Council Agenda 20 November 2024

Meeting will be held at Te Pou Ō Mata-Au Clutha District War Memorial & Community Centre, 6 Clyde Street, Balclutha, live streamed at ORC YouTube Channel

Members:
Cr Gretchen Robertson, Chairperson
Cr Lloyd McCall, Deputy Chairperson
Cr Alexa Forbes
Cr Gary Kelliher
Cr Michael Laws
Cr Tim Mepham
Cr Kevin Malcolm
Cr Andrew Noone
Cr Alan Somerville
Cr Elliot Weir
Cr Kate Wilson

Senior Officer: Richard Saunders, Chief Executive
Meeting Support: Kylie Darragh, Governance Support Officer

20 November 2024 01:00 PM

Agenda Topic   Page

1.   WELCOME

2.   APOLOGIES

3.   PUBLIC FORUM

Amber Paterson will speak on erosion at 905-921 Harrington Point, Dunedin.

4.   CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The agenda to be confirmed as published.

5.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of the need to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected representative and any private or other external interest they might have. The Register of Pecuniary Interests can be found on the ORC Website

6.   PRESENTATIONS

Morgan Watt will present on Fonterra's Stirling Biomass Boiler

To present the Catlins Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to Council for endorsement and to recommend a framework for CAP delivery and support from Otago Regional Council (ORC).Grant Bradfield (Chair) and Rachel Napier, and Vincent Leith (Awarua Representative) will speak and there will also be a presentation for this report.

This paper seeks approval of:
a) The funding for the 2025 ECO Fund and associated incentive funding.
b) The recommendations arising from the review of the ECO Fund and associated incentives funding programmes.

Otago
Regional
Council

Council
MINUTES

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Otago Regional Council held in the Hutton Theatre, Tūhura Otago Museum, 416 Great King Street, North Dunedin on Wednesday 23 October commencing at 9:03AM
https://www.youtube.com/live/hy9x2HG5vCA?si=jg6nJaELtPKSrd1K

PRESENT

Cr Gretchen Robertson	*(Chairperson)*
Cr Lloyd McCall	*(Deputy Chairperson)*
Cr Alexa Forbes	
Cr Gary Kelliher	
Cr Michael Laws	
Cr Kevin Malcolm	
Cr Tim Mepham	
Cr Andrew Noone	
Cr Bryan Scott	
Cr Alan Somerville	
Cr Elliot Weir	
Cr Kate Wilson	

1. WELCOME

Chair Robertson welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 9:03 am. Staff present included Richard Saunders (Chief Executive), Nick Donnelly (GM Finance), Anita Dawe (GM Regional Planning and Transport), Tom Dyer (GM Manager Science and Resilience) Joanna Gilroy (GM Environmental Delivery), Tami Sargeant (GM People and Corporate) Amanda Vercoe (GM Strategy and Customer, Deputy CE), Kylie Darragh (Governance Support).

2. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received for this meeting.
9.11 am Cr Laws joined the meeting.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

Dunedin Wildlife Hospital, Manager, Jordana Whyte presented slides and spoke on preparations for the hoiho chicks' arrival due at the end of October and thanked the ORC warmly for their support to the organisation, there was an opportunity for questions and Chair Robertson thanked Jordana for attending.

Extinction Rebellion, Pierre Marasti spoke via zoom on the increasing global temperatures and the effect on the wildlife and planet. There was an opportunity for questions and Chair thanked Pierre for attending.

Federated Farmers, North Otago Provincial President Otto Dogterom and Otago Provincial President Luke Kane spoke on the drafted Land and Water Regional Plan and proposed that farmers and council work together towards better outcomes for farmers. There was an opportunity for questions and Chair Robertson thanked both for attending.

Wise Response, Dugald MacTavish, spoke on the concerns on the interruption to the Land and Water Regional Plan and the efforts to work with the Council and the RMA process, to have ecological limits recognised in plans. There was an opportunity for questions and Chair Robertson thanked Dugald for attending.

4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The Chair noted that items 9.7 LWRP Documents Incorporated Consultation Feedback, and item 11.1 Notification of the Proposed Land and Water Regional Plan, were withdrawn from the agenda by the Chief Executive due to justified circumstance.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was moved by Cr Wilson, seconded by Cr Weir
That the minutes of the Public Council Meeting 25 September 2024, Council Hearings and Deliberations Meeting 3 October 2024, and the Council Extraordinary Meeting held 3 October 2024, be confirmed as true and accurate records.
MOTION CARRIED

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors were reminded of the need to stand aside if a conflict of interest arises. No changes to Councillor Declarations of Interests were noted.

7. ACTIONS (STATUS OF COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS)

The Actions register was reviewed, the Chair noted that there are none currently due and no updates were provided.

8. CHAIRPERSON'S AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORTS

8.1. Chairperson's Report

[YouTube 40:43] Chair Robertson summarised the report including a special thanks to the people of Otago through the recent significant flooding event. The Chair noted the Ports 150th Celebration and extended a special thanks to the past and present directors and staff. There was opportunity for question and an amendment was added to the recommendation for acknowledgement to the Port of Otago.

Resolution CM24-190 Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Noone Seconded

That the Council:

1. **Notes** this report.
2. That the Council acknowledge in writing to the board the great work of Port Otago and recognise it's 150 years of operation and acknowledge the Port Liaison Group Chair's work to support the relationship

MOTION CARRIED

8.2. Chief Executive's Report

[YouTube 54:22] Richard Saunders noted that this report included newly requested reports such as Customer Experience rates inquiries data and a summary of the efficiency review of actions, which will be provided quarterly. In the Annual Report item, service levels needing a stronger focus were identified, with full updates on annual finances to be provided at the next Finance Committee in November. The status of the proposed draft Land and Water Regional Plan was also explained with staff now needing to work with central government on the next steps, subject to completion of the next parliamentary process.

Resolution CM24-191: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr McCall Seconded

That the Council:

1. *Notes this report.*

MOTION CARRIED

Additional recommendation **moved by Cr Weir seconded by Cr Somerville** were taken separately as divisions.

1. *Notes with deep concern the legislation moved and passed in parliament on October 22 preventing notification of the Land and Water Regional Plan.*

For:	Cr Forbes, Cr Mepham, Cr Scott, Cr Somerville, Cr Weir.
Against:	Cr Kelliher, Cr Laws, Cr Malcolm, Cr McCall, Cr Noone, Cr Wilson, Cr Robertson.
Abstained:	

MOTION FAILED

Council Meeting - 23 October 2024

*2. **Requests** clarification from government as to how existing and imminent Regional Policy Statements will be given effect to in regional freshwater planning.*

For:	Cr Forbes, Cr Mepham, Cr Scott, Cr Somerville, Cr Weir.
Against:	Cr Kelliher, Cr Laws, Cr Malcolm, Cr McCall, Cr Noone, Cr Wilson, Cr Robertson.
Abstained:	

MOTION FAILED

It was moved by Chair Robertson, seconded by Cr Wilson
***That** Council adjourn for a break until 11:30 am.*
MOTION CARRIED.

Cr Noone returned to the meeting at 11:41 am.

9.   MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1.   Annual Report 2023/2024

[Youtube: 2:38] To adopt Council's Annual Report 2023-2024 for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Sarah Munro, Finance Manager – Reporting, and Nick Donnelly (GM Finance) were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution CM24-192: Cr Mepham Moved, Cr Malcolm Seconded
That Council:
1. ***Receives** this report.*
2. ***Approves** and adopts the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2024.*
3. ***Authorises** the Chairperson and Chief Executive to sign the Annual Report 2023-2024 and Representation Letter on behalf of Council.*
MOTION CARRIED

9.2.   Port Otago Statement of Corporate Intent

[Youtube 3:03] This report was presented to receive Port Otago's Statement of Corporate Intent for the three years to 30 June 2027. Nick Donnelly, General Manager Finance was present to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution CM24-193: Cr Noone Moved, Cr Malcolm Seconded
That the Council:
1. ***Receives** this report and the attached Statement of Corporate Intent for Port Otago Limited to 30 June 2027.*
2. ***Endorses** the Statement of Corporate Intent for Port Otago to 30 June 2027.*
MOTION CARRIED

9.3.   Updated Consent Environmental Fee Fund Policy

[Youtube 3:13] This report provided an updated Resource Consents Fees Support Policy to Council for approval. Alexandra King, Manager Consents, and Jo Gilroy, General Manager Environmental Delivery, were available to respond to questions on the report. There was an addition to the second recommendation as correction.

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Resolution CM24-194: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr McCall Seconded

That Council:
1. ***Approves*** *the proposed changes to the Resource Consent Fees Policy including the expansion of scope of the policy to cover Bylaw processing fees.*
2. ***Authorises*** *the Manager Consents to make minor changes and corrections to the Policy and update the Policy accordingly.*

MOTION CARRIED

9.4.   Air Quality Work Programme Reference Group

[Youtube 3:18] This paper had two purposes: to update Council on ORC's approach to reviewing the Regional Plan: Air for Otago (Plan) and the 2018 Air Quality Strategy (Strategy), including key milestone points; and to recommend Council establish a Councillor Reference Group to oversee the process of updating the Plan and Strategy. Hilary Lennox, Manager Strategy and Fleur Matthews, Manager Policy and Planning, were available to respond to questions on the report.

Resolution CM24-195: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Weir Seconded

That the Council:
1. ***Notes*** *this report.*
2. ***Notes*** *ORC's joint approach to updating the Regional Plan: Air for Otago and the 2018 Air Quality Strategy.*
3. ***Agrees*** *to establish a Councillor Reference Group and appoints Cr Somerville, Cr Wilson, and Cr Kelliher as members.*
4. ***Approves*** *the Terms of Reference.*

MOTION CARRIED

Cr Kelliher voted against the motion.

9.5.   Biodiversity Strategy Reference Group

[YouTube 3:36] This report sought to progress the establishment of a Biodiversity Strategy Reference Group and note the scope for the Biodiversity Strategy. Hilary Lennox, Manager Strategy and Shay van der Hurk, Senior Advisor Strategy were present to respond to questions.

Resolution CM24-196: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Scott Seconded

That the Council:
1. **Notes** this report.
2. **Approves** the Terms of Reference.
3. **Appoints** two Councillors to the Reference Group.
4. **Invites** Mana Whenua to appoint two Mana Whenua representatives to the group.

MOTION CARRIED

Cr Kelliher and Cr Laws voted against this recommendation.

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9.6. Membership Representation Review: Final Proposal

[YouTube 3:49] This paper was brought to Council to adopt a final proposal for the ORC's 2024 Membership Representation Review. Amanda Vercoe, General Manager Strategy and Customer and Stephen Hill Representation Review Advisor from Electionz (online) were available to respond to questions.

Resolution CM24-197: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr Laws Seconded

That the Council:

1. ***Receives*** *this report.*
2. ***Notes*** *the response to submissions.*
3. ***Adopts*** *the following final representation proposal pursuant to section 19N of the Local Electoral Act 2021:*
   - a. *That the Otago Regional Council shall comprise of four (4) regional constituencies.*
   - b. *These four constituencies will be:*
     - ***i. Moeraki Constituency****, comprising the Otago portion of the Waitaki District territorial area, being part of the Ahuriri and Corriedale wards, and the entirety of the Oamaru ward and Waihemo ward.*
     - ***ii. Dunedin Constituency****, comprising the comprising central Dunedin and the Waikouaiti Coast, West Harbour, Otago Peninsula and Saddle Hill community board areas located within the Dunedin City territorial area.*
     - ***iii. Dunstan Constituency,*** *comprising the Central Otago District and Queenstown Lakes District territorial areas.*
     - ***iv. Molyneux Constituency****, comprising the Clutha District territorial area and Mosgiel-Taieri and Strath-Taieri community board areas located within the Dunedin City territorial area.*
   - c. *There will be 12 Councillors, elected as follows:*
     - i. *1 councillor elected by the electors of the Moeraki Constituency*
     - ii. *5 councillors elected by the electors of the Dunedin Constituency*
     - iii. *4 councillors elected by the electors of the Dunstan Constituency*
     - iv. *2 councillors elected by the electors of the Molyneux Constituency.*
4. ***Notes*** *that the decision to reduce the number of Dunedin councillors from 6 councillors to 5 and increase the number of Dunstan councillors from 3 to 4 reflects and responds to significant population growth in the Dunstan constituency since the last representation review was undertaken.*
5. ***Notes*** *that the population that each member will represent is as follows:*

Constituency	Population	Members	Population member-ratio	Difference from quota	% difference from quota
Moeraki	*22,300*	*1*	*22,300*	*1,083*	*5.11*
Dunedin	*115,200*	*5*	*23,040*	*1,823*	*8.59*
Dunstan	*78,800*	*4*	*19,700*	*-1,517*	*-7.15%*

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Molyneux	*38,300*	*2*	*19,150*	*-2,067*	*-9.74*
Otago Regional Boundary Total	**254,600**	**12**	**21,217**		

6. ***Notes*** *that a public notice outlining the final proposal will be made by 3 November 2024.*
7. ***Notes*** *that there will be an appeals period of not less than one month.*
MOTION CARRIED

The next items were not considered at this meeting:
9.7 LWRP Documents Incorporated Consultation Feedback
10. Public Forum – Part two
11 Matters for Consideration- Part two
11.1 Notification of the Proposed Land and Water Regional Plan

12. CLOSURE
There was no further business and Chairperson Robertson declared the meeting closed at 1:15 pm with a karakia.

_____ _____
Chairperson   Date

Meeting Date	Document	Item	Status	Action Required	Assignee/s	Action Taken	Due Date
22/03/2023	Council Meeting 2023.03.22	GOV2306 Proposal to participate in CouncilMARK programme	In Progress	The Chief Executive will execute an agreement with CouncilMARK to undertake an independent assessment in 2024. **Res CM23-130**	Chief Executive	**13/09/2023 Governance Support Officer** Underway. Assessment likely to take place February 2024 **15/05/2024 Governance Support Officer** Te Korowai (formerly CouncilMARK) is underway and due to be completed in September 2024. The main data gathering exercise takes place between May and June. A Councillor Workshop for input into our assessment is due to take place by July. **19/07/2024 Governance Support Officer** Workshop took place on 3 July. Next workshop takes place on 7 August. **21/08/2024 General Manager Strategy and Customer** Workshop took place on 7 August. Te Korowai assessors onsite 3/4 September 2024. **11/10/2024 Governance Support Officer** 10/10/24 - CE Assessment has been completed and we are awaiting the final report which will be on a future Council agenda.	16/12/2024
20/03/2024	Council Meeting - 20 March 2024	Chairperson's Report	In Progress	A summary review on the Wanaka Show 2024 is to be completed covering the topics of general interest, to be submitted to the Regional Leadership Committee before a firm decision is made whether to commit again next year for the Committee's consideration.	Chief Executive, Manager Communications and Marketing	**22/04/2024 Governance Support Officer** Summary review of Wanaka Show effectiveness and efficiency to be submitted to the Regional Leadership Committee before a firm decision made as to whether to commit again next year. **16/05/2024 Governance Support Officer** An engagement workshop will be organised where development of an engagement calendar for general use and then for whole organisation attendance will be discussed	01/11/2024

Meeting Date	Document	Item	Status	Action Required	Assignee/s	Action Taken	Due Date
						18/07/2024 Governance Support Officer Engagement workshop confirmed for 26/06/24. Paper for Regional Leadership Committee will be prepared for November Regional Leadership Committee meeting.	
20/03/2024	Council Meeting - 20 March 2024	REG2404 Update to Delegations Manual to Include Delegations to staff for Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations 2022	Assigned	**CM24-120** Update to Delegations Manual to include delegations to staff for Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations 2022 as outlined in the report.	Chief Executive	**16/05/2024 Governance Support Officer** Workplan on pause due to changes at Central Government. An update will be provided.	16/12/2024
29/05/2024	Finance Committee LTP Deliberations - 29&30 May 2024	CS2421 Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 Deliberation	Assigned	**FIN24-137:** **32)** *Directs Council staff to make the following adjustments to the draft Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 detailed in paper 6.1.2 and including:* **c.** *Allocate $50,000 in Year two Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 for potential sponsorship of the activity outlined in 'Dunedin Tracks and Trails' submission or other activity that would deliver on the Public and Active Transport Connectivity Strategy.*	General Manager Regional Planning and Transport		27/06/2025
29/05/2024	Finance Committee LTP Deliberations - 29&30 May 2024	CS2421 Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 Deliberation	Assigned	**FIN24-138:** **32)** *Directs Council staff to make the following adjustments to the draft Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 detailed in paper 6.1.2 and including:*	General Manager Regional Planning and Transport		27/06/2025

Meeting Date	Document	Item	Status	Action Required	Assignee/s	Action Taken	Due Date
				d. *Investigate within existing year one forecast budgets the feasibility of incorporating an Oamaru-Dunedin service within the 'Oamaru year two and three public transport trial.*			
29/05/2024	Finance Committee LTP Deliberations - 29&30 May 2024	CS2421 Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 Deliberation	Assigned	**FIN24-139:** **32)** *Directs Council staff to make the following adjustments to the draft Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 detailed in paper 6.1.2 and including:* ***g.*** *Requests that staff complete a review of options for the allocation of Public Transport targeted rates and report back in time for the 25/26 annual plan.*	General Manager Finance, General Manager Regional Planning and Transport	**16/10/2024 General Manager Finance** In progress. Staff will provide an update and proposed next steps in the Annual Plan 2025-26 workshop on 30-Oct-2024.	06/12/2024
29/05/2024	Finance Committee LTP Deliberations - 29&30 May 2024	CS2421 Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 Deliberation	In Progress	**FIN24-120:** **44)** *Requests staff undertake a review of all flood and drainage schemes to inform rate allocation and report back to Council on the Terms of Reference and timing for this review*	Chief Executive, General Manager Finance, General Manager Science and Resilience	**11/10/2024 Governance Support Officer** 10/10/24 CE Underway. Staff are considering the best approach for this work and will report back to Council early in 2025.	16/12/2024
29/05/2024	Finance Committee LTP Deliberations - 29&30 May 2024	CS2421 Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 Deliberation	In Progress	**FIN24-149:** **50)** *Requests that staff research and report on alternative community ownership models for flood and*	General Manager Finance, General Manager Science and Resilience	**16/10/2024 General Manager Finance** Underway. Staff are considering the best approach for this work and will report back to Council early in 2025 along with FIN24-120.	27/06/2025

Meeting Date	Document	Item	Status	Action Required	Assignee/s	Action Taken	Due Date
				drainage schemes as a way of addressing financial unsustainability.			
24/07/2024	Council Meeting - 24 July 2024	PPT2408 Adoption of Draft Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-2031	In Progress	**CM24-154** Forwards the approved Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-2031 to the New Zealand Transport Agency	Executive Assistant - Regional Planning and Transport, Manager Transport		31/07/2024
28/08/2024	Council Meeting - 28 August 2024	POL2419 Waitaki River Update	Assigned	**CM24-167** Notes a further update will be provided in 2025, after the early engagement has been undertaken.	Executive Assistant - Regional Planning and Transport, General Manager Regional Planning and Transport		01/06/2025
28/08/2024	Council Meeting - 28 August 2024	POL2423 Identification of Potential Commissioners to Hear the Draft Land and Water Regional Plan	Assigned	**Resolution CM24-173** Directs staff to approach the members of the recently completed Freshwater Hearings Panel for the RPS as part of the identification process.	Executive Assistant - Regional Planning and Transport, General Manager Regional Planning and Transport		31/10/2024
20/09/2024	Council Meeting (Extraordinary) - 20 September 2024	GOV2434 Investigating Options for Government Support on LWRP Matters	In Progress	***CM24-178: Requests** that staff engage with officials to discuss the NPS-FM review process and identify actions that seek to address the issues associated with Plan Change 6AA and Plan Change 7 should a new LWRP not be notified and report back to Council ahead of the decision on notification of the plan.*	Chief Executive	**05/11/2024 Governance Support Officer** 10/10/24 CE Staff have engaged with officials and a further letter has been received from the Minister for the Environment and a report was prepared for Council.	06/12/2024

9.1. Chairperson's Report

Prepared for:	Council
Activity:	Governance Report
Endorsed by:	Cr Gretchen Robertson, Chairperson
Date:	20 November 2024

I would like to recognise the location of today's meeting. Balclutha, fondly known as the "Big River Town," is known for its iconic arched bridge and vibrant rural community. Balclutha serves as a gateway to the scenic Catlins region and embodies the spirit of southern Otago with its rich agricultural heritage and welcoming atmosphere. It is part of the Molyneux Constituency represented by Councillors Kate Wilson and Lloyd McCall. The early whalers and settlers of the South called the river and the district Molyneux and the name survived well into the gold mining era.

Significantly, Balclutha lies alongside the impressive Clutha/Mata-au River, which translates to "surface current," the longest river in the South Island and the second longest in New Zealand. Notably, the Clutha/Mata-au has the highest water volume of any New Zealand river, discharging approximately 6% of all of the South Island's fresh water.

The Clutha River is central to the region's environmental, economic, and social landscape. It supports two major hydropower stations, which together contribute 14% of New Zealand's hydropower capacity. Its vast and diverse catchment also sustains an array of other values - primary production, tourism, recreation, housing-industry, mining, cultural, and ecological. This is a hugely diverse catchment with rainfall ranging from, for example, 2500/annum at Makarora to as low as 400ml/annum at Alexandra. The highest point is Mount Aspiring (Tititea) 3033m. The Clutha/Mata-Au and its huge catchment is a significant focal point for the Otago Regional Council's environmental management core work within the wider region.

In line with ORC's commitment to regional accessibility and engagement, today's meeting in Balclutha reflects our Councillors' and the wider organisation's dedication to maintaining a strong presence and meaningful work across all of Otago.

Councillor Bryan Scott: Honouring Two Decades of Service

It is fitting to be meeting here in Balclutha, Councillor Bryan Scott's hometown. I want to take this opportunity to recognise and thank Bryan for his exceptional service to the Otago Regional Council over the past two decades. With his recent resignation, Bryan leaves a significant gap in our team and we will feel the absence of his insight, experience, and unwavering dedication to Otago's future.

Bryan's diverse background, including his training as a chemical engineer, has brought an analytical and evidence-based approach to the Council. His focus on factual accuracy and his insistence on measurable outcomes have been instrumental in shaping Council decisions. Known for his matter-of-fact approach, Bryan judges success by actions and impacts rather than accolades or adornment, encouraging those around him to keep focused on what truly matters. His dedication to a data-driven approach has set a high standard for decisions that

balance long-term environmental and community wellbeing, reflecting his steadfast commitment to securing Otago's future.

Beyond his technical skills, Bryan's deep love for the outdoors and his commitment to conservation have greatly influenced his contributions to Otago. His property above Otago Harbour, where he has planted over 3,500 native trees, stands as a testament to his belief in conservation through action. Whether out tramping the rugged Te Araroa Trail or working on integrated catchment management across Otago, Bryan's focus has always been on creating a resilient environment for generations to come. His dedication goes beyond self-advancement, centring on securing a thriving, sustainable region for all who call it home.

Bryan's years with the Otago Regional Council reflect a rare blend of resilience, tenacity, and passion for both people and the natural world. From supporting projects that protect rivers, forests, and wetlands to fostering strong partnerships with mana whenua, his legacy will be felt across the region for years to come. On behalf of the Otago Regional Council, I extend our deepest gratitude to Bryan Scott for his invaluable years of service, and for the lasting impact he has made on Otago's environment and communities.

Meetings attended:
24 & 25 October, Zone 5&6 (Dunedin)

30 October, Joint Mayoral Forum - water services (Online).

31 October, Te Ropu Taiao hui (Online)

31 October, Outreach Meeting with NZ First MP Andy Foster

1 November, Zone 6 Water Meeting, Balclutha and online

1 November, Regional Sector Chairs/Mayors Monthly Informal Catch-Up

1 November, Bus Hub/Central City Safety oversight group meeting

4 November, ODT/ORC Catch up meeting Richard Saunders, Gretchen Robertson, Paul McIntyre (Editor)

6 November, ORC Whare Runaka Project Site Visit

8 November, 100 years of Waipori Forest event, Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

11 November, Armistice Day (Queens Garden)

14 November, ORC New Starter Induction

19 November, Mana to Mana

Letters Sent/Received
Incoming:

- **23 October – Mins Bishop, Simmonds and McClay**
- **7 November – Min Andrew Hoggard**

Outgoing
- **24 October – Min Andrew Hoggard**
- **1 November – Mins Bishop, Simmonds and McClay**

RECOMMENDATION
That the Council:

1. ***Notes*** *this report.*

ATTACHMENTS
1.   C B 24- O C 074 231024 - ORC Letter [**9.1.1** - 1 page]
2.   CO R 928 Robinson [**9.1.2** - 1 page]
3.   Otago Regional Council Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 [**9.1.3** - 1 page]
4.   ORC Biosecurity Operational Plan Annual Report 2023-2024 [**9.1.4** - 19 pages]
5.   ORC Letter to Ministers Bishop, Simmonds and Mc Clay - 1 November 2024 [**9.1.5** - 1 page]

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance

Cr Gretchen Robertson
Chairperson
Otago Regional Council

23 October 2024

Dear Gretchen,

We are writing to inform you that yesterday we introduced an amendment to the Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill that restricts regional councils publicly notifying freshwater planning instruments ahead of the replacement of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM). This amendment to the Bill was voted on and passed yesterday. The Bill will be read for a third time today, and if passed, we expect Royal Assent will be given tomorrow, with it coming into force on Friday.

As amended the Bill will restrict public notification of freshwater planning instruments on and from 22 October 2024.

We're making this change to the RMA to reduce the risk of duplication and to provide certainty to councils and resource users, that freshwater planning instruments will not be notified prior to the NPS-FM being replaced, which we expect to happen by mid-2025.

We do acknowledge some councils may need to progress targeted plan changes within the restriction period, so we have provided an exemption regime to accommodate this. The Minister for the Environment will be able to exempt a freshwater planning instrument (or parts of one) from the restriction on notification in certain circumstances, including to address unintended consequences or inefficient outcomes. You may wish to consider if an exemption is something Otago might pursue, given some of the matters you have previously raised with us.

We are keen to work together collaboratively on freshwater matters going forward, including drawing on your experience and expertise in our review and replacement of the NPS-FM.

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

Hon Todd McClay
Minister of Agriculture

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

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Hon Andrew Hoggard

Minister for Biosecurity
Minister for Food Safety
Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare, Skills)
Associate Minister for the Environment

29 October 2024

Gretchen Robinson
Chairperson, Otago Regional Council
By email: Kim.Wainscott@orc.govt.nz

Dear Gretchen,

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 October regarding the Otago Regional Council Biosecurity Operational Plan Annual Report 2023-2024, and the insight that this has provided me into the performance of Otago's Regional Council pest management.

I would like to congratulate you on the progress that Otago Regional Council is making. It is particularly pleasing to see an excellent KPI achievement and a large improvement in achievements since 2021.

I appreciated the highlights of the lessons learned and improvements. I strongly support working with land owners and occupiers to achieve solutions and it is encouraging to see that this has helped the plan to be more effective.

Thank you again for writing to me and providing this report.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Andrew Hoggard
Minister for Biosecurity

Otago
Regional
Council

From the Office of the Chairperson

23 October 2024

Hon Andrew Hoggard
Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety
Associate Minister for Agriculture and Environment
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

via Email: a.hoggard@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Minister Hoggard

Otago Regional Council Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24

On behalf of Otago Regional Council (ORC), I am pleased to provide you with a copy of ORC's Biosecurity Operational Plan Annual Report 2023-2024 which includes the Summary of Performance. This report was presented at Council's Environmental Implementation Committee on 8 August 2024.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Gretchen Robinson
Chairperson

9.2. Biosecurity Operational Plan Annual Report 2023-2024

Prepared for:	Environmental Implementation Committee
Report No.	EVN2403
Activity:	Environmental: Land
Authors:	Murray Boardman, Performance and Delivery Specialist Libby Caldwell, Manager Environmental Implementation
Endorsed by:	Jo Gilroy, General Manager Environmental Delivery
Date:	8 August 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   To report on the implementation of the Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, as required under Section 100C(2) of the Biosecurity Act 1993.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1)   **Notes** *this report and the range of work undertaken to give effect to Otago's Regional Pest Management Plan and the Biosecurity Act (1993).*
2)   **Notes** *the lessons learnt from the 2023-24 Biosecurity Operational Plan are being applied to the delivery of the 2024-25 Biosecurity Operational Plan.*
3)   **Notes** *that this report and the attached Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 Report will be provided to the Minister for Biosecurity as required under Section 100C(2) of the Biosecurity Act 1993.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   A Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) is required by the Biosecurity Act 1993 to detail the nature and scope of activities the Council intends to undertake in the annual implementation of the Regional Pest Management Plan. Under Section 100C(2) of the Act, ORC as the respective management agency "*must prepare a report on the operational plan and its implementation not later than 5 months after the end of each financial year*" and "*provide a copy of the report to the Minister or council.*" This paper, including the attachments, fulfils that requirement.

[3]   The 2023-24 BOP contained 63 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Overall, 47 KPIs were fully achieved or exceeded (achievement rate of 74.6%). A further 10 KPIs were assessed as being partially achieved (15.9%). Two KPIs were not achieved, while four KPIs were not measurable as the required event did not occur.

[4]   While the KPIs across the past four reporting periods are not identical, there has been a progressive improvement in achievement from 29.9% in 2020-21 to 74.6% in 2023-24.

BACKGROUND

[5]   In accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993, Council's Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) 2019-2029 was adopted in November 2019. The RPMP details the plants and animals that are declared pests in the Otago region, explains why they are declared as

pests and outlines how each pest will be managed over a ten-year period. The RPMP is a Council plan that is operationalised by the Biosecurity Team.

[6]   An annual operational plan is required by the Act to detail the nature and scope of activities the Council intends to deliver as it implements the RPMP. The Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) details the range of activities that will be undertaken by Council to manage pests in Otago for the year.

[7]   The BOP enacts the RPMP and details how the RPMP objectives will be met through specific deliverables (actions), performance measures and targets.

DISCUSSION

[8]   A summary of achievement towards the delivery of the BOP 2023-24 is presented in the attached document (Appendix 1: Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 Assessment of Performance), detailing the achievement of each Key Performance Indicator (KPI).

[9]   The 2023-24 BOP contained 63 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Overall, 47 KPIs were fully achieved or exceeded (achievement rate of 74.6%). A further 11 KPIs were assessed as being partially achieved (17.5%). Two KPIs were not achieved while four KPIs were not measurable as the required event did not occur. An assessment of each KPI is provided in Appendix 1.

[10]   Although the KPIs across the past four reporting periods are not identical, there has been a progressive improvement in achievement from 29.9% in 2020-21 to 74.6% in 2023-24 (Figure 1).
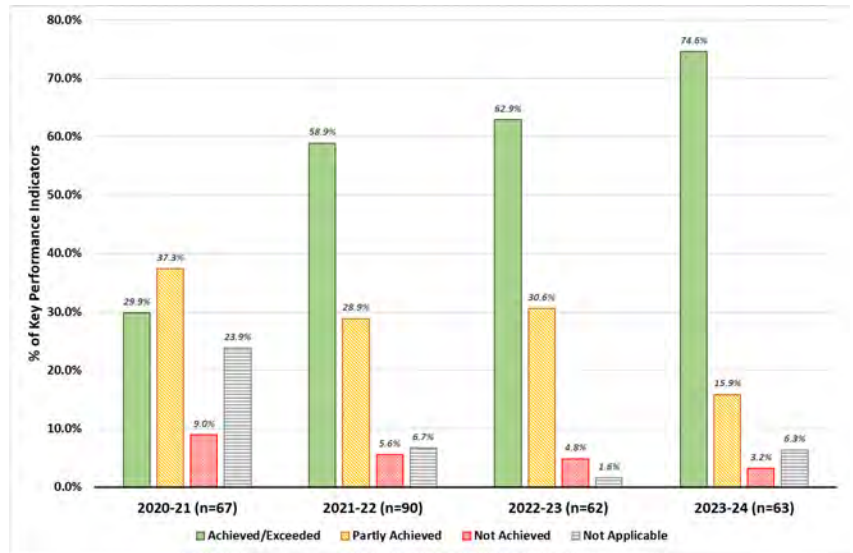
Figure 1: Change in achieving Key Performance Indicators over past four Biosecurity Operational Plans.

Pest Inspections

[11]   Figure 2 shows the geographical spread of biosecurity inspections and monitoring activities during the year.

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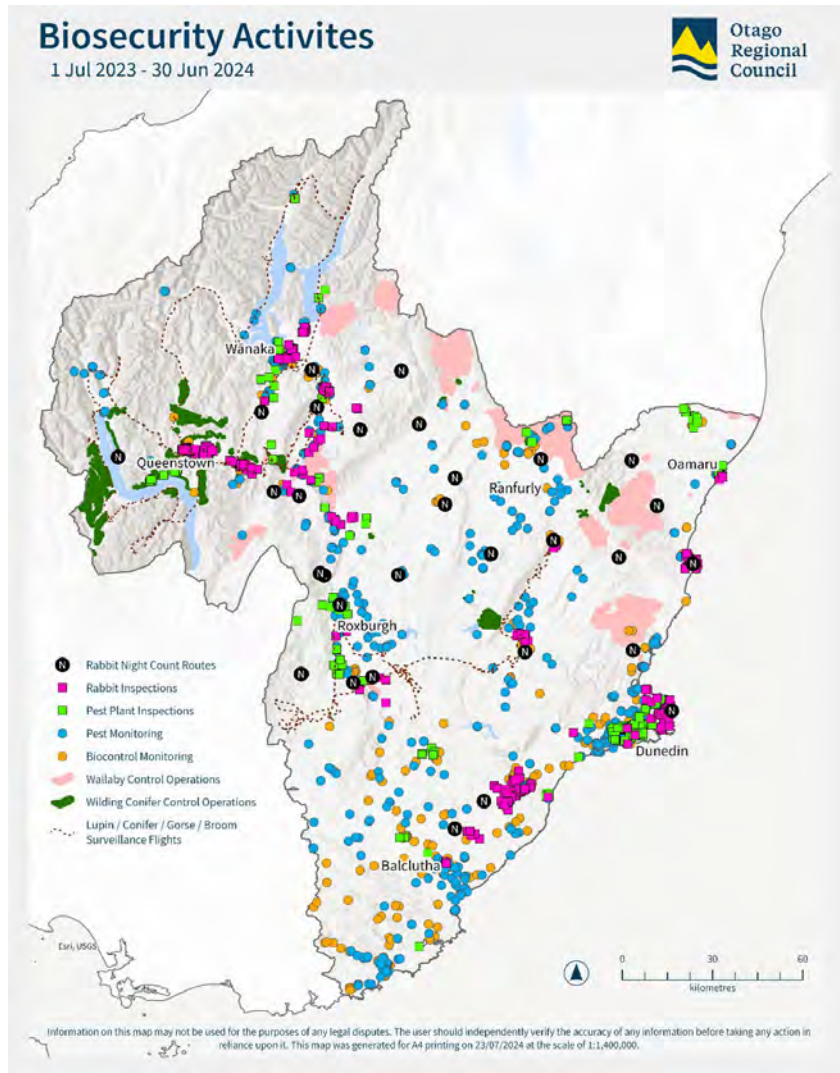
Figure 2: Geographical distribution of Biosecurity Pest Inspections and Monitoring Activities

Rabbit Inspections

[12]   Over the 2023-24 year, 467 rabbit inspections were completed in non-community programme areas against a target of at least 250 rabbit inspections. In addition, a further 192 inspections were completed in community rabbit programme areas.

