIVED

- 9 NOV 2006

MFE - South Island Office

Submission on Water Conservation Order – Oreti River

Section 205, Resource Management Act 1991

6 November 2006

Te Ao Marama Inc.
408 Tramway Road
PO Box 7078
Invercargill

Ph: 03 931 1242 Email: tami@woosh.co.nz

To: The Special Tribunal Oreti River Conservation Order

We wish to submit to the application of:

New Zealand Fish and Game Council and Southland Fish and Game Council for a Water Conservation Order in respect of the Oreti River.

We Support the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and Southland Fish and game Council in their application for a Water Conservation order for the Oreti River. The four Papatipu Rūnanga notes that a Water Conservation Order will in particular provide protection for Ngāi Tahu's cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association with the Oreti River. It will ensure the mauri is not further degraded due inappropriate development that would affect access to an ancient trail, archaeological sites of significance to Ngāi Tahu, and the associated resources including pounamu.

- 1. The specific parts our submission relates to are:**
All parts of the application.
- 2. Our submission is:**

Ngāi Tahu Association with the Oreti River

The Oreti River is a special and important river for Ngāi Tahu. The Crown in the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 has acknowledged Ngāi Tahu's spiritual, historic, and traditional association to the Oreti River.

The Oreti River traverses a significant area of Murihiku, stretching from its mouth at Invercargill almost to the edge of Whakatipu-wai-māori (Lake Wakatipu). As such, it formed one of the main trails inland from the coast, with an important pounamu trade route continuing northward from the headwaters of the Oreti and travelling, via the Mavora Lakes system, or Von River Valley, to the edge of Wakatipu and onto the Dart and Routeburn pounamu sources. Indeed, pounamu can be found in the upper reaches of the Oreti itself.

In the upper Oreti Catchment there are known archaeological sites. Some of these sites are stone resources and because of the shapes of the artifacts, are considered to be among the oldest in the country. There will be many more unrecorded archaeological sites in the Catchment as yet to be discovered and characterized.

The tūpuna had considerable knowledge of whakapapa, traditional trails, tauranga waka, places for gathering kai and other taonga, ways in which to use the resources of the Oreti, the relationship of people with the river and their dependence on it, and tikanga for the proper and sustainable utilisation of resources. All of these values remain important to Ngāi Tahu today.

The kai resources of the Oreti supported numerous parties venturing into the interior, and returning by mokihi (vessels made of raupo), laden with pounamu and mahinga kai. Nohoanga (temporary campsites) supported such travel by providing bases from which the travellers could go water fowling, eeling and catching inanga (whitebait), and were located along the course of Oreti River.

Traditionally, to European, water has been seen as a versatile transport medium and, because of its ability to break down and assimilate waste, it has been intimately linked to waste disposal. Such use directly conflicted with Māori beliefs, and illustrates the cultural differences in relation to natural resources. Whilst Māori saw themselves as part of Nature, European saw themselves as ascendant to nature. Although such views persist, developing environmental awareness has shifted the balance towards recognition of the natural environments intrinsic value. This application for a Water Conservation Order is consistent with the shift in attitude and supports Māori beliefs in regard to resource management. The protection of mauri being fundamental to resource management from a Maori perspective.

The mauri of the Oreti represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force, and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Ngāi Tahu Whānui with the river.

Te Ao Mārama Inc makes this submission on behalf of the four Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga o Murihiku:

Te Rūnaka o Awarua

Hokonui Rūnanga Inc Society

Te Rūnaka o Oraka-Aparima and

Te Rūnaka o Waihopai

We do wish to be heard in support of this submission



Contact person Te Ao Mārama Inc
M R Skerrett