



Young River, Mt Aspiring National Park

## Consultation on Otago's new Land and Water Regional Plan is gathering pace this year

**The Otago Regional Council is responsible for managing and protecting Otago's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater. That includes protecting water quality and ensuring there's enough water in our waterways.**

We do this in a number of ways, including community consultation, policy development, education, support, fieldwork, rules and enforcement.

In 2019, following a recommendation from the Minister for the Environment, ORC agreed to develop a new Land and Water Regional Plan for notification in 2023. This will replace the current Regional Plan: Water and Regional Plan: Waste, and that will ensure an integrated approach to

managing the effects of land use on water quality and quantity.

The new Land and Water Regional Plan will set out how ORC will protect and manage the region's water by setting objectives and rules for how land and water can be used.

The Plan will be structured around each of the different freshwater management units – areas of the region that are appropriate sizes for managing freshwater. In Otago, there are five proposed freshwater management units: North Otago, Taieri, Dunedin Coast, Catlins, and Clutha Mata-Au. The Clutha Mata-Au area is further divided into five rohe, or sub-areas, due to its size: Upper Lakes, Dunstan, Manuherekia, Roxburgh and Lower Clutha. There will be some rules that apply across Otago, and others which are specific to each freshwater management unit.

We'll be working with freshwater management unit and rohe communities over the next two years to understand how to manage and protect what is important for each community, consistent with national direction. We want as many people as possible to get involved in deciding how waterways in each area should be managed.

It's important that you have your say, as the decisions made will affect how you can use water, which areas need to be protected, and what activities can take place in or near your waterways.

To keep up to date with consultation opportunities in your area, follow our Facebook page and subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter at [www.orc.govt.nz/on-stream](http://www.orc.govt.nz/on-stream).



## Kia ora koutou, and welcome to the first issue of Waterlines for 2021.

The new year kicked off with a flurry of activity for the Otago Regional Council, as staff across our natural hazards, engineering, environmental monitoring and communication teams responded to flooding that affected many parts of Otago. This was the first flood event to benefit from the new MetService weather radar at Hindon, which improved situational awareness for staff.

We hope you kept dry during this significant rain event.

These are an important few months for the Otago Regional Council as we work towards the adoption of a new Long-term Plan for 2021-31. You'll be hearing more from us in the near future, as we seek input from all Otago residents on our plan for the next ten years.

Another really exciting piece of work that we'll be landing in the coming months is the notification of our new Regional Policy Statement for Otago. The RPS is a wide-ranging document that sets out what we want for Otago, what's stopping us achieving this, and how we will solve those problems. It's a high-level piece of policy, under which Otago's regional and district plans will sit. In other words, it's the key document for the future management of Otago's natural and physical resources.

Last year, we worked within a really tight timeframe to write the first draft of the RPS and gather freshwater visions for each freshwater management unit and rohe in Otago. We also formed reference groups with the community as an innovative way to gather input from all over the region after Covid-19 disrupted consultation plans. We have been hugely impressed with the participation and the invaluable input we have had from our community during our freshwater visions workshops. Thank you to all involved.

The RPS will be notified before the end of June this year.

Our ongoing work implementing the Essential Freshwater reforms continues this year. There's information in this issue of Waterlines about a few elements of this work that may affect you, so I recommend giving it a look. We're taking an education-first approach to help get everyone up to speed. Our website has more info – a good place to start is [www.orc.govt.nz/newwaterrules](http://www.orc.govt.nz/newwaterrules) – or you can always get in touch with staff.

We're here to help.

**Ngā mihi**

**Andrew Noone**  
Chair, Otago Regional Council





## Heavy rain brings a wet start to 2021

The Christmas-New Year break was interrupted around the region by widespread flooding that began on 2 January. While most parts of Otago experienced heavy rain and flooding, some of the worst hit areas were Middlemarch, Central Otago, North Otago, and parts of the Lower Taieri.

