

Smooth Hill Landfill Submission

I am John Finlayson, resident of Dunedin all my life, resident of Brighton for 12 years, but with an association to Brighton for more than 60 years.

In support of my on-line submission of 14 October 2021, against the Smooth Hill Landfill application in its entirety, I would offer the following comments.

I would describe myself as a concerned citizen. That concern comes from the Smooth Hill Consent application itself, the lack of detail and planning in the application, and the cavalier attitude of the Dunedin City Council, the DCC, for the way in which this consent application has been presented.

When I talk today about the DCC I include the elected councillors and employed senior managers.

The consent application the DCC submitted was originally requested to be non-notifiable. For such a major project, irrespective of the site of the proposed landfill, to be considered by the DCC as not worthy of public scrutiny is disingenuous, if not attempting to by-pass good governance practice.

Note has already been made of the fact the DCC filed this application a week before new national environmental rules came into effect. The proposed aspects of this application would not, as I understand it, fit with these new rules.

The inclusion of the Smooth Hill Landfill site in the 2nd generation district plan went with little public notification or scrutiny.

I am concerned that the proposed site for the new Dunedin City Landfill has been selected based on investigations done 30 years ago, and recommended in a report "A FUTURE LANDFILL FOR DUNEDIN" dated 21 April 1993 to the DCC Chief Executive.

To suggest that a 30-year-old report takes into account the needs of today's city, and today's thinking on the environmental impact of such a proposal, is barely believable.

In that memorandum only 13% of submissions approved of the Smooth Hill Landfill, with 33% disapproving, but of course that does not seem to be of note to those within the DCC making decisions.

This application is not a considered one, I believe it is a rushed proposal despite having had, as far as the DCC is concerned, 30 years to finely tune a proposal for Smooth Hill.

Also of concern is that the current Green Island Landfill consent expires in 2023, with no consent as yet to extend the life of the Green Island Landfill site.

A report entitled "DCC WASTE FUTURES 2023 LANDFILL FEASIBILITY WORKSTREAM" presented to Council dated February 2019 stated there was urgent need for council to make decisions about extending consent to use the Green Island Landfill and /or proceeding with Smooth Hill.

We are here 3 years on from that report, with 2023 just around the corner, with an application presented to you for consideration.

A cynic might suggest that the tardiness of sorting out these vital elements of waste disposal, and seeking this resource consent, might be an attempt to push this Smooth Hill Landfill application across the line, with time running out on the Green Island Landfill and no other viable option proposed.

As I stated in my submission, the water permit seeks to divert surface water within the Otokia Creek catchment and dam water in order to construct the landfill and also realign the road to the landfill.

Incredibly the Land Use Consent openly seeks to alter, reclaim and place structures on the bed of waterbodies and wetlands.

Clearly this will bring about the degradation of the Otokia Creek and the habitats of the flora and fauna in the area. The extent of the likely degradation is unknown as it is unclear how effective the various components of the proposed landfill are in preventing run-off of waste water and leachate from the landfill into the surrounding land and into the ground water.

Degradation of wetlands and impacts on waterways is a significant problem in New Zealand and cannot be condoned.

It has been reported that the DCC has amended its application to realign the proposed road carriageway to avoid any direct impact on wetlands by changes to McLaren Gully Road. Surely if this was a well-thought-out application the original realignment of the road would not have been near wetlands, rather than see if they could get away with the original plan.

In today's climate, impact on wetlands is not considered to be remotely acceptable. I would suggest the DCC's amendment to the road alignment has only done to appease critics, not a genuine action admitting they got it wrong in the first place.

The proximity to Momona airport and the potential of bird strike has been highlighted. It has been documented that IF food waste is stopped from going to landfill and IF the gull population is adequately managed bird strike can be minimised.

If the DCC really believe that the majority of Dunedin households will put their food waste into separate bins so that it does not go to landfill, I think unfortunately this will not be the reality. Therefore, this type of waste will continue to end up in the landfill site. The disposal

of commercial offal in large quantities on a regular basis is of concern. I don't believe these issues will be managed well and the bird population of the landfill at Smooth Hill will large, and pose a threat to aircraft and a nuisance to residents in the vicinity of the landfill.

I am also concerned that Smooth Hill Landfill may well be contracted to a private company. This would in all likelihood make the DCC over-sight less rigorous than if the DCC was directly responsible.

I guess my overall concern and the basis of my submission is that I don't believe we can trust the DCC to do the right thing.

By proposing this Landfill at Smooth Hill, they have clearly demonstrated, in my opinion, they have a disregard for modern day environmental protection and preservation of habitats, and are certainly not displaying care for its community or a desire to listen to that community.

I fear if the DCC is granted this resource consent, the potential adverse effect of many aspects of the proposed landfill will not be adequately managed, despite assurances from the Chief Executive and others within the DCC.

It is my sincere hope that the Smooth Hill Landfill will not go ahead, and that you do not grant this resource consent application.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today.