[13]   Overall, 52.2% of inspections were compliant with 47.8% being non-complaint (Table 1). In comparison, 57.6% were compliant and 42.4% non-compliant in the previous year (Table 2).

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Table 1: Rabbit inspection compliance and non-compliance 2023-24

Compliance Status	Compliant	Non-compliant	Total
New Inspection	108 (42.0%)	149 (58.0%)	**257**
Re-Inspection	109 (27.1%)	293 (72.9%)	**402**
Total	**217 (32.9%)**	**442 (67.1%)**	**659**

Table 2: Rabbit inspection compliance and non-compliance 2022-23

Compliance Status	Compliant	Non-compliant	Total
New Inspection	190 (73.6%)	68 (26.4%)	**258**
Re-Inspection	94 (32.9%)	192 (67.1%)	**286**
Total	**284 (52.2%)**	**260 (47.8%)**	**544**

[14]   Care is needed when comparing against previous year results due to the different factors involved in the inspections. Properties inspected cover a range of areas with each having an underlying proneness to rabbit infestation. In turn, the actual prevalence of rabbits in any specific area will vary based on control, virus activity and ecological factors. Consequently, the baseline prevalence for areas inspected this year is likely to vary from areas inspected in the previous year. The level of rabbit prevalence will influence how quickly compliance can be achieved. For example, rabbit inspections that are marginally non-compliant (i.e. MMS 4) are likely to be controlled faster and become compliant quicker. In comparison, when infestations are higher (i.e. MMS ≥ 5) then achieving compliance is likely to take longer as it may take a few seasons of control before the property is able to become compliant (e.g. two, or more, re-inspections).

[15]   Provisional analysis of paired data[1] from 131 non-compliant properties shows that, based on the median, there is a decrease of one level in the Modified McLean Scale (MMS) between first and re-inspections. Given the MMS is an 8-point scale, the change of one level is statistically significant and suggests inspections, overall, have a positive effect. Further analysis is being undertaken to confirm this outcome.

Non-rabbit Pest Inspections

[16]   2,129 non-rabbit pest inspections and monitoring visits were completed against a target of 1,500. The total was made up of 285 formal inspections and 1,844 monitoring visits.

[17]   During the year, a secondary data collection tool was developed to monitor pests in non-property locations (e.g. road verges, river margins) and selected pests (e.g. rooks). This has provided better flexibility to assessing the prevalence of pests and is complementary to formal inspections.

[18]   Table 5 shows the compliance rate for the formal inspections. Due to the change in data collection, the comparison between the previous year is impractical. Absence and presence data[2] for the monitoring visits are shown in Table 6.

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[1] Paired analysis compares properties that were non-compliant at first inspection which then had a follow-up re-inspection.

[2] Presence does not automatically mean non-compliant as some pests can be present yet be compliant (e.g. ragwort).

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Table 5: Pest inspection (non-rabbits) compliance and non-compliance 2023-24

Compliance Status	Compliant	Non-compliant	Total
New Inspection	319 (37.2%)	538 (62.8%)	857
Re-Inspection	177 (44.4%)	222 (55.6%)	399
Total	**496 (39.5%)**	**760 (60.5%)**	**1,256**

Table 6: Pest monitoring visits (non-rabbits) absence and presence 2023-24

Compliance Status	Absent	Present	Total
Monitoring Visit	734 (39.0%)	1,150 (61.0%)	1,844

[19]   Pest specific analysis will be presented in the 'State of Pest Management Report', scheduled for the November Environmental Implementation committee meeting.

Pest Management Engagement

[20]   A highlight of the year has been the engagement with landowners, the community, Crown agencies and territorial authorities.

[21]   A total of 53 engagements where had with key Crown agencies and territorial authorities in regard to various aspects of pest management. These agencies include MPI, DoC, LINZ, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, WDC, DCC, CDC, CODC and QLDC.

[22]   743 engagements were made over summer through the "Check, Clean, Dry" campaign to advocate and educate the public on preventing the transmission of aquatic weeds, focusing on lagarosiphon. There was a resounding positive feedback to the engagements.

[23]   Twenty-seven collaborations were held with neighbouring Regional Councils on pest management, including meetings, information sharing, site visits and staff exchanges. In addition, 32 meetings/visits were held with ECan on wallabies. Fourteen collaborations were held with Kāi Tahu on biosecurity issues.

[24]   Fourteen community events attended to support best practice pest control. Some 61 advocacy and education engagements (including online) were disseminated to the public.

Compliance and Enforcement

[25]   At least 595 letters (excluding Notices of Direction (NOD)), were sent to occupiers or landowners to advise them of the outcome of the inspection.

[26]   Occupiers and/or Owners of non-compliant properties are engaged using one of five methods listed in the RPMP. The principal approach following an inspection is through advocacy and education/collaboration (e.g. non-regulatory Request for Work letters) which are followed by re-inspections and, where appropriate, the issuing the requirement to act through a NOD. The approaches used to progress compliance differ depending on circumstances, such as the pest species, location, infestation level, and the relevant RPMP rule. In some situations, contractors maybe tasked to undertake pest control (e.g. boneseed and spartina).

[27]   24 Notices of Direction were issued during the year to eligible non-compliant properties, that meet the required NOD criteria. These properties will be re-inspected during the 2024-25 year to determine progress towards compliance.

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[28] Under the Compliance and Enforcement Policy, a property could receive a NOD if it remains non-compliant after the first re-inspection. However, due to variety of factors including the pest species, initial infestation level, change in infestation level and the suitability of season for control methods progressing directly to NOD may not be the most effective method to achieve compliance. This is in line with Council's educatio0n first approach to compliance activities. Properties that were liable for, but not issued a NOD will be scheduled for further re-inspection to monitor progress towards compliance.

[29] The compliance and enforcement outcomes are progressing with the new system operating for a full year. However, some issues remain in optimising the system, in particular tracking non-compliance progress in real time. Modifications of the current system are continuing to enable better efficiency before the move to IRIS NextGen.

2023-2024 Lessons learned and Improvements[1]

[30] Most of the improvements in this year's performance can be traced back to adopting better strategic planning (e.g. scheduling of inspections). This has enabled better tracking of deliverables and activities. This highlights the importance of strategic planning and its relationship to improved performance.

[31] Operating in targeted management areas and working with land occupiers in these areas through to compliance is more effective than a scattered approach. Strategic planning allows for the team to work together in dedicated management areas.

[32] An improved approach to monitoring and surveillance, including remote sensing, that informs planning to undertake formal inspections has been an improvement. The role of spatial analysis is seen as being a progressively important tool in pest management, including the role of artificial intelligence.

[33] Working with land occupiers to support them to achieve compliance can take multiple seasons/years, particularly regarding rabbits. This is in part due to the seasonal unpredictability of control methods and the time it takes to work with the land occupier to understand the most effective form of control for the infestation level and their property (it is not a one-size-fits all system). However, there is clear value in this approach. Management plans are a beneficial way of working with land occupiers over the longer term to manage species that will persist even after control has taken place, i.e. due to the seed source or life history of the species.

[34] Obtaining details of land occupiers (as opposed to owners), as required by the Biosecurity Act, adds considerable complexity to the administration of pest compliance. This is something that will continue to be looked at as it relates to our systems and processes.

[35] A move towards outcome driven pest management is increasingly needed to ensure the deliverables of the BOP align with the objectives of the RPMP. To this end, a review is to be conducted on the effectiveness of the RPMP in 2024/25 to assess the achievement of the RPMP objectives and recommend, where necessary, any changes.

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[1] The following list is not ordered in terms of importance.

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CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[36]   None.

Financial Considerations

[37]   None.

Significance and Engagement Considerations

[38]   None.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[39]   In line with the Biosecurity Act (1993), it is desirable that the attached report is proactively submitted to the Minister of Biosecurity prior to the 30 November 2024.

Climate Change Considerations

[40]   None.

Communications Considerations

[41]   None.

NEXT STEPS

[42]   Lessons learned and required improvements identified through preparing this report are being implemented.

[43]   The attached report will be provided to the Minister for Biosecurity.

ATTACHMENTS

1.   Appendix 1 Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023 24 Assessment

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Appendix 1: Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 Assessment of Performance
Implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-29

This report presents an assessment of the Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 and reviews the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as listed in the plan. This report is divided into the five pest control programmes as outlined in the Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-29, along with the administration programme.
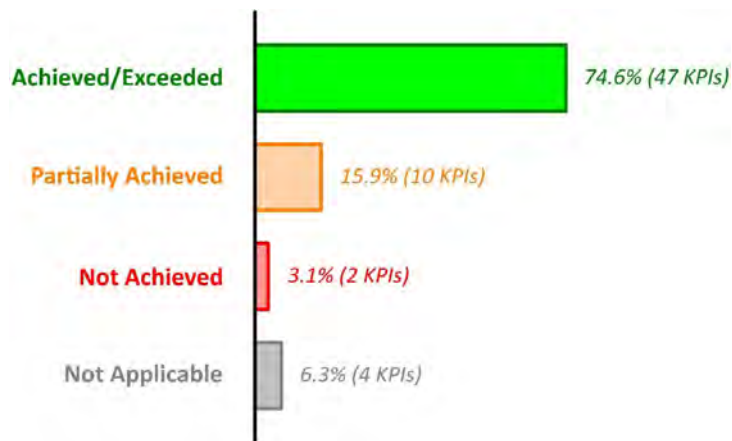
Figure 1: Snapshot of Biosecurity Performance in 2023-24

Key Legend

✔	**Achieved/Exceeded**	100% or more achieved
➖	**Partly Achieved**	Between 1-99% achieved
✖	**Not Achieved**	0% achieved
---	**Not Applicable**	Not able to be measured

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1. Exclusion Pest Programme

ORC will prevent six high threat pest plants from establishing in the region.

Exclusion Pest Programme				
Objective: Preclude the establishment of the following plant pests (listed below) in the Otago region for the duration of the RPMP: African feather grass, Chilean needle grass, Egeria, False tamarisk, Hornwort, and Moth plant.				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	# of meetings with neighbouring regional councils on exclusion pest threats	6	8	✅
KPI 2	Exclusion pest management and surveillance plans covering the six identified exclusion pests finalised by 31 May 2024	6	6	✅
KPI 3	% of actions completed within the required timeframes as set out in the incursion pest response plan for each confirmed sighting (as assessed by checklist)	100%	*See comment*	---
Comments	KPI 3: As there were no reported or confirmed sightings of exclusion pests, the KPI is not able to be measured (not applicable).			
Lessons Learnt	Given incursion of pests is a continual risk, the exclusion plans play a key means to proactively prevent spread of listed exclusion pests and other unlisted pests.			

2. Eradication Pest Programmes

ORC will eliminate spiny broom, and eradicate Bennett's wallaby and rooks from the region.

Bennett's Wallaby				
Objective: There are three key objectives in the eradication of Bennett's Wallaby.				
• Reduce known wallaby populations to zero density and prevent their further expansion in the region, • Prevent further spread of wallaby into North Otago from Canterbury, and • Inform the Otago community on the wallaby threat and encourage vigilance and reporting to council.				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	% of sightings inspected within 3 working days of receiving the sighting report	90%	93%	✅
KPI 2	% of sightings inspected within 10 working days of receiving the sighting report	100%	100%	✅
KPI 3	% of Operational Advisory Group meetings attended	100%	100%	✅

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			Target	Actual	
KPI 4	Fulfil requirements of MPI funding agreement		100%	100%	✅
KPI 5	# of wallaby R+D trials supported		2	4	✅
KPI 6	# of meetings or visits with Environment Canterbury on wallaby control		6	31	✅
Comments	KPI 5: R+D trials were supported were: [1] Bennett's wallaby site fidelity study, [2] ORC Judas Wallaby trial, [3] MPI eDNA research and [4] MPI wallaby detection probability trials				
Lessons Learnt	Strengthening the strong relationship with Environment Canterbury is an important aspect to eradicating wallabies from the Otago Region.				

Rooks

Objective: Reduce rook populations to zero density, within the RPMP period and maintain this status until eradication is attained.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of known rookery locations inspected	100%	100%	✅
KPI 2	If rooks are sighted, control action completed within 3 working days of the inspection.	100%	*See comments*	---
Comments	KPI 1: In additional to the 50 known rookeries, a further six sites checked. KPI 2: As there were no confirmed sightings of rooks, the KPI is not able to be measured (not applicable).			
Lessons Learnt	No specific lessons identified. However, as rooks were observed in the previous year it is important to actively inspect known rook sites.			

Spiny broom

Objective: Reduce spiny broom populations to zero density within the RPMP period and maintain this status until eradication is attained.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of known locations (13) inspected and surrounding areas surveyed for spiny broom	100%	100%	✅
KPI 2	Control action is commenced within 5 working days of confirmed sighting of spiny broom	100%	100%	✅
Comments	KPI 1: A total of 13 locations were inspected/surveyed. KPI 2: One small plant was found at one location, and immediately controlled.			
Lessons Learnt	The programme will be strengthened with a monitoring plan being developed in the 2024-25 Operational Plan.			

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3. Progressive Containment Pest Programmes

ORC aims to contain and reduce the extent of 11 pest plants (or groups of plants) across the region.

Wilding conifers				

Objective: Contain wilding conifers within the region (in accordance with national strategy), reduce infestation densities where practicable and prevent their spread to new locations

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	# of properties inspected for wilding conifer compliance	100	103	✓
KPI 2	% of Operational Advisory Group meetings attended	100%	100%	✓
KPI 3	Fulfil requirements of MPI funding agreement	100%	100%	✓
KPI 4	Funding disbursed as per agreement*	100%	100%	✓

Comments	KPI 1: Focus for this year was on engagement with landowners to encourage compliance rather than formal inspections.
Lessons Learnt	The complexity of rules meant determining compliance was a challenge. The main lessons learnt were [1] to be more strategic in identifying which properties should be prioritised for inspection/engagement and [2] investing in the quality of engagement with landowners over focusing on the number of inspections done.

* To *"Support regional partnerships through funding Whakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group and Central Otago Wilding Conifer Control Group"*

African love grass				

Objective: Contain African love grass to its 20 known sites within the region, reduce its densities at these sites and prevent spread to new sites.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of known locations (20) inspected and surrounding areas surveyed for African love grass	100%	100%	✓
KPI 2	If African love grass is sighted, control action is commenced within 10 working days of the inspection.	100%	100%	✓

Comments	KPI 1: In additional to the 20 known locations, a further seven sites checked.
	KPI 2: Plants were found at three locations, and immediately controlled.
Lessons Learnt	The programme will be strengthened with a monitoring plan being developed in the 2024-25 Operational Plan.

Nassella tussock

Objective: Contain Nassella tussock to known areas within the region, reduce its densities at these sites and prevent spread to new sites.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of known locations (38) inspected and surrounding locations surveyed for Nassella tussock	100%	100%	✅
Comments	KPI 1: In additional to the 38 known locations, a further 17 locations were checked.			
Lessons Learnt	The programme will be strengthened with a monitoring plan being developed in the 2024-25 Operational Plan.			

Old Man's Beard

Objective: Contain old man's beard to known areas within the region, reduce its densities at the above sites and prevent spread to new locations.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of non-compliant properties re-inspected for Old Man's Beard	100%	83%	⊖
Comments	KPI 1: A total of 103 properties were re-inspected out of a possible 124 non-compliant properties.[1] The difference relates to rescheduling re-inspections to an appropriate time of year when the pest is visible.			
Lessons Learnt	The KPI has been revised for 2024-25 year to focus properties inspections on, or surrounding high biodiversity, areas. This will help achieve the spread to new locations.			

Spartina and Six Containment Plants

Objective: Contain [1] spartina to known areas within the region, reduce its densities at the known sites and prevent spread to new sites and [2] the six pest plants (Bomarea, Boneseed, Bur daisy, Cape Ivy, Perennial nettle, White-edged nightshade) within the region, reduce their densities at known sites and prevent spread to new sites

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of non-compliant properties re-inspected for spartina or any one of the six containment plants	100%	67%	⊖
Comments	KPI 1: A total of 22 properties were re-inspected out of a possible 33 non-compliant properties.[1] The difference relates to rescheduling re-inspections to an appropriate time.			
Lessons Learnt	The programme will be strengthened with a monitoring plan being developed in the 2024-25 Operational Plan.			

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[1] Assessed at a population level rather than as a paired new/re-inspection.

4. Sustained Control Pest Programmes

ORC will enforce rules to ensure control of rabbits and five widespread pest plants (or groups of plants) to reduce their impacts and spread.

Feral rabbits				
Objective: Ensure continuing control of feral rabbits to manage their spread and to reduce adverse effects and impacts on economic wellbeing and the environment.				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	# of rabbit inspections outside a community programme	250	467	✅
KPI 2	% of non-compliant properties re-inspected for rabbit compliance	100%	96%	➖
KPI 3	# of engagements with community rabbit programme either through re-inspections or continued support	12	32	✅
KPI 4	# of rabbit night count routes completed and analysed	30	30	✅
KPI 5	# of fly traps locations monitored and analysed	10	59	✅
KPI 6	Report on analysis of historical serological data completed by 30 June 2024	1	*See comment*	❌
KPI 7	Update rabbit proneness map completed by 31 March 2024	1	*See comment*	➖
KPI 8	# of R+D trials to enhance rabbit monitoring instigated	2	2	✅
KPI 9	Funding round *(Sustainable Rabbit Management)* is oversubscribed with eligible applications	Yes	Yes	✅
KPI 10	# of territorial authorities and Crown agencies† engaged on rabbit management.	8	10	✅
Comments	KPI 1: An additional 193 properties were inspected through the community rabbit programme. KPI 2: A total of 402 properties were re-inspected out of a possible 418 non-compliant properties[2] (community and non-community programmes). The difference relates to rescheduling re-inspections to an appropriate time. KPI 4: Analysis was presented at Environmental Implementation Committee meeting, 8 November 2023. KPI 5: Analysis will be presented at Environmental Implementation Committee meeting, 7 November 2024. KPI 6: This KPI has been transferred to the 2024-25 Operational Plan due to the availability of the consultant. The analysis will be completed by October 2024.			

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[2] Assessed at a population level rather than as a paired new/re-inspection.

Assessment of Biosecurity Operational Plan 2023-24 Key Performance Indicators   Page **6** of **12**

	KPI 7: The report has just been completed (the work was extended by two months). The report will be presented at Environmental Implementation Committee meeting, 7 November 2024.
	KPI 8: R+D trials were supported were: [1] Moeraki Bait Pen and [2] Fly traps.
	KPI 9: $249,740.78 requested out of $100,000 available. 10 proposals received with 5 fully funded and one partly funded.
	KPI 10: A total of 28 meetings/engagements were held across the ten listed agencies on rabbit management.
Lessons Learnt	The rabbit programme is progressing well and strengthened, in particular rabbit monitoring has increased following Council resolutions. This includes additional night count routes, fly trap analysis (rabbit virus), serology analysis (rabbit virus) and updating rabbit proneness modelling.

† Listed agencies are: MPI, DoC, LINZ, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, WDC, DCC, CDC, CODC and QLDC.

Gorse and broom

Objective: Ensure continuing control of gorse and broom, that prevents land free of these pests from becoming infested and reduces adverse effects on the economic (and environmental) wellbeing of occupiers regionwide.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of non-compliant properties re-inspected in gorse and broom free areas	100%	56%	⊖
KPI 2	# of community meetings delivered on new gorse and broom free areas	4	5	✓
Comments	KPI 1: A total of 9 properties were re-inspected out of a possible 16 non-compliant properties. The difference relates to rescheduling re-inspections to an appropriate time (e.g. when flowers are blooming). KPI 2: Community meetings also included engagement with selected stakeholders (LINZ and DoC) and landowners.			
Lessons Learnt	The programme will be strengthened with a monitoring plan being developed in the 2024-25 Operational Plan. The monitoring of gorse and broom via remote sensing is also being investigated.			

Russell lupin

Objective: Instigate boundary controls of Russell lupin to prevent spread (e.g. the planting and subsequent seeding) of wild lupin plants, and to reduce adverse effects in rural zoned land.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of actions completed by due date as described in the Russell lupin strategy	100%	100%	✓
KPI 2	# of high-risk areas inspected for Russell lupin	6	6	✓
Comments	KPI 1: All four actions set down for 2023-24 were completed as required. Some actions may extend into the following year.			

	KPI 2: The six areas inspected were the following catchments: Dart, Rees, Matukituki, Makarora, Hunter and Shotover (downstream of Arthurs Point)
Lessons Learnt	Having a strategy provides a proactive means to plan through to June 2028.

Ragwort and Nodding thistle

Objective: Over the duration of the Plan, implement sustained control of nodding thistle and ragwort on rural zoned land within specified distances of property boundaries throughout the Otago region to prevent their spread in order to minimise adverse effects on production values and economic well-being.

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	% of non-compliant properties re-inspected for nodding thistle and ragwort	100%	*See comment*	---
Comments	KPI 1: No nodding thistle and ragwort complaints were received hence under RPMP rules no inspections were needed. Consequently, the KPI was not able to be measured.			
Lessons Learnt	No lessons learnt.			

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5. Site-led Pest Programmes

ORC has two site led pest programmes.

1. ORC will take a lead role in supporting community and agency control of six pest plants and nine pest animals to support Predator Free Dunedin and wider biodiversity enhancement initiatives.
2. ORC will target one freshwater pest plant.

Otago Peninsula, West Harbour – Mount Cargill and Quarantine & Goat Islands				
Objective: Support community groups and other agencies to protect the ecological integrity of the Otago Peninsula, West Harbour-Mt Cargill, and Quarantine & Goat Islands.				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	Site-led programme plan (including each site-led location) reconfirmed by 31 July 2023	3	3	✅
KPI 2	% of actions implemented within defined timeframes for 2023-2024	100%	100%	✅
Comments	None to note			
Lessons Learnt	No specific lessons learnt. Continue programmes as planned.			

Lagarosiphon				
Objective: Support LINZ in controlling and eradicating lagarosiphon in the region's rivers and lakes				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	# of meetings attended with LINZ and other stakeholders	4	13	✅
KPI 2	Funding disbursed as per agreement *[Support LINZ in the management and control of lagarosiphon]*	100%	100%	✅
KPI 3	# of interactions in the 'Check, clean, dry' programme	650	767	✅
KPI 4	# of lagarosiphon monitoring visits at priority water bodies	18	33	✅
KPI 5	# of lagarosiphon inspections at secondary water bodies	40	50	✅
Comments	KPI 4: Of the priority water bodies, lagarosiphon was present in Bullock Creek (Wanaka) and Albert Town retention ponds. KPI 5: Of the secondary water bodies, lagarosiphon was present in the Purerua River, Inch Clutha.			
Lessons Learnt	Visits to priority and secondary water bodies also includes monitoring other aquatic pests.			

6. Integrated Programmes

Biodiversity Integration			
		Target	**Actual**
KPI 1	# of pest inspections undertaken	1,500	2,129
KPI 2	% of pest inspections undertaken in high biodiversity focus areas and their surrounds	40%	72%

Comments	KPI 1: The total was made up of 285 formal inspections and 1,844 monitoring visits.
	KPI 2: 780 out of 1087 inspections/monitoring visits (new visits only) were undertaken in high biodiversity focus areas and their surrounds.[3]
Lessons Learnt	During the year, a secondary data collection tool was developed to monitor pests in non-property locations (e.g. road verges, river margins) and selected pests. This has provided better flexibility to assessing the prevalence of pests and is complementary to formal inspections.

Shared Pest Programmes			
		Target	**Actual**
KPI 1	% of non-compliant inspections re-inspected within set timeframes	100%	84%
KPI 2	# of density monitoring visits undertaken	20	0
KPI 3	# of monitoring visits to bio-control sites	20	354
KPI 4	# of nurseries and pet shops visited	10	10
KPI 5	% of deliverables enacted from the advocacy and education programme.	100%	100%

Comments	KPI 1: A total of 142 properties were re-inspected out of a possible 170 non-compliant properties (formal inspections). The difference relates to rescheduling re-inspections to an appropriate time in the season. (This KPI excludes rabbit inspections which is detailed separately).
	KPI 2: Density monitoring of selected pest plants has been retired and will be replaced by monitoring plans for 2024-25 for specific pests. This is seen as being a more effective way to assess pest infestations.

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[3] A high biodiversity focus area consists of properties with [1] a Significant Natural Area (SNA), a QEII covenant or land demarcated as 30% high biodiversity area (Leathwick, 2020) and [2] and buffer of 1 km around said properties.

Lessons Learnt	The density monitoring of selected pest plants was challenging to implement over a series of years. In its place, a series of monitoring plans will be developed for key pest plant species. This is expected to be completed by December 2024.

Pest Programme Engagement

		Target	Actual	
KPI 1	# of communication engagements with listed agencies† at least once annually	10	10	✅
KPI 2	# of community events attended to support best practice pest control	12	14	✅
KPI 3	# of collaborations with neighbouring regional councils	4	27	✅
KPI 4	# of meetings with Kāi Tahu on biosecurity issues	2	14	✅
KPI 5	# of school programmes attended to provide awareness on biosecurity	10	5	⊖

Comments	KPI 1: All ten agencies had at least one engagement during the year. Overall, there was 25 meetings/engagements with the listed agencies. (This is in addition to engagements with agencies related to rabbits, as reported above.) KP5: Requests for attending school programmes was lower than expected.
Lessons Learnt	Engagements with key agencies and stakeholders have been a strength of the Operational Plan with most engagement KPIs being exceeded.

† Listed agencies are: MPI, DoC, LINZ, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, WDC, DCC, CDC, CODC and QLDC.

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

7. RPMP Administration

Compliance and Enforcement Actions				
		Target	**Actual**	
KPI 1	% of occupier/landowner advised of inspection status within three weeks of the inspection	75%	66%	⊖
KPI 2	% of occupier/landowner advised of inspection status within six weeks of the inspection	100%	84%	⊖
KPI 3	% of eligible non-compliant properties issued with a Notice of Direction within 20 working days after re-inspection	100%	100%	✓
KPI 4	% of exclusion pest enquiries responded to within 24 hours	100%	*See comment*	---
KPI 5	% of eradication pest enquiries responded to within three working days	100%	100%	✓
KPI 6	% of all pest enquiries responded to within 10 working days	100%	88%	⊖
Comments	KPI 1 & 2: This was partially achieved due to adjusting to the new administration system. Letters were prioritised for non-compliant properties. Some letters were not processed as the re-inspection was placed on hold, re-scheduled or suspended for operational reasons.			
	KPI 3: 24 Notices of Direction (NoD) were issued. Once a non-compliant property was deemed eligible (i.e. meeting the NoD criteria), they issued a NoD within 20 working days.			
	KPI 4: No exclusion pests were reported during the year (excludes wallabies which are reported separately).			
	KPI 5: Six enquires were received on eradication pets and all were actioned within three working days.			
	KPI 6: There were 159 pest enquiries with 142 responded to within 10 working days. The difference is essentially due to enquiries during the December/January period and close closure/staff leave.			
Lessons Learnt	The partial achievement of RPMP administration continues to be related to the operationalising of the revised administration systems during the year. For technical reasons, the solution has taken longer than expected. While this is improving, a complete solution is unlikely until IRIS NextGen is fully rolled out.			

Otago Regional Council

From the Office of the Chairperson

1 November 2024

Hon Chris Bishop, Hon Penny Simmonds and Hon Todd McClay
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

via Email: c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz, p.simmonds@ministers.govt.nz,
todd.mcclay@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Ministers Bishop, Simmonds and McClay,

Thank you for your letter following the RM amendment last week.

We acknowledge the opportunity to collaborate on the forthcoming National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and welcome the offer to contribute. We look forward to hearing more on mechanisms to progress this.

As noted, Otago faces specific timebound regulatory water management challenges. We note the new acceptable notification timeframes, likely new NPSFM completion date, and the exemptions pathway.

Our Council is committed to representing our region's needs and the constructive role regional councils can play in achieving our shared goals of healthy, sustainable environments and livelihoods. We welcome the opportunity to build on our shared goals through collaboration.

Yours sincerely

Gretchen Robinson
Chairperson

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Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

9.2. Chief Executive's Report

Prepared for:	Council
Activity:	Governance Report
Author:	Richard Saunders, Chief Executive
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   This report provides Council with an overview of Otago Regional Council's key projects, financial performance and progress against our levels of service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   Planning is underway for the Annual Plan for 2025/26 process (Year 2 of the LTP). A workshop has been held with Councillors on the 30th of October, with a follow up session scheduled on 4 December 2024.

[3]   Staff have provided a further update on customer enquiry data received this financial year, including separate data for rates enquiries, as requested previously by Council.

[4]   Nine non-financial level of service measures are currently being reported as at risk and one is being reported as off track at the end of October.

[5]   At the end of October ORC is reporting a surplus of $3.081m against a budgeted surplus of $2.489m, a positive variance of $591k. The reduction in variance from previous reports is due to the completion of budget phasing for the financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. **Notes** this report.

DISCUSSION

Annual Plan 2025/26

[6]   Work continues on the 25/26 annual plan. Staff are preparing for a second Council workshop in early December. The focus of the workshop will be to review options for changes to the year two budget and programme to achieve an overall reduction in rates.

[7]   Key decisions are transport investment for year 2 are the subject of a separate paper on today's agenda.

Customer Experience Report

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[8]   At September's Council meeting a request was made for the inclusion of some customer experience data to show the impact of rates on call volumes. The first customer report was included in the October CE's report. A follow up report to the end of October is included as attachment 1.

[9]   Attachment 1 shows the customer data by enquiry type for the 2024 calendar year. The total number of calls received in October was 18% higher than previous years. The higher call volumes and length of interactions are placing pressure on staff to consistently achieve high service levels. 83% of calls were answered which is slightly lower than the 23/24 year but significantly higher than the 22/23 year. Service satisfaction remains high at 93%.

[10]   Rates calls remain higher than previous years. The key themes identified by the customer experience team have been:
    a. Queenstown customers unhappy their % increase is significantly more than the reported average rates increase
    b. General complaints about increasing rates
    c. Changes to rate types and understanding why these are paid
    d. Confusion around changes to the direct debit arrangements offered by ORC
    e. Updating details

[11]   A further call peak is expected in November when rates penalty notices are issued. Additional resources have been arranged for this period to assist in responding to customer enquiries.

Non-financial Levels of Service

[12]   Attachments 2 and 3 show the results for the non-financial levels of service contained in the LTP. At the end of October there are nine measures being reported as at risk and one measure being reported as off track. 45 measures remain on track.

[13]   The off track measure relates to the Land and Water Regional Plan. Staff will not be able to deliver a plan to the Chief Freshwater Commissioner by 30 June 2025 following recent legislative changes. The LGOIMA level of service will also be off-track at year end but is currently being reports as at risk.

[14]   The range of at risk measures relate to the timing of reports within the Regional Planning, Environment and Safety and Resilience areas. These measures will be closely monitored with a view to achieving the LTP level of service.

[15]   A number of transport measures cannot be assessed until Q4 so are not assessed in the preceding months.

Financial Performance

[16]   The statement of comprehensive revenue and expenditure is included as attachment 4 and the statement of financial position is included as attachment 5.

[17]   At the end of October ORC is reporting a surplus of $3.081m against a budgeted surplus of $2.489m, a positive variance of $591k. Revenue is $1.385m over budget and expenditure is $1.416m over budget. A surplus of $991k is being forecast at year end. This is due to the managed fund and is expected to change during the year. The next forecast will be completed at the end of Q2 and reported to Council in February.

[18]   At this stage of the financial year there are no risks to raise with Council. Expenditure is being carefully managed and full financial reporting including forecasting will continue to be provided to the Finance Committee.

[19]   The statement of financial position demonstrates that ORC is continuing to maintain a strong balance sheet that enables us to meet our financial obligations as they fall due.

OPTIONS
[20]   As this is a report for noting there are no options to consider.

