

I am Al Shearer and I live at 65 Lyford Lane, Twizel. I am opposed to the Hydro Inundation Hazard rules proposed for our property by Mackenzie District Council (MDC). These rules will not reduce the risk to ourselves or our property. In effect they will simply reduce opportunities for our property and increase our property rates. I consider that these rules are a waste of MDC time and ratepayer money.

On 23 May 2023 MDC invited Lyford Lane landowners and residents to a meeting to discuss a proposed wastewater scheme for Lyford Lane. This scheme was a practical option for addressing potential issues with the Twizel township water protection zone. The wastewater scheme was supported by all landowners and residents and was approved and budgeted for by MDC in June 2023. Construction was planned for January to May 2024.

On 1 August 2023 MDC held a meeting in Twizel to present Plan Change (PC) 25. MDC Planner Aaron Hakkaart said limitations were proposed for the Lyford Lane area due primarily to the location of the Twizel Water Supply Protection Area. Because the Lyford Lane area was not connected to the reticulated sewer network, proposed limitations include all subdivision to be a noncomplying activity and a maximum of one residential unit per property.

While the MDC Engineers had produced a waste water scheme that would remove all risk to the water protection zone and was supported by the landowners and approved by MDC, the Planners had produced PC 25 with limitations on the use of our properties that would not reduce the risk to the water protection zone.

I arranged a meeting with Aaron which was held in Twizel on 14 August 2023. Aaron was not aware of the MDC approved wastewater scheme for Lyford Lane. I showed him the scheme information and asked that the proposed PC 25 limitations for Lyford Lane be changed to a restriction on residential building until the wastewater scheme was complete. Aaron said he was just following the plan change process.

Section 32 of the RMA requires all options to be considered when addressing issues and an explanation given of why options are chosen or not. Clearly this did not occur. A pumped wastewater scheme was the only practical and effective way to address the water protection zone issue for Lyford Lane.

On 1 September 2023 we received a letter from MDC say information provided by Meridian Energy has identified that if a dam break and/or canal failure was to occur there may be an impact on our property. It said they were still working through what new rules or requirements may be needed to address this risk.

Unfortunately the wastewater scheme for Lyford Lane did not proceed as was planned and budgeted for. The explanation was that MDC already had numerous projects in progress.

At a meeting in Twizel on 25 July 2024 regarding the Hydro Inundation Hazard we were told that rules were required to protect visitors to our property who may not be aware of the hazard. The rules proposed under PC 28 included only one residential unit per property, no visitor accommodation and no subdivision. These are the same rules approved under PC 25 to protect the Twizel township water supply. As already discussed, these rules will not reduce the risk to the Twizel water supply and should be removed as soon as the pumped wastewater scheme is operating. Likewise these rules will not reduce the flooding risk to ourselves or our property from hydro inundation. The only effective and practical way to reduce the flooding risk from hydro system failure is to ensure efficient dispersal of flood waters. This can be achieved by improving the flood flow capacity of the streams, bridges and culverts within the Hydro Inundation Area. When the hydro canal system was built there were only a few willow trees along the Twizel, Fraser and Dry Streams. The number and size of trees has increased significantly, restricting the flood flow capacity of the streams and causing bank erosion. Alder trees spreading from amenity plantings at Lake Poaka are growing in dense stands down the Twizel River. Removing these invasive trees and replacing them with more suitable native riparian species like carex, toi toi and flax would improve the flood flow capacity and stabilise the stream banks, greatly improving the quality of these streams and reducing the flood risk to the adjacent land.

I have lived within the Hydro Inundation Hazard area for the past 25 years and was not aware of any emergency management plan for hydro inundation. On 26 July 2024 I met with the Emergency Response Manager at Meridian Energy who informed me that they had no emergency response plan for the hydro inundation area but were assisting MDC to produce a plan. There was also no mitigation plan to reduce the flooding impacts within the hydro inundation area. Further there was no compensation plan for damage to our property due to a hydro inundation event and no compensation plan for restrictions on the use of our property due to the hydro inundation risk.

In October 2024 the MDC presented a Hydro Inundation Community Response Plan. It said that following a long or strong earthquake evacuate following Lyford Lane to the Twizel Event Centre. This involves crossing several culverts on Lyford Lane plus concrete bridges over Dry Stream and Fraser Stream. I would expect that an earthquake large enough to damage the hydro canal system would also damage these concrete bridges so they would be unsafe to cross until carefully inspected.

On 27 May 2025 MDC Engineers presented an update to Lyford Lane landowners on the pumped wastewater scheme. They said they planned to proceed with the construction of the wastewater scheme at the end of this year. They also said that the scheme delay was due to the Plan Change process. This is difficult to believe when in fact if the wastewater scheme had proceeded as intended the Plan Change should not have occurred.

I have been assured by Meridian Energy that they have no objection to me having more than one residential unit on our land or providing residential visitor accommodation.

The section 42A Report for PC 28 states (273) that because the proposed rules for our property already exist due to PC 25, there is no extra burden on our property. As already discussed the PC 25 rules should be removed when the wastewater scheme is completed. This will leave us with the burden of the PC 28 rules on our property, even though these rules will not reduce the Hydro Inundation risk to ourselves or our property.

Therefore I ask that the proposed PC 28 rules are removed for our property and maybe replaced with a practical programme to reduce the flooding hazard associated with a hydro inundation event.