

Kayla Sims

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Subject: Submission on Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan

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I make the following submission on the Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan.

Submitter.

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Hearing

I wish to be given the opportunity to speak to my submission at the public hearing.

My Interest in the plan

I have a long association with and interest in South Westland, having first come here to work at Franz and Fox in 1968.

I have owned my property at Okuru since 1999, and have been a permanent resident since 2017.

My career was in protected lands management for 50 years, and as a result of this I have maintained strong personal interest in the geomorphological and other natural history aspects of Okuru and environs.

There are several provisions in the proposed plan that will affect the future viability of my property and the cost of continuing to live here.

General comment on the plan

My submission is confined to the Okuru village and environs as they are described and affected by this plan and its supporting documents.

This is a planner's document. For an ordinary resident it is far too time consuming and complex to fully comprehend. There appears to be no summary of the accumulated effects of each section on particular areas, even though it is often the accumulated effects of policies and rules that determine residential viability.

For the above reasons I have not referenced individual sections of the plan. It is just too complex and time consuming to do so.

The cost of flood mitigation

I draw your attention to the cost of physical flood protection infrastructure and how it is funded.

Okuru village is protected by a seawall which was first constructed in 2000 and extended a few years later.

Our Okuru floodwall is funded and maintained entirely by the affected ratepayers via the Okuru SRD. Similar arrangements are in place elsewhere in the District. But some communities have flood mitigation works funded by the council or central government. This is inequitable.

Climate change and flood mitigation in the Okuru lagoon.

Two recent studies and reports have been completed recently on the effect of natural disasters as they affect our coastline.

The Te Tai o Poutini plan relies on the work done by NIWA.

But the report done by GNS contradicts the NIWA report in relation to what might happen to the Okuru lagoon.

The NIWA report suggests that the current lagoon may cease to exist and the future beachfront will be the inner edge of the existing lagoon.

The GNS report suggests that this region will rise with the next major seismic event (predicted to occur very soon) so it can be expected that the new beachfront will in fact be further seaward than it currently is.

In any event, the increasing number of flood events is certainly bringing more silt and debris down from the mountains and depositing them in the lagoon and on the coastline. My personal observations over many years are that the lagoon is silting up and the gravel and sand dune along the spit appears to be increasing in size and becoming more stable.

It is logical too that the next big earthquake, whether or not it will cause the land here to rise, will certainly cause more erosion in the mountains and therefore much more gravel and debris to be washed down the rivers over the ensuing decades.

A result of the increasing siltation of the Okuru lagoon is that river levels are relatively higher thus causing more surface flooding. Nevertheless the Okuru flood wall has stood the test of time and has not been breached by any flood in the past 22 years. There is some ponding of rain water and seepage of flood waters which affect low lying properties inside the wall, but this affects only a few properties.

Iwi Interest in Okuru

The plan identifies iwi interest in the Okuru village and lagoon, with Council advice of immediate effect of this provision.

It is not clear what purpose or effect this has.

It could be expected that there may be a mahinga kai connection with the lagoon. Fair enough. But why is there an interest in the residential village - an area much modified by subdivision and entirely in private ownership?

The changes I am seeking.

1. The final plan needs to be more user friendly for non-planner readers and affected parties - those ratepayers who are not familiar with planning documents. In particular to be able to easily combine the cumulative effects of the plan on particular areas.
2. Clear and concise policy on who should be funding the cost of flood and disaster mitigation on individual communities, and ensure this is fair and consistent across the region.
3. The effects of climate change on the Okuru lagoon are reassessed taking into account both the GNS and NIWA reports, and a practical reassessment of what has actually been happening there over the past 22 years since the Okuru flood wall was constructed. To be noted that the model on which future planning rules and limitations have been applied to Okuru may be incorrect, that the village is actually much safer than the plan suggests.
4. The purpose of iwi interest in the Okuru village should be explained and justified. Unless there is compelling justification for this classification, that iwi interest be removed from the developed land in private ownership, and be confined to the actual lagoon and any other specific sites of cultural value.

Downstream effects

As it stands, the draft plan if adopted will severely limit further development of the Okuru village and thus increase the cost of protecting the village more expensive per ratepayer.

There is also the matter of insurance increases. These have been well canvassed in the media where coastal properties are at risk. This would be fair enough if there actually is a major risk. But in the case of Okuru, it has proved to be well protected and the modelling of future coastal inundation may be incorrect in this situation.

I wish to attend and be heard at the hearing on this plan.

Thank you

Chris Eden.