ATTACHMENTS
1.   October Customer Report [**9.2.1** - 2 pages]
2.   Monthly performance report Oct 2024 Summary final [**9.2.2** - 3 pages]
3.   Monthly performance report Oct 2024 Exceptions final [**9.2.3** - 2 pages]
4.   SCRE October 2024 [**9.2.4** - 1 page]
5.   Balance Sheet October 2024 [**9.2.5** - 1 page]

October 2024 Customer Report

Rolling 12-month customer volume average is 5752 per month

October customer volume total is **9355**
(reception = 1105, phone = 4121, email = 2840, social 976 afterhours = 313)
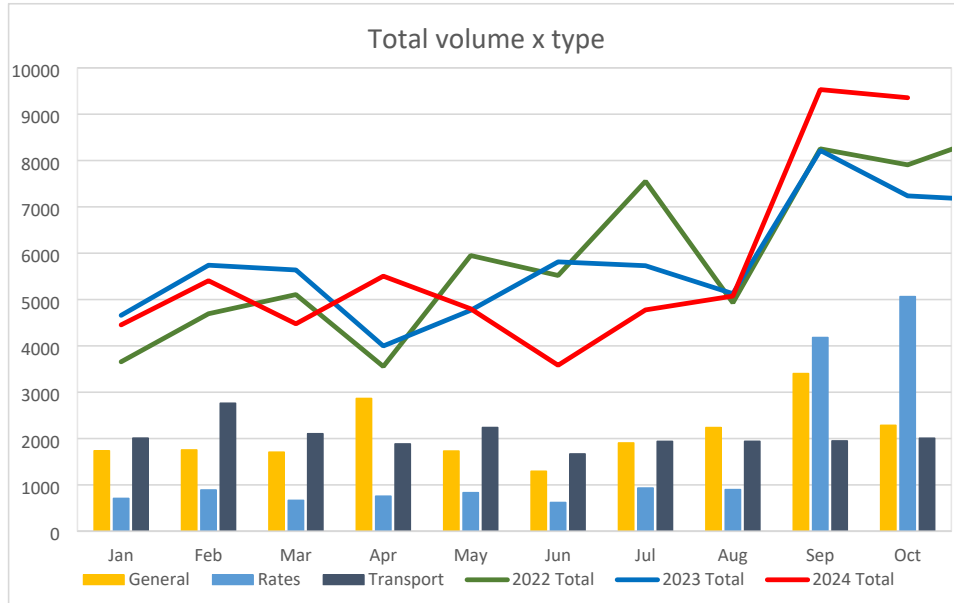
- Total volume customer interactions reduced by 2% (176) and remains 18% higher than previous years.
- Customer sentiment is low with interactions taking longer to move to a more positive outcome.
- Total service level for all calls dropped to 83% (longer call duration = longer wait times & higher abandoned calls)
- Total customer satisfaction rating for October increased to 93%.

Rates calls 2022 v 2023
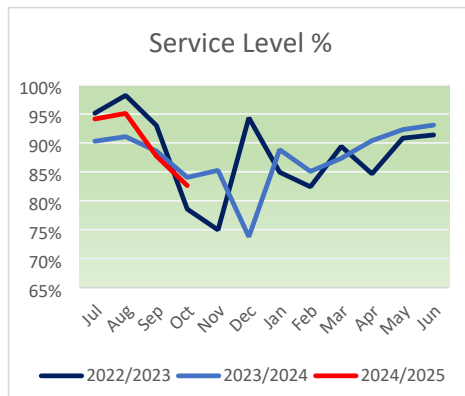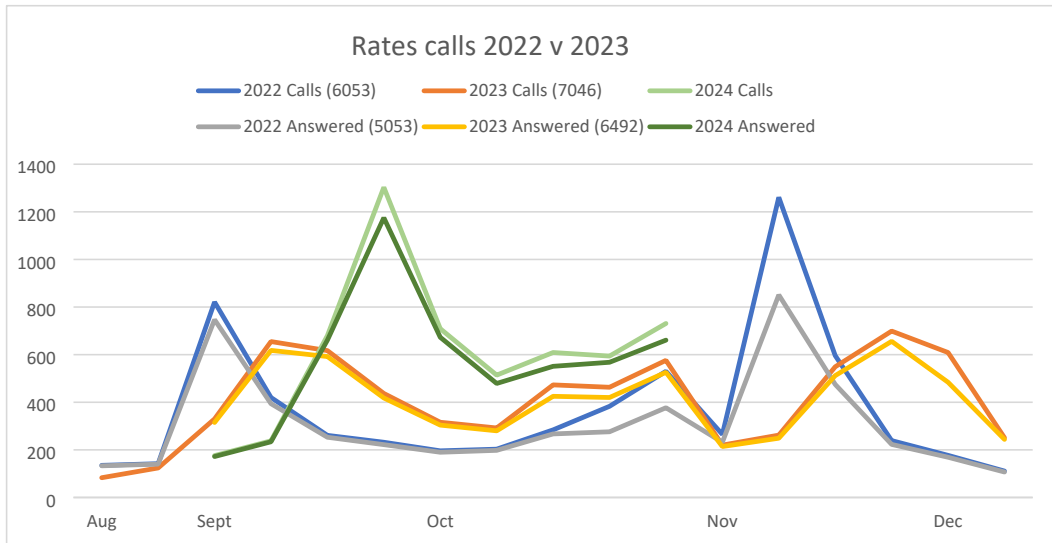
Rates summary:

- Rates enquiries increased as expected but remained elevated through October compared to previous years.
- Reminder email sent 18 October to all unpaid & non-direct debit customers.
  - Improved CX from finance with one email for multiple properties this year.
- CS team answered 93% of rates calls for October (2932/3157*)
- Rates enquiry themes remained similar to last month:
  - higher-than-expected increases,
  - changes to rate types,
  - triannual payment resets.
  - Update information,
  - resend invoice,
  - unable to pay – looking for options.

Forward planning:

- Customer volumes for November, are reduced for week 1, then predicted to reach/exceed capacity from week 2 to mid-December. This has been mitigated by spreading the mail drop over multiple weeks and recruiting an agency temp in customer support for 5 weeks.

*Please note the September report showed this figure as 1175/1303, which was only the last week of the September rates calls. The total Sept rates calls answered/volume was 2242/2397 = 94%

OCTOBER PERFORMANCE REPORTING - SUMMARY

Status by Activity

Legend:
- Reporting Overdue (black)
- Not yet Due (grey)
- Off Track (red)
- At Risk (yellow)

Service Measure and Target				
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP				
Governance & Community Engagement	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Percentage of official information requests responded to within 20 working days of being logged - Target: 100%	green	yellow	red	yellow
Deliver our Long-Term Plan, annual reviews of the LTP, and reporting of performance against plan as per the statutory requirements - Target: Annual Plan adopted by council prior to 30 June 2025	green	green	green	green
Percentage of council agendas are publicly available two working days or more before a meeting - Target: 100%	green	green	green	green
Biannual survey is conducted to understand and improve community awareness, perceptions and expectations of ORC - Target: Report against the action plan to Council by March 2025.	green	green	green	green
Customers express high levels of satisfaction with customer service provision - Target: Develop Customer Policy to determine satisfaction levels	green	green	green	green
Increase opportunities for engagement with diverse groups across Otago to lift awareness and understanding of the work of the regional council and seek feedback on performance Target: Create and implement engagement plan and establish engagement data	green	green	green	green
Regional Planning, Strategy & Urban Development	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Support integrated and well managed urban growth across Otago - Target: Joint Queenstown future development strategy completed by 30 June 2025	green	yellow	yellow	yellow
Support integrated and well managed urban growth across Otago - Target: Consultation on maps of highly productive land completed by 31 December 2024	green	red	red	yellow
Develop a regional biodiversity strategy and implement ORC actions. Target: Draft regional biodiversity strategy is made available for public consultation by 30 June 2025	green	green	green	green
Develop a Regional Air Quality Strategy and implement ORC actions. Target: Draft Regional Air Quality Strategy is made available for public consultation along with the revised Air Plan by 30 June 2025.	green	green	green	green
Develop a Regional Climate Change Strategy and implement ORC actions -Target: ORC actions from the Regional Climate Change Strategy are implemented, and the effectiveness of the strategy is monitored and reported to Council annually.	green	green	green	green
Regulatory	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Maintain 24-hour/7 day a week response for environmental incidents - Target: Pollution hotline staff available/on call 24/7	green	green	green	green
Maintain 20 appropriately trained responders for maritime oil pollution incidents -Target: 20 responders attend 3 exercises per year	green	green	green	green
Percentage of resource consent applications processed in accordance with Resource Management Act 1991 legislative timeframes - Target: ≥98%	green	green	green	green
Percentage of performance monitoring returns completed each year, as per the Compliance Audit and Performance Monitoring Schedule targets - Target: ≥90%	green	green	green	green
Percentage of significant non-compliance identified where action is taken in accordance with Compliance Policy - Target: 100%	green	green	green	green
Percentage of programmed inspections/audits completed each year, as per the Compliance Audit and Performance Monitoring Schedule targets - Target: ≥90%	green	green	green	green
Maintain compliance with Port and Harbour Marine Safety Code - Target: External review is completed and deemed to be code consistent.	green	green	green	green
The safety campaign for recreational 'boaters' is delivered - Target: 80% achieved	green	green	green	green

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Percentage of public enquiries for consent information completed within 7 working days - Target: Maintain or increase				(green)

ENVIRONMENT

Land and Water	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Complete the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) - Target: Freshwater hearing panel nominations and required documents submitted to Chief Freshwater Commissioner by 30 June 2025.	(green)	(green)	(green)	(red)
ORC led and community/landowner supported workshops and events are delivered which promote best practice land management for soil conservation, water quality and/or the efficient use of water. Target: At least 12 ORC led workshops or events are delivered annually	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Site specific projects are developed for selected degraded waterbodies - Target: New projects and associated milestones are developed and reported to Council	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Site specific projects are developed for selected degraded waterbodies - Target: Project actions have been progressed as scheduled (>80%)	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Catchment Action Plans (CAPs) give effect to the ICM programme and are developed in partnership with iwi and in collaboration with the community. Target: One Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to be presented to Council for approval by 30 June 2025	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Report the results of environmental monitoring for freshwater, land use, estuarine, and regional coastal environments. Target: Annual report for each of the 4 environments to Council prior to 30 June 2025.	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)

Biodiversity & Biosecurity	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Actions within the Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) are identified and progressed - Target: 100% of targets for priority pests are delivered.	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Externally funded biosecurity projects/programmes are implemented as per their agreements - Target: 90% of deliverables in the agreements with Central Government are progressing as scheduled	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Biodiversity Forum-based joint projects to enhance indigenous biodiversity are developed - Target: New projects and associated milestones are developed and reported to Council and forum partners	(green)	(green)	(green)	(yellow)
Joint projects are implemented against milestones - Target: Project actions have been progressed as scheduled (>80%)	(green)	(green)	(yellow)	(yellow)
Alignment between initiatives and deliverables receiving Council funding, and Council's strategic biodiversity strategic objectives - Target: 80% alignment	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Externally funded freshwater projects/programmes are delivered as per their agreements - Target: 90% of deliverables in the agreements with Central Government are progressing as scheduled	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Report the results of environmental monitoring for regional indigenous biodiversity ecosystems - Target: Annual report completed prior to 30 June 2025	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Actions within the Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) are identified and progressed - Target: 90% of actions achieved within timeframes specified.	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)

Air	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Implement a regional air monitoring programme - Target: Annual report on monitoring programme completed and reported to Council	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Report the results of environmental monitoring for air. - Target: Annual report for air monitoring for previous financial year reported to Council by 30 Sept 2024. Note: ≥95% = achieved	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Complete review of the Regional Plan Air - Target: Council approves Regional Plan Air for notification by 30 June 2025	(green)	(green)	(green)	(yellow)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE

Natural Hazards & Climate Change Adaptation	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Natural hazards information is available via the web-based Otago Natural Hazards Database - Target: Database is accessible and up-to-date 100% of the time	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Percentage of flood warnings that are issued in accordance with the flood warning manual - Target: 100%	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Implement the findings of the regional natural hazards risk assessment and inform adaptation planning and implementation - Target: Implementation and additional assessments of natural hazards and risks based on the findings of the Otago Natural Hazards Risk Assessment. Phased delivery Yr 1 to 10	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Implement prioritised natural hazard risks adaptation works - Target: The first Head of Lake Whakatipu natural hazards adaptation strategy completed by 31 December 2024; Actions developed, implemented and reviewed, as per Head of Lake Whakatipu natural hazard adaptation strategy.	(green)	(green)	(yellow)	(yellow)
Implement prioritised natural hazard risks adaptation works - Target: Support the South Dunedin Future Programme - South Dunedin Future natural hazards adaptation plan progresses as per annual work plan	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)

Flood protection & River Management	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Percentage of scheme renewals programme: Major flood protection and control works are maintained, repaired, and renewed to the key standards defined in relevant planning documents. - Target: > 85% of renewal programmes completed	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Percentage of scheme maintenance programme: Major flood protection drainage and control works are maintained, repaired, and renewed to the key standards defined in relevant planning documents. - Target: > 85% of planned maintenance programme completed	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Percentage of planned maintenance programme: Channel works are maintained, repaired, and renewed to the key standards defined in relevant planning documents - Target: >85% of planned maintenance programme completed	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)
Respond within defined timelines for reported issues and to flood events in a timely manner - Target: Flood repair programme: Damage identified, prioritised and a repair programme is made available to affected communities within 3 months of the event/100%.	(green)	(green)	(green)	(green)

	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Respond within defined timelines for reported issues and to flood events in a timely manner - Target: Reported issues that have been investigated and appropriate action determined and communicated to affected landholders within 20 working days.	Green	Green	Green	Yellow

Emergency Management	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Emergency Management Otago staff are available to respond 24/7 to a Civil Defence emergency - Target: Maintain a duty roster for 24/7 365 coverage for initial responses to Civil Defence emergencies	Green	Green	Green	Green
Provide a regional coordination facility (ECC) capable of coordinating a region-wide emergency - Target: An appropriate facility as defined in the CDEM Partnership Agreement is available for immediate activation. Adequate staff (as defined in the Group Training and Capability Strategy) are trained and capable to coordinate a region wide response	Green	Green	Green	Green
Support is provided to Emergency Management Otago to fulfil Otago CDEM Group requirements as defined in the CDEM Act and CDEM - Target: Fulfil all requirements as the administering authority and the Otago CDEM Partnership Agreement	Green	Green	Green	Green
Provide a regional coordination facility (ECC) capable of coordinating a region-wide emergency - Target: Adequate staff (as defined in the Group Training and Capability Strategy) are trained and capable to coordinate a region wide response	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green

TRANSPORT

Transport	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Percentage of scheduled services on-time (punctuality – to five minutes) - Target: 95%	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Overall passenger satisfaction with Dunedin Public Transport system at annual survey - Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey
Annual public transport boardings in Queenstown - Target: Increase	Green	Green	Green	Green
Annual public transport boardings in Dunedin - Target: increase	Green	Green	Green	Green
Percentage of scheduled services delivered (reliability) - Target: 95%	Green	Green	Green	Green
Overall passenger satisfaction with Whakatipu Public Transport system at annual survey - Target: Maintain or increase 3yr rolling average >=90%	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey
Percentage of users who are satisfied with the provision of timetable and services information - Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey
Percentage of users who are satisfied with the overall service of the Total Mobility scheme- Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey

On Track	At Risk	Off Track	Reporting Overdue

OCTOBER PERFORMANCE REPORTING - EXCEPTIONS

Status by Activity

Service Measure and Target					
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP					
Governance & Community Engagement	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Percentage of official information requests responded to within 20 working days of being logged - Target: 100%					As 100% Compliance is required, we will not be able to achieve total compliance by 30 June 2025
Regional Planning, Strategy & Urban Development	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Support integrated and well managed urban growth across Otago - Target: Joint Queenstown future development strategy completed by 30 June 2025					As the Housing and Business development capacity assessments (HBCA) for the joint ORC QLDC FDS (Spatial Plan Gen 2.0) is delayed until November 2024 at least it is uncertain when the FDS will be notified to the public, heard by a Panel and completed.
Support integrated and well managed urban growth across Otago - Target: Consultation on maps of highly productive land completed by 31 December 2024					It is unlikely that public consultation will be completed by end of December 2024 as we are still waiting on direction from central government.
ENVIRONMENT					
Land and Water	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Complete the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) - Target: Freshwater hearing panel nominations and required documents submitted to Chief Freshwater Commissioner by 30 June 2025.					The pLWRP and the section 32 report were ready for notification decision by end of October 2024, but this decision has been deferred due to legislative change.
Biodiversity & Biosecurity	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Biodiversity Forum-based joint projects to enhance indigenous biodiversity are developed - Target: New projects and associated milestones are developed and reported to Council and forum partners					First project was delayed but is now in the final stages. This would inform new projects being developed and delivered.
Joint projects are implemented against milestones - Target: Project actions have been progressed as scheduled (>80%)					67% of actions progressed so far but this is still being reviewed. Working to the target.
Air	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Complete review of the Regional Plan Air - Target: Council approves Regional Plan Air for notification by 30 June 2025					The draft Plan and section 32 report will be ready for notification by August 2025, which is two months later than the LOSM in the LTP.
CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE					
Natural Hazards & Climate Change Adaptation	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Implement prioritised natural hazard risks adaptation works - Target: The first Head of Lake Whakatipu natural hazards adaptation strategy completed by 31 December 2024; Actions developed, implemented and reviewed, as per Head of Lake Whakatipu natural hazard adaptation strategy.					A revised schedule to deliver the first iteration of the strategy will be in early 2025 so we won't make it to the 31 December 2024 target. This is to allow sufficient time for community/public feedback on the draft Strategy, and incorporation of this feedback into the final version of the Strategy document.
Flood protection & River Management	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Respond within defined timelines for reported issues and to flood events in a timely manner - Target: Reported issues that have been investigated and appropriate action determined and communicated to affected landholders within 20 working days.					We predict that we will be marginally off target due to staff changes, the implementation of a new method for enquiries over the Rain Event and an increase in workload volume. We are taking measures to mitigate this and improve processes for the remaining year, and we are confident we will be back on target by end of year.
TRANSPORT					
Transport	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	COMMENT
Percentage of scheduled services on-time (punctuality – to five minutes) - Target: 95%					Services are heavily affected in Dunedin by extensive roadworks and road closures, whilst Queenstown continues to be affected by heavy congestion on the approaches in and out of central Queenstown/Stanley Street at peak times and significant ongoing roading works. It is anticipated that Dunedin punctuality will improve significantly with the completion of the central city works.
Overall passenger satisfaction with Dunedin Public Transport system at annual survey - Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%					The next survey will take place in Q4 2025.
Overall passenger satisfaction with Whakatipu Public Transport system at annual survey - Target: Maintain or increase 3yr rolling average >=90%					Surveys are completed in Q4 - Targets are expected to be achieved.
Percentage of users who are satisfied with the provision of timetable and services information - Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%					Surveys are completed in Q4 - Targets are expected to be achieved.

Percentage of users who are satisfied with the overall service of the Total Mobility scheme- Target: Maintain or increase 3 yr rolling average >=90%			Surveys are done in Q4. We expect to achieve the target.

On Track	At Risk	Off Track	Reporting Overdue

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 OCTOBER 2024

	October 2025 Actual Year to Date	October 2025 Budget Year to Date	Variance Actual Year to Date	2025 Forecast Full Year	2025 Budget Full Year	Variance Forecast Full Year
Revenue						
Revenue from non-exchange transactions						
Rates Revenue	21,610	21,274	336	63,932	64,893	(961)
Grant revenue and subsidies	7,438	6,443	995	22,910	21,991	919
Other Revenue non exchange	3,101	2,313	787	12,092	10,856	1,236
Revenue from exchange transactions						
Interest and investment revenue	2,455	3,255	(799)	9,170	9,765	(595)
Dividends	6,226	6,000	226	18,188	18,000	188
Other Revenue Exchange	1,802	1,962	(160)	3,644	3,644	0
Total Revenue	**42,632**	**41,247**	**1,385**	**129,936**	**129,149**	**787**
Expenditure						
Employee benefits expense	13,219	13,155	64	39,424	39,454	(30)
Depreciation and amortisation	1,416	1,101	316	3,578	3,302	276
Finance Costs	2,967	3,141	(174)	9,296	9,424	(128)
Other Expenses	23,069	21,858	1,211	79,152	78,879	273
Total Expenditure	**40,671**	**39,255**	**1,416**	**131,450**	**131,059**	**391**
Other gains/(losses)						
Other (gains)/losses	1,120	498	622	2,088	1,493	595
Surplus/(deficit)	**3,081**	**2,489**	**591**	**574**	**(417)**	**991**
Fair value gain/loss on shares in subsidiary	**0**	**0**	**0**	**28,156**	**28,156**	**0**
Total Comprehensive Revenue and Expense	**3,081**	**2,489**	**591**	**28,730**	**27,739**	**991**

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2024

	October 2024 Actual $000s	June 2024 Prior year actual $000s	Year to Date Variance $000s	June 2025 Budget $000s
Assets				
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	25,105	13,605	11,501	2,455
Trade and other receivables	58,428	17,139	41,289	18,180
Property held for sale	3,350	3,350	(0)	0
Current related party receivable	38,355	38,480	(125)	0
Other financial assets	28,710	27,284	1,426	29,181
Other Current Assets	2,643	1,561	1,082	1,433
Total Current Assets	156,591	101,419	55,172	51,249
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Shares in subsidiary	732,720	732,720	0	780,239
Property, plant and equipment	95,608	96,161	(553)	109,835
Intangible assets	335	408	(74)	2,025
Non current related party receivable	75,323	75,198	125	150,088
Investment Property	16,850	16,850	0	17,134
Borrower Notes	500	500	0	500
Total Non-current Assets	921,336	921,838	(502)	1,059,821
Total Assets	1,077,927	1,023,256	54,671	1,111,070
Liabilities				
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Trade and other payables	57,110	20,281	36,829	22,594
Employee entitlements	2,958	3,293	(335)	2,716
Borrowings	63,455	48,359	15,096	69,878
Total Current Liabilities	123,524	71,934	51,590	95,188
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Non current borrowings and other financial liabilities	90,528	90,528	0	110,438
Total Non-current liabilities	90,528	90,528	0	110,438
Total Liabilities	214,052	162,462	51,590	205,626
NET ASSETS (Assets minus Liabilities)	863,875	860,794	3,081	905,444
Equity				
PUBLIC EQUITY				
Public Equity	105,548	102,467	3,081	120,576
Total Public Equity	105,548	102,467	3,081	120,576
RESERVES				
Reserves	758,328	758,328	0	784,868
Total Reserves	758,328	758,328	0	784,868
Total Equity	863,875	860,794	3,081	905,444

10.1. Catlins Catchment Action Plan

Prepared for:	Council
Report No.	GOV2458
Activity:	Governance Report
Authors:	Anna Molloy (Principal Advisor - Environment Implementation), Libby Caldwell (Team Leader Environmental Implementation), Charly Richardson (Catchment Action Analyst), Sophie Fern (Catchment Action Planner).
Endorsed by:	Joanna Gilroy, General Manager Environmental Delivery
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   To present the Catlins Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to Council for endorsement and to recommend a framework for CAP delivery and support from Otago Regional Council (ORC).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   This paper will be preceded by a presentation from members of the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group (ICG) and staff to introduce and overview the CAP.

[3]   The Catlins CAP was developed collaboratively by members of the Catlins ICG. The ICG includes community members from across the Catlins who have expertise in agriculture, forestry, conservation, tourism and recreation. The ICG also includes representatives from mana whenua (Te Rūnaka o Awarua), Clutha District Council, Department of Conservation and ORC.

[4]   The CAP was developed using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (Conservation Standards) and supported by the ORC's Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Team. This is the first CAP for Otago and represents significant time, effort and collaboration from all parties involved.

[5]   The CAP is being presented to Council for 'endorsement' that it sets the direction, in principle, for taking actions to enhance the environment of the Catlins area which is located within the Otago boundary. If the CAP is 'endorsed' it is proposed that actions for each strategy be further developed with a governance group and supported by ORC staff where appropriate. A framework for this support is outlined below.

[6]   It is also recommended that funding be allocated to the implementation of the CAP to enable on ground activities to be undertaken in focus areas identified through the action development work.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. ***Endorses*** *the Catlins Catchment Action Plan as presented by the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group as a plan that sets the direction, in principle, for taking action to enhance the environment of the Catlins.*

2. ***Notes*** *the proposed framework for ORC Staff support for ongoing CAP delivery as show in Figure 2 and that this delivery structure may change through discussions with the ICG.*

3. ***Approves*** *the allocation of $100,000 from the existing Environmental Implementation annual budget for 2024-25 to be used to implement actions that deliver on the strategies in the Catlins CAP.*

BACKGROUND

[7] The LTP 2021-31 initiated the development of the ICM Programme in late 2021. The programme was formalised in August 2022 when the ICM Working Group was established and the Catlins area was selected by Council as the pilot Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to be developed.

[8] Following work by the ICM Working Group to establish the framework, the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group (ICG) began meeting in October 2023 to co-develop the Catlins CAP. Over 12 months the ICG has held four meetings, six workshops and a public hui. The meetings were useful to allow time for members to get to know each other and the process for developing the CAP. The ICG last met in September 2024 to review their draft CAP.

[9] Between workshops the ICM Team reviewed, refined, and added to the work undertaken by the Group. This included liaising with the Science, Compliance, Biosecurity, and Policy Teams to incorporate supporting data and knowledge where available.

DISCUSSION

The Draft Catlins CAP

[10] The CAP outlines the environmental (and associated human) values in the Catlins, goals for the values, pressures on these values, and strategies to reduce the pressures and/or improve the values. There are seven strategies and one programme in the CAP which together will contribute to achieving the goals for the values. These are:

a) Introduced mammal and bird control strategy
b) Weed control strategy
c) Sustainable farming strategy
d) Sustainable forestry strategy
e) Fish interactions (mapping and barriers) strategy
f) Overharvesting (shellfish and fish) strategy
g) Human behaviour strategy (plastics and litter, septic tanks, vehicles on beaches, and off-lead dogs)

h) Dune restoration programme – this includes a combination of mammal control, weed control, vehicles on beaches and off-lead dog management, in priority dune systems.

[11] The strategies provide an agreed programme of works required to improve the environment of the Catlins. Detailed actions will be developed to progress these strategies as part of the implementation once support from ORC and others is known. The CAP contains initial 'first steps' required to progress these strategies. This approach of the plan first with the strategies then followed by detailed actions is part of the ICM process.

[12] The Catlins hub (see Figure 1 below) is the online space dedicated to the CAP and interactive collaboration. It has been designed on an ArcGIS Online platform which enables spatial mapping, 'story maps', the ability for members to add to the discussion and maps and invite the wider public to review and comment. The hub currently hosts the CAP and will be used to track progress of the CAP as works and activities are undertaken. It is envisaged a 'dashboard' will show, at a glance, the progress against actions and strategies, and monitoring of the values' goals will provide an outcome-based evaluation.

Figure 1: Catlins Hub Front Page Screen Shot

[13] The CAP can be found online and is also in a PDF format at Attachment 2. Maps and diagrams in the PDF version are better viewed through the hub.

[14]   It is important to note:

a)   The CAP is a community owned and led plan which has been developed with the support and input of ORC and mana whenua, as well as other organisations.

b)   The CAP is intended to be a 'living' plan which means the CAP as it is presented will be continually updated and improved as more information becomes available and strategies are further developed.

c)   The Goals and Strategies establish intended outcomes and a direction of travel for how to get there. Detailed actions that create on ground or behaviour change need to be developed as part of the implementation of the CAP. However, this requires a level of certainty regarding resources and funding available.

d)   The CAP is a non-regulatory plan.

[15]   A snapshot summary of the CAP strategies and context will be created. A 4 -page A3 foldout brochure will be developed to communicate this and be made available via the hub, ORC website, customer service centre and other avenues as determined with the CICG and ORC Communications Team. This acknowledges that there is a lot of content and detail in the CAP itself and providing an easily digestible snapshot is of importance to the community to enable engagement with the CAP.

Wider community input

[16]   The Catlins CAP was presented by the ICG to the wider community at a hui on 16 October 2024. Approximately 8 members of the community attended and were invited to provide comments via email back to the ICM Team. No comments have been received to date.

[17]   The CAP will be available for input on an ongoing basis via the Catlins Hub and the Catlins community will be invited to get involved in delivery where appropriate. CAPs are intended to be living documents and updated over time.

Mana whenua input

[18]   Representatives from mana whenua, Te Rūnaka o Awarua and Hokonui Rūnaka, were invited to be members on the ICG. A representative from Awarua participated throughout the process. A representative from Hokonui Rūnaka was on the ICG but was unable to continue due to career changes and left in April 2024. Hokonui did not replace this member.

[19]   Meetings with both Rūnaka were held in mid-October to discuss the draft CAP. Comments from Hokonui Rūnaka have been incorporated into the draft CAP as appropriate. This incorporation of feedback is consistent with the approach taken to community feedback.

ICM Working Group Input

[20]   The ICM Working Group has also received the draft CAP and had a role throughout the development in oversight of the process and reviewing the mid-term evaluation plan. The ICM Working Group has members from both Te Ao Marama and Aukaha.

Evaluation of the Catlins Pilot CAP Project

[21]   As the Catlins is our pilot CAP it is important that we can learn from the process. External evaluators have been engaged by ORC to undertake an evaluation of the project. The evaluation is still underway with the final report due in December.

[22]   The evaluation is not an assessment of the CAP itself, but of the processes used to develop the CAP. As such the evaluation is intended to be used to inform other CAP development projects and not inform the Catlins CAP content.

[23]   A mid-term evaluation report was received in June 2024 (see **Attachment 1**). In response to some findings that highlighted where improvements could be made, the following actions were undertaken within the latter part of the process:

   a)   Catlins ICG ownership of the CAP was reiterated and emphasised.
   b)   A CAP delivery framework is being proposed.
   c)   A community hui to present and take feedback on the CAP was held.
   d)   Meetings with rūnaka were held to discuss the draft CAP and receive feedback.
   e)   The current regulatory context that may influence strategies of the CAP was included in the baseline information.
   f)   Adapting our approach throughout the process to foster engagement and quality input by Catlins ICG members.

[24]   The final evaluation report will be made available to Council and findings from it used to inform the CAP development process underway in the Upper Lakes and Taiari.

Proposed CAP Delivery Framework

[25]   The CAP is a community owned plan. However, the community on their own will not be able to implement all the strategies and it is important to support the strategies leading into actions. There are several ways Council could support the ongoing delivery of the CAP and maintain the momentum built by the ICG.

[26]   Figure 2 below outlines a potential framework for CAP delivery and ORC support. The delivery framework will still need to be discussed and refined with the ICG, but the below is an option for ORC support moving forward to enable actions and support the community.

CAP Delivery broad framework

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Figure 2: Proposed CAP delivery framework.

[27]   The proposed framework includes:

a)   A governance group to provide oversight and drive delivery of the CAP through the Catlins community. This group may include members of the ICG, who developed the plan, as well as mana whenua. They could meet quarterly or bi-monthly depending on capacity. They would be responsible for developing the actions for the strategies further – e.g. an invasive mammal subgroup could work on identifying focus areas for this strategy. The governance group would also be responsible for overseeing any updates or reviews of the CAP.

b)   ORC staff (ICM Team) can support the governance group through organising meetings, facilitating access to data and expertise, provision of maps and tracking of actions via the hub. ORC Staff (Catchment Advisors) can also provide project support (where required or wanted) for the community actions. Where appropriate, actions from the CAP will be integrated into internal Council work programmes.

c)   Funding available currently can be accessed through application to contestable funding grant programs such as the ECO Fund. As CAPs develop the ECO Fund may be able to prioritise or allocate funding specifically for CAP implementation which will be contestable. Direct funding for the Catlins CAP is discussed below.

Direct Funding for the Catlins CAP

[28]   The Environmental Implementation Team annual budget has $200,000 allocated for priority projects being delivered. There were three priority projects defined in the Long Term Plan 2021-2031. These included projects at Lake Hayes/Wai Whakaata, Tomahawk Lagoon and Lake Tuakitoto. These three previously identified priority projects were funded through the annual plans for 2021-2023. Some of this budget has been allocated and spent on delivery of actions in these areas over these three years. There is still some of the budget remaining and this has been carried forward to deliver over this financial

year. A report on the activity and funding of these projects was presented to the Environmental Implementation Committee on the 7th of November 2024.

[29] Future priority projects have not yet been identified and therefore it is proposed that $100,000 be used for projects arising from the Catlins CAP. The other $100,000 is proposed to be allocated to large scale biodiversity projects through a contestable grants process (refer to Council Paper – ECO Fund Review 20 November 2024 for details on this proposal).

[30] Direct funding the Catlins CAP implementation will enable the community to build on the momentum gained through the development of the CAP and work towards agreed environmental – community goals.

[31] Direct funding the Catlins CAP delivery would provide significant support to initiate CAP implementation. If approved, a process for how this direct funding would be allocated would be developed and based around key principles including:

a) Funding would be overseen by the ORC via the Environmental Implementation Team

b) Project must deliver on CAP strategies.

c) Projects need to be developed with ORC staff.

d) Funding will be approved by appropriate level of delegation within ORC.

e) Funding will be provided up front to groups / organisations and contracted through a funding agreement.

f) Community in-kind contribution would be expected.

[32] The funding amount of $100,000 will not be able to achieve all the work required in the CAP, however it is a significant amount which can provide seed funding to incentivise the community to undertake work which contributes to the goals of the CAP.

[33] The funding would not set a precedent as any future CAP funding would be determined through annual plan processes.

OPTIONS

Endorsement of Draft Catlins CAP

[34] Option 1 **[Recommended]** – Council endorse the Draft Catlins CAP in principle as presented. Proceeding with this option would be in line with the Council's ICM Programme (as per LTP 2021-2031), show Council's support for the work completed by the ICG and in principle indicate agreement of the key work to be done in the Catlins.

[35] Option 2 – Council suggests changes to the CAP to be considered by the Catlins ICG. Any suggestions could be reviewed by the ICG and incorporated as appropriate, but this may delay the next phase of more detailed implementation planning.

[36] Option 3 – Council notes the CAP. Noting the CAP does not provide as clear ORC support for the CAP or the work of the ICG. This option would potentially leave the community to continue with their CAP without the in-principle support of the ORC, putting at risk the ongoing implementation.

CAP Funding

[37]   Option 1 **[Recommended]** – Council approve the allocation of $100,000 direct funding to support the implementation of the Draft Catlins CAP Strategies. This would provide much needed seed funding to support the implementation and maintain momentum of the ICG work. Given the work in the invasive mammal strategy which is already being organised by the community it is expected, with project support, this amount could be allocated to on-ground projects before June 2025.

[38]   Option 2 – Council approves the allocation of another amount (not more than $200,000) of direct funding to support the implementation of the Draft Catlins CAP Strategies. If $200,000 was supported this means that $100,000 would be reallocated from the proposed Large Scale Biodiversity funding under the ECO Fund umbrella. Larger amounts of funding can be harder to allocate within the 2024/25 budget year and allocating the full $200,000 would reduce the ability to fund more large-scale biodiversity projects.

[39]   Option 3 – Council decides to not approve any funding to support the implementation of the Draft Catlins CAP. This will slow down momentum gained through the Catlins ICG for collaborative community work.

Proposed Delivery Option

[40]   Option 1 **[Recommended]** – notes the proposed delivery structure for the CAP as outlined in Figure 2. This will provide staff with support to further discuss the delivery structure with the ICG and to continue to provide support to the community with the CAP. This will also enable the CAP to be considered in internal work programmes.

