

<b>Date</b>	23 February 2026
<b>To</b>	Jon Bright, Project Director – Waitaha Hydro Scheme Westpower Ltd
<b>From</b>	Rob Greenaway
<b>Project advice provided for</b>	<i>Waitaha Hydro Scheme</i>
<b>Documents referred to</b>	<i>Waitaha Hydro Scheme Substantive Application Appendix 28 Recreation Report</i>
<b>Qualifications</b>	Recorded in Appendix 28 Recreation Report
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Provided 21 January 2026
<b>Signature</b>	

1. I have reviewed the statements prepared by Ms Sidley and Mr Head for the Department of Conservation (**DOC**) dated 19 February 2026. I respond to those statements below and I clarify the use of a five-point and seven-point assessment scale in my Appendix 28: Recreation Report.
2. I address Ms Sidley's concerns below. I consider my answers to the above also address any relating recreation matters in Mr Head's statement.

**The risk channel maintenance occurs more than 15 times in a year**

3. I understand that:
  - (a) Westpower's engineering design is well progressed and has prioritised minimising the use of channel maintenance during operations such that they will be infrequent (5-15 times per year on average has been provided as an approximate range);
  - (b) the proposed conditions of consent are clear that Westpower is required to minimise channel maintenance and must annually report on its occurrence;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Memorandum-10-Attachment-11-Mr-Jackson-10-February-2026\\_Redacted.pdf](#), para 4.3 to 4.5.

- (c) it was discussed in the empanelment hearing that this is a highly dynamic environment and Westpower cannot guarantee the number of channel maintenance events each year;
  - (d) the recent information to DOC summarised that the key risk of the intake being blocked and channel maintenance being required is long lasting floods above 250 cumecs (but that, as I understand was explained during empanelment it is not expected that even during those events blockages are predicted to be infrequent); and
  - (e) that in events under 250 cumecs intake blockages are not expected but they cannot be ruled out and may occur (for example following upstream slips or earthquakes).
4. I understand that Mr Jackson has also now proposed 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 over a 5 year period.

#### **Likelihood of visitors seeing channel maintenance**

5. There are good indicators that overlap between visitors at Kiwi Flat and channel maintenance will be infrequent. Long-lasting high flows (greater than 250 cumecs) that are most likely to cause blockages of the intake will also create challenging conditions for visitors. Canyoners and kayakers need low or moderate flows to safely do their activities. Trampers and hunters may be more minded to visit soon after severe weather or high flows. However, they will do so by foot and need to be able to safely cross various waterbodies, including Whirling Water to access Kiwi Flat Hut.
6. I understand Westpower, however, intends to use its real time flow data and cameras on the Scheme to efficiently instruct its excavator operator to attend to the site using the access road and tunnel constructed for that purpose.
7. My assessment in respect of the level of effects on recreational values at Morgan Gorge remains unchanged (noting it was, in any event, already assessed as a 'high' effect and 'significant' in that vicinity).

### **Visitors knowing if channel maintenance is occurring during their trip**

8. I understand Westpower has proposed a condition that channel maintenance will be notified on its website. Mr Griffith's 21 January 2026 statement<sup>2</sup> also refers to the possibility of linking through the DOC website related to Kiwi Flat Hut. I consider this is a reasonable and sufficient method to inform potential visitors about activities in the Valley before they embark on a trip.
9. I acknowledge that some visitors will not check the websites. However, I do not consider signage notifying them of an excavator being in use will markedly alter their perception of naturalness when they arrive by the weir. My assessment on recreational values already acknowledges the effect of the Scheme on that experience in that localised area is high (and significant).

### **Assessment scales**

10. Mr Wilson queries in his peer review report<sup>3</sup> my seven-point level of effect assessment, as described in para 3.3 of my report, my Table 1: Scheme effects and mitigation summary; and my five-point scale of effects described in Appendix F.
11. I acknowledge this may be confusing when read alongside Appendix F.
12. To clarify, Table 1 includes my preferred assessment conclusions. A seven-point scale of effect is used (consistent with the description in para 3.3 of my report, applying: very low, low, low-moderate, moderate-high, high and very high).
13. In addition to the categories above, in Table 1, I also use:
  - (a) "nil" (which means no adverse effect); and
  - (b) "nil or very mildly-positive" (which reflects the ability for the project to deliver some positive recreational outcomes).
14. In my executive summary I used the seven-point scale to align with the landscape assessment. This reflects the relationship between visual and perceptual effects from the landscape and natural character perspective and effects on recreational values on the managed backcountry remote

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<sup>2</sup> [Attachment-9-Statement-Rodger-Griffiths\\_Redacted\\_redacted.pdf](#) at para 8.

<sup>3</sup> [Peer-Review-Recreation-Xyst-270126\\_FINAL.pdf](#), at para 40.

experience. It was considered that at the summary level this would enable the panel with an easier comparison across the two reports.

15. The significance of the level of adverse effect based on the seven-point scale is described at page 73 of Appendix 27: Landscape Report and is pictured below.<sup>4</sup>

LESS THAN MINOR			MINOR		MORE THAN MINOR		SIGNIFICANT
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH	

16. My key conclusions are that the residual levels of effects are:
- (a) during construction. on recreational opportunities and values, **very high and significant**; and
  - (b) during operation, on recreation values (on the managed backcountry remote experience in the abstraction reach, Morgan Gorge and Kiwi Flat - altered flows and visible infrastructure), **high and significant**.
17. I acknowledge Mr Wilson generally agrees with my evaluation of how the scheme affects recreation, as outlined in Appendix F. There is no inconsistency between Appendix F and Table 1, rather, Table 1 provides another level of detail to fit within the above regime and, it was thought, assist the panel.

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<sup>4</sup> [Appendix-27-landscape-report.pdf](#)