

Evidence for Plan 7 Hearing Nov 5th 2020
Orari River Protection Group (ORPG).

Point 7: History of use of the river by education providers and recreationalists. Drew Brown.

A: Recreation:

- Recreational users of the Orari have a very long history. Trampers, swimmers, “tubers”, fisherfolk, birdwatchers, painters, kayakers and rafters have used appropriate parts of the river for generations.
- Over the last 35 years the Andrew’s Stream waterfall confluence and a hole on the north bank farther downstream are visited in large numbers. Because community members have been using these resources for generations there was an immediate and very strong support for ORPG when Rangitata South Ltd announced its intentions to dam the river below the gorge.
- Fisher folk have used the lower stretches of the Orari and more especially from Andrew’s Stream upwards for trout fishing, again for generations. Fishing guides are known to fly in clients for trout fishing in the upper catchment.
- Kayakers and rafters take their opportunities when they can, mostly using the Andrew’s Stream put-in to a take-out 3 km downstream. This is a grade 2 section.
- Kayakers and rafters also use the upper catchment section from Lochaber to Andrew’s Stream confluence, a much valued high country wilderness experience.
- All users have a deep appreciation for the extremely clear and clean free running water that enters the gorge from the upper catchment.

B. Education: Education providers fall mainly into 2 groups: Schools and Outdoor Centres.

Examples:

- Geraldine High School (GHS) has been the main secondary school education provider using the river, concentrating on beginner kayak instruction from Andrew’s Stream confluence to the take-out. It also uses the section for advanced slalom moves, river rescue, risk management, river crossing activities and environmental studies.
- GHS Outdoor Education classes (started in 1990) have used (and still use) this part of the river every year, and has also used the river for Year 10 Challenges which include river crossing and river safety.
- GHS has introduced thousands of students to watercraft skills and environmental studies because of the pristine quality and nature of this educational resource.
- Peel Forest Outdoor Centre has also used (and still uses) this area for the same activities since its inception in 1994 and similarly has introduced thousands of students to this learning environment.
- The river, especially the gorge, offers unique opportunities for schools’ curriculums, which include environmental appreciation and multi-varied on-site learning opportunities.
- Having clean swimmable water in this part of the river is a health risk management issue that providers must take into account when considering taking students into that environment. This is a very specific and vital issue that needs to be regulated by a form of protection.