

My name is Platt Gow. I am a retired dairy farmer now living at Ohope. During my working life, I lived at 396 Westbank Road on the Rangitaiki Plains near Edgecumbe.

I was a member of the Rangitaiki Drainage Board in 1966 for five years and then a member of the Bay of Plenty Power Board for 15 years, serving the last 6 years as Chairman after we built and commissioned the Aniwhenua Hydro-Electric Generating Station above Matahina in 1980.

My submissions are based on my observations and experience of local conditions over my lifetime. I have no academic or other expert qualifications. Meeting the challenges and loving the land I live in has taught me much.

I congratulate the team from TrustPower who have presented such a uniform approach with real synchrony and excellent interlocking to make it a believable case for change. A very competent case which could gain much more favourable consent conditions but give little in return. A strong commercial approach is what it is.

I believe all our interest here is focused on the river. Rivers don't flow in megawatts. The measurements must be in cumecs.

The Matahina dam has been generating for 44 years. TrustPower has had it for half that time following a political decision by Parliament to sell the generating assets of N.Z.E.D. Obligations in operating the dam accepted by NZED

are financially negative and would have influenced the price paid but should have been accepted willingly by TrustPower. Use of the spillway is lost water and also the river rises about 8 metres with an increase in turbulence which affects generation efficiency. But losses of hundreds of thousands of dollars is surely better than millions lost downstream.

As ratepayers we were let down in 2004 on two fronts. Some of the monitoring stations the council had inherited and modified from commission days which transmitted rainfall volumes and intensities from the National Park had been vandalised or stolen and TrustPower's Waiohou gauge was non functional and its management model for the dam during the floods was missing. Whether the remote management from Tauranga made this better or worse is unclear. We had a major flood. Were they away for the weekend?

Months later the Council held a public meeting in Edgecumbe and told a packed hall just how it had been. It was received well and much appreciated. There was a feeling the problems had been identified and would be fixed.

TrustPower, on the other hand, denied there had ever been more than a manageable flood flow of more than 600 cumecs. They highlighted publicly that they delayed opening the slipway because it was Saturday night "so high level spilling was deliberately delayed". Their maximum

generation continued until the lake was at its top level and they had to open the spillway but “the water spilled was simply the inflow, nothing more”.

The fact that this was 3 days after the major rainfall had started and the river by then was in full flood was not acknowledged. No sympathy and no apology for the \$30m of assessable damage done downstream. An abysmal public relations effort by a reputable company. No wonder the term “Notrust Power” was being bandied about.

Before the flood on 18 July 2004, I recorded 268mm of rain. For 3 days the river had been about half height with its 160 cumecs of maximum generation. I thought we must have had only a very local rain. Civil Defence suddenly evacuated our riverbank neighbours. Our nearest neighbour rang us to see if we could collect her new car as she was being conscripted to leave with Civil Defence immediately. Gill and I did that and noticed that the river was at the top of the bank. While Gill found Margaret’s key and got her car out, the river topped the bank. We got our cars safely ready to exit down the road and just watched. The river topped the bank until it was 2 to 3 inches high through the grass and rubbish then reduced and in about 10 minutes had dropped about a metre. Sullivan’s bank had gone. To reach that height the river must have been flowing at least 800 cumecs.

Much later, when it was all history, I read BECA's assertion in the current consent application that "management of the dam had no effect on the 2004 floods" (page 26). It was non management that caused the flood. Were they on automatic?

Sullivan's Bend was adapted initially to be a relief valve for the whole lowland river scheme 300m of the bank were 300mm lower than standard. That Sunday when the peak hit, it must have been half a metre deep. None of our soil banks can withstand that pressure for long – but who really will ever know the exact chain of events?

Until the flood, our communities had adapted to their stopbanked security with much more intensive development. TrustPower is seeking more privileges without any sign of more safety, security or benefit to our region.

Reid Central was to give more security to the scheme but at the time of construction it almost aborted due to the determined refusal of 3 farmers at the Thornton end. It proceeded in modified form. There are about 12 farms there that will have portions of their farms under floodwater when it is used. The 1987 Edgecumbe earthquake dropped land at the top end (McCracken Road area) by over 2 metres and the canal up to there is now tidal similar to the Thornton outlet. It also goes through some of the lowest land in the district. The 2004 insecurity has reenergised development to a 200

cumecs design only 100 cumecs of which will be controllable, the rest will overflow the stopbank as before. Bridges, roads and railway will all be part of the change as will access changes to farms. Cost will be over \$13m of Public money plus an extraordinary amount of effort with no contribution by TrustPower. The Council is battling on because in my opinion there is no other obvious way it can improve the overall security of the scheme during a river flood without genuine cooperation from TrustPower. I wish them well on behalf of everyone.

TrustPower's negative attitude is epitomised by what they have classed their "unnecessarily generous" offer of an annual \$55000 to replace the present NZED inheritance, started 40 years ago, of \$15000". TrustPower seems to be regarding the river in its present condition as the normal standard. Locals mostly have a rather different vision, more like the "run of the river". Most of the broken banks are not that long damaged. They are primarily victims of peaking and recharging the lake during low flows down the river.

The changes sought by TrustPower will do much to increase the generation income from the dam in an ideal way – there will be a negligible increase in their overheads. If the current consent requests are accepted, things will get much more difficult for ratepayers because of the huge cost of bank reinstatement and the major reason for their destruction is the pattern of river flow manipulation by the dam controllers

and the occasional flood. The community is no safer than it was before 2004. Were the dam under more sympathetic control, Reid's Central and all it entails might have been left alone. Every time a flood has entered the canal it has been a disaster and it will not be easy to make it a success. Not even having lip service from TrustPower means it will have to be a success. It also means that this period of hopefully less than 35 years must be decided by commercial criteria.

1. TrustPower should have a trial period of a year or two to see if local opinion can accept its assertion of little or no disadvantage, otherwise the low flow privileges are cancelled
2. TrustPower should pay at least \$1m per year for at least the next 5 years (about 1% of its Matahina income) and if the banks are then considered by Council to be sufficiently restored and stabilised to manage with an ordinary degree of maintenance, it could be dropped at Council's discretion to somewhere between 30 to 50% of the cost of continued maintenance
3. If that is unacceptable to TrustPower, it could simply pay 50% of the value of its increase in profitability under the new flow conditions to Council for river maintenance purposes. If Council cannot use it all for this purpose, the residue would remain with TrustPower. This would

cost TrustPower nothing if it is only relying, as it stated, on a 3GWH increase

4. TrustPower should have total control of the dam during floods, using as much freely available advice as it needs from Council, but taking full responsibility for bank overtopping and damage downstream if it exceeds channel capacity without previously utilising all channel capacity necessary during that period between significant rainfall and the river flood peak.

I remember Dale Revington CEO and chief engineer of the newly formed Catchment Commission addressing public meetings in the 60's before the stopbanking.

He said not to be afraid of the dam although the lake it formed filled the gorge which had been an absorber of much of the energy of flood flows during river peaks and replaced it with a frictionless 14km of water – The dam properly managed would safeguard everyone.

He and the other remarkable pioneers are now gone but his philosophy is still sound.

Thank you.