[41]   Option 2 – does not note the proposed delivery structure and directs staff to not support the ongoing delivery of the CAP, or consider other delivery structures. This option will risk the delivery of the CAP and may lead to the plan not being well supported and implemented.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[42]   The Catlins CAP aligns to achieve outcomes in the strategic framework and support policy outcomes and objectives through the development of community led strategies to achieve environmental improvement.

Financial Considerations

[43]   This paper requests $100,000 be allocated to the delivery of the CAP. This budget already exists in the Environmental Implementation annual budget for 2024/25. There is staff time available to support the proposed delivery framework.

Significance and Engagement

[44]   The engagement with mana whenua, community and stakeholders has been primarily through the Catlins ICG.

[45]   In addition, a public hui (meeting) and meetings with rūnaka were held to provide input into the Plan.

[46]   Ongoing engagement with mana whenua will aim to ensure the relevant parties are included, such as the landowners/trustees of South Island Landless Natives Act (SILNA) land, any parties leasing land, etc.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[47]   The CAP is non-regulatory and does not commit ORC to any obligations beyond those agreed by Council.

Climate Change Considerations

[48]   Although climate change was not identified as a specific pressure by the Catlins ICG, the strategies in the CAP will build resilience to the effects of climate change. For example, sustainable land use, dune and beach management, invasive mammal and weed control will all need to consider climate change impacts in the development of detailed actions.

Communications Considerations

[49]   A media release will be made post Council meeting which aims to raise awareness of the CAP, next steps, getting involved and implementation.

[50]   The CAP will be housed online at the Catlins CAP hub website. This will be communicated to the community through ORC channels and the ICG members. Ongoing tracking and updating of the CAP will be available through this hub.

[51]   A snapshot summary of the CAP strategies and context will be created. A 4 -page A3 foldout brochure will be developed to communicate this and be made available via the hub, ORC website, customer service centre and other avenues as determined with the CICG and Communications Team.

[52]   Internal communications work will also be completed, to ensure that staff are briefed on the CAP and integrated into work programmes as needed.

NEXT STEPS

[53]   If endorsed and the delivery approach is noted, the Environmental Implementation Team will work alongside the community, ICG and mana whenua to establish a governance group to support the implementation of the CAP.

ATTACHMENTS
1.   Attachment 1 - Catlins CAP Project Mid Term Evaluation Report [**10.1.1** - 12 pages]
2.   Attachment 2 - Catlins CAP [**10.1.2** - 67 pages]
3.   Council meeting presentation 20 Nov 24 [**10.1.3** - 23 pages]

June 2024

CATLINS CATCHMENT ACTION PLAN PROJECT

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

Introduction

This report sets out the key findings from a mid-term evaluation of the Catlins Catchment Action Plan (CAP) development project (October 2023 to October 2024). Specifically, it examines the effectiveness of key CAP development processes, including (a.) the selection and recruitment of the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group (CICG) (tasked with developing the CAP); (b.) the decision-making support provided by the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Team; and (c.) the tools enabling collaboration, engagement, and information sharing. An end-point evaluation will further explore the effectiveness of CAP development processes and assess mana whenua, community, and stakeholders had ownership of the completed CAP.

The mid and end-point evaluations do not focus on the CAP implementation. However, the evaluation findings enable the ORC to determine to what extent Catlins CAP development pilot has been successful and provide the ICM Working Group (ICMWG) and the ICM Team with information to improve future CAP developments. This evaluation will support the ICM Team to learn from their work, update practices, develop best practice guidelines, and enable the ICMWG to advise on improvements to the CAP design process.

This report is structured into four parts beginning with background information on Catlins CAP development project including how it is managed and implemented. The CAP development process is described. Next information related to the evaluation is provided including, the purpose of the evaluation, intended use of evaluation findings, and the key evaluation questions addressed in this report. Finally, the key evaluation findings are reported.

Background to the CAP development project

Integrated Catchment Management takes a catchment perspective on natural resource management.[1] The importance of ICM is signaled in the Otago Regional Council's *2021-2031 Long-Term Plan* requiring ORC to lead "the development, implementation, and review of integrated Catchment Plans in collaboration with iwi and community" (ORC, 2021, p.17). The ICMWG oversees the pilot of the CAP development in the Catlins Freshwater Management Unit (FMU). A CAP is a long-term management plan that builds on community, mana whenua and local government work to protect and manage the catchment as well as new actions and projects. A CAP is not solely focused on freshwater outcomes but the whole catchment, including biodiversity, land, water (fresh and salt), ecosystem services and human well-being values such as mahika kai[2], wāhi tupuna[3] and livelihoods[4].

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[1] For more information about Integrated Catchment Management see - https://www.orc.govt.nz/managing-our-environment/integrated-catchment-management

[2] Food gathering area.

[3] Sites and areas of significance to Māori.

[4] For more information about the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group who will work with mana whenua and community to develop a Catchment Action Plan, see - https://www.orc.govt.nz/managing-our-environment/integrated-catchment-management/catlins-integrated-catchment-group

1

As part of the Catlins CAP pilot project (October 2023 - October 2024), the ORC ICM Team is working with mana whenua and community to:

- Foster effective collaboration to ensure the CAP is 'owned' and strongly supported by a broad consensus among:
  - Community representing interests including farming, biodiversity, tourism and forestry
  - Mana whenua
  - Key stakeholders including the ORC, the Clutha District Council and the Department of Conservation.
- Develop a focused and adaptive CAP for the Catlins' FMU that builds on the best available knowledge
- Enable accountability within the CAP – monitoring progress and impacts
- Deliver a CAP development process and CAP that aligns with ORC plans and policies.

The ORC ICM Team provides advice, administration, and facilitation support to the CICG.

Having described the background of the CAP development process, we now turn to describing the CAP development process as it informs the evaluation focus.

The CAP development process

ICM is a holistic, natural resource management philosophy that acknowledges that all the elements of an ecosystem, including the people, are connected. It enables a space for communities and mana whenua to agree on shared values for a catchment, make informed decisions and act collectively to manage natural resources. ICM is collaborative, evidence-informed, focused, accountable, and adaptive.

The ICMWG was established to develop the framework for Otago region CAPs (including the Catlins CAP) and the collaborative platform for developing the CAPs. The ICMWG has been meeting since February 2023 and its membership includes ORC councillors and staff, mana whenua and community.[5]

The CICG, which is tasked with developing the Catlins CAP, has 15 members who were selected to represent diverse interests. It was formed with advice from the ICMWG using the following steps:
- Develop criteria to specify the desired experience, knowledge, sectoral and geographic representation of ICG members
- Develop an open call for CICG membership based on a term of reference that outlines expectations and commitment
- Hold a community meeting to explain the ICM and CAP processes to the Catlins community and interested stakeholders
- Disseminate the call for expressions of interest in joining the CICG
- Review Expressions of Interest for CICG membership
- Recommend appointments to ORC based on an assessment of all applicants against the desired skills and experience.

The ORC ICM Team provides advice, administration, and facilitation support to the CICG. The ORC ICM team and CICG meet monthly (between October 2023 and October 2024). Working with the CICG, the ORC ICM team uses the Conservation Standards (https://conservationstandards.org/about/) and

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[5] For the Catlins CAP pilot, contact was made with Aukaha, Te Ao Marama, Otago Catchment Community Inc (OCC), Catlins Coast Inc, and the Owaka Catchment Group. All expressed an interest in being involved in the ICMWG in principle. Letters were sent to each group asking them to nominate a representative.

2

Miradi (https://www.miradishare.org/ux/home). The Conservation Standards are an internationally developed set of principles and practices that provide a framework for developing focused and effective conservation plans with communities. Miradi provides guidance and tools to implement the Conservation Standards.

Evaluation purpose and use

The ORC ICM Team has commissioned Emergence Hub to complete an external evaluation of the Catlins CAP development process to determine (a.) the 'fitness for purpose' of the processes used to develop the Catlins CAP using quality criteria set out below; and (b.) the extent to which the CAP captures available knowledge[6] and strategies representing the concerns, values, and interests of mana whenua, community, and stakeholders.

The evaluation does not consider CAP effectiveness given that there is a significant lag between CAP activities and medium to long-term outcomes, and progress towards the CAP targets is a part of the CAP implementation process.

This evaluation will enable the ORC to determine the success of the Catlins CAP development process and provide the ICMWG and the ICM Team with information to adapt planning and engagement processes to improve future CAPs. Four quality criteria were identified to focus the mid and end point evaluation and associated key evaluation questions (see Table 1). This mid-term evaluation report focuses on Criteria One, Two and Three.

Table 1 Quality Criteria and associated Key Evaluation Questions

Quality Criteria Area (and description)	Key Evaluation Questions
Criteria One: Recruitment and selection process The recruitment and selection processes are transparent, inclusive, and strategically designed to attract and identify candidates who not only possess a diverse range of necessary technical skills, experience, and local knowledge but also reflect the community affected by the CAP. There is clear communication of roles, expected contributions, and selection criteria, as well as mechanisms to ensure diversity and inclusivity in the selection process.	How effectively did the recruitment and selection process identify and onboard CICG members with the diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge necessary for the comprehensive development of the Catlins Catchment Plan (CAP)?
Criteria Two - Decision-making The decision-making processes of the ORC ICM team facilitate clear, efficient, and effective communication and collaboration among CICG members. There are defined roles and responsibilities, and transparent decision-making protocols that encourage consensus-building, and the presence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms that ensure all voices are heard and valued. High quality decision making is critical to good governance.	How well did the decision-making processes within the CICG foster efficiency, transparency, and inclusiveness in the CAP development process?
Criteria Three - CAP development processes and tools The development processes and tools enable and enhance productive collaboration, engagement, and information sharing among all CICG members. This encompasses the suitability, accessibility, and usability of tools and methodologies to support a collaborative environment, facilitate effective communication, and ensure the CAP development process is agile and responsive to emerging insights and CICG member feedback.	How well did the development processes and the methods used to facilitate meaningful engagement and collaboration among CICG members lead to steady progress in the CAP's development?

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[6] We recognise that there are different ways of knowing about ecosystems that are held by community, mana whenua and Western scientists.

3

Quality Criteria Four - The developed Catlins CAP The completed CAP comprehensively reflects the values, concerns, and aspirations of a wide range of stakeholders, mana whenua, and community members representing a balanced consideration of diverse perspectives and interests. This includes a demonstrable integration of stakeholder and mana whenua input throughout the CAP document, clear responsiveness to identified issues and solutions, and evidence of efforts to reconcile differing viewpoints in a manner that respects and values community and environmental well-being.	To what extent does the completed CAP accurately reflect the broad spectrum of values, issues, and potential solutions identified as important by stakeholders, mana whenua, and community members involved in the CAP development process?

There are assumptions and external influences that were identified at the start of the evaluation process, which could potentially influence the success (or not) of the CAP development process. Assumptions are those circumstances that must be 'true' to ensure quality criteria are met. External influences are those factors that can have a positive or negative impact on the ability to meet quality criteria (see Table 1). Assumptions and external influences are listed in Appendix A.

Evaluation methodology

Two evaluation team members attended a CICG meeting (29 April 2024) to understand the context of the CAP development process, introduce the evaluation, and encourage participation in interviews. Several background documents, for example, about the CICG workshops were also provided by ORC and reviewed by evaluation team members to provide context.

Emergence Hub developed semi-structured interview guides and a consent form and information sheet (stating the purpose of the evaluation and how findings would be used) for review by the ORC ICM Team. These fieldwork documents were then finalised by Emergence Hub.

The ORC ICM Team contacted CICG members to see if they were happy for their contact details to be provided to Emergence Hub. Once contact details were provided, the evaluation team contacted each potential interviewee by email and/or telephone to ask if they were happy to participate in an online or telephone interview (taking between 45 – 60 minutes). A total of 15 people were interviewed (12 CICG and three ORC ICM members).

4

Key findings

Recruitment and selection process

This section reports findings on how well the CICG recruitment and selection process identified and onboarded CICG members with the diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge necessary for the comprehensive development of the Catlins Catchment Action Plan (CAP). Key findings are as follows.

The channels and methods used to call for an Expression of Interest (EOI) for CICG membership effectively reached mana whenua, community, and stakeholders. A large group of people attended an ORC community meeting to learn about the planned CAP development process. The following aspects worked well to promote community meeting and recruit CICG members: (a.) two local people and two mana whenua ICMWG representatives provided advice on how to approach the community; (b.) mana whenua representatives could consult with Runaka about recruitment and selection; (c.) various media invited mana whenua, community, and stakeholders to attend the ORC community meeting[7]; and (d.) the ICMWG members helped to distribute information.

Clear messaging about the importance of the CAP from a local community, mana whenua, and ORC perspective helped to support interest in the CAP development process from mana whenua, community, and stakeholders. At the ORC organised community meeting to introduce the CAP development process the following factors were noted as supporting 'buy-in' to the process and CICG group membership (a.) a local person introduced the pilot on behalf of the ICM ORC Team; (b.) a mana whenua representative talked about the 'special nature' of the place; and (c.) the ORC ICM Team members shared a clear message about the integrated nature of the CAP and used examples from overseas. These factors helped potential CICG members understand the CAP development process and stoked their interest in becoming involved.

Selection criteria and processes have ensured that CICG members mostly represent the technical expertise, local knowledge, stakeholder, and mana whenua representation required for CAP development. While some positions for the CICG were protected (e.g., for the Department of Conservation), for others the ICMWG group used explicit selection criteria to ensure there was a mix of gender and age and diverse perspectives and knowledge (e.g., farming, forestry, or mana whenua) from across the Catlins. All applicants were telephoned by an ORC ICM team member to let them know whether their application had been successful (or not). While the selected CICG members have different backgrounds and interests, these members appear to be open to exploring multiple issues and solutions associated with the catchment (as opposed to having a singular view or divergent view). Subsequently, the CAP development process has not been held up through disagreements. Nevertheless, ensuring that the selection process considers inclusion of those likely to challenge common views in the room might ensure that all issues or solutions are brought to the 'table' in CAP development discussions (and may secure community buy in from others with divergent views). An ORC operational perspective and a marine perspective were identified as missing from the CAP development process. Suggested improvements to the selection process included (a.) offering remuneration to CICG members to improve accessibility to the process by a broader range of people in the Catlins (and to acknowledge the knowledge and insights that people bring); and (b.) ensuring adequate time in the ICWMG meeting for CICG member selection.

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[7] Approaches that were used to market the initial community meeting included providing information (a.) in local newspapers; (b.) in emails to schools; (c.) on the ORC website; and (d.) face-to-face at general community meetings (by Catlins members of the IMCWG).

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Adaptations to the selection process may be needed to avoid selection bias. While the framework criteria appeared to be useful in narrowing down the candidates for the CICG group, some ICMWG members involved in the final selection would have personally known candidates. To avoid potential bias, future CAP development recruitment processes might consider not including names on Expressions of Interest[8].

Perspectives of some community groups in the Catlins community are missing from the CAP development process. Some groups noted as potentially having an important perspective they could bring to the CAP development process included: (a.) ethnic groups such as Pacific or Philippine peoples; (b.) young people; (c.) holiday homeowners; and (d.) people in industry and commerce (e.g., from the local supermarket or freezing works).

Mana whenua involvement in a CAP development process needs to be considered within the broader Runaka context. The ORC ICM team have made a concerted effort to communicate with Runaka from the start of the process. To further support mana whenua to be able to effectively engage in a CAP development process and provide a perspective on behalf of mana whenua, the ORC needs to work closely with the Runaka throughout the CAP development process to ensure mana whenua representatives (a.) have a clear mandate from Runaka well before the process starts (and this is shared knowledge amongst all involved in the CAP development process); (b.) have the capacity to be involved in a project from start to finish given other commitments; and (c.) are renumerated by ORC for their time and costs (e.g., travel) with ORC working directly through the Runaka to organise renumeration. There is also a need for the dual role of mana whenua in governance (as a partner) and in operations (as a stakeholder) to be clarified at the establishment of a CAP development process and amongst all of those involved.

Decision-making

As noted above, the CAP development process is ORC-led. ORC ICM team members were trained in using the Conservation Standards to design and facilitate the CICG workshops**.** In the ORC-facilitated workshops, group decisions are captured as workshop outputs and synthesised by ORC after each workshop. Outputs are sent to CICG members who could not attend for feedback. Outputs are checked by the CICG at the start of the next workshop. This section sets out how well CICG understood the roles and responsibilities of the ICM team and CICG members at the start of the CAP development process (and to date), and how well decision-making processes within the CICG foster efficiency, transparency, and inclusiveness in the CAP development process. Key findings are as follows.

As part of onboarding CICG members had sufficient understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the ICM team and CICG members when deciding to participate in the CAP development process but CICG ownership needs to be upheld in the process. CICG members were well informed about ORC ICM team's role in running workshops and the time required for participation. It was also clear to CICG members that their expertise (among that of other CICG members and the ORC) would be drawn on for the development of the CAP. CICG members voted in a community chair. The reason for including a community chair in the process was to help ensure co-ownership of the CAP development process by the community. There will be a need to continue to ensure that the chair can operate in a way that results in enough CICG ownership in the process (e.g., the right balance between input and leading

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[8] This suggestion does not apply to mana whenua representatives who need to be known and well respected or to organisations offered a place (e.g., Clutha District Council to ensure that local legislation is considered in the CAP's development).

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can is realised). Having a mana whenua Co-Chair could also be an option for future CAP development processes (to support mana whenua governance).

CICG members are uncertain about the resources that will be made available to implement the finalised CAP or if it will become part of ORC's regulatory planning. CICG members would like to know more about ORC's responsibility in supporting the implementation of the CAP. Yet, a lack of clarity related to implementation has not lessened member input into the CAP development process. CICG members continue to work on developing a CAP that represents an ideal situation. The ICM team and an ORC counsellor view that establishing what implementation support will look like is a priority. Consequently, they have started internal conservations at ORC to get clarity on what that support might look like. CICG members would also like more clarity about whether the CAP will have any 'legal standing' (e.g., in ORC's long-term planning).

While the processes used in developing the CAP ensure that decision-making is participatory, transparent, and mainly based on consensus or informed agreement, unintended consequences of decisions could be better explored in prioritising solutions. The workshop design based on the Conservation Standards supports a process that enables several feedback loops so that participants can see and critique the work of others and agree on workshop outputs. This appears to be working well in most instances, especially when there is enough time allocated for small group work to be critiqued by the wider group within workshops. While decision-making is mainly based on consensus or informed agreement, unintended consequences of decisions (and scientific evidence), might be better explored as part of decision-making processes. For example, a decision to have a target to reduce possum numbers, which is not science-based (but based on popular opinion), needs to take into account the subsequent rat explosion that might occur, which will then cause further environmental harm.

To ensure that the priorities of mana whenua are incorporated in the CAP, mana whenua CICG members need the opportunity and time to be able to feedback and forward to the Runaka about CAP development decisions. To give mana whenua confidence in the process and Runaka 'buy in' to any outputs and decisions in the CAP development process, mana whenua CICG members need to be provided with time to (a.) take any decisions made by the CICG group back to the Runaka before they are incorporated into the CAP; and (b.) have sufficient time to engage with Runaka about the content of the draft CAP once it is drafted by the CICG group. Recognition of the importance of such a feedback process by all involved in the CAP development process will likely increase 'buy-in' and support of the CAP by Runaka.

While processes used in developing the CAP have supported a range of local priorities to be acknowledged, the broader local context and urgency for addressing environmental concerns could be better considered. Suggestions for wider considerations that better acknowledgement include infrastructure needs (according to where people live and how they live). There is some concern from CICG members that current environmental issues may have to wait until the completion of the CAP development process.

There is a need to increasingly fold the broader community into the work and outputs of the CICG, or else there is a risk that the CAP is not perceived as credible once drafted, and then potentially not supported in its implementation. Capturing feedback on the CICG's work during CAP development (and the completed CAP) allows different community groups and local government (e.g., Clutha Council) to see their voice (and local legislation) in the CAP development process and could potentially lead to more support for the CAP and its implementation. Those who were interested in being CICG members but were not chosen need pathways for engagement in the CAP development

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process. The ORC ICM team are currently considering ways to better involve the wider community in the process through website updates and other means.

While processes used in developing the CAP have somewhat acknowledged broader legalisation and planning instruments, different non-legislative and legislative boundaries could be better considered. Some regional and local council input into CICG meetings means that broader legislation and planning instruments have been introduced and acknowledged in the development of the CAP to date. However, CICG members have acknowledged that more clarity could be brought to (a.) changes resulting from a National Government (e.g., the impact of more intensive farming); and (b.) the different legislative and non-legislative boundaries at play in the development of the CAP, and emerging legislative and non-legislative boundaries. These considerations would then need to be appropriately incorporated into the CAP alongside non-regulatory approaches.

The CICG group appears to communicate well and in a respectful way with each other with few noticeable disagreements amongst the group but more time for critical reflection may need to be built into further CAP development processes. While there are a few noticeable disagreements during discussions about what information they include in CAP development, the speed at which processes need to be completed for each set of Conservation Standard activities might not allow enough time for critical discussion. Nevertheless, people in the group appear to be open-minded to accepting others' perspectives on broader issues and solutions in the CAP development process and the design of activities, and the Chair's input helps to keep the group focused. Accommodation has not been reached yet on the vision for the CAP (there are currently two vision statements). Regardless of what vision statement is landed on, a focus on looking after the environment for social benefits appears to be an important to most CICG members (and potentially more difficult to capture in an environmental plan). As noted above, ideas put forth by mana whenua CICG members (and potentially adopted by the CICG) need to be checked with the Runaka in case ideas do not resonate with the Runaka. In addition, mana whenua might be less inclined to state a position if the group dynamic does not feel safe enough to do so.

There is a need to continue to ensure that Māori knowledge and tribal boundaries are adequately acknowledged in the CAP development process. While existing environmental work and ORC's science expertise have been drawn on well to support the CAP development processes, ORC boundaries, expertise, and worldviews that are brought to decision-making may be at odds with a Māori worldview and takiwa/tribal boundaries. For example, mahika kai does not feature predominantly in the CAP development process to date, yet this is significant to a mana whenua worldview.

CAP development processes and tools

This section describes the usefulness of development processes and the methods used to facilitate meaningful engagement and collaboration among CICG members to enable steady progress in the CAP's development process. Key findings are as follows.

The environment selected for the CAP development process and the responsiveness of the ORC ICM to community needs have ensured a high level of accessibility by CICG members. Holding meetings at Owaka Community Centre (and at certain times of the day) was agreed between the ORC ICM Team and CICG members. When a workshop had to be moved to the local rugby club (on one occasion) this setting was also found suitable by attendees. There is a need to ensure that technology works if team members cannot attend a workshop in person. An ORC team member has followed up to ensure that

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anyone affected by the loss of technology had the opportunity to hear what went on in the meeting and to provide feedback back to the group (which was much appreciated).

The processes used in developing the CAP are seen to be effective in supporting CICG members to contribute their diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge. In particular, the following aspects were noted by CICG members as useful: (a.) the positive attitude of ORC team members who facilitate the process, (b.) the clarity around what processes will be used, and how they are skilful listeners who reflect on CICG members ideas with minimal influence (e.g., paraphrasing); (c.) a good range of ORC expertise (science and policy team); (d.) having ORC facilitators sit at each table and provide guidance and support where needed; (e.) the presentations given by ORC which are well designed and easy to follow; (f.) a presentation of outputs (what was generated in the previous workshop) in an aesthetically pleasing format and with summary information representative of process and output that led to that point; (g.) a clear outline of where participants are up to in the CAP development process and the aim of the workshop for the day; (h.) the small group exercises and mixing up of people each time with different perspectives and expertise; (i.) the opportunity to critique the work of each small group when they present their outputs after group activities are finished; (j.) the opportunity to read the whole workshop outputs (in summary documents provided by the ORC ICM team) between workshops. Some improvements suggested were the use of local (as opposed to overseas) examples and framing used by facilitators when providing discussion prompts. An ICM team member suggested that facilitator training might have been useful alongside training in the Conservation Standards process.

While a range of tools employed by the ORC ICM team to support the CAP development process have generally helped support the CAP's development, the quality and confidence in outputs may be better known later in the CAP development process. The following tools supported the efficiency and effectiveness of CAP development process activities: (a.) the resources provided by the ORC ICM Team (e.g., large sheets used to capture the group's thinking and discussions); and (b.) the group exercises in each workshop based on a series of steps and ways of capturing outputs (e.g., a risk identification exercise looking at the costs and timeframes round pressures impacting the environment). One approach that was mentioned that seemed less helpful was asking CICG members to nominate monitoring methodologies to use in a part of the ecosystem (e.g., forest health) where science-led decisions around monitoring seemed the best approach. This approach led to a lack of confidence in the quality of selected indicators, monitoring tools, and whether Iwi would recognise and acknowledge the indicators and approach put forward).

The ICM team regularly reflect on what is working well (or not) with an eye to ongoing improvement in the delivery of the CAP development process. The ICM Team undertakes activities to improve as they go to best meet the needs of the CICG in supporting them to develop the CAP. This includes (a.) reviewing and documenting how each CAP development workshop goes as a team; (b.) drawing and sharing inspiration from other communities working with the Conservation Standards around the world; and (c.) working with other catchment planners in the Otago region to explore useful processes and tools.

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Summary

This report reports on a mid-term evaluation of the effectiveness of Catlins CAP development process, noting key findings related to the recruitment and selection of CICG members, decision-making, and CAP development processes and tools. Twelve CICG and three ORC ICM Team members were interviewed about their views on Catlins CAP development process.

Key findings about recruitment and selection included that: (a.) the EOI for CICG members effectively reached mana whenua, community, and stakeholders; (b.) there was clear messaging about the CAP development process; and (c.) CICG member selection criteria and processes ensured that invited members had the technical expertise, local knowledge, stakeholder, and mana whenua representation necessary for CAP development. There is scope to alter the selection process to avoid selection bias, include other (potentially important) community groups, and consider mana whenua involvement in a broader Runaka context. Remuneration of CICG members would increase the pool of Catlins people who could potentially participate in a CAP development process (for mana whenua this process should be organised directly between ORC and the Runaka).

Key findings about decision-making included that: (a.) incoming CICG members had sufficient understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the ORC ICM team and the CICG members, but CICG ownership for the process needs to be monitored; (b.) while CAP development processes ensure that decision-making is participatory, transparent, and mainly based on consensus, unintended consequences of decisions could be explored more in prioritising solutions; (c.) CICG members are uncertain about resourcing available for CAP implementation and how it will become part of ORC's regulatory planning; (d.) mana whenua CICG representatives need the opportunity and time to be able to feedback and forward to the Runaka about CAP development information and decisions; (e.) while a range of local priorities have been acknowledged in the CAP, the broader local context, such as infrastructure needs, and urgency for addressing environmental concerns could be better considered; (f.) there is a need to implement ORC plans to update the broader community on CAP progress and enable community feedback; (g.) more time may need to be allocated for critical reflection in CAP development processes; and (h.) mana whenua worldviews and tribal boundaries need to be adequately acknowledged in the CAP development process.

Key findings in relation to CAP development processes and tools included that: (a.) the environment selected for the CAP development process and the responsiveness of the ORC ICM to community needs has ensured a high level of accessibility by CICG members; (b.) the processes used in developing the CAP are seen as effective in supporting CICG members to contribute their diverse skills, experience, and knowledge; (c.) while a range of tools employed by the ICM team to support the CAP development process have generally helped support the process to be effective in working with CICG members to produce workshop outputs, the quality of tools and processes used in CAP development and confidence in outputs will be better known later in the CAP development process; and (d.) the ORC ICM teams focus on adapting the process to foster engagement and quality outputs by CICG members means that the process is more likely to produce meaningful outputs.

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Appendix A - Assumptions and external influences

<u>Assumptions</u>

Assumptions related to the quality criteria being realised include:

Selection of CICG members

- There are effective outreach and communication strategies in place to ensure that all potential stakeholders are aware of and can participate in the selection process.
- Inclusivity and accessibility in the selection process led to better decision-making and outcomes because of the diverse inputs.
- The community values inclusivity and is willing to engage in a process that might be more time-consuming and complex to ensure broad representation.

Governance and decision-making

- There are established mechanisms (e.g., workshops, public forums, online platforms) that facilitate effective communication and participation.
- Stakeholders are willing to engage in constructive dialogue and compromise when necessary.
- Effective governance and decision-making processes are recognised as foundational for the success of the CAP.

CAP development processes (inclusive and meaningful engagement)

- Engaging stakeholders meaningfully leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes.
- Participants are motivated by the opportunity to contribute to environmental and community well-being.
- The process is designed to be accessible and accommodating to the needs of all participants, including consideration of language barriers, physical accessibility, and timing of meetings.

Completed CAP

- Integrating diverse knowledge systems leads to more comprehensive and effective environmental management solutions.
- There is respect and openness among stakeholders to learn from and utilise different types of knowledge.
- Mechanisms are in place to accurately translate and incorporate traditional and local knowledge into the planning process alongside scientific data.

<u>External influences</u>

The ability to meet quality criteria associated with the development of the CAP might be affected by the following external influences:

Positive influences

- Legislation and policies that encourage community involvement in environmental management and provide a supportive framework for CAP development.
- Adequate funding and resources allocated for CAP development can enable thorough engagement processes and ensure that the plan is comprehensive and well-informed.

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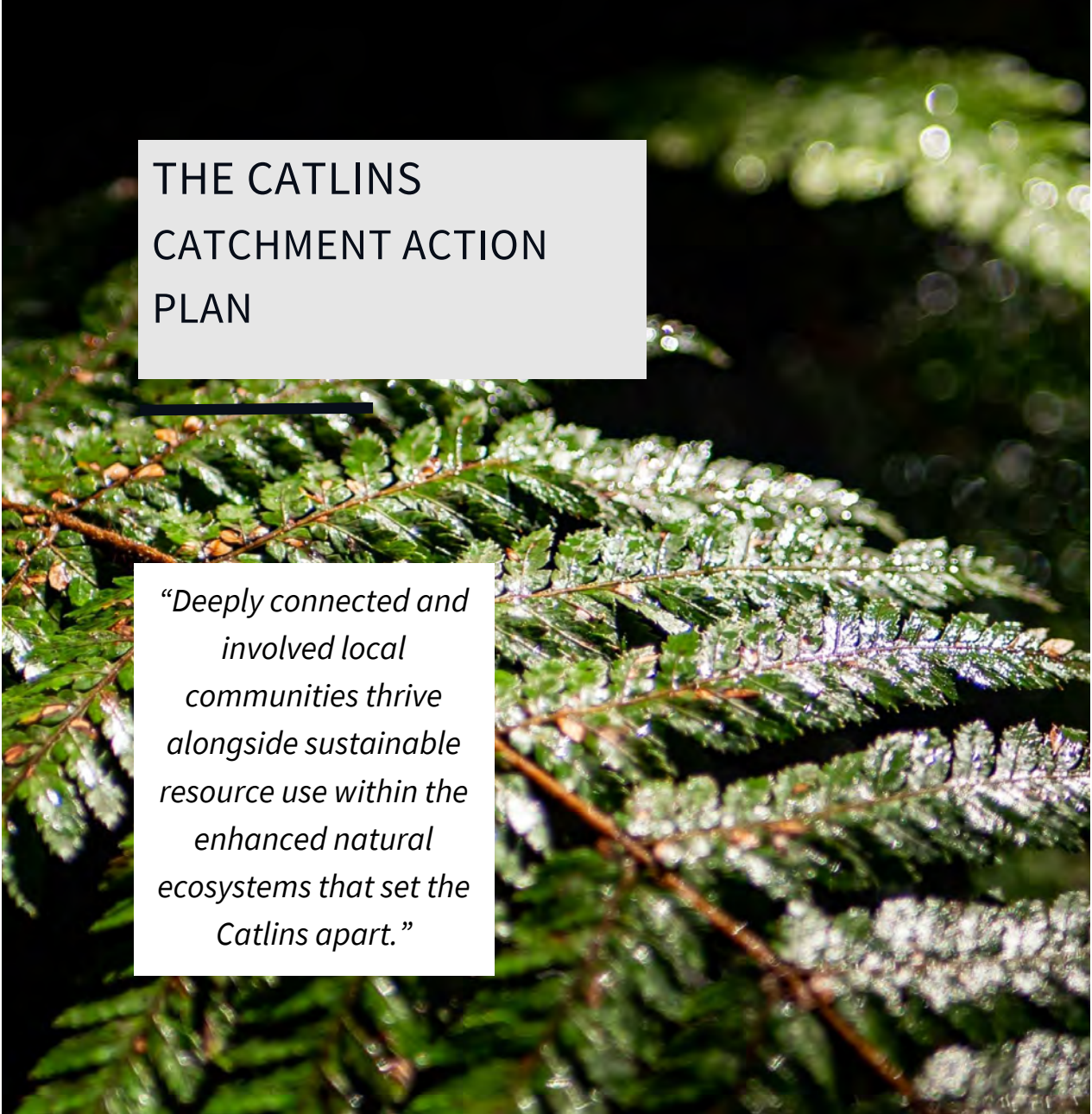
- Active local networks and community organisations can facilitate broader participation and ensure that local knowledge and matauraka Māori is effectively incorporated into the CAP.

Negative Influences

- Shifts in political priorities or leadership can affect the continuity and support for CAP initiatives, potentially undermining the process and its outcomes.
- Economic downturns or budget cuts can limit the resources available for CAP development, reducing the scope of engagement activities and the quality of the plan.
- Pre-existing social or cultural tensions within a community can hinder participation and collaboration, particularly if segments of the community feel marginalised or distrustful of the process.
- Natural disasters or the broader impacts of climate change can shift focus and resources away from long-term planning initiatives like CAPs to more immediate disaster response and recovery efforts.
- If the public is not adequately informed about the importance of catchment management or does not perceive it as a priority, engagement in the CAP development process may be low.

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THE CATLINS CATCHMENT ACTION PLAN

"Deeply connected and involved local communities thrive alongside sustainable resource use within the enhanced natural ecosystems that set the Catlins apart."

