

# FRIENDS of Banks Peninsula Inc.

P.O. Box 56, Duvauchelle, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury



Working to protect and enhance  
the unique environmental heritage  
of Banks Peninsula

Submission to the Water Services Bill – Friends of Banks Peninsula

25 February 2021

The Friends of Banks Peninsula, incorporated in 1990, is a voluntary society working to protect and enhance the environmental heritage of Banks Peninsula. The Society has a long-standing interest in water and waste disposal issues around Akaroa Harbour.

1. The small urban communities of Akaroa and Duvauchelle rely on stream-fed water supplies and summer shortages have been a regular problem for decades. With increasing demand, and climate change bringing more prolonged and serious periods of drought, our water supplies are now in crisis. (As well as several months of restrictions on outdoor water use, a ‘boil water’ notice is currently in place for Akaroa and this is expected to last for up to 6 weeks.) A failing wastewater treatment plant and a network of old and leaking water and sewer pipes leads to regular sewage contamination and water quality issues.
2. We understand that these are common problems facing many Councils nationwide. **We submit that the Water Services Bill must include a legal framework to facilitate the re-use of treated wastewater and enable holistic, three waters solutions for our climate, water and wastewater crises.**
3. Currently Akaroa and Duvauchelle discharge treated wastewater into Akaroa Harbour. This is environmentally undesirable and culturally offensive. The Christchurch City Council investigated land disposal, but concluded that this was not practicable due the scarcity of stable, flat land. However, in 2015, consent for continuing Harbour discharge from Akaroa was declined on the grounds of significant adverse effects on Tangata Whenua.
4. The Council has recently decided to proceed with a complex, experimental and very unpopular scheme which would pipe Akaroa’s treated wastewater 6 kms for disposal within rural communities. The scheme requires a 2 hectare storage pond and will discharge up to 200,000 cubic metres of wastewater per year to 40 hectares of farmland. It will be extremely expensive – currently costed at \$68 million for up to 1000 connections.
5. Community consultation has shown overwhelming support for reuse of wastewater to augment Akaroa’s water supply. Our community is extremely disappointed that the Council now proposes to spend so much on a system that disposes of such a valuable water resource to an area where it is neither wanted nor needed, and does nothing to address Akaroa’s increasingly precarious water supply.
6. Our Society researched and presented a holistic three-waters solution that would treat the wastewater to a potable standard, enabling it to be used for gardens and to replenish streams so that more water could be extracted. We proposed that this was done in conjunction with a wetland treatment system to address Māori cultural concerns. This concept was backed up by a professional engineering team and received extensive community support. However, it was dismissed by the Council on the grounds that **currently there is no regulatory framework in place at a national level** to allow for such a scheme.
7. As climate change and many environmental issues threaten water supplies all around the country dumping of wastewater will become increasingly unsustainable in many areas. An integrated water strategy approach

is essential to ensure 'water' is viewed in a holistic and sustainable manner. Wastewater is safely reused in many other parts of the world.

8. We implore this forward thinking Government to take a broader approach and to work to **introduce new legal mechanisms to allow and promote the re-use of wastewater for both non-potable and potable purposes, and do so in a way that addresses Māori cultural issues at a national level.**
9. We also ask for proactive measures at a national level to reduce water consumption. Water users must now be encouraged to conserve water by such measures as education, incentives and requirements (e.g. water efficiency rules for buildings and appliances).
10. Attached is our recent submission to the Akaroa Treated Wastewater Options Consultation (2020). This relates to the Akaroa scheme but many of the ideas we have proposed present possibilities that could address the recycling of wastewater on a national scale. We ask you to consider chapter 11 and 12 of this document (pages 56-64) containing information relating to long term reuse.

We wish to be heard in support of our submission.

Submitted by Sue Church  
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