

26 March 2020

Cr Marian Hobbs
Chairperson
Otago Regional Council
marian.hobbs@orc.govt.nz

Dear Chairperson Marian

Withdrawal/Suspension of ORC Plans

Given the current COVID-19 emergency and its associated economic, social and political effects, we strongly believe that the Otago Regional Council needs to re-evaluate its policy and financial priorities for the next 12 months.

We do so in the knowledge that the tourism economy in New Zealand has collapsed and that there will be no short-term recovery. The consequences will be particularly severe for the Otago region, especially the Dunstan districts. New Zealand's primary export earner has effectively ceased.

We believe that any national or regional recovery will be based upon the agrarian economy and the production of food.

By circumstance, the Otago Regional Council is currently consulting on **Plan Change 7 (deemed permits)** and is also progressing an **Omnibus Plan Change**, and a review of the **Regional Policy Statement (RPS)**. The latter has been suspended, we understand, until the current COVID-19 emergency has passed.

It is our view that all consultation upon Plan Change 7 should be halted, and that the plan should be entirely withdrawn. Similarly, we need to review the fundamentals and logic that led to the Omnibus Plan Change and the RPS.

There are also 'natural justice' and social equity considerations that should accompany any discussion on the progress, or otherwise, of any ORC plan changes.

We also wish to flag that the **draft Annual Plan 2020/21** and its assumptions, including its financing, also requires immediate review. The Otago Regional Council needs to immediately withdraw the draft Annual Plan from consultation, to better consider a plan that meets our region's current and likely needs.

We are aware of the advice from Chief Executive Sarah Gardner that the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and relevant departments will continue to progress "*RM Reform and the Freshwater Package*".

We consider that the Otago Regional Council should discuss whether we wish to make fresh submissions to central government, including the Minister for the

Environment, in the wake of the COVID-19 emergency and its consequences upon our region and communities.

If you require us to frame the suitable Notices of Motion for the Otago Regional Council's formal discussion of the plan withdrawals and policy reconsiderations, please advise.

Yours sincerely

Cr Hilary Calvert Cr Carmen Hope Cr Gary Kelliher
Cr Michael Laws Cr Kevin Malcolm Cr Andrew Noone Cr Kate Wilson