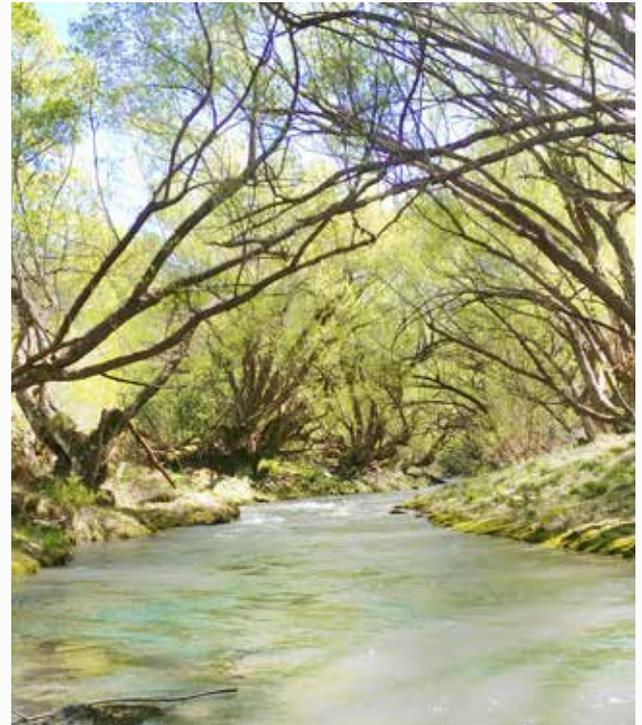
One of the challenges posed by this event was the number of successive rainy fronts which dumped new rain on top of the old. This required a speedy response from ORC's engineering team to inspect flood protection schemes and waterways, and manage drainage infrastructure before the next weather salvo hit.

Manager Engineering Michelle Mifflin said cooperation and communication were key.

"This was a tricky event to manage, as there were fairly widespread impacts on Otago rivers and waterways. We're really grateful to the local councils, contractors and landowners who worked with us to respond during what's supposed to be a nice, quiet part of the year."

**Clockwise from bottom left:**  
 Clearing the debris flow at the mouth of Reservoir Creek; ORC staff assess the situation at Reservoir Creek; a digger opening the channel at Tomahawk Mouth; Debris after flooding near Middlemarch; natural hazards staff demonstrating the rain radar in action.

# Arrow, Cardrona and Manuherekia water management proposals coming in March



**In March, ORC will be visiting Arrow, Cardrona and Wanaka communities to give an update on how we propose to manage freshwater in the area. ORC will present on our preferred option, which is based on what the community told us in 2019.**

This information has been assessed and considered along with the ecology and hydrology of these rivers, and the preferred option takes economic impacts into account.

The preferred option seeks to provide for the needs and aspirations of the community while giving effect to ORC's obligations under the Government's new National Policy Statement for Freshwater. The water take limits will form part of the Dunstan Rohe chapter of the Land and Water Regional Plan when it is notified in 2023.

Come along to a presentation about the way ORC proposes to manage the catchments followed by discussion and questions.

For the Arrow catchment:  
**Wednesday, 17 March**  
**3pm-4.30pm and 7pm-8.30pm**  
**St John's Church, Berkshire St**  
**Arrowtown.**

For the Cardrona catchment:  
**Thursday, 18 March**  
**1pm-2.30pm and 7pm-8.30pm**  
**Lake Wanaka Centre**  
**89 Ardmore Street, Wanaka.**

## Manuherekia Rohe

ORC and the Manuherekia community have been discussing objectives, policies and rules to manage water in the area since 2016. The Manuherekia Rohe includes Lauder, Becks, Omakau, Ophir, Ida Valley, St Bathans, Oturehua and the surrounding rural areas, and includes the Manuherekia River and its tributaries.

In 2019, we formed a Manuherekia Reference Group to get community input into the Manuherekia Rohe plan. The Manuherekia Reference Group has representatives from the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird, Central Otago District Council, Fish and Game, the Central Otago Environmental Society, irrigators and ORC, and is chaired by an

independent chairperson, who facilitates discussion about community and stakeholder interests and aspirations for the Manuherekia Rohe.

ORC has also worked with Kāi Tahu to incorporate iwi values and aspirations for the rohe.

These discussions, along with community meetings and online input about what people value about the Manuherekia, have helped ORC to develop a series of options for how the catchment could be managed in the future.

The options are summarised in the Manuherekia Choices document, which will be available on our website or in print from 23 March, and presented in public meetings. We'd like to hear what you think about the options, and which option you prefer.

