Otago Regional Council

14 September 2026

Hearings Panel
Waitaki Proposed District Plan - Hearing Stream 2
Waitaki District Council

Otago Regional Council Planning Statement with respect to its submissions on Topics under Hearing Stream 2

Dear Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to Hearing Stream 2 of the Proposed Waitaki District Plan (PDP) process.

The Otago Regional Council (ORC) lodged submissions and further submissions on a range of matters within the draft Energy, Infrastructure, Transport, Stormwater, Earthworks and Designations chapters. ORC's interest in these topics primarily relates to its statutory responsibilities for natural hazards, flood protection and drainage infrastructure, the management of stormwater discharges and broader regional resource management planning, including implementation of the Operative Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021 (ORPS).

Overall ORC position

ORC has reviewed the recommendations contained within the section 42A reports and acknowledges the considerable work undertaken by both the reporting officer and submitters throughout the development of these recommendations.

Overall, ORC is supportive of the recommendations. For this reason, ORC considers it is not necessary to appear with planning and legal evidence. Instead, ORC considers it most appropriate and effective to provide a short planning statement for the Panel's benefit and provide clarity regarding ORC's position.

ORC considers the recommended provisions generally provide an appropriate framework for managing infrastructure, transport networks, stormwater, energy activities and related environmental effects within the Waitaki District, Otago. . Importantly, many of the matters raised through ORC's submissions have been either accepted or substantially incorporated into the recommended provisions.

In particular, ORC supports the recommendations that:

- improve recognition of the role and significance of flood protection and drainage infrastructure;
- recognise the functional and operational needs of infrastructure;
- strengthen transport network resilience, including resilience to natural hazards and the effects of climate change;
- retain and strengthen stormwater management outcomes, including water-sensitive design approaches and management of stormwater effects; and

- continue to support integrated approaches to hazard management and community resilience.

ORC considers that these recommendations are generally consistent with, and assist in giving effect to, the relevant outcomes sought through the ORPS.

ORPS Alignment and Drafting Observations

There are, however, a small number of matters where ORC considers further consideration by the Hearing Panel would be beneficial. These relate primarily to aspects of the Infrastructure and Energy chapters where the recommended provisions appear generally appropriate, but where the section 42A analysis does not clearly demonstrate how the recommendations give effect to the relevant Energy, Infrastructure and Transport provisions of the ORPS.

ORC does not oppose the overall direction of these recommendations and does not consider the matters identified below significant enough to warrant further evidence or hearing attendance. However, there are a small number of recommendations where ORC considers the Panel may wish to satisfy itself that the final provisions, and drafting, appropriately give effect to the relevant Energy, Infrastructure and Transport (EIT)provisions of the ORPS.

Infrastructure

In relation to submission points **259.20 and 259.21**, ORC sought greater consistency between the PDP's Infrastructure chapter and the ORPS' EIT framework, particularly regarding the management of infrastructure in sensitive environments, application of effects-management hierarchies, and recognition of avoidance requirements where specified by higher-order planning documents.

ORC generally supports the recommendations and does not identify any obvious inconsistency with the ORPS. However, the section 42A report does not clearly explain how some of the specific outcomes sought by ORC through the EIT provisions of the ORPS have been incorporated into the recommended district plan provisions. ORC therefore highlights to the Panel it may wish to satisfy itself that the recommended provisions appropriately give effect to the relevant ORPS policies.

Energy

In relation to submission point **259.18**, ORC acknowledges the officer's reliance on the amended National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS-REG) and generally supports the overall direction of the recommendation. However, ORC notes that Policy F(2) of the NPS-REG expressly contemplates implementation alongside relevant regional policy statements. While ORC does not identify an obvious inconsistency between the recommendation and the Operative ORPS, the section 42A analysis does not clearly explain how the recommended approach gives effect to both instruments. ORC therefore notes that the Panel may wish to confirm that the recommended provisions appropriately reconcile the amended NPS-REG and the relevant Operative ORPS provisions.

In relation to submission point 259.19, ORC supports the officer's conclusion that the notified ENG-P7 is unclear and establishes an unnecessarily rigid distinction between large-scale renewable electricity generation in the General Rural Zone and other locations. ORC also supports the intended move to a more effects-based framework which recognises functional and operational need while appropriately managing adverse effects as provided for in the ORPS.

ORC notes, however, an apparent inconsistency between the officer's analysis and the recommended drafting. The section 42A report states that ENG-P7 should be deleted and its relevant function incorporated into ENG-P6, with the consolidated policy providing for large-scale renewable electricity generation activities in all locations. The recommended wording of ENG-P6 instead changes the policy from large-scale to community-scale renewable electricity generation. This is also relevant because ENG-R7 continues to expressly provide the consenting pathway for large-scale renewable electricity generation activities, but there is no policy in the Energy chapter to guide decision-making with respect to these activities.

ORC therefore considers the Panel may wish to clarify the intended policy pathway for large-scale renewable electricity generation when finalising the Energy provisions. ORC supports the officer's intended effects-based approach and does not seek retention of ENG-P7. However, ORC considers the final framework should provide clear policy direction for large-scale generation and appropriately give effect to both the amended NPS-REG and the relevant provisions of the ORPS and support being able to make clear assessments against these two statutory documents.

ORC raises these matters because they represent the remaining areas where either the relationship between the recommended provisions and the relevant ORPS outcomes, or the intended operation of the recommended Energy provisions themselves, would benefit from clarification by the Panel.

Conclusion

Subject to those observations, ORC generally supports the recommendations before the Panel and acknowledges that they represent a positive planning outcome for many of the matters raised through ORC's submissions.

ORC Council officers remain available should the Hearing Panel require clarification of ORC's submissions, statutory responsibilities, or interests in implementation of the ORPS.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the PDP process.

Yours sincerely



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