

Subject: FW: Submission on Government's 'Freshwater Consultation 2016' document

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To: Water Consultation Questions and Comments

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With reference to the 'Summary of Key Proposals' in the recent MOE release I submit on the section concerning the perception of special rights and interests proposed for Maori under the section 'Iwi rights and interests in fresh water'. That whole section implies the rights and interests of Maori as being inherently different and separately definable from those of the general population. In particular that section is suggestive of a proposal for a co-governance regime. Such a regime would then provide the ability for Maori to insist upon priority of access to a significant proportion of the water resource. This will be of particular importance in areas where the resource itself is finite and potentially insufficient for future requirements of rural and urban activities. From this arises the potential for unfair and unreasonable allocation of the resource (duly enshrined in legislation) and for the ability of Maori to 'sell' a proportion of 'their' unused allocation to the Local or Regional authority that issues water rights to its constituents. Such a foreseeable scenario envisages payment (in one form or another) to the local Iwi.

The present trendy experiment with co-governance in other areas, such as for certain mountains, prominent hills, land and marine reserves (and not to forget the City of Auckland's structure with unelected Iwi delegates on all major committees), has resulted in excessive control being demanded by Maori together with significant funding and fees for their participation. This duality is proving corrosive.

In this democratic country nothing prevents individual Maori participating at governance level (and they do). The creation of separate authorities in co-governance formats is simply a further step towards separation of Maori from all the other ethnicities in this country. The MOE summary of Key Proposals is clearly predictive of a negation of the accepted principle that 'nobody owns water'.

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