Meetings will be held on 30 and 31 March:

**Alexandra**  
**Tuesday, 30 March**

**Sorry, these meetings have been cancelled - we'll be promoting new dates and venues soon**

**3pm and 7-8.30pm**  
**venue to be confirmed.**

# New water telemetry requirements being introduced soon



## Do you have a consent to take 5 litres per second of water or more?

Under the new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater, part of the government’s Essential Freshwater reforms introduced last year, anyone with a resource consent for a consumptive water take of five litres or more per second needs to have a telemetry system in place.

A telemetry system can measure the water take every fifteen minutes and report the data electronically to ORC once per day.

If you don’t have one already, you’ll need to put a telemetry system in place in the next few years. The deadline depends on the rate of take on the consent:

Amount of water	Consent deadline
20 litres per second or more	3 September 2022
Between 10 and less than 20 litres per second	3 September 2024
Between 5 and less than 10 litres per second	3 September 2026

If your consent does not specify a flow rate, then the 2022 deadline applies.

ORC suggests contacting an approved service provider to discuss the installation of telemetry. In some cases, they may be able to fit telemetry to your existing data logger without the need for a new meter.

All work on telemetry installation must be undertaken by a provider approved by ORC – there’s a list of providers at [www.orc.govt.nz/consents/water-metering-and-measuring](http://www.orc.govt.nz/consents/water-metering-and-measuring).

For more information about the new rules, visit [www.orc.govt.nz/NewWaterRules](http://www.orc.govt.nz/NewWaterRules) or you can contact our team with any questions on **0800 474 082** or [watermetering@orc.govt.nz](mailto:watermetering@orc.govt.nz).

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# Working together for better rabbit control



## ORC is honing an improved approach to rabbit management this year, facilitating a range of joint initiatives through cooperative, landowner-led control operations in Otago.

Rabbits are a significant priority pest in Otago, said Manager Biosecurity and Rural Liaison Andrea Howard, and they present complex challenges for pest management.

“Much of Otago’s landscape is rabbit-prone, meaning it’s ideal country for rabbits to thrive in. One of the contributing factors to the rabbit problem in recent times has been increased urbanisation and changing land use, meaning a greater number of landowners are responsible for rabbit control.”

Under the regional rules, rabbit management is the responsibility of landowners, while ORC has a role in education, compliance and facilitating cooperative efforts.

“As you would expect, rabbits don’t recognise property boundaries, so one person’s good work can be undone if there’s not a coordinated, collaborative approach to rabbit management amongst neighbours.

“We have seen a few great examples in the last year of how a joined-up approach

between landowners can have the best impact on rabbit populations,” Ms Howard said.

ORC is working to replicate this approach in a number of locations this year, including Lake Hayes, Gibbston Valley, Wanaka, Albert Town, Queensberry, Lowburn/Pisa Moorings, Otago Peninsula and Moeraki, with more sites identified for future years.

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“ORC hasn’t operated in the direct pest control space since 2015, but we absolutely have a role to play in demonstrating leadership, increasing engagement with landowners, ensuring compliance with rules, and identifying effective ways to tackle the rabbit problem in those more difficult semi-urban and peri-urban areas” said Ms Howard.

There are good pest contractors in the region to assist landowners with work and ORC will be working with these contractors to better coordinate our activities so they can be prepared for likely consumer demand. We will also be making our

rabbit control assets available to suitably qualified people.

In the past year, ORC has substantially increased the number of properties inspected and it’s clear in some areas, particularly larger rural properties, that landowners are proactively managing rabbit populations. However, we still have a long way to go to reduce overall populations across the region.

ORC is committed to instituting a collaborative approach to integrated rabbit control in Otago, based on engaging landowners, facilitating cooperation, and encouraging best management practices appropriate to the range of properties and land use types in the region.

“Otago’s rabbit problem is not one that will be solved overnight, or with a silver bullet – continuous action on private land will always be essential to back up control efforts and ensure those gains are not lost. But a collective effort will go a long way to managing rabbits more effectively.”

If you are in one of the areas listed above and would like to register your interest in landowner led initiatives, please fill in our online form at

[www.orc.govt.nz/rabbits-signup](http://www.orc.govt.nz/rabbits-signup)

We can let you know when a community meeting will be held or record your interest in being involved in future projects.

