



OIAD-4731

14 January 2025



Tēnā koe [redacted]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 30 November 2024, in which you asked for:

All information you have such as internal meetings and minutes, engineers reports, correspondence with ECAN, Ngai Tahu, Selwyn District Council etc regarding ECAN's decision to lower a section of the Selwyn River Stop Back downstream and on the opposite side of the Upper Selwyn Huts?

It is our understanding that ECAN has agreed to this work in their Long-Term Plan as a way to control where the river will breach during extreme events, so it breaches in a way that causes the least amount of damage to homes and farms, however DOC has refused permission for this work to go ahead. This decision by DOC will put many residences and farms at risk of severe flooding.

Please provide all information you hold on this project about this decision and discussions.

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

The Department was contacted informally by Environment Canterbury (ECAN) in October 2024 notifying us of their interests in lowering a portion of the Selwyn River stop bank and inviting our feedback. We are always open to discussing with other agencies and receiving ideas or proposals to mitigate the effect of natural disasters.

Following the brief discussions we had with ECAN on this proposed work, we looked at the potential effects this proposal would have on the conservation values of the land we had recently purchased to protect. These values include habitat for Australasian Bittern (Threatened–Nationally Critical) and many other wading birds.

At face value the potential impacts of high volume and high pressure floodwaters on this rare natural ecosystem would potentially be devastating. This was communicated back to ECAN, along with an indication that the Department would like a full ecological review and input from mana whenua and other involved parties prior to making any decision.



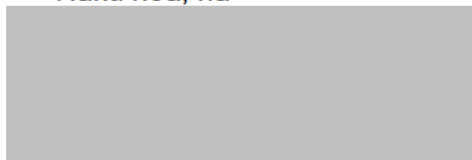
Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	4 October – 9 October	Attachment 1 – Collated emails – Selwyn River Stop Bank	Released in part
2		Attachment 2 – Flood Image	Released in full
3		Attachment 3 – Selwyn River Waikirikiri capacity – Issues and Options	Released in full

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people. In making this decision, I have considered section 9(1) of the Official Information Act and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Jo Macpherson
Director Regional Operations, Eastern South Island
Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*