Catlins Integrated Catchment Group

October 2024

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PROJECT PURPOSE

RATIONALE

Otago Regional Council's (ORC) Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) programme arose from the adoption of the Long-term Plan 2021-31 in June 2021 which tasked the ORC to "*Lead the development, implementation, and review of integrated Catchment Plans (ICP) in collaboration with iwi and community*." A Catchment Action Plan (CAP) is a plan for the management and conservation of an entire catchment or catchments. It is a long-term plan that builds on the work that iwi, communities and local government are already doing to protect and manage their place and serves as a focus for new actions and projects. The CAPs are not prescribed by regulation, nor are they making any rules.

The Catlins area of Otago was chosen as the first pilot area for the region, and the Catlins Integrated Catchment Group (CICG) was established in October 2023 to co-develop a CAP for the area. The planning process is based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (Open Standards) and guided by the corresponding planning software, Miradi. The Open Standards process provides an evidence-based planning framework that helps achieve lasting impacts. The aim of the CAP is to collaboratively produce a plan that can serve as a focus for environmental and natural resource management in the Catlins.

SCOPE

The Catlins area for the CAP[1] comprises an area in the south-eastern corner of the South Island of New Zealand. The area lies between Balclutha and Invercargill, straddling the boundary between the Otago and Southland regions. The Catlins CAP area is bounded to the north by the Koau Branch of the Clutha/Mata-au River and to the south by Waiparu head (on the Otago Southland boundary at Wallace beach). Inland the northern boundary extends to the source reaches of the Puerua, Ōwaka, Catlins and Tahakopa rivers, the marine boundary extends to the twelve nautical mile territorial sea limit (Figure 1).

The temporal scope of the CAP is from 2024 - 2034.

VISION

The CICG's long-term vision for the Catlins is:

> *"Deeply connected and involved local communities thrive alongside sustainable resource use within the enhanced natural ecosystems that set the Catlins apart."*

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[1] Where this Plan refers to "the Catlins" it refers to the Catlins area of Otago as shown in Figure 1.

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Figure 1. The spatial boundary of The Catlins Catchment Action Plan

MANA WHENUA

Mana whenua are the tāngata whenua who hold traditional customary authority and maintain contemporary relationships within an area determined by whakapapa, resource use and ahīkāroa (the long burning fires of occupation). Kai Tahu hold mana whenua status in the Otago region. The two rūnaka invited to have representation on the CICG to ensure mana whenua values are recognised and upheld in this plan are Te Rūnaka o Awarua and Hokonui Rūnaka.

STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY

The government agencies involved in creating this CAP are:

- Clutha District Council (the territorial authority that includes the Catlins)
- Department of Conservation
- Otago Regional Council

Community members involved in the group that has co-designed this CAP come from, or represent interests from across the Catlins region and have expertise in agriculture, forestry, conservation, tourism and recreation.

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PROFILE OF THE CATLINS CAP AREA

CAP AREA PHYSICAL PROFILE

CAP area size: The Catlins land area is around 130,000 hectares (or roughly 5% of the Otago region) and the marine area around 160,000 hectares.

Climate: The Catlins generally has temperate climate compared to inland Otago. In summer, the temperatures generally range around 16-24 degrees Celsius while winter temperatures are in the 8-13 degree range. There are occasional hot days in summer with temperatures exceeding 30 degrees and in winter temperatures can dip to -5 degrees.

Significant waterbodies: The area contains four major freshwater rivers: the Puerua, Owaka, Catlins and Tahakopa and four estuaries: Waipati/Chaslands estuary, Tautuku River estuary, Tahakopa estuary, and the Catlins River estuary. The Tautuku and Waipati/Chaslands estuaries are relatively unmodified, and are predominantly fringed by native forest, showing a natural transition between the estuary to dunes/salt marsh/wetland into native forest and have low mud content.

Soils: The dominant soil orders in the Catlins are brown soils and podzols. The structure and drainage of brown soils make them suitable for cultivation. Podzols occur where there is a combination of acid leaf litter and high rainfall, so mainly in areas of indigenous forest. They have low natural fertility and root growth is limited, and as such they require fertiliser if used for grassland farming.

Water quantity: The Catlins is wetter than most parts of Otago and has an average annual rainfall of about 1300 mm (compared to 400 mm in Central Otago). Rainfall is fairly consistent throughout the year, which. is beneficial to the local agricultural industry and allowed for the formation and preservation of the Catlins rainforests. The Catlins usually has more water than is used for agriculture and industry, as rainfall is high, and evapotranspiration is low.

Major land uses: Land use in the Catlins is dominated by sheep and beef dry-stock farming (38%) and conservation estate (29%). The notable trends in land use change over the past three decades have been an increase in the extent of dairying and forestry, although these remain a relatively modest amount of the total Catlins area. Dairying increased by 36% from 1990 to 2018 and currently comprises 7% of the Catlins area. Similarly, the extent of plantation forestry has increased by 48% over the 1990-2018 period, to cover 7% of the Catlins area.

CAP AREA BIODIVERSITY PROFILE

Nearly a third of the Catlins is in conservation estate. The Catlins contains many unmodified river, coastal and estuarine ecosystems, including an extensive spread of indigenous land cover. The landscape is made up of low ridges running in a north-west/southeast direction which supports the native forest and high-producing grasslands.

Taoka species: Taoka species are culturally significant species that shape Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and whakapapa (genealogy). Ngai Tahu, as the iwi (tribe) that has authority over this area, also have the authority to define their own taoka species. These are detailed in the *Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998* , which gives a **non-exclusive** list of birds, plants and marine mammals that are taoka to the iwi.

Valued introduced species: There are also introduced species in the Catlins that are important for sport hunting and as a source of wild food. These include trout and perch, game birds and waterfowl, and

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mammals such as deer and pigs. Some of these species also threaten indigenous species and ecosystems through predation, browsing, disease, competition and habitat degradation

CAP AREA COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Catlins is a special place for the whole of Otago, but especially for mana whenua and the local community, and the many visitors who are welcomed into the area every year. In 2018, the Catlins was home to around 1,600 residents. Most Catlins residents live rurally, and nearly 40% of the population live in the Ōwaka, Kākā Point, or Pounawea townships.

While this CAP is focussed on protecting and enhancing environmental values. The CICG also identified human wellbeing values (Figure 2) that are important to them and their lives in the area. This Plan acknowledges that protecting and enhancing environmental values can also benefit the social, economic and cultural well-being of Catlins people and visitors – Ka ora te whenua, ka ora te tangata; When the land is well, we are well.

Figure 2. A diagram that summarises the human values identified by the CICG as important to The Catlins CAP are

CAP OVERVIEW

Figure 3 below gives an overview of this CAP, showing how its elements fit together. This diagram illustrates that the CAP is underpinned by policies, regulations and industry standards that make up the current operating environment and considers the environmental work that Catlins residents are already undertaking. Above this foundation are the strategies described in the CAP, the foundational actions of these strategies, the environmental values the CICG has identified as important and the human values which

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are supported when these environmental values are enhanced. The vision sits above the plan to guide the direction of travel.

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Council Meeting - 20 November 2024
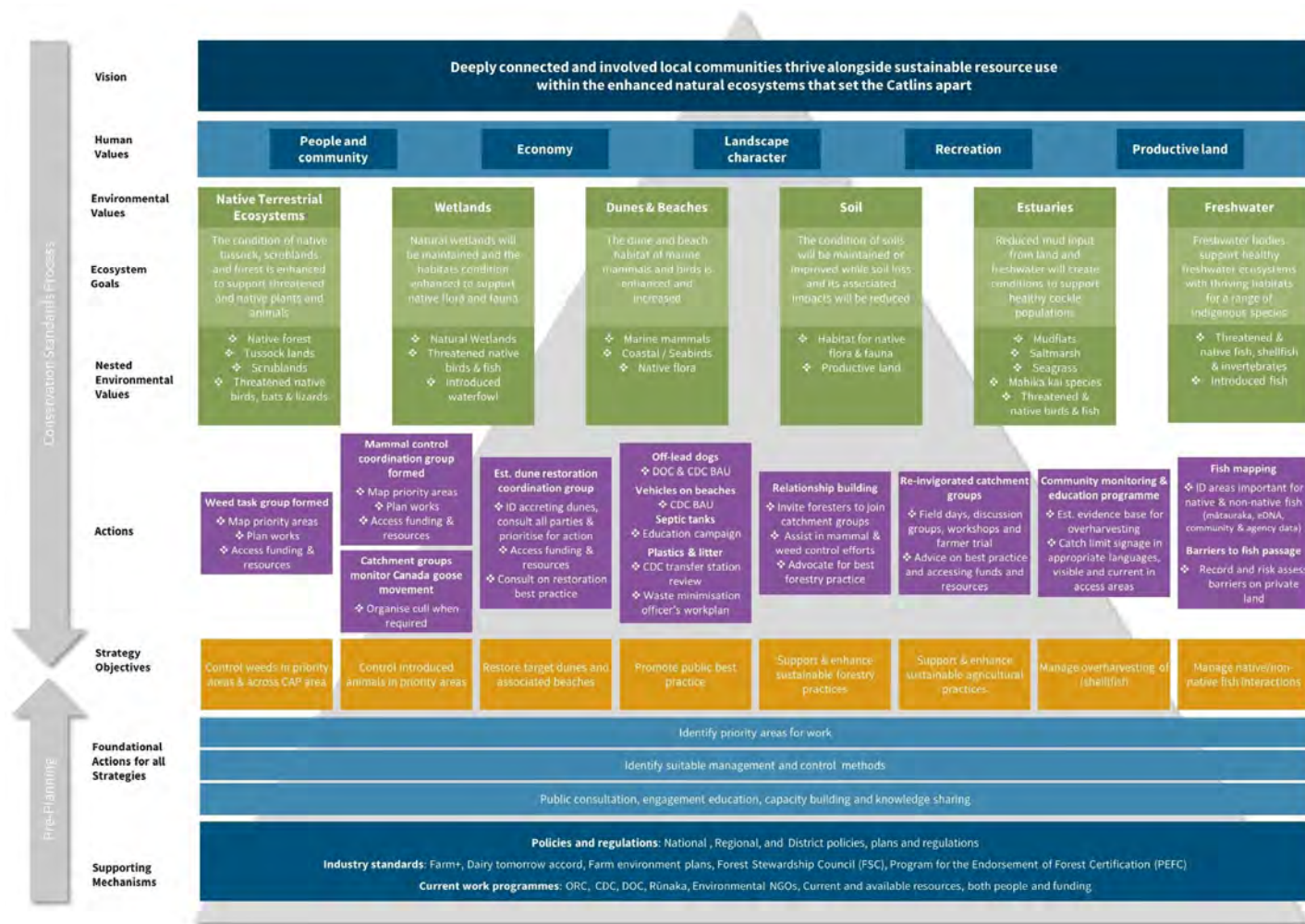
Figure 3. The "plan on a page" diagram that summarises this plan.

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ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

INTRODUCTION

This CAP defines a "value" as:

The features and assets that we care most about improving, protecting, restoring, and keeping healthy.

The values presented in this plan were developed with the CICG and are based on the knowledge of community and mana whenua. Similar values were grouped together into broad categories based on the ecosystem that they belong to. Grouping values assumes that by protecting the ecosystem, the values that are grouped within that ecosystem will also be protected.

The CICG also collaboratively developed goals for each value which detail the desired future state of the value and rated the current state of health of the value. The strategies in the plan are designed to move the health of each value closer to the goals.

SUMMARY OF VALUES AND GOALS

Native Terrestrial Ecosystems: By 2034 the condition of native tussock, scrubland and forest is enhanced to support native plant and animal species.
- **Indicators:** seedling / sapling ratio; biological integrity (condition of flora and fauna)
- **Current health:** Poor to fair

Wetlands: By 2034, the natural wetlands in The Catlins will be maintained and the habitat condition of native wetland flora is enhanced to support native species of fauna.
- **Indicators:** wetland extent; hydrological integrity; biological integrity (condition of flora and fauna)
- **Current health:** Good

Estuaries: By 2034, reduced mud input from terrestrial and freshwater sources will allow the estuaries to be potentially good cockle habitat.
- **Indicators:** mud content %; macrofauna score
- **Current health:** Good

Dunes & Beaches: By 2034, the dune and beach habitat of marine mammals and marine and coastal birds is enhanced and increased
- **Indicators:** % cover of target weeds; % cover native dune plants
- **Current health:** Fair

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Figure 4. A summary of the values in this plan, the goal for each value, the indicators of value health and their current health status

VALUE 1. NATIVE TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF NATIVE TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

By 2034 the condition of native tussock, scrubland and forest is enhanced to support native plant and animal species.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

The area has three major types of native terrestrial ecosystems:

- Native forest
- Shrublands
- Tussock

The native terrestrial ecosystems of the Catlins are diverse and retain many species of native fauna, flora, and fungi, many of which are threatened. These ecosystems have been affected by introduced browsers, predators and weeds and are in a fragile state and in need of conservation management. Some of the precious fauna species found within the Catlins terrestrial ecosystems include: pekapeka-tou-roa/ long-tailed bats (Nationally Critical); geckos (eg. Tautuku gecko Mokopiriakau "southern forest" At Risk, Declining) and skinks. The Beresford Ranges in the Catlins are home to approximately a quarter of the remaining mohua/yellowhead (At Risk, Declining) and the Catlins are also home to one of only two mainland populations of red-crowned kākāriki (At Risk, Relict). The Catlins also has a small population of the Nationally Critical hoiho/yellow eyed-penguins.

The native terrestrial ecosystems are part of the patchwork that give the Catlins landscape its distinctive character. The landscape's diversity, naturalness and peacefulness are all important to Catlins people, and

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the terrestrial ecosystems are used for recreation, food and mahika kai gathering and draw tourists to the area.
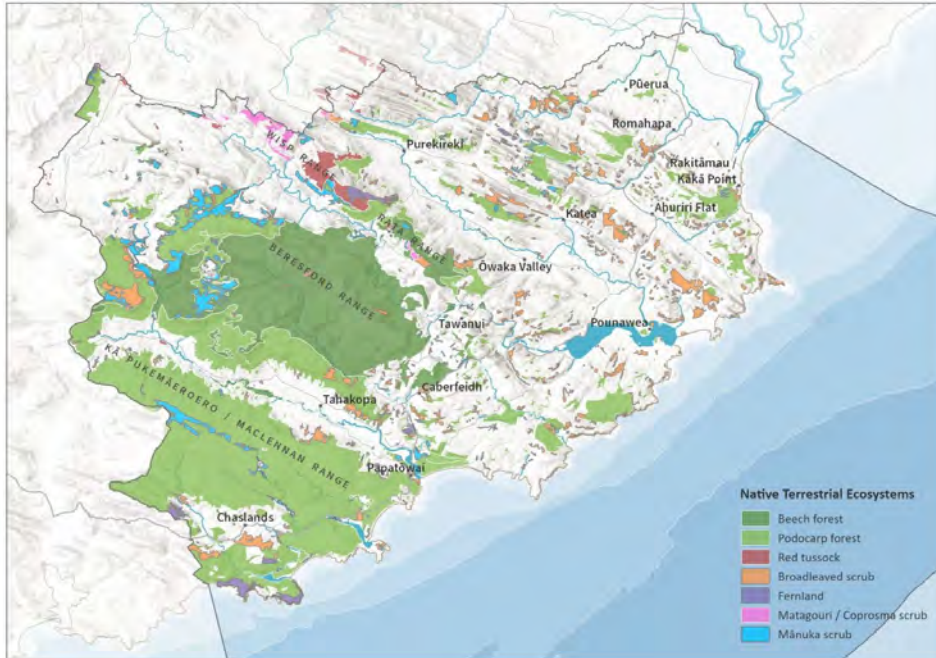
Figure 5. The distribution of the native terrestrial ecosystems across the area

The **current health** of the Catlins native terrestrial ecosystems is poor to fair. This rating is based on the CICG's evaluation of the condition of these ecosystems and includes the concern that the increasing numbers of introduced browsing mammals has resulted in few plant seedlings and saplings that should replace the mature plants when they die. Equally, introduced predators have a negative effect on all the Catlins' wildlife.

NESTED VALUES

A nested value is part of an ecosystem such a species, place or place-based practice that is protected or enhanced when the wider ecosystem is protected or enhanced.

When we protect the Catlins native terrestrial ecosystems, we also protect:

- Species that live within this ecosystem such as:
  - o Mammals: for example, pekapeka-tou-roa/ long-tailed bats which are classified as threatened/nationally critical
  - o Birds: for example, mohua/yellowhead which are at risk, declining, hoiho/yellow eyed penguins which are nationally critical
  - o Reptiles: for example, the Tautuku gecko which is at risk/declining
- The landscape's diversity, naturalness and peacefulness
- Cultural values

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There are other species of fauna, flora and fungi within this ecosystem, which will also be protected when the ecosystem is protected.

STRESSORS AND PRESSURES

For each of the values, the CICG identified the stressors and pressures that act on the health of that value. In this CAP, a "pressure" is usually a human activity that directly affects one or more of the values. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value. For example, introduced browsers, shown in pink boxes in Figure 6 (below) are a **pressure** on native terrestrial ecosystems and are shown in pink boxes. The causes of the pressures are shown in yellow boxes. The **stressors** that these animals cause includes a reduced or absent forest understory, and stresses are shown in green boxes.

STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve this goal for native terrestrial ecosystems are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- Introduced mammal and bird control strategy
- Weed control strategy
- Plastics and litter strand of the Human Behaviours strategy

MONITORING

The indicators we will use to measure the health of native terrestrial ecosystems:

- Seedling/sapling ratio: DOC has number of sites in the Catlins where it monitors the regeneration of the bush. Data for this indicator will be sourced from DOC.
- Other measures such as:
    - Abundance of deer palatable plants at browse level
    - Saplings without antler rub
    - Area of forest floor not disturbed by pigs
    - Evidence of possum browse
- The health of the populations of precious native species, for example mohua/yellowhead and pekapeka-tou-roa/ long-tailed bats should continue to be monitored in the area to provide data both for this plan and for wider species conservation.
- As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua

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Figure 6. A diagrammatic representation of the current situation of The Catlins Native Terrestrial Ecosystems. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

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VALUE 2. SOILS

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF SOILS

By 2034, the condition of soils will be maintained or improved while soil loss and its associated impacts will be reduced.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

The areas dominant soil is brown soils and podzols. Brown soils occur with moderate structure and drainage making these soils suitable for cultivation. Podzols occur where acid leaf litter and high rainfall combine, mainly in indigenous forest. They have low natural fertility and root growth and require fertiliser for grassland farming.

Human activities such as unsustainable forestry and farming in the area affect the soils, and introduced mammals that strip the undergrowth can cause soils to be washed into the waterways and eventually into wetlands and estuaries and out to sea. Careful land-use management practices and effective introduced mammal control, however, will ensure that the soils are kept on the land and out of the waterways.
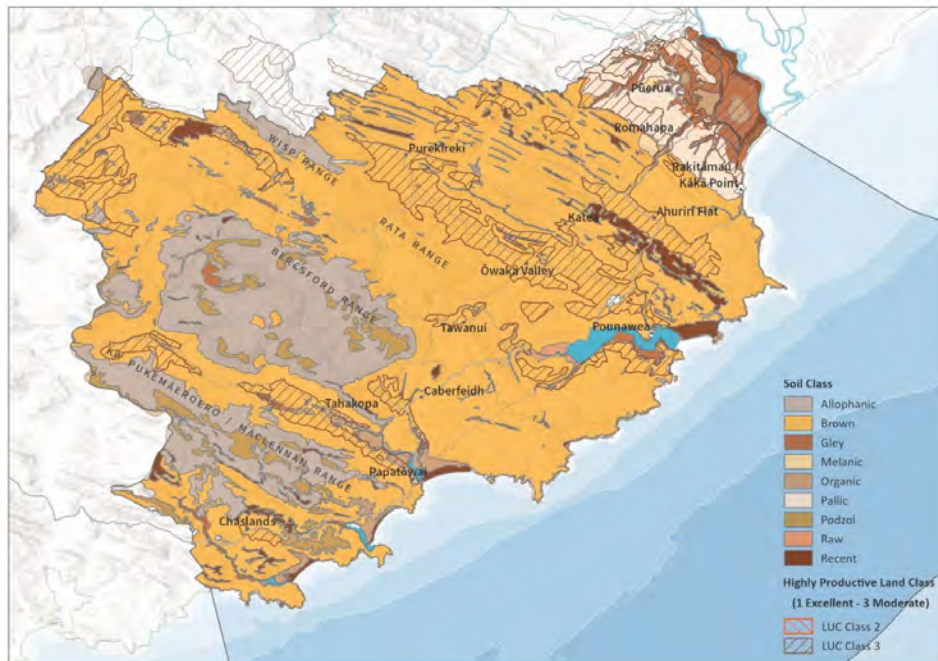
Figure 7. A map of the Catlins CAP area showing the distribution of the soils (shown by different colours) and areas of highly productive land (shown by the cross-hatching).

The **current health** of the soil on The Catlins' productive land is good, based on the farmers evaluation of the land that they work. There has yet to be work that determines the health of the soils under indigenous vegetation, but the ORC is about to establish soil test sites in indigenous forests.

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NESTED VALUES

There are no nested values within the soil value, although by protecting soil, the fauna and microbes within the soil are also protected. Additionally, protecting the soil enhances the economic potential of the Catlins as a good place for farming and forestry, thereby protecting resident's livelihoods.

STRESSORS AND PRESSURES

See Figure 7 below.

STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve the goal are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- Sustainable forestry strategy
- Sustainable farming strategy
- Introduced mammal and bird control strategy
- Weed control strategy

MONITORING

The indicators we will use to measure the health of the soils are:

- ORCs soil health monitoring programme has sites in the Catlins that are sampled once every 5-10 years. Data for this indicator will be sourced from the ORC. It is important to note due to the time that it takes for environmental change to occur, it is unlikely that there will be significant changes in the state of the soil over the timescale of this plan.
- As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua

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Figure 8. A diagrammatic representation of the current situation of The Catlins soils. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

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VALUE 3. FRESHWATER

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF FRESHWATER

Freshwater bodies support healthy freshwater ecosystems with thriving habitats for a range of indigenous species, and all life stages of those species, that would be expected to occur naturally.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

The Catlins area has four major freshwater rivers: the Puerua, Owaka, Catlins and Tahakopa.

Figure 9. The main rivers and streams in The Catlins

The Catlins freshwater ecosystem is extensively monitored by the ORC and reported as part of the Ministry for the Environment's "State of the Environment" reporting. This sustained monitoring effort results in multiple health measures for the Catlins freshwater, as shown in the data below, from the "Catlins at Houipapa" testing site on the Owaka river. These data were taken from taken from LAWA on 8/9/2024.

Indicator	5-year median	Attribute band	Indicator trend
E. coli	145n/100ml	D	Indeterminate
Suspended fine sediment, clarity	1.15 metres	C	Indeterminate
Suspended fine sediment, turbidity	3.25 NTU		Indeterminate

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Indicator	5-year median	Attribute band	Indicator trend
Total nitrogen	0.635 mg/L		Indeterminate
Total oxidised nitrogen	0.4 mg/L		Likely improving
Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	0.4375 mg/L		Likely improving
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	0.0055mg/L	A	Likely improving
Nitrate Nitrogen	0.4 mg/l	A	Likely improving
Dissolved reactive Phosphorus	0.01005mg/L	B	Very likely improving
Total Phosphorus	0.0245 mg/L		Likely improving

NESTED VALUES

When we protect the freshwater ecosystems in the area, we also protect:

- Streams
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Native freshwater wildlife
- Valued introduced freshwater species
- Cultural values such as mahika kai

Freshwater features in each of the human values mentioned for the Catlins. For example, river walks and spectacular waterfalls are an essential part of the Catlins' landscape character and serve to draw visitors to the area. Access to freshwater is important for successful farming operations, and clean freshwater is vital to human health.
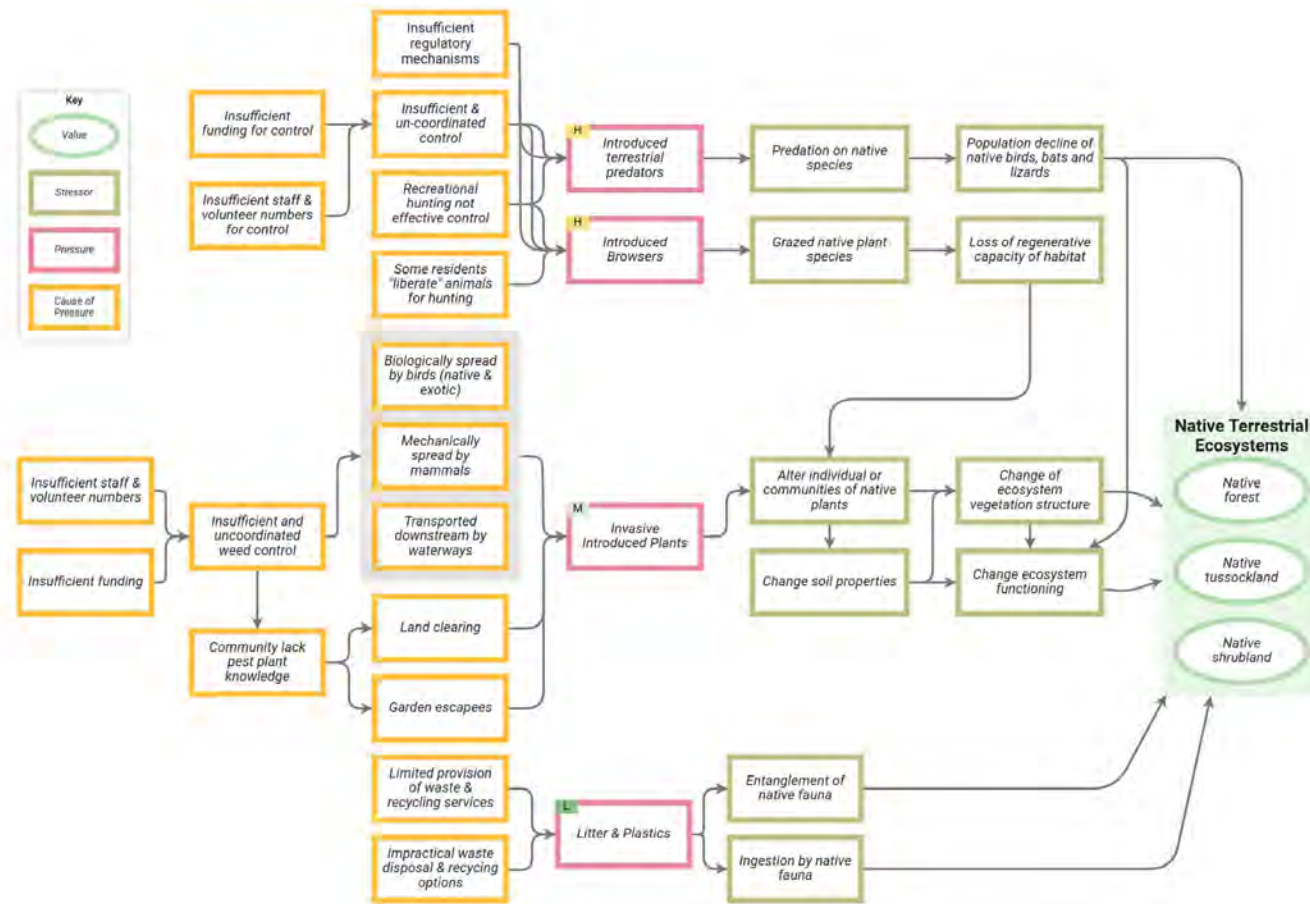
STRESSORS AND PRESSURES

See Figure 8 below.

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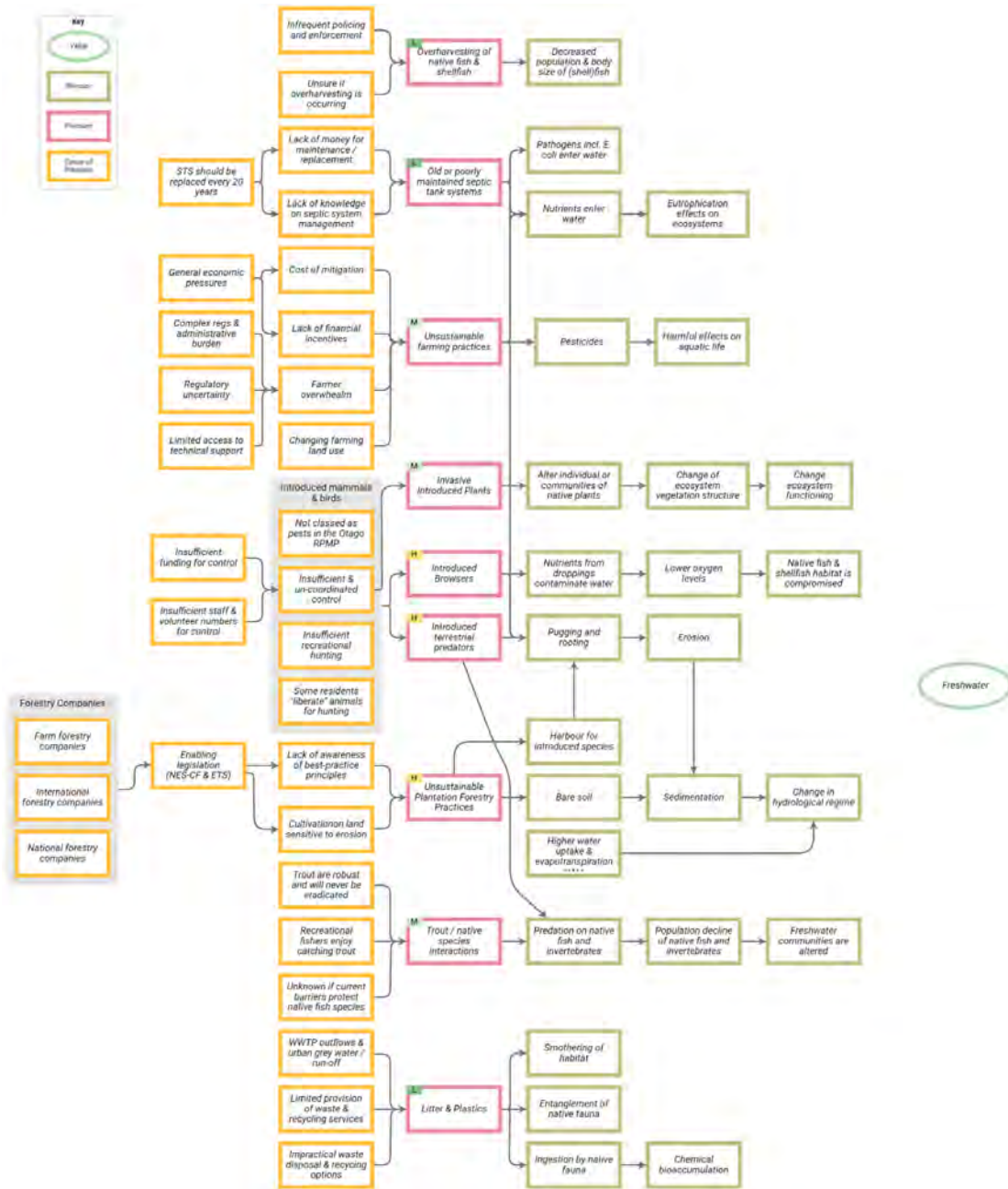
Figure 10. A diagrammatic representation of the current situation of The Catlins freshwater ecosystem. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

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STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve the goal are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- Sustainable farming strategy
- Sustainable forestry strategy
- Fish species interaction strategy
- Over-harvesting strategy
- Human behaviour strategy, especially the septic tank and plastic and litter strands
- Weeds control strategy
- Introduced mammal and bird control strategy

MONITORING

We will use the same indicators used to measure the health of the freshwater ecosystems as outlined above. These data will be sourced from the State of the Environment reporting done by the ORC. It is important to note due to the time that it takes for environmental change to occur, it is unlikely that there will be significant changes in the state of the freshwater over the timescale of this plan. As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua.

VALUE 4. WETLANDS

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF WETLANDS

By 2034, the natural wetlands in the Catlins will be maintained and the habitat condition of native wetland flora is enhanced to support native species of fauna.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

The Catlins has many types of natural wetlands that are home to native and endangered plant and animal species. "Wetlands" include peatlands and bogs and are also home to introduced birds that are valued for hunting and food.

Wetlands are areas where the water table is high, and water stays in the area for long enough to influence the soil, plants and animals that can live in a place. Wetlands can be dominated by freshwater, have brackish or salty water or a mixture of both. Just over 10% of New Zealand's historical extent of wetlands remains. Although wetlands have not always been valued, they are now recognised as having important function in trapping sediment, filtering water and can serve as flood protection to surrounding lands. Wetlands also contain characteristic fauna and flora that can live in this waterlogged environment.

The **current health** of the Catlins wetlands is "good" based on the community's assessment of the wetlands extent and condition. This rating includes the concerns of the spread of introduced weeds, but does not consider that, nationally, the current extent of wetlands is just 10% of its historical extent (Dymond et al, 2021)

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Figure 11. A map of The Catlins area showing the location of the natural wetlands, previously classified as Regionally Significant Wetlands.

NESTED VALUES

When we protect the wetland ecosystems in the area, we also protect:

- Bogs
- Swamps
- Marshes
- Native wetland flora and fauna
- Cultural values such as mahika kai
- Valued introduced wetland species (such as game birds)

Wetlands also offer great flood mitigation and can retain water. This means that they can act as a natural sponge and temper both high and low water flows for the whole ecosystem.

Catlins wetlands are an important part of the area's natural character, which is valued by those who live here and that attracts tourist to the area, thereby supporting tourism livelihoods.

