

UNDER THE:

The Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER OF:

Hearing on submission concerning the Proposed One Plan notified by the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council – Water Hearing

SUMMARY OF CAUCASING OUTCOMES AND RESPONSE BY NATHAN BAKER ON BEHALF OF HIGGINS GROUP (SUBMITTER 153)

1. Higgins Group Limited (Higgins) has actively engaged in the caucusing process. Caucusing has narrowed Higgins submission points to the following three key matters:

SUBMISSION POINTS (153/7)	OFFICER'S RESPONSE
A specific rule for large-scale gravel extraction that adequately provides for gravel extraction activities as a Discretionary (Restricted) Activity.	Agree New Rule 16-15(a)
A more certain Policy 6-32 for gravel extraction, particularly around allocation and exceptions for exceeding the annual allocable volumes of gravel, including a more flexible approach that deals with the variable nature of the aggregation/degradation process, relates to natural rates of replenishment and relates to the specific impacts of gravel extraction.	Agree Revised Policy 16-8 (previously Policy 6-32)
A more strategic management framework for the region's gravel resource that recognises and provides for the link between gravel extraction and the provision of the region's infrastructure.	Disagree

NEW RULE 16-15(a): LARGE SCALE GRAVEL EXTRACTION

2. Recommended Rule 16-15(a) satisfies Higgins submission point requesting a specific rule for large-scale gravel extraction. I support the wording and matters of discretion recommended by the Planning Officer for proposed Rule 16-15(a), which provides clarity for large-scale gravel extraction. I also support proposed Rule 16-2A relating to gravel extraction in protected rivers and proposed Rule 16-15 relating to small-scale gravel extraction.

Decision sought

3. Rule 16-15(a) be accepted as recommended

REVISED POLICY 16-8: GRAVEL ALLOCATION

4. Recommended Policy 16-8 satisfies Higgins submission point requesting policy clarity for gravel allocation. The exceptions to the quantities listed in Table 16.1(a) are reasonable. The matters to be considered for river reaches not listed in Table 16.1(a) are also reasonable.

Decision sought

5. Policy 16-8 be accepted as recommended

NEW POLICY 16-9: END USE OF GRAVEL

6. Higgins submission point is that the One Plan should specifically take into account the end use of gravel when making decisions regarding the use of the Region's gravel resource. As with the other two submission points, Higgins is seeking clarity in the One Plan, rather than relying on the provisions of Part II of the RMA for example.

7. I support the One Plan specifically taking into account the end use of the region's gravel resource.
8. Higgins point is that the Region's gravel resource must be strategically and efficiently managed with its final use in mind. For example, ensuring where possible that nearby aggregate sources are used for development projects where possible to reduce transport costs and carbon footprints.
9. The regional (and national) ambitions for infrastructure and energy development are heavily dependent on aggregate. The development of roads, rail, airports, transmission, broadband and buildings are all inextricably linked to aggregate supply. An estimated 80% of Higgins aggregate sales are used for infrastructure.
10. The following wording has been proposed by Higgins:

The Regional Council and territorial authorities shall, in relation to the use of the region's gravel resource, recognise and provide for the benefits derived from the final use of the gravel, such as its use for infrastructure and/or energy development.

11. In my opinion, such a policy (or similar) would fit well under Policy 16-8. It also links well with the provisions for infrastructure and energy in Chapter 3 of the One Plan. It goes a step further than ensuring adverse environmental effects are minor and considering river and flood management (Policy 16-8) – it supports Policy 16-8 by recognising the end use of gravel as an important consideration of the full picture.
12. In response, the Supplementary Officers' Report November 2009 disagrees with such a policy as follows:

Higgins seeks to provide a link between the provisions of Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 through an explicit policy that would require the Regional Council and territorial authorities to recognise and provide for the benefits derived

from the final use of the gravel. I consider that issues surrounding the “strategic” benefits of the gravel resource are matters best dealt with outside of the Regional Plan. For example, the need to consider aggregate extraction in close proximity to the infrastructure project to reduce the carbon footprint are matters that could appropriately be dealt with directly with the Operations Department of the Regional Council.

13. At the time of responding, this policy issue was sitting in Chapter 6 of the One Plan rather than Chapter 16. I am accepting of Policy 16-8 now sitting in Chapter 16 rather than Chapter 6.
14. However, I am not accepting of the response that *strategic benefits of the gravel resource are matters best dealt with outside of the Regional Plan.*
15. The One Plan is the regional planning document to set policy concerning the use of the Region’s gravel resource. In addition to ensuring the environmental effects of gravel extraction are minor and sustainable, the One Plan can and should take into account the end use of gravel.
16. I can see benefit including such a policy in the One Plan and no detriment. In particular, the policy would provide for a clearer consideration of such issues as high quality gravel allocation for uses which require such gravel; local gravel sources being used for local projects; and a balancing of environmental effects and end use.

Decision sought

17. That the following policy, or similar, be accepted under Policy 16-8:

The Regional Council and territorial authorities shall, in relation to the use of the region's gravel resource, recognise and provide for the benefits derived from the final use of the gravel, such as its use for infrastructure and/or energy development.