# Old Man's Beard must go!



## Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*)

It may look beautiful while flowering, but Old Man's Beard is one of the most threatening climbing plants introduced to New Zealand. The vine is easiest to spot during the warmer months, when it's in flower. As it matures, its flowers get a distinctive woolly look to them, a bit like an Old Man's Beard – hence the name.

Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*) spreads easily, producing up to 1,000 seeds per square metre which are spread by wind,

water and birds. And it grows quickly: a stem can produce up to 10 metres of new growth in a season.

Under ORC's Regional Pest Management Plan, the rules for Old Man's Beard require everyone in Otago to destroy the plant on the land that they occupy. However, getting rid of it just once may not do the trick, as it grows aggressively and often needs ongoing control.

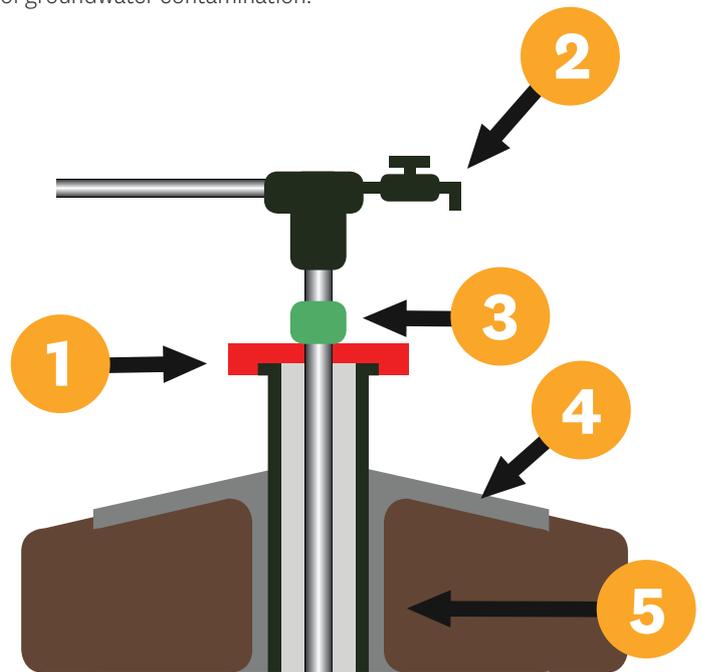
We recommend either digging out the roots, or cutting vines close to the roots and treating them with herbicide. It's best to leave the cut vines where they are to break down naturally, rather than heaping them on the ground where they can take root and grow new plants.

You can find more information on how to identify and control Old Man's Beard on ORC's Pest Hub, at [www.orc.govt.nz/pesthub](http://www.orc.govt.nz/pesthub).

# Do you take your drinking water from a private bore?

Here are five tips for managing your bore head to minimise the risk of groundwater contamination.

- 1** The **well casing** must be elevated above ground and above stormwater and flood levels. The top of the well should be securely capped, and hoses or cables going into the well should be securely sealed.
- 2** There must be a **sample point** to analyse the water if a problem is suspected.
- 3** A **backflow preventer** must be installed to make sure no contaminants can siphon back into the bore.
- 4** The area immediately around the bore casing must be sealed with a **concrete apron** that slopes away from the bore. This helps minimise any surface water flowing into the bore.



- 5** A **bentonite seal** must be installed around the casing and should extend below ground level



The Otago Ballance Farm Environment Awards Field Day is coming up on **5 March**. This Field Day is at the property of 2020 BFEA Otago Regional Supreme Winners Ben and Anna Gillespie of Two Farmers Farming.

Join them in Omakau to learn more about their beef and dairy grazing business.

For more information, visit the website: [www.nzfeatrust.org.nz](http://www.nzfeatrust.org.nz)



Every week in summer, our team sample water at popular swimming sites around Otago, testing for bacteria like E. coli and enterococci which can make people sick.

The results are published on the LAW A "Can I Swim Here?" page: [lawa.org.nz/swim](http://lawa.org.nz/swim)

So to check where is good to swim (and where's not), visit the LAW A website before you take a dip this summer.



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