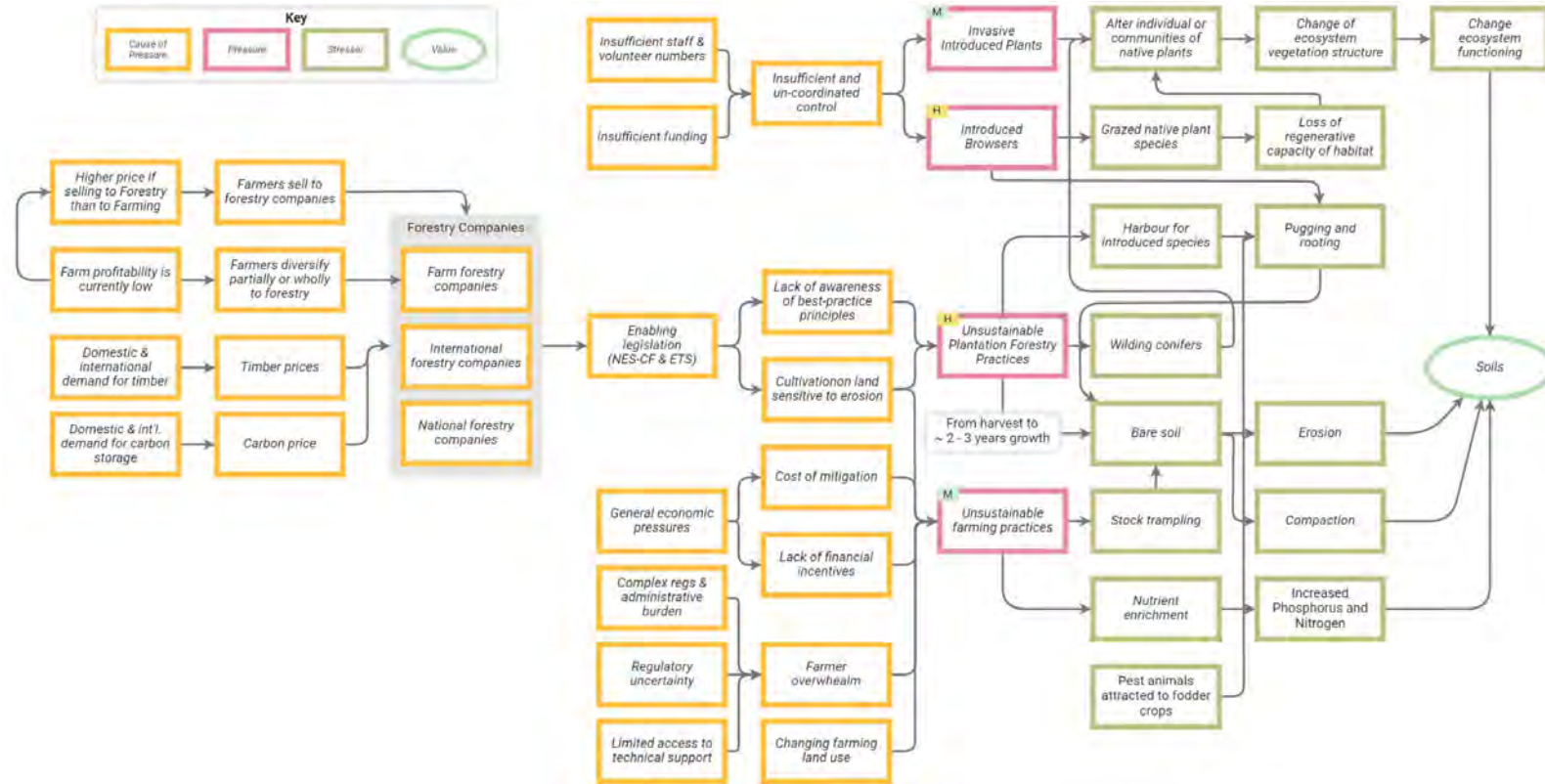## STRESSORS AND PRESSURES

See Figure 12 below.

21
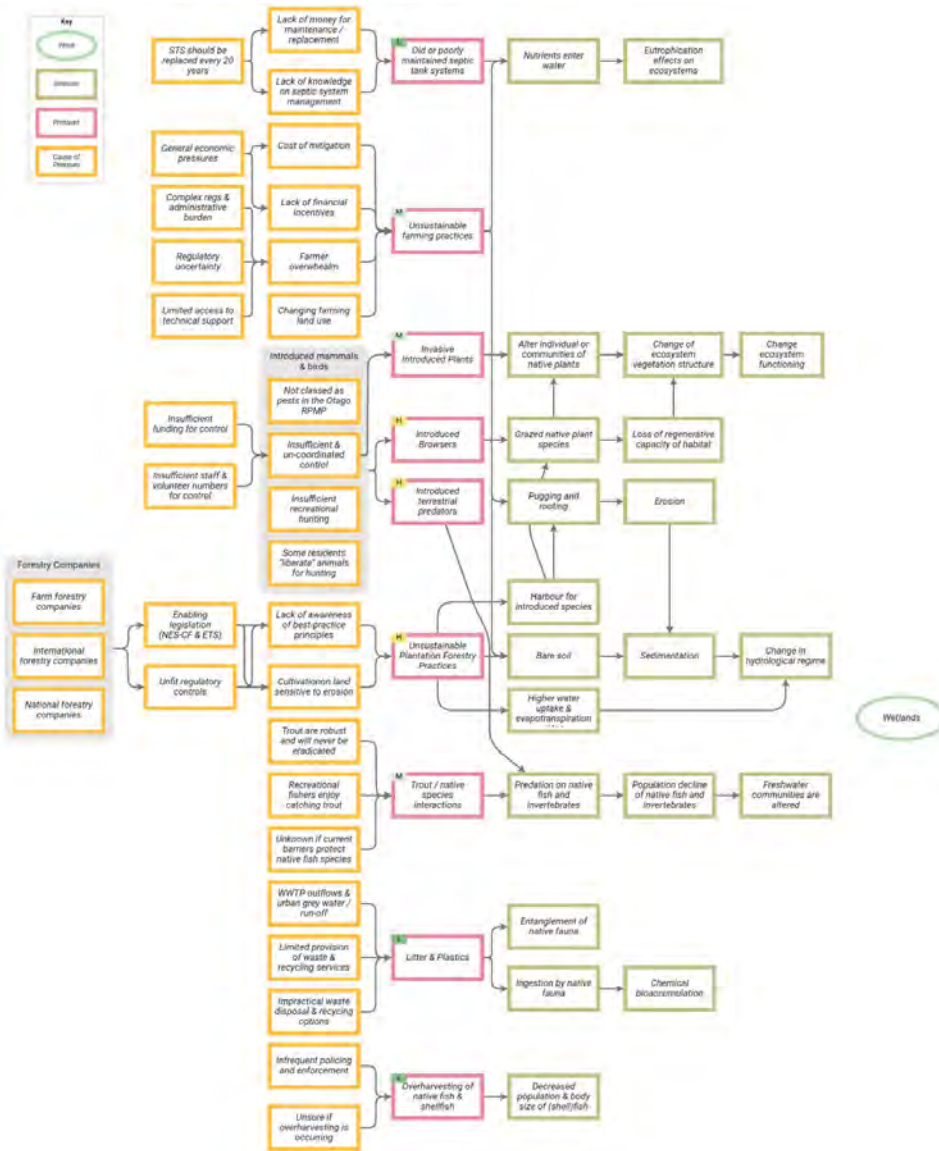
Figure 12. A diagrammatic representation of the current situation of The Catlins wetland ecosystems. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve the goal are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- [Sustainable farming strategy](#)

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- [Sustainable forestry strategy](#)
- [Fish species interaction strategy](#)
- [Overharvesting strategy](#)
- [Human behaviour strategy, particularly the plastic and litter and septic tank strands](#)
- [Weed control strategy](#)
- [Introduced mammal and bird control strategy](#)

These are the same strategies as for the freshwater value as outlined in the previous section and are also the same as those that will serve to protect estuaries in the next section.

MONITORING

Photo points are fixed locations from which you take regular photographs and compare against previous images taken from the same spot and from the same direction. These are the simplest and cheapest ways to monitor change in a plant populations.

Formal community wetland monitoring, such as the [WETmak resource](#) developed by the [NZ Landcare Trust/Ngā Matapopore Whenua](#), could be also established.

As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua.

VALUE 5. ESTUARIES

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF ESTUARIES

By 2034, reduced mud input from terrestrial and freshwater sources will allow the estuaries to be potentially good cockle habitat.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

The Catlins contains four estuaries: the Waipati/Chaslands Estuary, the Tautuku River Estuary, the Tahakopa Estuary, and the Catlins Estuary.

The Tautuku and Waipati/Chaslands estuaries are almost un-modified, which is unusual in Southern New Zealand. Both estuaries are fringed by native forest and contain a natural transition between estuary and dunes/salt marsh/wetland into native forest. Female Rāpoka/Whakahao/ NZ sealion use the Catlins river estuary to feed and estuaries are home to creatures such as kanae (mullet), tuangi (cockles) and pātiki (flounder) are mahika kai and food species for many local people.

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Figure 13. The location of the four open estuaries, and the monitoring points in these estuaries.

The **current health** of the estuaries in the Catlins is shown below, as illustrated by monitoring data from the Catlins and Tautuku Estuaries. The locations of the Catlins A and B, and Tautuku A and B monitoring sites are marked on the map in Figure 13. The data were taken from taken from LAWA on 8/9/2024.

Indicator	Catlins A (2019)	Catlins B (2019)	Tautuku A (2022)	Tautuku B (2022)
Estuary macrofauna score*	3.09	4.48		
Mud content	1.3%	42.9%	16.8%	49%

* a measure that illustrates the impact of mud on the creatures that live in the estuary mud. Low scores show a low effect.

NESTED VALUES

When we protect the estuary ecosystems in the area, we also protect:

- Saltmarshes
- Seagrass meadows
- Native estuarine wildlife
- Cultural values such as mahika kai

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STRESSORS AND PRESSURES
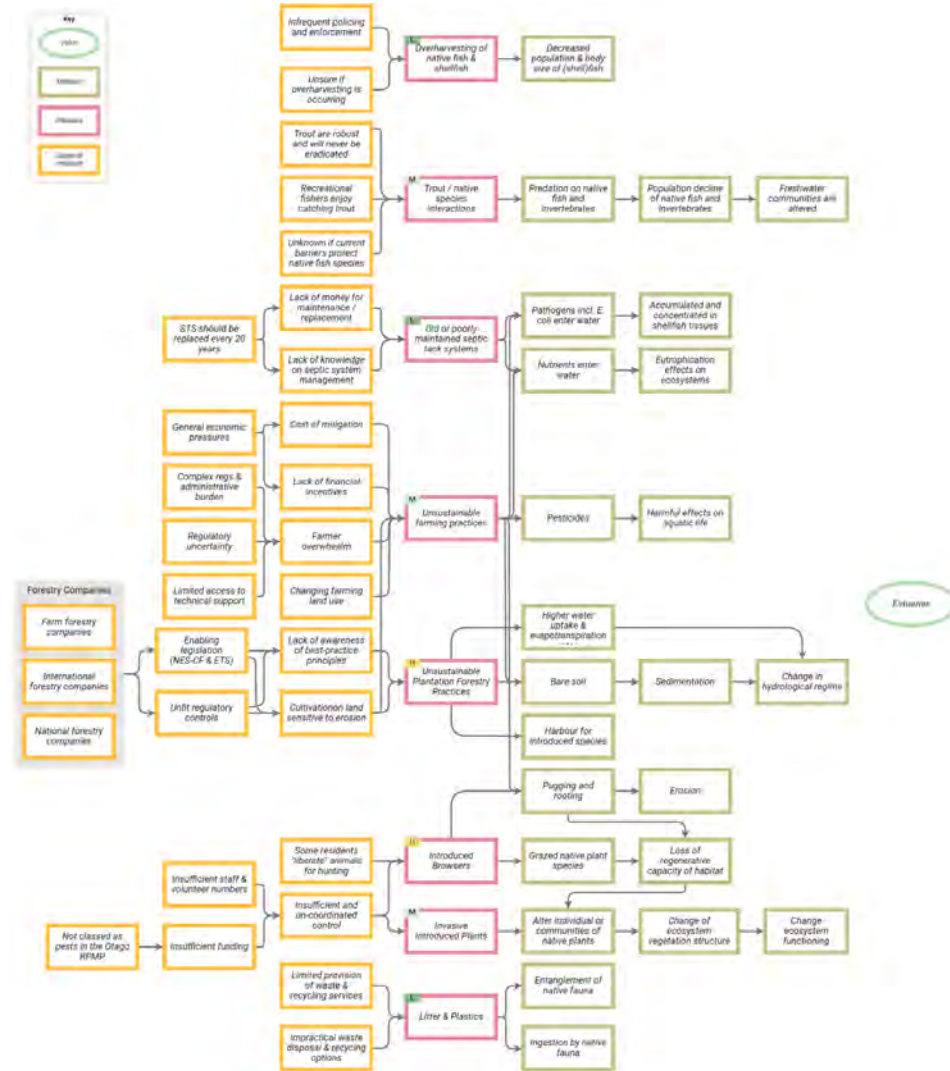
Figure 14. A diagrammatic representation of the current situation of The Catlins estuary ecosystems. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve the goal are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- Sustainable farming strategy
- Sustainable forestry strategy

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- [Fish species interaction strategy](#)
- [Overharvesting strategy](#)
- [Human behaviours strategy, particularly the plastic and litter and septic tank strands](#)
- [Weed control strategy](#)
- [Introduced mammal and bird control strategy](#)

These are the same strategies as for the freshwater and wetlands values as outlined previously. As these ecosystems are connected by water, all actions that improve the freshwater health will improve the health of the estuaries.

MONITORING

The indicators we will use to measure the health of estuaries are the two shown in the table of freshwater indicators, above.   These will be collected by ORC in their regular "State of the Environment" monitoring and reporting. As in previous sections, it is important to note due to the time that it takes for environmental change to occur, it is unlikely that there will be significant changes in the state of the estuaries over the timescale of this plan. As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua

VALUE 6. DUNES AND BEACHES

THE GOAL FOR THE FUTURE HEALTH OF DUNES AND BEACHES

By 2034, the dune and beach habitat of marine mammals and birds is enhanced and increased.

CURRENT STATUS AND HEALTH

Although the scope of the CAP goes out to the twelve nautical mile limit off the coast (see Figure 1), the dunes and beaches are the most accessible part of the coastal marine area for community management. This means that this value concentrates on the dunes and beaches of The Catlins.

Sand dunes are classed as "endangered" ecosystems and, in conjunction with the sand beaches to the waterline, are important habitats for pakeke/NZ sea lion, hoiho/yellow eyed penguins, kororā/ little blue penguins and tōrea pango/variable oystercatchers. Many of the Catlins dunes were originally active dunes. The area of active dunes has declined by 70% between the early 1900s and 2000s primarily due to the introduction of marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) which stabilises the dunes and to tree lupin (*Lupinus arboreus*). Marram grass has also replaced the native pīkao (*Ficinia spiralis*) a grass species that has both cultural importance to Māori and is part of an important ecosystem for native birds and invertebrates.

The **current health** of the Catlins dune and beach ecosystems is designated as "fair" based on the community's assessment of the dune ecosystems. However, the threat level of species that use these ecosystems differs; Hoiho/yellow-eyed penguins have declined by 78% in 15 years, and are classed as "Nationally Critical", and the New Zealand sealion are classed "Nationally Vulnerable."

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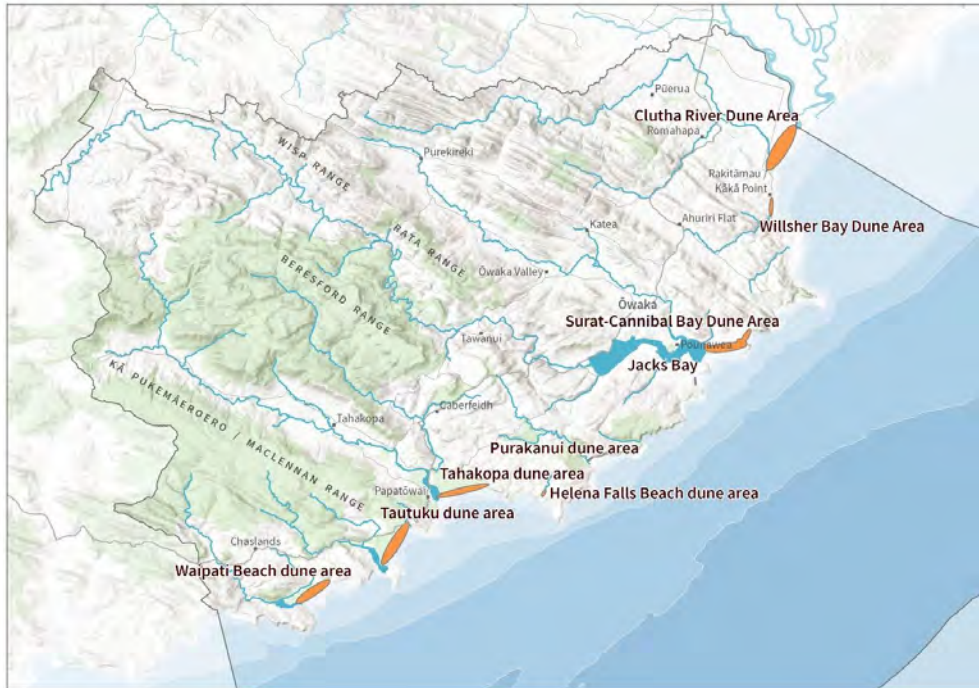
Figure 15. A map of The Catlins showing the location of the main dune areas and their associated beaches

NESTED VALUES

When we protect the dune ecosystems in the area, we also protect:

- Beach systems
- Dune systems
- Marine mammal habitats
- Seabird habitats

STRESSORS AND PRESSURES

See Figure 16 below.

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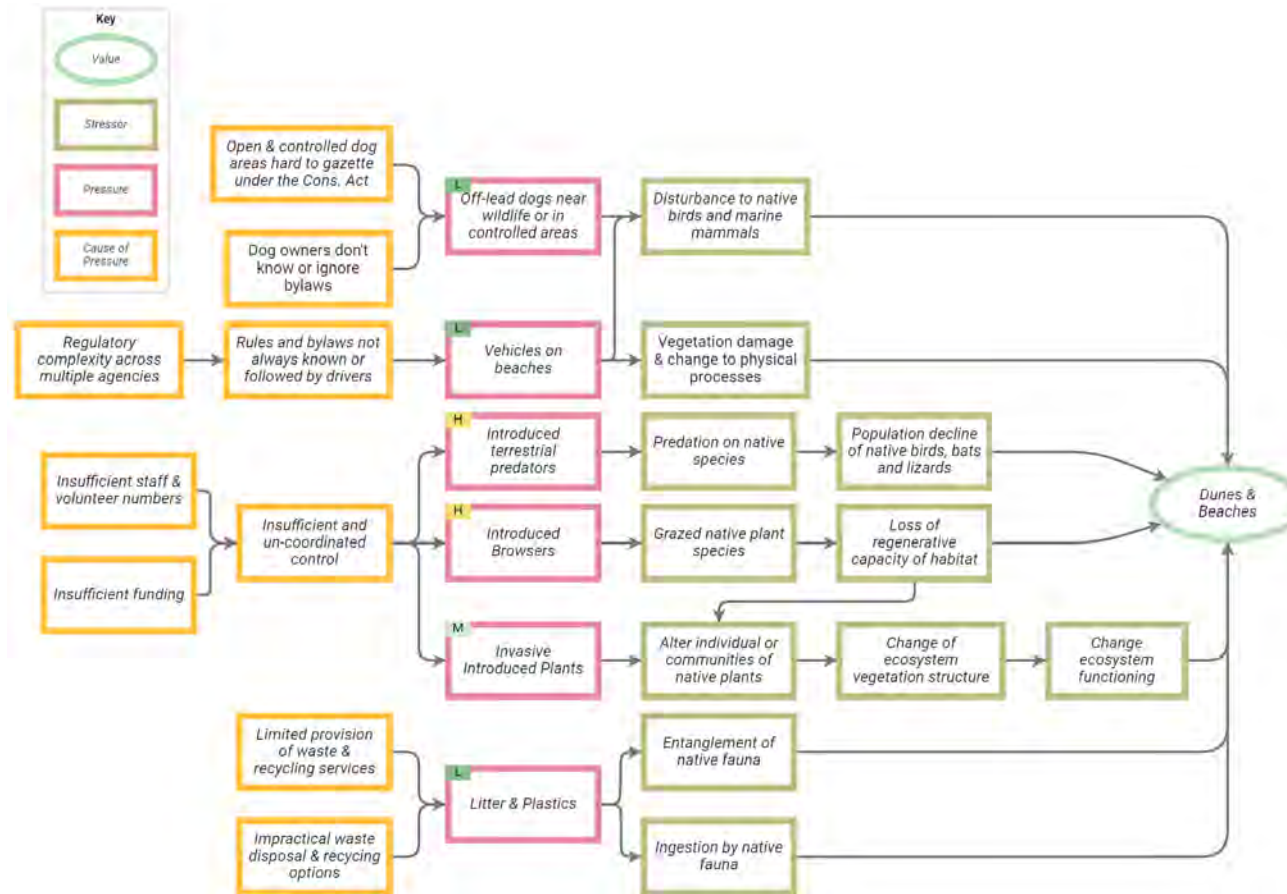
Figure 16. This diagram shows the current state of The Catlins dune and beaches. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. Pressures are shown in pink rectangles. These pressures will cause a "stress" on a value, and the stressors are shown in green. The yellow rectangles show the factors that contribute to the pressures. The symbols in top left corner of pink rectangles rate the impact of the pressure across The Catlins plan area. L = low impact; M = medium impact; H = high impact; VH = very high impact.

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STRATEGIES

Strategies that will help us achieve the goal are listed below. For further detail on each strategy, refer to the "Strategies" section of the Plan.

- Weed control strategy
- Introduced mammal and bird control strategy
- Human behaviours strategy, particularly the off-lead dog and vehicles on beaches strand

Together these three strategies combine for form the dune restoration programme which will be discussed further following the strategy section.

MONITORING

The health of the dunes and beaches will be monitored by:

- The percentage cover of target weeds (which this plan seeks to reduce)
- The percentage cover of native dune plants (which this plan seeks to increase)
- As appropriate, cultural monitoring will be developed with mana whenua

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PRESSURES ON ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

In this plan, a "pressure" is usually a human activity that directly affects the values. Below is a summary table showing the values and pressures in the Catlins. The CICG considered the **scope**, **severity**, and **irreversibility** of each pressure. **Scope** refers to the proportion of the value (area for ecosystems, population for species) that is likely to be affected within 10 years under current circumstances. **Severity** attempts to categorize the level of damage to the value. Irreversibility is the degree to which the effects of a given pressure can be undone. The blanks show that a particular pressure does not act on a value. Each pressure is rated by the CICG as having a Low, Medium, High or Very High effect on the values. The summary pressure rating provides a guide to the cumulative effect of the pressures across multiple values, and the summary value rating indicates how affected the values are by the pressures in the area.

Value / Pressure	Dunes & Beaches	Estuaries	Freshwater	Soils	Wetlands	Native Terrestrial Ecosystems	Summary Pressure Rating
Dairy & sheep farm effluent		Medium	Medium	Medium			**Medium**
Invasive Introduced Plants	High	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	**Medium**
Land clearing		Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	**Medium**
Overharvesting of native fish & shellfish		Low	Low				**Low**
Poor agricultural wintering practice		Medium	Medium	Medium	Low		**Medium**
Vehicles on beaches	Low						**Low**
Introduced Browsers	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	**High**
Introduced predators	Medium				Medium	High	**High**
Litter & Plastics	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	**Low**
Off-lead dogs near wildlife or in controlled areas	Medium					Low	**Low**
Old or poorly maintained septic tanks		Low	Low		Low		**Low**
Fish species interactions		Medium	High		Low		**Medium**
Unsealed roads		Low	Low	Low			**Low**
Summary Value Ratings	**Medium**	**High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**High**	

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STRATEGIES

The strategies in this plan are defined as "A set of one or more activities or actions with a common focus created to either restore values or reduce pressures. A strategy outlines a specific set of activities."

This plan has seven strategies and one programme (which is a collection of strategies) which cover many aspects of the environment and natural resources in The Catlins. The strategies, and the strategy effectiveness, are summarise below. The "strategy effectiveness" is calculated by rating the potential impact of the strategy, its feasibility, and its estimated cost. The strategy effectiveness is calculated to help prioritise the work outlines in the plan but does not determine what work is done. Detailed actions required to implement the strategy will be developed for implementing the CAP. These will be captured in the 'living' plan hosted online in the CAP Hub.

Strategy	Strands	Strategy effectiveness
Introduced mammal and bird control strategy	Mammal control at focus sites	Low
	Canada goose monitoring and control	Medium
Weed control strategy	Control weeds in priority areas	Low
	Suppress weed growth and spread across the region	Low
Sustainable farming strategy		Medium
Sustainable forestry strategy		High
Overharvesting		Medium
Fish species interaction strategy	Mapping	High
	Barriers	Medium
Human behaviour strategy	Plastic and Litter	High
	Septic tanks	Low
	Vehicles on beaches	Low
	Off-lead dogs	Low

The weed control, introduced mammal and bird, vehicles on beaches and off-lead dog strategies combine to become a **Dune Restoration programme** which is outlined fully at the end of this section.

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STRATEGY 1. INTRODUCED MAMMAL AND BIRD CONTROL STRATEGY

This is a **pressure reduction** strategy that aims to decrease the negative impacts that invasive introduced mammals and birds have on The Catlins ecosystems and endangered species through coordinated control of their numbers in focus areas.

New Zealand has over 90 introduced vertebrate species (Clout 2002) and introduced mammals have become major predators of New Zealand's birds, invertebrates, plants, reptiles, and even freshwater fish. The Catlins not only has relatively intact forests, it is also home to mōhua/yellowhead, native bats, geckos and countless other organisms that are affected by introduced mammals. Additionally, crops and newly planted forestry trees can be destroyed by introduced mammals.

Although Canada geese are not present across the whole Catlins, without monitoring and control, the geese could become more widespread. As Canada geese flock on pastures and lake edges, their faeces may contribute to the microbial and nutrient load in freshwater ecosystems and therefore be a risk to human health and native species. The geese feed on pasture and other natural grasses, degrading habitat when the flock in large numbers.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will contribute to the enhancement of the following values:

- Wetlands
- Freshwater
- Terrestrial native ecosystems
- Dunes and beaches
- Estuaries
- Soils

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:

- Increase effectiveness of control work through collaboration

The outputs of this strategy will be:

- Formation of an introduced mammal and bird control group
- Coordinated control activities
- Fewer Canada geese

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

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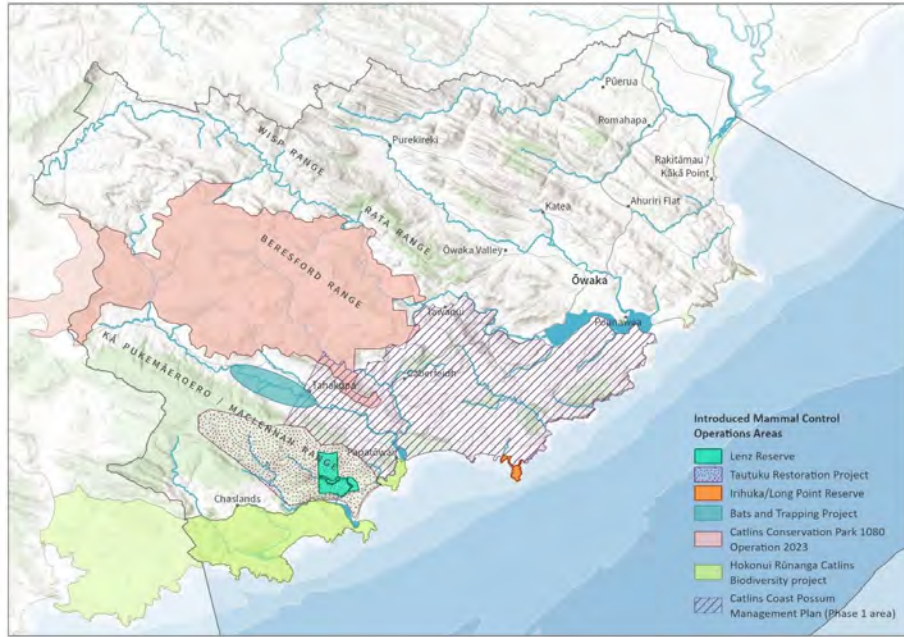
Figure 17. A map of The Catlins showing the location of current introduced mammal control and suggested areas where this work could continue to be supported.

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are shown in **figure 18** below.

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Figure 18. This diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the strategies of the introduced mammal and bird control programme. A key is provided in the diagram.

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STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Affordability	Strategy effectiveness
Mammal control at focus sites	High	Low	Very expensive	Low
Canada goose monitoring and control	High	Medium to high	Expensive	Medium

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

Across the country there are many examples that show that coordinated and targeted introduced animal control can be achieved at a landscape scale. Many of these efforts receive money and support from Predator Free 2050 and are focused on different introduced species.

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- Control of browsing mammals will support the regeneration of native vegetation in the focus areas
- Control of predatory mammals will protect populations of threatened native species

STRATEGY MEASURES

The progress of this strategy will be monitored by the following measurements:
- In situ ecological outcomes such as:
  - Abundance of deer palatable plants at browse level
  - Seedling to sapling ratio indicative of a self-sustaining forest
  - Saplings without antler rub
  - Area of forest floor not disturbed by pigs
  - Absence of possum browse
- Appropriate monitoring of threatened native species

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

- Immediately – there are foundational activities that will take time to establish

PEOPLE INVOLVED

This strategy could be lead by:

- Mana whenua/ Rūnaka
- Landowners
- Community

The strategy could be supported by:
- DOC
- ORC
- Forest & Bird
- Catlins Biodiversity Group
- Hunting groups could help with Canada Goose control
- Catchment Groups

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- Experienced contractors and operators

ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Foundational Action	Description	Who
Mammal Control Coordination Group	Form a group to lead, coordinate and focus invasive mammal control work, including: • Mapping priority areas • Planning on-ground works • Accessing funds and resources	Mana whenua, community, DOC, environmental NGOs and ORC Biosecurity Team form a group. ORC can support mapping and data analysis.
Canada Geese Monitoring	Investigate Canada geese issue using: • eBird to seek data on numbers • a community monitoring project could also be established and, if necessary, organise a control strategy	Catchment Group / farmer organisations to be involved in evidence gathering. ORC can provide annual data updates.

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Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

STRATEGY 2. WEED CONTROL STRATEGY

Of the 25,000 exotic plants that humans have introduced to New Zealand, 3,000 have been found growing wild and 1,800 have become environmental weeds (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2021). Some weeds are site specific, some are ecosystem specific (for example freshwater Lagarosiphon in the Puerua river) and some live on the boundaries between ecosystems.

There are two strands to the weed control strategy: (i) control weeds in targeted areas and (ii) suppress growth and spread of weeds across the region. The first strand is a pressure reduction strategy that aims to decrease the negative impacts that invasive exotic plants have on ecosystems through coordinated removal of weeds in targeted areas. Strand 2 is a pressure reduction strategy across the whole Catlins.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will contribute to the health of the following values:
- Wetlands
- Terrestrial native ecosystems
- Dunes and beaches
- Estuaries
- Freshwater

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are to:
- Increase effectiveness of weed control work in target areas through collaboration
- Increase public knowledge of key weeds
- Permanently reduce the area-wide coverage of invasive plant species
- Increase native plant coverage in focus sites once the weeds have been removed

The outputs of this strategy will be:
- The formation of a weed task group
- Public education materials

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

As invasive weeds are so widespread, mapping helps prioritise where the work could begin (Figure 19 below).

37
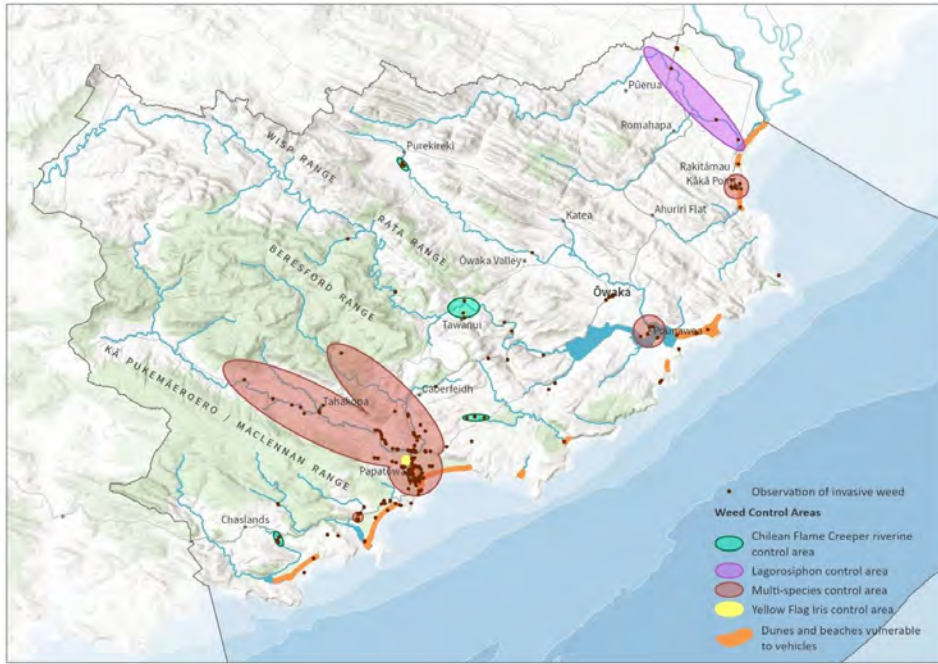
Figure 19. A map of The Catlins showing the suggested locations of priority areas for weed control.

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are shown in Figure 20 below.

38

Figure 20. This diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the strategies of the weed control programme. A key is provided in the diagram.

