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## Waitaki District Council Submission on Otago Regional Council's Navigation Safety Bylaw 2026

### 1. Introduction

Waitaki District Council (WDC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Otago Regional Council (ORC) Draft Navigation Safety Bylaw 2026. WDC is the landside owner of Ōamaru Harbour, the area defined in Appendix G of the draft document.

WDC recognises ORC's statutory role in managing navigation safety under the Maritime Transport Act 1994, which enables regional councils to make and enforce navigation safety bylaws. We support efforts to maintain and enhance safety for all water users across the Otago coast, including Ōamaru Harbour.

### 2. General Support for the Review

WDC supports the intent of the bylaw review, particularly ORC's goals of:

- Improving navigational safety across the region
- Ensuring that vessels operate safely through clear rules on lifejackets, speed, anchoring, and safe conduct
- Updating the bylaw to reflect current practice and technology.

### 3. Specific Feedback on Key Proposals

#### 3.1 Anchoring and Mooring

The draft bylaw proposes changing Part 4, Section 18 (3) from:

*"No vessel shall remain anchored within the same or proximate location for longer than 14 days in any six month period without the prior approval of the Harbourmaster."*

to:

*"No vessel shall remain anchored within the Otago Harbour for longer than 14 days in any six month period without the prior approval of the Harbourmaster."*

**Recommendation:**

1. WDC wishes to retain the ability to apply Section 18 (3) and does not believe that clause 5:

*“Vessels are permitted to anchor in Oamaru Harbour in the area shown in Appendix G provided that subclauses (2) to (4) above are complied with”*

provides sufficient clarity. We propose the wording of clause 3 be amended to:

*“No vessel shall remain anchored within the Otago Harbour or Oamaru Harbour for longer than 14 days in any six month period without the prior approval of the Harbourmaster”.*

### **3.2 Definitions and Mapping of Oamaru Harbour**

WDC notes that the draft bylaw identifies Oamaru Harbour as a “commercial port area”.

**Recommendation:**

2. WDC seeks assurance that this categorisation:
  - Aligns with ORC’s intended regulatory treatment of Oamaru Harbour, recognising its mixed use (recreational, fishing, heritage, and events); and
  - Does not inadvertently impose commercial scale operational expectations that exceed the nature of the harbour.

WDC also notes that Regional Plan: Coast for Otago (page 32) refers to Otago Harbour as Otago’s only commercial port.

**Recommendation:**

3. WDC believes there should be alignment in both documents on the region’s commercial ports, to ensure clarity for users, avoid regulatory ambiguity, and maintain consistency across regional and district planning instruments.

The current map of Oamaru Harbour in Appendix G shows the Commercial Port Area and a Temporary Anchoring Zone.

**Recommendations:**

4. WDC requests more detailed mapping in Appendix G to support clarity for users regarding reserved areas, moorings, and access lanes.
5. WDC would welcome to opportunity to work on this detail with the Harbourmaster, through the provisions of Part 3, Section 15 (2):

*“Any other waters may be reserved for an access lane or other specified maritime safety purpose or activity either: (a) by the Council issuing a written approval; or (b) by the Harbourmaster.”*

### **3.3 Speed and Right of Way in Oamaru Harbour**

WDC supports the submission by North Otago Yacht and Power Boat Club in relation to speed and right of way in Oamaru Harbour. The aim of both recommendations is to increase safety in the Harbour by considering the mixed use and limited area of the Harbour.

#### **Recommendations:**

6. Appendix G of the draft bylaw be amended to specify that a speed limit of 5 knots applies to the mapped area
7. Appendix G of the draft bylaw also be amended to show that boats entering Oamaru Harbour have right of way.

### **4. Conclusion**

WDC supports the overall intent of the Draft Navigation Safety Bylaw 2026 and appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback. Ensuring safe navigation in Oamaru Harbour is a shared objective, and WDC looks forward to ongoing collaboration with ORC to achieve positive outcomes for harbour users, visitors, and the broader Waitaki community.

Yours sincerely



Alex Parmley  
**Chief Executive**