

AWA is in the process of finalising its case for the forthcoming hearing on the legality of the water mining consents for the Belfast bottling plants.

To recap, in December 2017 ECan granted Cloud Ocean Water Limited and Rapaki Natural Resources Limited consents to take 24 million litres of water per day from aquifers beneath Belfast. AWA issued proceedings in the High Court challenging the process by which those consents were issued. (Because the applications for consent were not publicly notified, they weren't able to be challenged in the Environment Court).

ECan and the water mining companies lodged defences. One of those defences was that consents weren't even required because the companies were carrying on 'industrial uses' that were already authorised by existing consents for those sites. In late 2018, after a two-day hearing, the High Court agreed with AWA's argument that this wasn't correct and that consents were required.

Now we are pushing forward with our case that the consents were processed and issued illegally. We will be filing our evidence shortly and will be asking for a Court date. The date will depend on the availability of Court time but we are hoping the case will be heard quickly.

Once we have a Court date we will begin another fundraising drive. So far we have funded our case solely by public contributions, but Christchurch City Council recently agreed, in the face of considerable pressure from ECan, to assist us by granting \$50,000.00 towards our legal costs. We are extremely grateful to Council and proud they have shown such a strong commitment to our City's future, and the risks posed by the potential expansion of water mining in Christchurch.

We'll continue to keep you updated with progress in our case.