

Presentation – 23 February 2026

Objection to Ruakiwi Reservoir – Reclassification and Notice of Requirement

Kia ora Chair and Panel Members.

My name is Glenda Adele Morrissey. I live at 17 Ruakiwi Road and have been a Hamilton resident for over 50 years.

I formally oppose the proposed reclassification of reserve land within the Hamilton Lake Domain to enable construction of two large water reservoirs at Ruakiwi Road.

I want to be clear at the outset: I support responsible planning for Hamilton's future water needs. What I oppose is achieving that objective by permanently sacrificing protected reserve land when viable alternatives exist.

Once reserve land is built on, it is lost forever.

1. Conflict with the Reserves Act and Purpose of the Domain

The land in question is currently classified as a 'Recreation Reserve' under the Reserves Act 1977. The purpose of that classification is to preserve open space for public recreation, landscape protection, and community wellbeing.

Council proposing to reclassify approximately 15,000 square metres to Local Purpose (Water Infrastructure) Reserve. That change is not minor. It fundamentally alters the purpose of the land.

The proposal conflicts with the Hamilton Lake Domain Management Plan, which prioritises:

- Minimising built structures
- Protecting open space
- Preserving visual amenity
- Maintaining the natural character of the ridgeline

Introducing two industrial-scale reservoirs, each 62 metres in diameter, industrialises what is currently protected recreational land.

Reclassification in this context is not simply administrative — it is the removal of public protection to reduce infrastructure costs.

4. Use of Grant Funding and Financial Drivers

Council has received approximately \$158 million in government funding to support urban density.

I understand that such grants become income on Council's balance sheet and can support additional borrowing capacity.

There is concern within the community that the availability of funding is driving the project — rather than confirmed necessity. Free funding should enable council to go above the cheapest option and make the best choice for the city.

I have not seen the documentation to support the decommissioning of the existing 1932 reservoir or if it was a condition of the grant.

In fact, Council has invested in upgrades to the existing reservoir in recent years, including roofing and stairway access improvements.

If the current structure has recently been maintained and upgraded, the urgency to replace it requires stronger justification.

Infrastructure decisions must be driven by long-term need — not by funding windows.

5. Environmental and Geotechnical Concerns

The proposal involves removal or relocation of approximately 72 mature trees. (pg 6)

My particular concern is with the large macrocarpas along the steep bank descending toward the lake.

We have recently seen, in Tauranga, how slope failures can occur where large root systems have been disturbed.

When massive trees are removed, the decaying root channels can become pathways for water infiltration, potentially destabilising steep terrain.

The drop from the ridgeline to the water is steep and significant.

While a geotechnical report has been undertaken for the reservoir footprint itself, a detailed geotechnical assessment for the stability of the banks descending to the lake should be done prior to commencement, not at stage 2.

Recent issues in Melville involving a wastewater holding tank constructed on former swamp land — which rapidly filled with groundwater — demonstrate that assumptions about ground stability can prove costly.

Given these experiences, it is entirely reasonable for residents to expect that before starting full and robust geotechnical investigations have been undertaken — not only beneath the tanks, but across the affected slopes.

Replacement planting cannot replicate mature canopy or established root stabilisation for decades. This is permanent ecological change.

6. Construction Impacts

Construction is expected to last up to 30 months.

Ruakiwi Road is:

- A residential street
- A key access route to the Domain
- An ambulance route to Waikato Hospital

Heavy vehicle movements within approximately 10 metres of residential dwellings, early morning concrete pours, vibration, dust and prolonged noise will significantly affect residents.

← Current vibration = traffic

I purchased my home for its views, peace and quiet. The loss of visual amenity and the prospect of nearly three years living adjacent to a major construction site is not minor.

In my opinion the Assessment of Environmental Effects has understated the impacts.

This is not an industrial zone. It is one of Hamilton's most treasured recreational environments.

7. Heritage Impact

The existing 1932 water tower is a Category A heritage structure and a defining landmark on the ridgeline.

Placing two massive tanks in close proximity will visually dominate the landscape and diminish the tower's prominence and heritage value.

Once the visual character of that ridgeline is altered, it cannot be restored.

In Conclusion

The purpose of the Reserves Act is to protect land for public benefit and enjoyment.

Reclassifying this land to Local Purpose Reserve in order to reduce infrastructure costs undermines that purpose.

The proposed reservoirs would:

- Permanently remove protected reserve land
- Industrialise a heritage ridgeline
- Reduce amenity in an intensifying city
- Remove mature trees and alter ecological stability
- Subject residents and lake users to prolonged disruption

Sometimes the option that appears best on paper is not the right choice ethically or for the long-term wellbeing of residents.

Hamilton Lake Domain is one of this city's most important recreational assets. Its value will only increase as our population grows.

I respectfully ask the Panel to reject the Notice of Requirement and decline the reclassification of Recreation Reserve land at Ruakiwi Road.

I further request that Council pursue alternatives, which better align with environmental sustainability, community wellbeing, and the long-term vision for our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