39

STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness o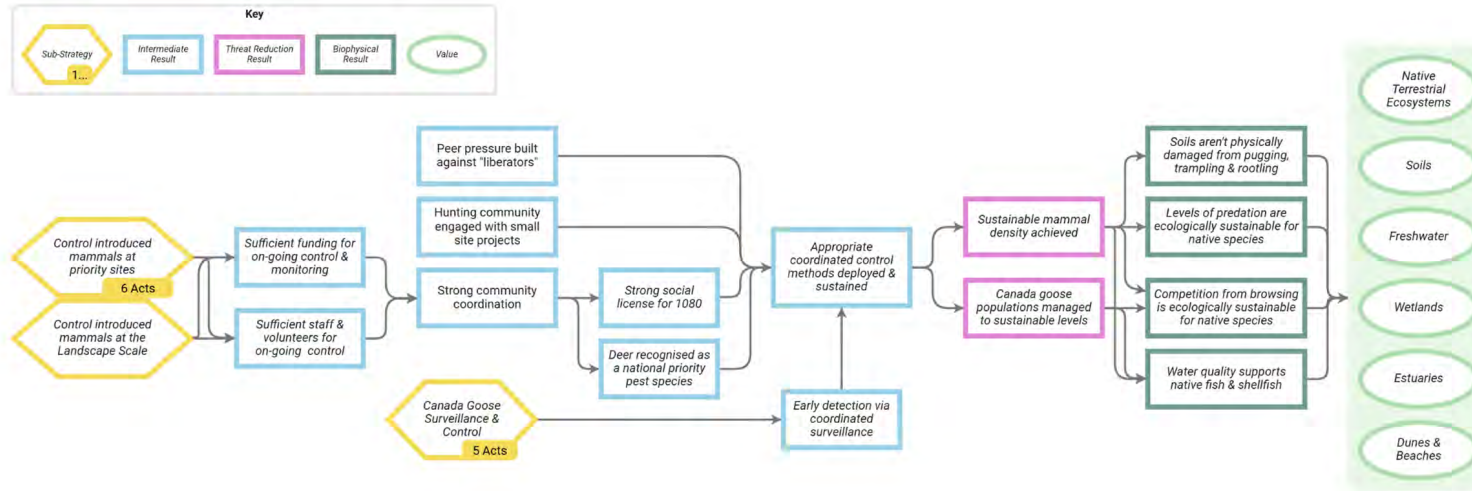f the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Cost	Strategy effectiveness
Control weeds in priority areas and suppress weed growth and spread across the region	High	Medium	Expensive	Low

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

There are many excellent examples of successful community weed control initiatives/projects in the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's 2021 report: Space Invaders: A review of how New Zealand manages weeds that threaten native ecosystems.
- Stewart Island / Rakiura Community & Environment Trust (Aim to enhance the environment around settled parts of the island. Weed control, particularly of Darwin's Barberry)
- Project De-Vine Environmental Trust in Golden Bay (Control of passionfruit, old man's beard, and other weeds to form a weed-free buffer zone around their national parks)
- Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust at Whangārei Heads (Restore native habitat through site specific control, community awareness and landscape scale management)
- Te Roroa: Te Toa Whenua (weed control after plantation forest harvesting to ultimately regenerate native forest)

ASSUMPTION MADE
- Long term resourcing will be secured for continued weed control and that the community and contractors have the time and will to do the work.

STRATEGY MEASURES

The progress of this strategy will be monitored by the following measurements:
- Area of weed control work carried out per year
- Area of land planted with natives per year
- Number of engagements with public per year

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the short term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

List the people/groups/agencies who will do the work and who will monitor the work
- Landholders (undertake invasive pest plant control work)
- Catchment Groups (planting)
- ORC (advice and monitoring)
- Other groups working on introduced species control and/or habitat restoration such as South Otago Forest and Bird, Papatōwai Barberry Busters

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ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational Action	Description	Who
Weed task group	Form a group to lead, coordinate and focus weed control work, including: • Mapping priority areas • Planning on-ground works and monitoring • Accessing fund and resources including suitable plants to fill gaps following weed removal	Mana whenua, community, DOC, Papatōwai Barberry Busters, South Otago Forest and Bird. ORC Biosecurity Team can provide advice, ORC can help with mapping and prioritisation.

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STRATEGY 3. SUSTAINABLE FARMING STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Farming is the largest industry in The Catlins, making up 41% of total employment in the area (using data from ANZSIC 200612). Farmers work within many rules and regulations and follow industry standards all of which regulate the effects that farms can have on the environment. Some of these rules are currently in flux as the Government has signalled that it will overhaul the rules around freshwater management when it reforms the Resource Management Act. This uncertainty around the rules puts pressure on farmers, including those who go over and above the regulations and standards.

Across the country, catchment groups have successfully worked to support farmers to collectively make a positive difference in their area. Otago South River Care is currently the only catchment group active in The Catlins, although others have operated until recently. This strategy is to enable these catchment groups to support their members to effect positive change.

This is a pressure reduction strategy.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will improve the health of the following values:
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Wetlands
- Estuaries
- Soils

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:
- Farmers are supported in the work that they do to enhance the environment on their farms
- Productive soils are kept on the land and out of the waterways
- Improved water quality across the area

The outputs of this strategy will be:
- Reinvigorated catchment groups who meet regularly and promote "on-farm" change
- A farming community that feels connected to each other and supported in their work
- An increase in land management actions that improve water quality

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

This is an "across area" strategy covering the whole of the Otago part of the Catlins
- Encourage and support farms with fewer land management actions to improve their work
- Focus on low cost – high return initiatives first and seek support to determine these

42
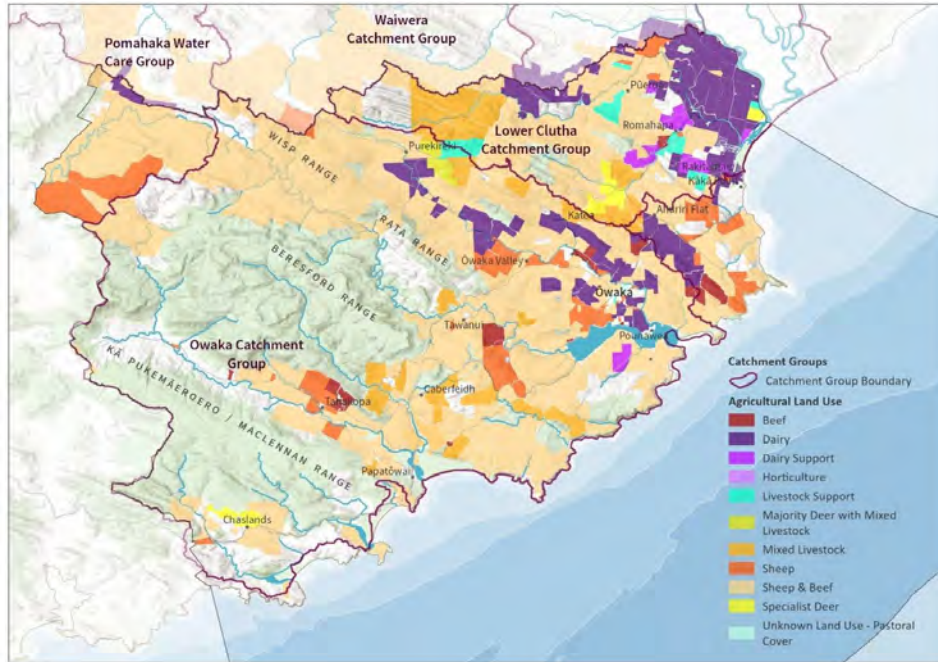
Figure 21. A map of The Catlins showing the primary farming practice on agricultural properties and the boundaries of the current catchment groups

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THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are show in Figure 22 below.

43

Figure 22. This diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the strategies of the sustainable farming programmes. A key is provided in the diagram

44

STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS
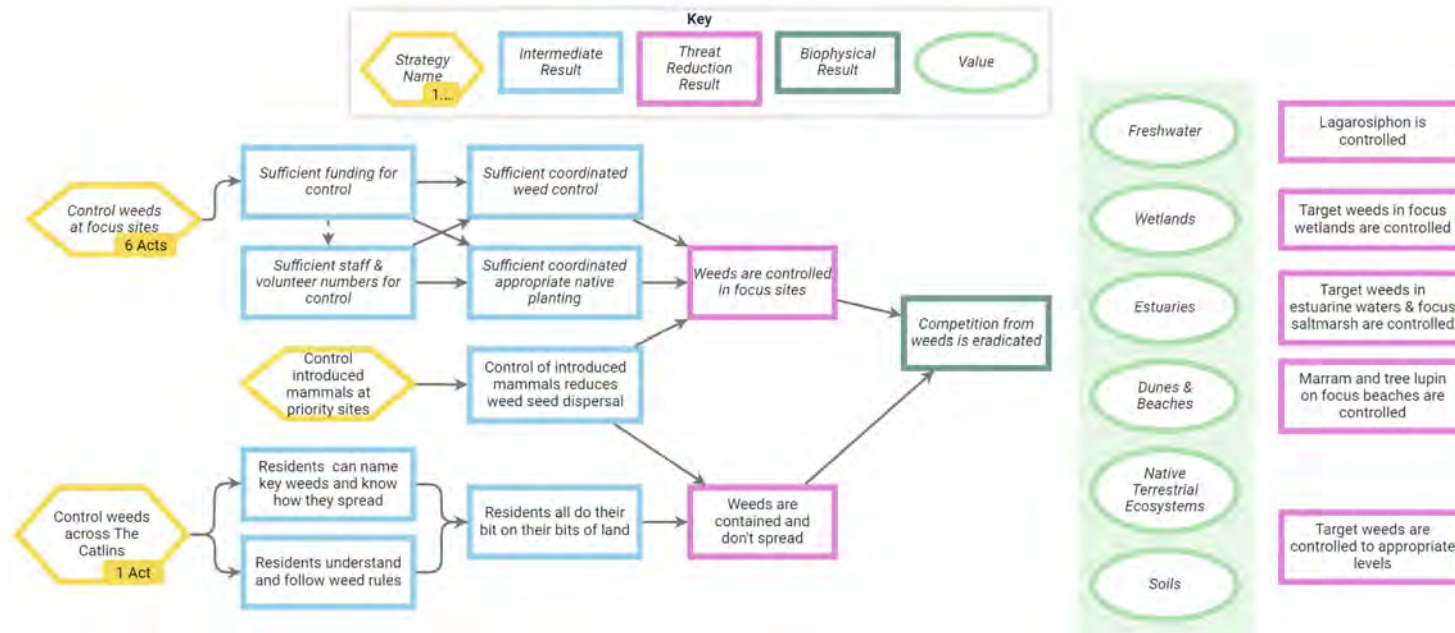
STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Cost	Strategy effectiveness
Sustainable Farming	Medium	Medium	Cheap (not including funding for remediation work)	Medium

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

"Our Land and Water" National Science challenge has extensively studied the successes of catchment groups in promoting on-farm change. They have a collection of resources for catchment groups on their website. Both Otago Catchment Community (OCC) and the NZ Landcare Trust/Ngā Matapopore Whenua work extensively with rural communities to support catchment groups and have staff and resources to support catchment groups that have made significant differences to water quality in their catchments.

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- Assumption that farmers have time and energy to be more actively involved in catchment groups. This is not necessarily the case, as farmers are currently under a lot of stress
- Assumption that focused and collective action will improve water quality. Evidence for this will come from the water monitoring that already happens, however it is important to remember that seeing changes in these measurements could take 15-20 years

STRATEGY MEASURES

The progress of this strategy will be monitored by the following measurements:
- Number of catchment group meetings and events, and the variety of folks who reflect the different land uses that attend these meetings and events.
- Number of focused land management actions that improve water quality

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the short term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

- Led and monitored by Catchment Groups
- Supported by OCC, NZ Landcare Trust, ORC's catchment advisors. Water Quality State of the Environment is monitored by ORC
- Technical advice available from organisations such as:
    - Beef and Lamb
    - Ag Research
    - ORC for water quality and soil data
    - Fert reps
    - Farm Accountants (for cost feasibility)
    - Farm Consultants

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ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational Action	Description	Who
Re-invigorated catchment groups	Re-invigorated catchment groups who support landowners in continuing their best-practice land management with actions including: • Field days, discussion groups, workshops, and farmer trial initiatives • Advice on best practice and accessing funds and resources	Catchment groups with the addition of other land users such as forestry. Industry bodies, OCC ORCs catchment advisors can run session on stream health assessment, Intensive winter grazing workshops, riparian management workshops. ORC can advice on monitoring and provide data

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STRATEGY 4. SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Foresters and forestry companies work with many rules and regulations and follow "best practice" industry standards all of which regulate the effects that forestry has on the environment. Some of these rules as the Government has signalled that it will overhaul the rules around freshwater management when it reforms the Resource Management Act. This uncertainty around the rules puts pressure on foresters, including those who go over and above the regulations and standards. Many forestry companies and those who manage the forests do not live in the area and are not part of the local community and therefore may not be aware of the concerns of the community. This strategy assumes that all forestry in the Catlins follows the regulations in the National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF). The strategy is to integrate foresters and forestry companies more closely with the local community, thereby giving them an even greater stake in the health of the area.

This is a pressure reduction strategy.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will improve the health of the following values:
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Wetlands
- Estuaries
- Soils

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:
- Forestry companies and those working on Catlins forests are closely connected to and actively involved with the Catlins community
- Foresters are supported in the work that they do to enhance the environment on their land
- Community and contractors who are doing mammal and weed control, and native species monitoring have controlled access to forestry blocks
- Forestry activities keep soils on land and out of the waterways

The outputs of this strategy will be:
- Successful collaborative weed and mammal control programmes and native species monitoring that include forestry blocks
- Improved water quality

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

As forestry blocks are present across the Catlins, this is a whole of area strategy.

47
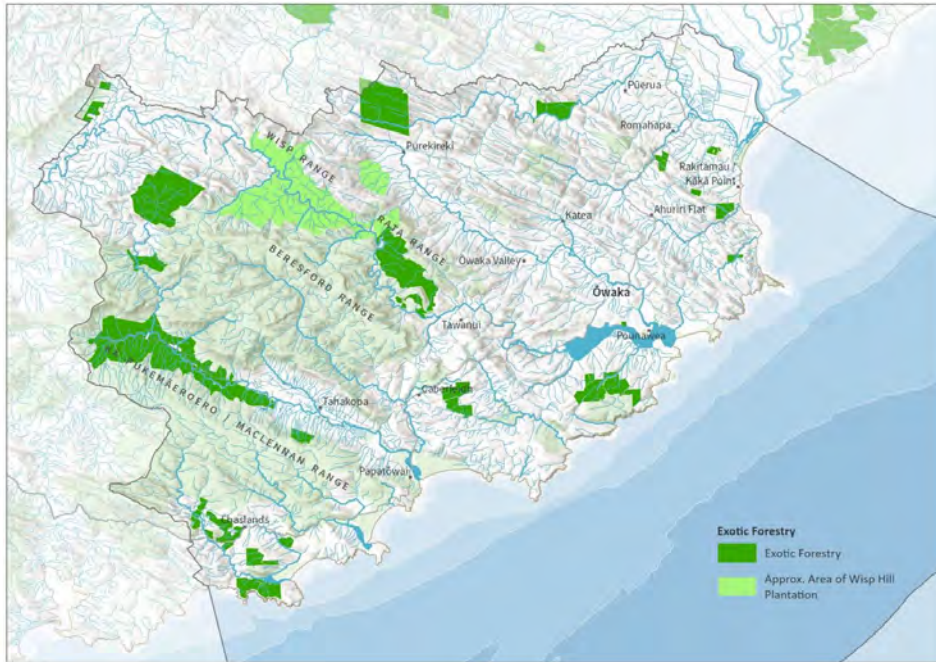
Figure 23. A map of The Catlins showing the location of forestry blocks

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are shown in Figure 24 below.
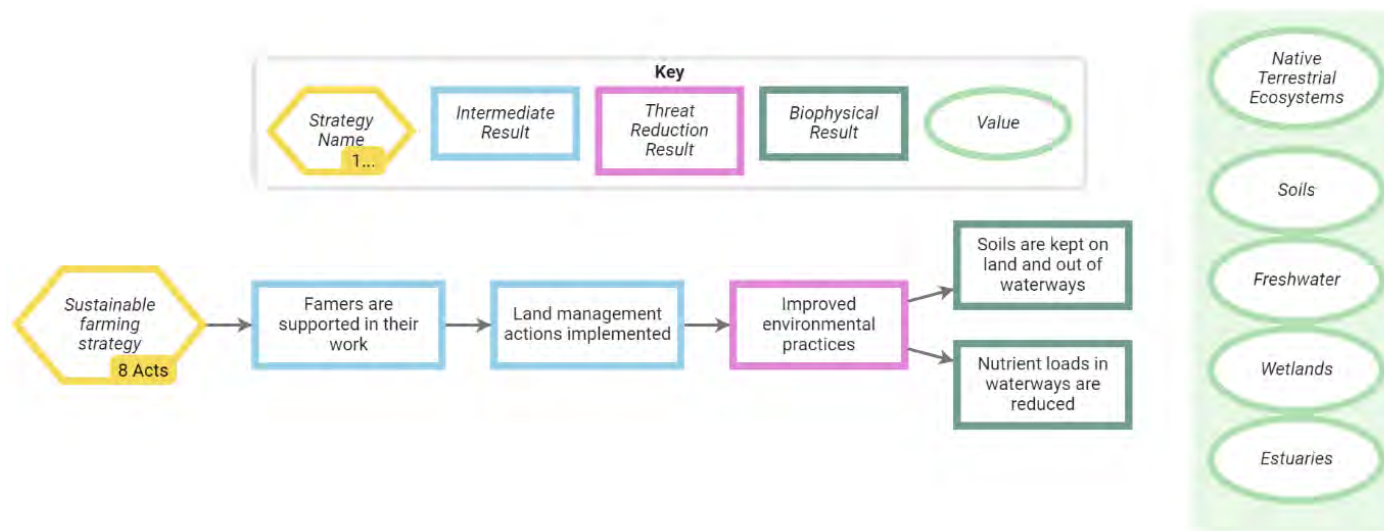
48
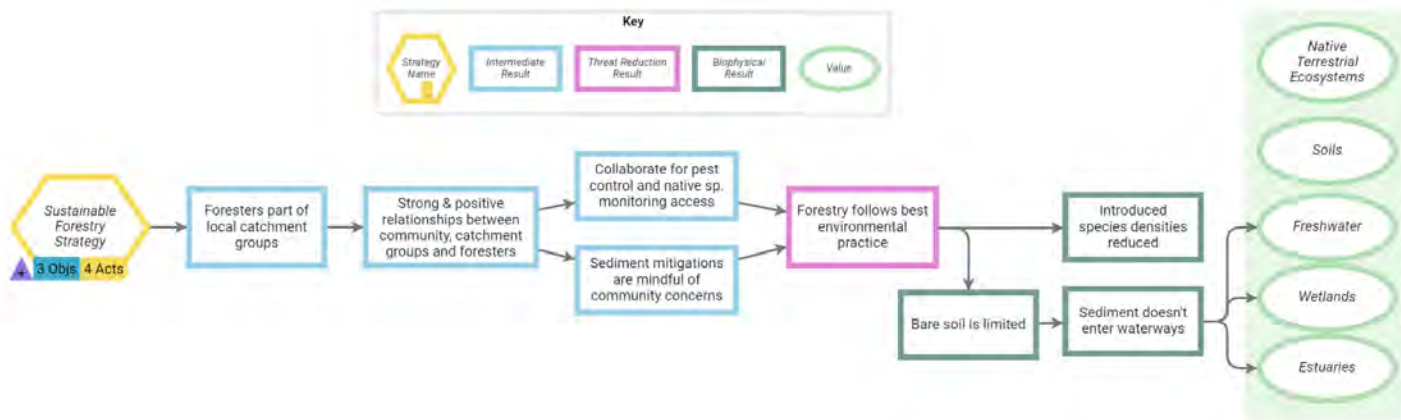
Figure 24. The diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the Sustainable Forestry strategy. A key is provided in the diagram.

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STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Cost	Strategy effectiveness
Forestry strategy	Medium	High (but it requires good will)	Cheap (while acknowledging that this takes the community and forester's time)	High

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

There is no researched evidence for this strategy in New Zealand. Internationally some work shows that relationships between landowners and foresters can show environmental benefits.

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- We assume that if forestry companies are more connected to the people and area in which they work, they will feel more connected to the community, and will therefore align their work more closely to community aspirations.
- This strategy assumes that forestry companies and foresters have the time to be more actively involved in catchment groups. This is not necessarily the case, as foresters are currently under a lot of stress.

STRATEGY MEASURES

The progress of this strategy will be monitored by the following measurements:
- Forestry representatives are invited to and attend relevant catchment group activities
- Forestry blocks are successfully included in collaborative mammal and weed control operations and native species monitoring

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the short term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

List the people/groups/agencies who will do the work and who will monitor the work
- Collaboration between Catchment Groups and forestry companies/foresters
- Supported by ORC

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ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational Action	Description	Who
Relationship building	Ensure that forestry companies and foresters are connected to the community by: • inviting forestry to join catchment groups • including forestry companies in planning invasive mammal and weed control and native species monitoring • advocating for best forestry practice through ongoing engagement	Catchment Groups, forestry companies, Southern Wood Council Environment Groups Catchment advisor

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Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

STRATEGY 5. FISH SPECIES INTERACTION STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Trout were introduced to the South Island in 1867 and are prized by anglers for sport and food. Equally, however, the introduction of trout has been detrimental to native freshwater fish and invertebrates. The current National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management requires identification and mapping of desired native and introduced fish species to allow the enabling and restricting of fish passage. The ORC has begun some of this work, and, along with input from mana whenua; Fish & Game; DOC; and fisheries managers, it will form the basis of a fish species interaction strategy.

This is a pressure reduction strategy.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will contribute to the health of the following values:

- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Estuaries

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:

- Maintain spawning grounds and habitat
- Protect native fish populations and habitats, including from whitebaiting
- Identify areas where it is appropriate to protect the habitats of introduced fish that have recreational fishing value

The outputs of this strategy will be:

- The habitats of native fish are protected, and diadromous native species can move between the sea and freshwater
- Where appropriate, the habitats of introduced fish are protected and introduced fish can move between the sea and freshwater

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Mapping fish distribution (including historical and potential distribution), habitats of importance and barriers to fish passage are the foundational actions for this strategy. These actions will build on national fish passage work already underway, and utilise existing datasets from ORC, DOC and Fish & Game.

52
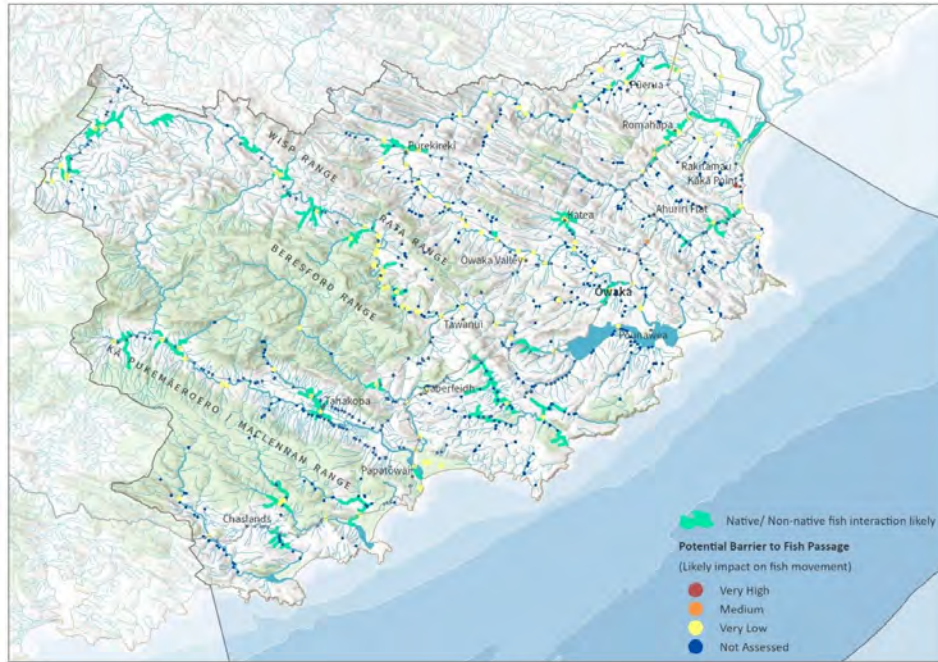
Figure 25. A map of The Catlins area showing the probable native / introduced fish interaction areas and the location of potential barriers to fish passage.

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are:
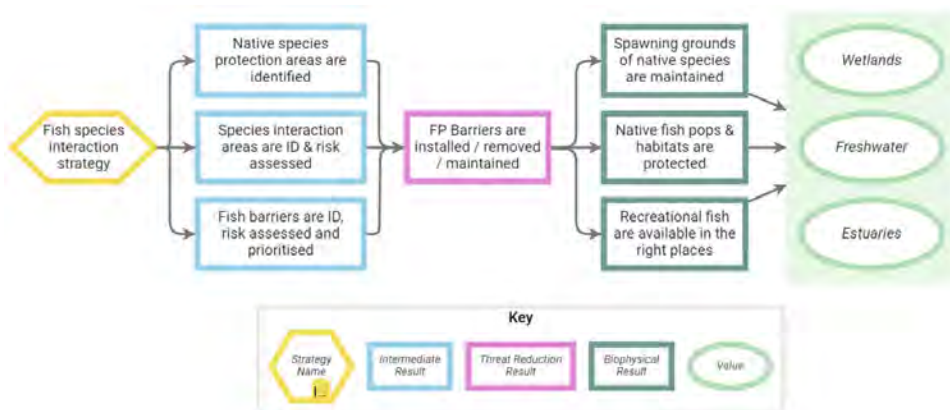
Figure 26. This diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the Fish Species Interaction Strategy. A key is provided in the diagram.

53

STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Cost	Strategy effectiveness
Fish species interaction strategy (mapping)	High	High	Cheap	High
Fish species interaction strategy (barriers)	High	Medium to high	Expensive	Medium

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

Fish & Game report that trout barriers that have worked elsewhere to protect native fish species. Protecting the spawning habitat of native fish will protect stocks of native fish if predation pressure is lower than recruitment.

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- That barriers are effective and there are no introduced fish access upstream areas.

STRATEGY MEASURES

The progress of this strategy will be monitored by the following measurements:
- Mapping of native and introduced fish completed
- Trout barrier work planned and completed

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the medium term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

The strategy is led by ORC and supported by mana whenua, landowners, Fish & Game and DOC

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ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational actions	Description	Who
Fish mapping	Identify areas that are important for native and introduced fish species. This work includes species and habitat datasets and incorporation of Mātauraka and community knowledge. Potentially include eDNA sampling	ORC, supported by Fish & Game, DOC, Forest and Bird, mana whenua and community. Catchment groups or individuals supported by ORC
Document and assess fish passage barriers on private land	Work with landowners to document the location and assess barriers. Work with landowners to document the location and assess fish barriers	Catchment groups or individuals supported by ORC

55

STRATEGY 6. OVER-HARVESTING STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

Wild food harvesting of fish and shellfish is important to many who call The Catlins home and is also an activity that attracts visitors to The Catlins. There are established whitebaiting stands, and fish and shellfish are gathered from the estuaries, beaches, and rocks. National rules set catch limits and catch methods for many of these species, but these rules are infrequently policed. Locals report that the abundance and sizes of many species are not what they remember from when they were growing up.

The evidence for over-harvesting is currently qualitative but needs to be quantified to determine whether there is a need for greater surveillance and protection for these resources. As it is not safe or appropriate for kaitiaki rangers and locals to question people about their harvest/catch, this quantitative evidence needs to be collected based on the stocks and sizes of key organisms in the environment. This monitoring could be carried out either by community and mana whenua or be done by professionals.

This is a pressure reduction strategy.

RELATED GOALS

This strategy will contribute to the following values:
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Estuaries

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:
- Monitor and quantify the changes in abundance and size of key species
- Lobby for greater surveillance and protection of key species

The outputs of this strategy will be:
- A quantitative evidence base for decision-making

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES
- This is an area-wide strategy. See Figure 27 below.

56

Figure 27. A map of The Catlins showing the location of the main areas thought to be at risk of potential fish and shellfish over-harvesting.

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are:

Figure 28. This diagram shows the results we expect the achieve by implementing the Over-harvesting Strategy. A key is provided in the diagram.

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STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Cost	Strategy effectiveness
Overharvesting strategy	Medium-High	Medium	Medium	Medium

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

In the Hauraki Gulf community shellfish monitoring programme, Waikato Regional Council supports community groups to survey the shellfish on Hauraki Gulf mudflats. By using consistent methods, these surveys have become part of a long-term fisheries monitoring dataset. Another long-term data set that can be investigated are customary permit data collected by iwi.

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- Unreported harvesting over catch and bag limits is occurring in the area
- If people are aware of the limits, then they will keep their catch within the limits

STRATEGY MEASURES

- Greater visibility of fisheries monitoring
- Establishment of a community shellfish monitoring programme

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the short term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

- Led by mana whenua and community
- Supported by the MPI (for shellfish) and DOC (for whitebait) and mana whenua

ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational actions	Description	Who
Community monitoring and education programme	Establish a community monitoring programme to establish an evidence base which will provide evidence for overharvesting. Ensure that catch limit signage is visible and current at popular access areas	Mana whenua Community DOC Supported by ORC

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STRATEGY 7. HUMAN BEHAVIOURS STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION

The Catlins is home around 1600 residents and is visited by many visitors yearly. Living, working, and playing in a place always has effects on that place, but these effects need not be detrimental, especially if locals and visitors take care about the effects that their activities have on the place.

This strategy has four strands.

OFF-LEAD DOGS

Although dogs are much loved pets and working animals, when not under control, they can cause disturbance and even death to native wildlife. Dogs are known to kill both adult and juvenile hoiho/yellow eyed penguins in Otago (Hocken 2005) and nesting shorebirds in northern New Zealand were shown to perceive dogs as more of a threat than humans (Lord et al. 2001). Out of control dogs can also harass and harm valuable stock animals. This strategy seeks to minimise disturbance to sensitive wildlife by educating dog owners and better dog-control will equally benefit farmers.

VEHICLES ON BEACHES

International research shows that vehicles driving on beaches and dunes can pose a threat to sensitive vegetation and wildlife and erode dunes unless appropriately managed.

SEPTIC TANKS

Poorly managed and old septic tank systems potentially increase the nutrient and pathogen load (particularly *Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*)) in Catlins freshwater and estuarine ecosystems. *E.coli* is a useful indicator of faecal contamination and the presence of disease-causing organisms that can cause illnesses in humans. *E. coli* is present in the guts of all warm-blooded animals (mammals and birds) so although the *E. coli* load in the area's river catchments are high, it would take source monitoring to identify the fraction of *E.coli* load that can be attributed to humans. Nutrient load, particularly from nitrates, nitrites and phosphates are also high in some of the Catlins river catchments. This increased nutrient load can be attributed to both natural (human and animal) and artificial sources such as fertilisers. Hence the proper use and upkeep of septic tanks, along with introduced mammal control, introduced waterfowl control, sustainable farming practices are expected to all make some difference in the *E. coli* and nutrient loading of rivers in the area.

PLASTICS AND WASTE

Catlins locals report overflowing rubbish bins, especially in highly visited areas, litter not even placed in the bins, litter on beaches, and how hard it is to successfully use the farm-plastics collections services. Additionally, the Review of the Catlins Community Tourism Strategy includes waste and recycling as an important area to address.

RELEVANT BYLAWS AND GUIDELINES

This is a pressure reduction strategy, and each strand has associated bylaws and guidelines that are already in place.

- CDC's 2022 Regulatory Bylaw indicates on which beaches you can and cannot walk dogs, and that you must put dogs on a leash within 20m of wildlife, and DOC also has guidelines on where you can, and cannot, take your dog.

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- The regulations that control the use of vehicles on beaches are complex: CDC's "vehicles on beaches" bylaw sets some rules, but other agencies including DOC, ORC, and NZ police also have responsibilities in this space.
- The ORC's "Otago Water Plan" currently regulates discharges into the environment, including septic tank systems. The Water Plan will be replaced by the ORCs Land and Water Regional Plan when this plan is notified. CDC also has a "Water Services Bylaw" which mentions sewerage.
- CDC has guidelines on waste minimisation, has a "Waste Management and Minimisation Plan" and has the "Solid Waste Bylaw" which covers waste within the district.

RELATED VALUES

This strategy will contribute to the health of the following values:
- Dunes and beaches
- Terrestrial ecosystems
- Freshwater Ecosystems
- Wetlands
- Estuaries
- Soils

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The objectives of this strategy are:

- Locals and visitors understand and follow the bylaws and guidelines

The outputs of this strategy will be:

- Reduced impacts from these activities on wildlife and the environment

FOCUS AREAS FOR ACTIVITIES

This is an area-wide strategy. See Figure 29 below.

60

Figure 29. A map of The Catlins showing the location of the main areas thought to be at risk of harmful human behaviours.

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this strategy, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are:

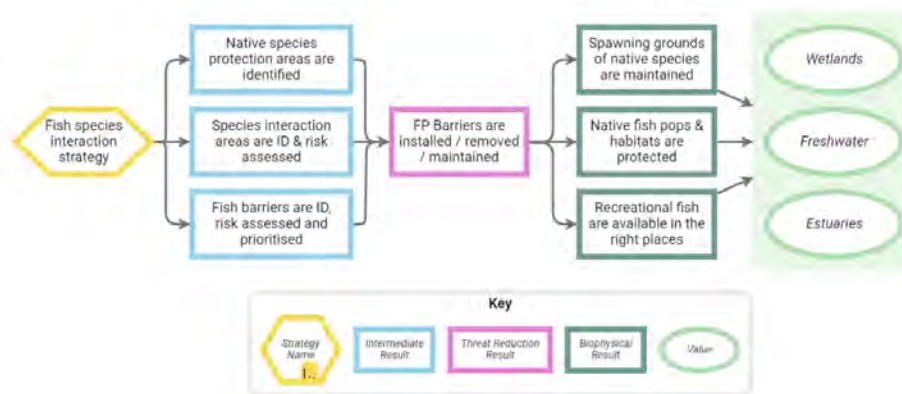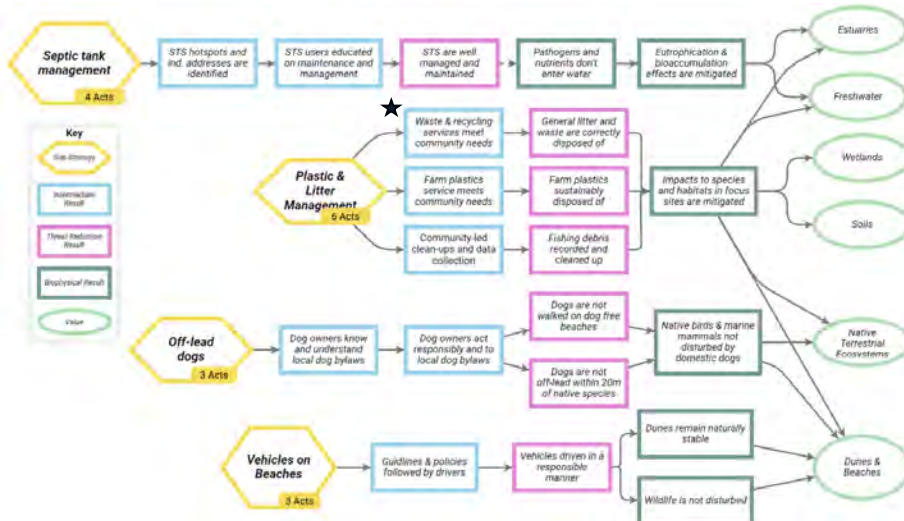**Figure 30. This diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the Human Behaviours strategy. A key is provided in the diagram. The * next to the "Waste and recycling services meet community needs" box denotes that this is the only part of Plastics and Waste strand that is part of buisness as usual for CDC.**

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STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGY RATING

Each strategy was rated by the CICG on its potential impact, feasibility, and estimated affordability. These ratings were multiplied together to give the effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy effectiveness can be used to guide priority setting in subsequent operational and work plans.

