

Date	23 February 2026
To	Jon Bright, Project Director – Waitaha Hydro Scheme Westpower Ltd
From	Rodger Griffiths
Project advice provided for	<i>Waitaha Hydro Scheme</i>
Documents referred to	<i>Waitaha Hydro Scheme Substantive Application</i>
Signature	

1. I have reviewed the statements prepared by Ms Sidley and Mr Head for the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) dated 19 February 2026. They raise several operational issues that I respond to very briefly below.

How channel maintenance will be triggered and responded to

2. In their statements, and during empanelment, Westpower's experts have repeated their comfort that the system can be designed and operated to minimise the potential for blockage of the intake channel such that they will be infrequent (on average some 5-15 times per year).
3. Outside of more extreme natural events (landslips, earthquakes etc), the use of channel maintenance by a 20 tonne excavator is anticipated to primarily respond to long lasting floods greater than 250 cumecs (but not all such events will require maintenance, and it is in Westpower's interests to ensure that is the case so the scheme continues to operate as planned).
4. As explained in my 21 January 2026 statement, a 20-tonne excavator is preferred because it has a longer arm and can minimise in stream/river works.¹ In-stream works would only occur as a last resort when the digger could not reach the required area.
5. If a blockage has accumulated, Westpower will rely on its cameras and real-time flow monitoring (and if operating again, generation information) to determine the extent of the blockage and whether an excavator is required.
6. With this real time visual and data monitoring, Westpower will make an expedient call to clear, and arrange promptly for an excavator operator to attend to the site. This will involve the excavator operator driving to, and

¹ [Attachment-9-Statement-Rodger-Griffiths_Redacted_redacted.pdf](#), at para 12.

through, the access tunnel to where the excavator is parked (at least 100m within the tunnel). The Site Operations and Maintenance Plan will ensure health and safety requirements are met, including checks to ensure the tunnel is safe to drive the excavator down.

7. The excavator operator will then travel down the tunnel to beside the river, and move boulders or shift any built-up bedload that has blocked the channel intake. After a few hours, the excavator operator will return the machinery to its parking spot within the access tunnel, and return on the access road. The Application includes provision for the excavator operator to travel by a helicopter trip in emergency circumstances.

New condition

8. Westpower accepts Mr Jackson's proposed new condition of consent that Westpower undertake a review of the Site Operations and Management Plan to reduce the average number of occurrences of channel maintenance, if it exceeds 15 per annum on average over a 5-year period.