

Before the Independent Hearing Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021

Summary of Evidence of Ben Farrell on behalf of Otago and Central South Island Fish and Game Councils (#0321) on Topics: Significant Resource Management Issues for the Region (SRMR), Integrated Management (IM) Urban Form and Development (UFD), Energy Transport and Infrastructure (EIT), Ecosystems and Biodiversity (ECO)

19 April 2023

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Summary

- 1 The amendments I recommend are provided in the document I tabled with the panel on 16 March 2023 (noting that I also support other various amendments sought by F&G that are supported in the s42A Reports).

Providing for development for the health and wellbeing of people

- 2 The SRMR section currently provides a one-sided approach to sustainable management. This section should be amended to acknowledge the regional significance of the use and development of resources. I support inclusion of one new SRMR section (as per my recommended amendments), with or without addition of the two new SRMRs indicated in the two planning JWS dated 22 and 29 respectively.
- 3 Recreation has significant direct benefits to human health and wellbeing, which I consider are relevant under s5 of the RMA. The RPS should be framed to ensure that the benefits of recreation to human health and wellbeing are recognised and provided for.

Integrated Management – prioritisation and using resources within limits

- 4 I remain supportive of the position set out in my Statement of Evidence dated 28 November 2023 – that it is appropriate for the RPS to require activities to be undertaken subject to limits (environmental limits and resource limits). In short, reference to using resources subject to environmental limits is an important paradigm shift that needs to occur to avoid or reduce the risk of natural systems breaching tipping points.
- 5 Prioritising the health and wellbeing of the natural environment is appropriate, particularly if it is reflective of the resource management approaches promoted by Otago’s rūnunga. Consequently, all activities and development should be subordinate to natural environmental limits (there should be no ‘carve outs’ from Policy IM-P12, including REG and the National Grid).
- 6 I acknowledge that in some cases it may be appropriate to allow limits to be breached or exceeded, namely in response to climate change mitigation. Policy IM-P12 is appropriate in this regard, although I support an amendment to Policy IM-P12 to allow decision-makers to consider allowing an activity to breach or exceed an environmental limit if there are no other reasonable alternatives.

Reconciling policy tensions

- 7 The RPS should attempt to reconcile internal policy tensions as far as possible to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of decision-making processes made 'under' the RPS. If the RPS does not reconcile internal policy tensions (including those created by national policy directives), then I question the efficacy of the RPS in decision-making processes.

Te Mana o te Wai

- 8 I agree with ORC and rūnunga that giving effect to TMOTW is fundamental to the RPS framework. Implementing TMOTW will require education/upskilling of practitioners and people who use or affect water to better understand what this concept means. It is therefore helpful (but not necessary) for the RPS to include provisions clarifying what is and what is not tier 1 and 2 priorities.

Ben Farrell

19 April 2023