



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

File Ref: PAC-11-04-115

12 June 2018

To all submitters on the application for concessions for the Waitaha hydro scheme by Westpower Limited

Dear submitters

**Re: Westpower - Waitaha Hydro Scheme – further measures to address effects – Invitation to comment**

Some time ago the public were invited to have their say on the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant concessions to Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the South Island's West Coast. Submissions closed on 14 November 2016, and a hearing was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Many submitters participated in that hearing process.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that, since the hearing, Westpower has proposed further measures to address the potential adverse effects of the hydro scheme proposal on recreation (kayaking and tramping) in the Waitaha valley.

**Proposed Westpower Tai Poutini Kayaking Trust**

As some of you may be aware, Westpower has offered to establish a Trust in partnership with local outdoor educational specialist Tai Poutini Polytechnic. The purpose of the Trust would be for promoting and enhancing kayaking on the West Coast, through the provision of funds to the local kayaking community to assist kayakers of varying ages and abilities (from beginners through to elite kayakers) with their kayaking needs. As well as being a partnership between Westpower and Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Westpower proposes that the Trust also involve the kayaking community.

The objectives of the Trust would include:

- Working with Tai Poutini Polytechnic and schools to promote kayaking as part of education, including tertiary education;
- Working with kayaking organisations, community groups, iwi and the tourism industry to promote kayaking; and
- Supporting ongoing kayaking activities on West Coast rivers and lakes, including the Waitaha River.

Westpower has indicated that it would establish the Trust and make an initial contribution of \$250,000, and that the Trust could distribute these funds through grants of up to \$20,000 per annum to cover activities such as, for example:

- The purchase of kayaks and other equipment for Tai Poutini Polytechnic and schools;
- School holiday and community programmes;
- Refresher courses and health and safety courses relating to kayaking;
- Targeted funding to support kayaking trips (for example, for more advanced kayakers to access more challenging rivers such as the Waitaha River); and
- The promotion of kayaking as a tourism activity on the West Coast.

It is anticipated that the Trust and its partners would seek other funding to support kayaking, for example from central and local government and business.

Westpower proposes that the Trust be established once all RMA consents and concessions are in place.

### **Two additional “no take” days – a total of four “no take” days per year**

The second further measure proposed by Westpower is that it now proposes that it operate the scheme in a way that provides four (as opposed to the original two) “no take” days per year. This would provide more opportunities for the Morgan Gorge to be utilised by elite kayakers than the two “no take” days previously proposed would.

### **Periodic shutdowns for kayaking training in the lower abstraction reach**

Westpower has also signalled its willingness to explore a regime which would allow the scheme to be shut down at short notice for short periods to allow the conditions in the lower abstraction reach to normalise so that kayaking training could take place in the lower abstraction reach.

### **Access to the river for tramping and kayaking – true right bank of the Waitaha River**

Westpower has indicated that it was not aware of issues with access along the true right bank of the Waitaha River at the time of the hearing in December 2016. Since that time Westpower has been in discussions with the farmer on the true right to purchase a strip of land from him to gain access around the boundary of his property on the hill side and around to the proposed crossing on Macgregor Creek. This access will be formed into a road for construction purpose and also for future access for maintenance of the hydro scheme.

Westpower has indicated that it would make this road available to trampers and kayakers to use following construction, subject to any safety considerations.

### **Invitation to comment on these proposed additional measures**

The Department wishes to hear your views on these additional measures being proposed by Westpower, and invites you provide written comments by **5pm on Wednesday 4 July 2018**.

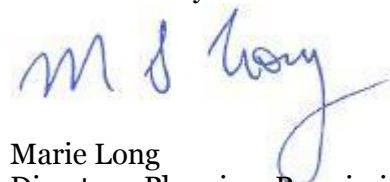
All comments received from submitters will be made available to Westpower for their consideration, and Westpower will be provided the opportunity to comment to the Department on all submitter comments received.

If you **do not** wish to be identified as a person making comments, please indicate this clearly in your email to the Department containing your comments.

Comments need to be sent by email to: [Permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:Permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

If you have any questions about this process, please call **Judi Brennan** on 03 756 9143 or 027 444 7713, or email your questions through to Judi at [jbrennan@doc.govt.nz](mailto:jbrennan@doc.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'm s long', with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Marie Long  
Director - Planning, Permissions and Land