



7 March 2005

## **CONTACT ENERGY REACHES AGREEMENT WITH KAYAKING USERS**

Contact Energy will fund the design and construction of whitewater kayaking facilities in the Hawea River downstream of the Hawea Dam, subject to gaining resource consents.

The facilities will be designed by World Cup kayak champion, Scott Shipley, and will incorporate a range of in-river hydraulic features for use by kayakers, including features designed to create surfing waves, eddies and eddy lines.

Contact will fund the project as the key part of an agreement with kayak users on the Hawea River between Contact Energy, the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) and Central Otago Whitewater Incorporated (COW).

The agreement addresses issues specific to kayak users in relation to impacts on recreation as a result of damming the Hawea and Clutha Rivers for the purpose of generating electricity in the Clutha hydro scheme.

Once completed, NZRCA and COW will be responsible for management and operation of the course while Contact Energy will contribute to its ongoing operation and maintenance.

Maree Baker of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association welcomed the development of whitewater facilities for all kayakers.

"The vision is to develop in the Hawea River whitewater features and facilities that operate at all river flows. The facilities and features will cater for educational kayak users such as the local Colleges and other groups, recreational kayaking as well as for advanced national and international kayaking freestyle and slalom events. The aim generally is to make the Hawea River a great destination for kayaking," said Ms Baker.

Gordon Rayner of Central Otago Whitewater said the kayakers' goal is for the whitewater features to compliment the existing amenity values of the river.

"We acknowledge that kayakers share the river with other groups and we will be consulting with these groups to ensure all mutual interests are recognised and respected. In developing the course concept, Central Otago Whitewater, the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association and Contact Energy have received design advice from the United States firm of former three times world kayak cup champion, Scott Shipley. This has given us access to the most advanced design and safety technology available. When completed, the course will be a fantastic resource for kayakers from both Central Otago and throughout New Zealand," said Mr Rayner.

Under the agreement, Contact Energy will also double the minimum number of days of recreational flows for kayak users on Hawea River to eight and establish a formal process for kayakers to make additional flow requests.

The agreement is part of Contact's ongoing consultation with those who appealed the decision to grant the company 35-year resource consents for using water in the Clutha River to generate electricity.



Contact's Generation Manager, Hydro, Graham Quinn, welcomed the agreement as significant.

"We are naturally pleased to reach agreement with two main groups representing kayakers using Hawea River and to be part of what looks set to become a world-class facility for recreational kayakers and sportspeople in the region and New Zealand."

The agreement was the result of discussions between the company and a range of appellants to try and resolve outstanding matters prior to the Environment Court appeal commencing on 7 March 2005. In December last year, Contact reached agreement with irrigation users who source water from the Kawarau arm of Lake Dunstan.

The Hawea River is part of the catchment area for the Clutha River where Contact operates the Clyde and Roxburgh dams.

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