

1 May 2024

## **Re Falls Dam Fast Track Application**

I write in relation to an application by the Manuherekia Catchment Group to be approved into the process envisaged by the Fast-track Approvals Bill in relation to the building of a new Falls Dam on the Manuherekia River, alongside a catchment-wide approach to water storage within a large part of the district I am mayor of.

I have held the role of mayor for seven and a half years and have been involved in discussions on solving the water storage issues on the river for all that time. My councillors and I, while never having been in a position where a formal decision has been needed to be made on the subject, are supportive of a new dam and a catchment-wide approach to water storage as being a key component of the health of our waterways and our regional economy.

In my time as mayor, I (generally alongside at least one other councillor) have been part of the formal groups seeking consensus on the issues we face. These include the Manuherekia Strategy Group, the Manuherekia Reference Group and the Manuherekia Exemplar Catchment Governance Group. While circumstances have not required council to take a formal position on matters relating to this application or to water storage issues across the catchment, council has been well involved and informed on the issues and the potential solutions.

The discussions referenced above have been on-going far longer than my tenure, with resolution that allows for a healthy river and catchment alongside economic benefit needing to be achieved for the long-term benefit of the people and communities we serve. Given the length of time that it has taken to get so little progress, we see expediated decision-making becoming the preferred solution moving forward.

Council may, in the future, be a more involved party with currently no long-term solution being found for our domestic water supply to Omakau and Ophir, making a pumped solution from the Clutha Mata-au River, potentially as part of an irrigation water supply scheme from the same river, being something that warrants and will receive serious consideration.

Alongside this support for the fast-track application, I note our submission on the Bill seeking an increase the time for specified persons and entities (and invited parties) to comment on FTA projects from 10 to at least 20 working days and preferably 30, and an increase to time limits for Ministers to refer a project to a Panel and make decisions after receiving Panel recommendations to offset any increase in the timeframe for specified persons, entities, and invited parties to comment on FTA projects.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cadogan', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Cadogan  
Mayor Central Otago District