	Potential impact	Feasibility	Affordability	Strategy effectiveness
Human behaviour strategy	Low	Medium	Cheap	Low

STRATEGY EVIDENCE

Behaviour change takes time, education, constant ongoing effort and an understand of people's motivations. For example, an Australian education campaign to keep dogs on leashes in koala habitat found that the strongest driver for owners putting dogs on leashes was the risk of fines and concerns for dogs' safety and wellbeing. Forest and Bird's 2023 report on vehicles on beaches in New Zealand recommends both resourcing the compliance and enforcement of the rules and providing better education about the rules concerning driving on beaches.

ASSUMPTION MADE

- That, if locals and visitors are aware of the guidelines and bylaws, that they will follow them.
- That breaches of the guidelines and bylaws are reported, investigated and can be remedied by the responsible agencies.
- That following the guidelines and bylaws is sufficient to prevent the harmful effects that these activities can have on wildlife and the environment.

STRATEGY MEASURES

Measures for monitoring this strategy will be collaboratively developed by the agencies involved as appropriate.

STRATEGY TIMEFRAME

This strategy was rated as beginning in the medium term.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

List the people/groups/agencies who will do the work and who will monitor the work:
- The lead and support agencies are outlined in the table below
- Input and support should be sought from mana whenua and community

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ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Strategy strand	Foundational actions	Description	Who
Septic tanks	Education	• Identify septic tank hotspots • Develop appropriate education campaign	ORC, with the support of CDC
Plastics and litter	Covered under current work plans	• CDCs transfer station review • CDC business as usual as per 2024 Waste Management and Minimisation Plan	CDC, with the support of the Regional Waste officer
Off-lead dogs	Covered under current work plan	• DOCs business as usual • CDCs freedom camping ranger	DOC, with the support of CDC
Vehicles on beaches	Covered under current work plans	• CDCs freedom camping ranger • CDC business as usual	CDC with the support of ORC, DOC

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PROGRAMME 1. DUNE RESTORATION / MODEL BEACHES PROGRAMME

DESCRIPTION

The dune restoration programme or model beach programme stems from the CICG's ambition to have some parts of The Catlins dune system returned to an approximation of their original condition. Figure 31 illustrates the dune systems in The Catlins, and Value 6 describes the current state of the Catlins dunes. There are four strategies that collectively become the Dune restoration or model beaches programme:

- Weed control strategy
- Introduced mammal and bird control strategy
- Off-lead dog strand
- Vehicles on beaches strand

A 2016 report prepared for DOC by Dr Teresa Konlechner recommended focus areas for dune restoration. Following recent discussions with her, the dunes that the report recommended for restoration are eroding and a new set of priority dunes where the sand is gathering should be explored as the foundational action for this programme.

ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMME

Initial actions which will enable us to progress this strategy are outlined below:

Foundational Action	Description	Who
Dune restoration coordination group	Form a group to lead dune restoration including: • List and map dunes on which sand is increasing • Prioritise that list for potential restoration including consultation with affected parties • Accessing fund and resources to begin the restoration work • Consult on restoration best practice	Community, mana whenua, CDC, other stakeholders ORC natural hazards may help prioritise the list ORC may help with mapping and science advice

THEORY OF CHANGE

When we successfully implement this programme, the expected flow-on effects and expected results are shown in Figure 31 below.

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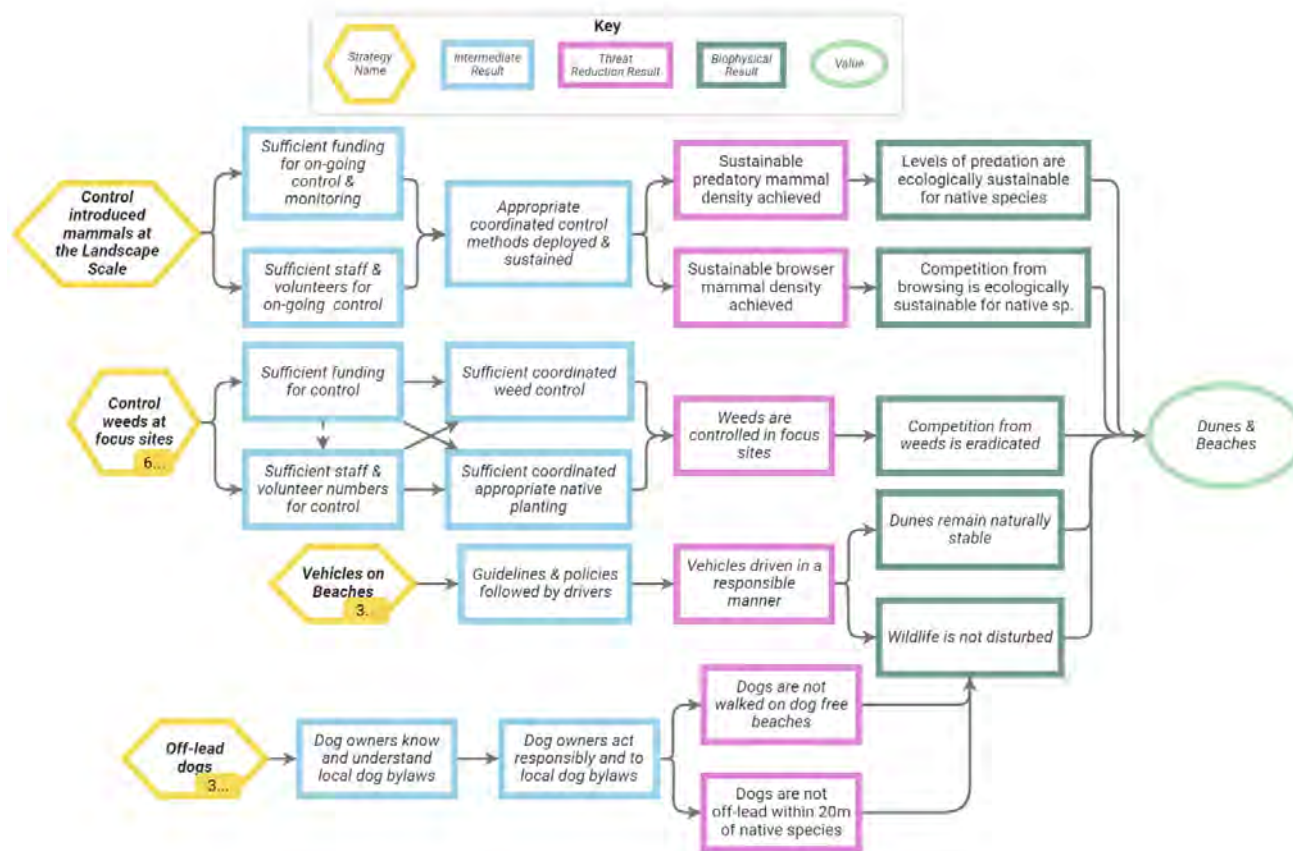
Figure 31. The diagram shows the results we expect to achieve by implementing the Dune Restoration Programme.

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MONITORING FRAMEWORK

We monitor whether the plans' strategies and actions are making an impact on the health of the values. Monitoring is a vital part of adaptive management, which allows plans to be written based on the best available knowledge and continuously improved based on the monitoring results. As the plan progresses, strategies and actions can be improved based on the results of the monitoring.

This plan does not specify measures for cultural monitoring as those will be defined, when appropriate, by mana whenua.

REPORTING

The monitoring data will be reported on the Plan's online hub, which can be reached here.

COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

These four groups make up the audiences for the communication of this plan.

- This plan has been co-developed with representative from The Catlins community and mana whenua and the successes, failures and changes in the plan must be communicated to those who helped develop the plan.
- The wider Catlins community and stakeholders who are interested in The Catlins, should also be able to keep track of the plan.
- Mana whenua, both at a whānau and rūnaka level, but also including the landowners/trustees of SILNA land, and any parties leasing land.
- The wider natural resources management community may be interested in the successes and failures of the plan as these data increase the evidence base for others who are developing plans such as these.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

There are two main avenues for the communication of this plan.

- This document is the first output of the planning process and will be proactively and widely shared. It is important to note that this plan represents a snapshot in time, with the current concerns of The Catlins mana whenua and community, the current available knowledge and the current rules and regulations. This document should therefore be viewed as the basis and beginning of a conversation that will continue and evolve as time progresses.
- The second avenue for communicating this plan is an ArcGIS Hub, which is an online and interactive site that allow everyone to track the progress of the plan through dashboards and maps. This will be maintained by the ORC and interested parties will be able to add their actions and data to the Hub and follow the progress of the plan.

REVIEW

This plan is based on the principals of adaptive management, which recognises that knowledge of an ecosystem will always be incomplete, but incomplete knowledge cannot be a barrier to beginning work to protect and enhance the environment. Adaptive management plans are based on the best available evidence, from science, from Mātauraka Māori and from evidence provided by the community.

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Adaptive management requires plans to be monitored and reviewed regularly, to allow new information as well as the lessons from current iteration of the plan to be incorporated into future plans and practice.

The temporal scope of this plan is 10 years, and the plan will be reviewed at the following milestones:

- There will be an 18-month health check. The early stages following a plans' launch can feel slow with multiple new work streams and a new team learning to work together. The 18-month health check will check to see which strategies are on track, which have yet to be begun and which need small changes or extra support.
- 5-year evaluation review. This is halfway through the scope of the plan and this review will be more thorough than the 18-month health check. It will monitor the progress and success of the strategies and reflect on the work to date. It will also re-examine the situation diagrams and theories of change on which the current plan is based.

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Otago
Regional
Council

Catlins Integrated Catchment Group
Catchment Action Plan

20 November 2024

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

ICM Background

Commitment in the Long-Term Plan 2021-31

New approach for Otago

The ICM framework

- Principles – collaborative, best available knowledge, focused, accountable, adaptive

- Scale – start with FMUs / rohe

- Who – mana whenua and community

- How – CAPs – open standards

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"ICM is a process through which people can:
- develop a goal
- agree on shared values and behaviours
- make informed decisions and
- act together

…to manage the natural resources of their catchment."
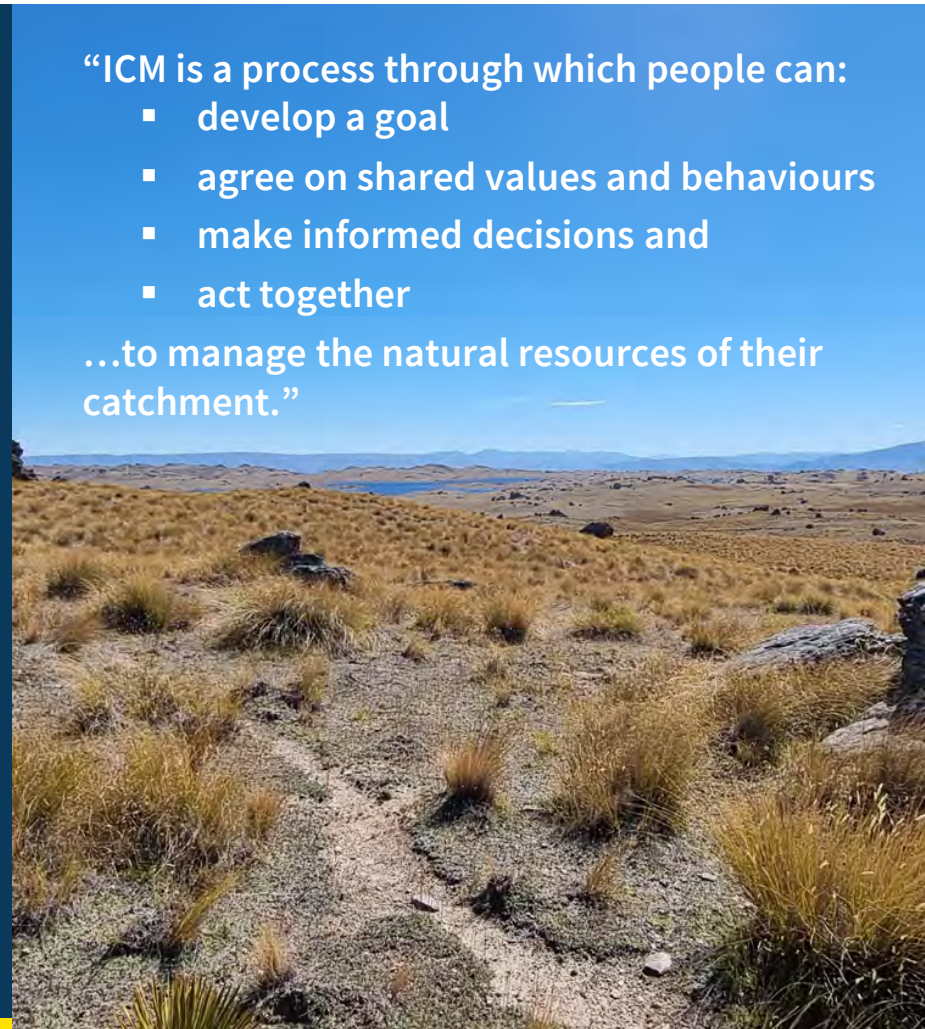
Introduction

- **Catlins ICG started October 2023**
- **15 members from across Catlins, diversity of ages, industry, community**
- **4 meetings and 6 workshops**
- **≈ 43 "contact" hours per person**
- **≈ 645 total "contact" hours**

- **ORC team – facilitation, and coordination of science, policy, compliance input**

Meeting 20 November 2024

The features and assets that we care most about improving, protecting, restoring, and keeping healthy.

- Native terrestrial ecosystems
- Wetlands
- Dunes and beaches
- Soil
- Estuaries
- Freshwater

Values

Pressures

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PRESSURES \ VALUES	Native Terrestrial Ecosystems	Wetlands	Soils	Dunes & Beaches	Estuaries	Freshwater	SUMMARY PRESSURE RATING
Dairy & sheep farm effluent			●		●	●	●
Invasive introduced plants	●	●	·	⬤	●	·	●
Land clearing	·	●	·		●	●	●
Overharvesting of native fish & shellfish					·	·	·
Poor agricultural wintering practice		·	●		●	●	●
Vehicles on beaches				·			·
Introduced browsers	⬤	●	●	●	●	·	⬤
Introduced predators	⬤	●		●			⬤
Litter & plastics	·	·	·	·	·	·	·
Off-lead dogs near wildlife or in controlled areas	·			●			·
Old or poorly maintained septic tanks		·			·	·	·
Fish species interactions		·			●	⬤	●
Unsealed roads			·		·	·	·
SUMMARY VALUE RATING	⬤	●	●	●	⬤	⬤	

Strategies

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Vision

Deeply connected and involved local communities thrive alongside sustainable resource use within the enhanced natural ecosystems that set the Catlins apart

Human Values

| People and community | Economy | Landscape character | Recreation | Productive land |

Environmental Values

Ecosystem Goals

Nested Environmental Values

Native Terrestrial Ecosystems	Wetlands	Dunes & Beaches	Soil	Estuaries	Freshwater
The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals	Natural wetlands will be maintained and the habitats condition enhanced to support native flora and fauna	The dune and beach habitat of marine mammals and birds is enhanced and increased	The condition of soils will be maintained or improved while soil loss and its associated impacts will be reduced	Reduced mud input from land and freshwater will create conditions to support healthy cockle populations	Freshwater bodies support healthy freshwater ecosystems with thriving habitats for a range of indigenous species
❖ Native forest ❖ Tussock lands ❖ Scrublands ❖ Threatened native birds, bats & lizards	❖ Natural Wetlands ❖ Threatened native birds & fish ❖ Introduced waterfowl	❖ Marine mammals ❖ Coastal / Seabirds ❖ Native flora	❖ Habitat for native flora & fauna ❖ Productive land	❖ Mudflats ❖ Saltmarsh ❖ Seagrass ❖ Mahika kai species ❖ Threatened & native birds & fish	❖ Threatened & native fish, shellfish & invertebrates ❖ Introduced fish

Actions

Conservation Standards Process

- **Weed task group formed**
  - ❖Map priority areas
  - ❖Plan works
  - ❖Access funding & resources

- **Mammal control coordination group formed**
  - ❖Map priority areas
  - ❖Plan works
  - ❖Access funding & resources
- **Catchment groups monitor Canada goose movement**
  - ❖Organise cull when required

- **Est. dune restoration coordination group**
  - ❖ID accreting dunes, consult all parties & prioritise for action
  - ❖Access funding & resources
  - ❖Consult on restoration best practice

- **Off-lead dogs**
  - ❖DOC & CDC BAU
- **Vehicles on beaches**
  - ❖CDC BAU
- **Septic tanks**
  - ❖Education campaign
- **Plastics & litter**
  - ❖CDC transfer station review
  - ❖Waste minimisation officer's workplan

- **Relationship building**
  - ❖Invite foresters to join catchment groups
  - ❖Assist in mammal & weed control efforts
  - ❖Advocate for best forestry practice

- **Re-invigorated catchment groups**
  - ❖Field days, discussion groups, workshops and farmer trial
  - ❖Advice on best practice and accessing funds and resources

- **Community monitoring & education programme**
  - ❖Est. evidence base for overharvesting
  - ❖Catch limit signage in appropriate languages, visible and current in access areas

- **Fish mapping**
  - ❖ID areas important for native & non-native fish (mātauraka, eDNA, community & agency data)
- **Barriers to fish passage**
  - ❖ Record and risk assess barriers on private land

Strategy Objectives

| Control weeds in priority areas & across CAP area | Control introduced animals in priority areas | Restore target dunes and associated beaches | Promote public best practice | Support & enhance sustainable forestry practices | Support & enhance sustainable agricultural practices | Manage overharvesting of (shell)fish | Manage native/non-native fish interactions |

Foundational Actions for all Strategies

Identify priority areas for work

Identify suitable management and control methods

Public consultation, engagement education, capacity building and knowledge sharing

Pre-Planning

Supporting Mechanisms

Policies and regulations: National , Regional, and District policies, plans and regulations

Industry standards: Farm+, Dairy tomorrow accord, Farm environment plans, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

Current work programmes: ORC, CDC, DOC, Rūnaka, Environmental NGOs, Current and available resources, both people and funding

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Situation Diagram – Native Terrestrial Ecosystems

Situation Diagram – Native Terrestrial Ecosystems

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Key

- Value
- Stressor
- Pressure
- Cause of Pressure

Insufficient funding for control → Insufficient & un-coordinated control

Insufficient staff & volunteer numbers for control → Recreational hunting not effective control

Some residents "liberate" animals for hunting

H Introduced terrestrial predators → Predation on native species → Population decline of native birds, bats and lizards

H Introduced Browsers → Grazed native plant species → Loss of regenerative capacity of habitat

Insufficient staff & volunteer numbers
Insufficient funding → Insufficient and uncoordinated weed control

Biologically spread by birds (native & exotic)
Mechanically spread by mammals
Transported downstream by waterways

Community lack pest plant knowledge → Land clearing → Garden escapees

M Invasive Introduced Plants → Alter individual or communities of native plants → Change of ecosystem vegetation structure

Change soil properties → Change ecosystem functioning

Limited provision of waste & recycling services
Impractical waste disposal & recyling options → **L** Litter & Plastics → Entanglement of native fauna
Ingestion by native fauna

Native Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Native forest
- Native tussockland
- Native shrubland

Results Chain – Control of Introduced Mammals

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Monitoring and evaluation

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Vision

Deeply connected and involved local communities thrive alongside sustainable resource use within the enhanced natural ecosystems that set the Catlins apart

Human Values

| People and community | Economy | Landscape character | Recreation | Productive land |

Environmental Values

Ecosystem Goals

Native Terrestrial Ecosystems	Wetlands	Dunes & Beaches	Soil	Estuaries	Freshwater
The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals	Natural wetlands will be maintained and the habitats condition enhanced to support native flora and fauna	The dune and beach habitat of marine mammals and birds is enhanced and increased	The condition of soils will be maintained or improved while soil loss and its associated impacts will be reduced	Reduced mud input from land and freshwater will create conditions to support healthy cockle populations	Freshwater bodies support healthy freshwater ecosystems with thriving habitats for a range of indigenous species

Nested Environmental Values

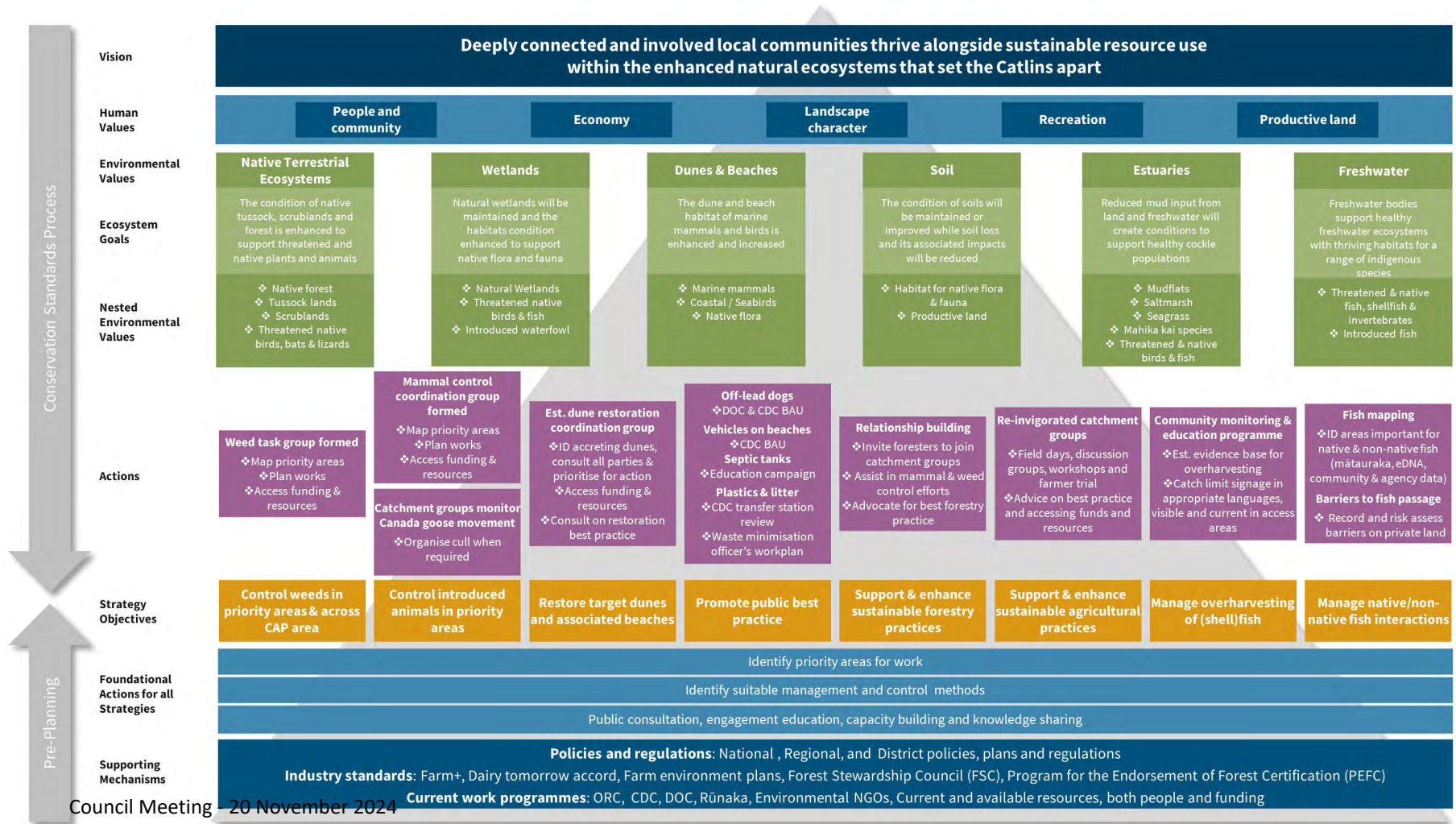|					
❖ Native forest ❖ Tussock lands ❖ Scrublands ❖ Threatened native birds, bats & lizards	❖ Natural Wetlands ❖ Threatened native birds & fish ❖ Introduced waterfowl	❖ Marine mammals ❖ Coastal / Seabirds ❖ Native flora	❖ Habitat for native flora & fauna ❖ Productive land	❖ Mudflats ❖ Saltmarsh ❖ Seagrass ❖ Mahika kai species ❖ Threatened & native birds & fish	❖ Threatened & native fish, shellfish & invertebrates ❖ Introduced fish

Conservation Standards Process

Actions

Weed task group formed	Mammal control coordination group formed	Est. dune restoration coordination group	Off-lead dogs	Relationship building	Re-invigorated catchment groups	Community monitoring & education programme	Fish mapping
❖Map priority areas ❖Plan works ❖Access funding & resources	❖Map priority areas ❖Plan works ❖Access funding & resources	❖ID accreting dunes, consult all parties & prioritise for action ❖Access funding & resources ❖Consult on restoration best practice	❖DOC & CDC BAU **Vehicles on beaches** ❖CDC BAU **Septic tanks** ❖Education campaign **Plastics & litter** ❖CDC transfer station review ❖Waste minimisation officer's workplan	❖Invite foresters to join catchment groups ❖ Assist in mammal & weed control efforts ❖Advocate for best forestry practice	❖Field days, discussion groups, workshops and farmer trial ❖Advice on best practice and accessing funds and resources	❖Est. evidence base for overharvesting ❖Catch limit signage in appropriate languages, visible and current in access areas	❖ID areas important for native & non-native fish (mātauraka, eDNA, community & agency data) **Barriers to fish passage** ❖ Record and risk assess barriers on private land

Mammal control coordination group: **Catchment groups monitor Canada goose movement** ❖Organise cull when required

Pre-Planning

Strategy Objectives

| Control weeds in priority areas & across CAP area | Control introduced animals in priority areas | Restore target dunes and associated beaches | Promote public best practice | Support & enhance sustainable forestry practices | Support & enhance sustainable agricultural practices | Manage overharvesting of (shell)fish | Manage native/non-native fish interactions |

Foundational Actions for all Strategies

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Identify suitable management and control methods

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Supporting Mechanisms

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Current work programmes: ORC, CDC, DOC, Rūnaka, Environmental NGOs, Current and available resources, both people and funding

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Environmental Values

Ecosystem Goals

Nested Environmental Values

Actions

Strategy Objectives

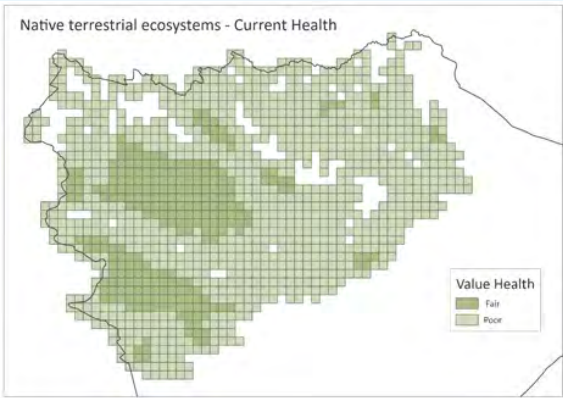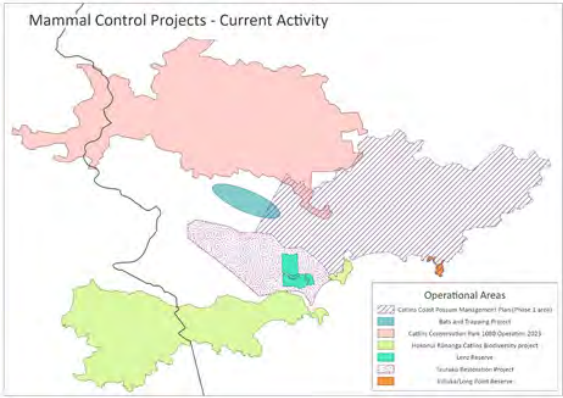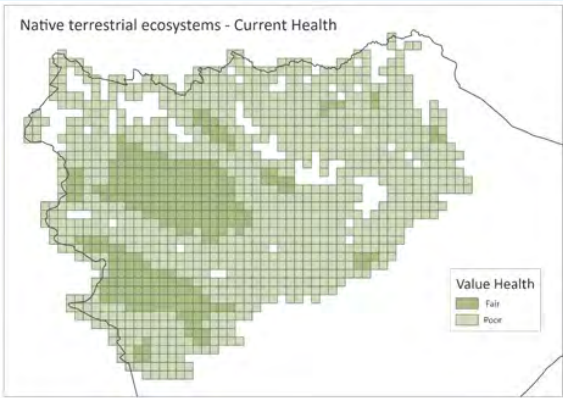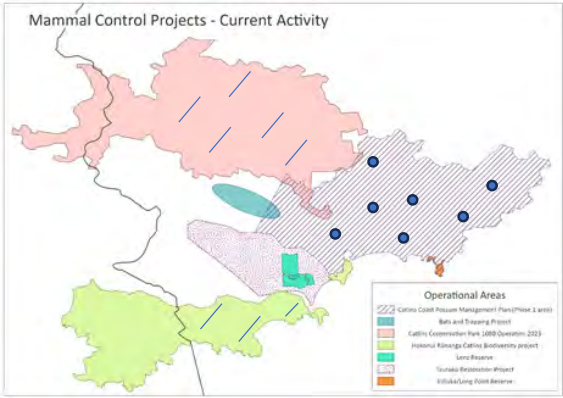|			
Native Terrestrial Ecosystems	**Wetlands**	**Dunes & Beaches**	**Soil**
The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals	Natural wetlands will be maintained and the habitats condition enhanced to support native flora and fauna	The dune and beach habitat of marine mammals and birds is enhanced and increased	The condition of soils will be maintained or improved while soil loss and its associated impacts will be reduced
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Mammal control coordination group formed
❖Map priority areas
❖Plan works
❖Access funding & resources

Weed task group formed
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Plastics & litter
❖CDC transfer station review
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Relationship building
❖Invite foresters to join catchment groups
❖Assist in mammal & weed control efforts
❖Advocate for best forestry practice

Control weeds in priority areas & across CAP area

Control introduced animals in priority areas

Restore target dunes and associated beaches

Promote public best practice

Support & enhance sustainable forestry practices

Vision

Deeply connected and involved local communities thrive alongside sustainable resource use within the enhanced natural ecosystems that set the Catlins apart

Supported human values

| People and community | Economy | Landscape character | Recreation |

Monitoring
To be hosted in the hub

Goal

Native Terrestrial Ecosystems
The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals

Seed to sapling ratio – DOC
Key native species numbers – F&B
Disturbance indicators - TBC

Outcome / objective

Sustainable mammal density achieved

Weeds are not outcompeting natives

Residual trap catch – community trapping
Cover Ratio (weeds : native) - TBC

Outputs / measure

No. target mammals removed

Area of weeds removed

Number of mammals removed – community
Area of weeds removed - TBC

Strategies / Actions

Control introduced mammals in priority areas
- Form task group
- Prioritise areas
- Develop on-ground plan
- Enable / access funding
- **Implement control**

Control weeds in priority areas
- Form task group
- Prioritise areas
- Develop on-ground plan
- Enable / access funding
- **Implement control**

Action tracking – CAP group
- Group formed
- Priorities mapped
- Projects developed
- Funds accessed

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Goal

The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals

Indicators of Value Health

Disturbance indicators (Disturbance)

Seed to Sapling ratio (Regeneration)

Native species count (Supporting habitat)

NATIVE TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Value Health Monitoring
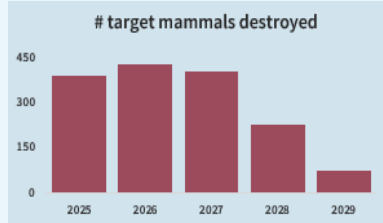
Activity Tracking

Outputs Monitoring

Outcomes Progress

Sustainable mammal density achieved	Weeds don't outcompete natives
Residual trap catch	**Cover Ratio (weeds : natives)**
Target: RTC = 3	Target: CR = 1:5

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Activity Progress

Strategy / Activity / Task	Progress Status
RC1. Control Introduced Mammals in Priority Areas	**Not started**
01. Implement control activities	**Not started**
01.1 Form task group	**Not started**
01.2 Prioritise areas	**Not started**
01.3 Develop on-ground plan	**Not started**
01.4 Enable / access funding	**Not started**
02. Monitor control activities	**Not started**

Goal

The condition of native tussock, scrublands and forest is enhanced to support threatened and native plants and animals

Indicators of Value Health

Disturbance indicators (Disturbance)

Seed to Sapling ratio (Regeneration)

Native species count (Supporting habitat)

Outcomes Progress

Sustainable mammal density achieved	Weeds don't outcompete natives
Residual trap catch	**Cover Ratio (weeds : natives)**
4.2	**2:5**
Target: RTC = 3	Target: CR = 1:5

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NATIVE TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Value Health Monitoring

Native terrestrial ecosystems - Current Health

Activity Tracking

Mammal Control Projects - Current Activity

Outputs Monitoring

target mammals destroyed

Area of weeds removed (m²)

Activity Progress

Strategy / Activity / Task	Progress Status
RC1. Control Introduced Mammals in Priority Areas	**On-Track**
01. Implement control activities	**On-Track**
01.1 Form task group	Completed
01.2 Prioritise areas	Minor issues
01.3 Develop on-ground plan	On-track
01.4 Enable / access funding	On-track
02. Monitor control activities	**Minor issues**

Online and Interactive

Mapping of CAP values, pressures and actions, in engaging visual formats

Community input via surveys, photo uploads and syncing with open-source apps

Online community following the CAP progress and open sharing of information

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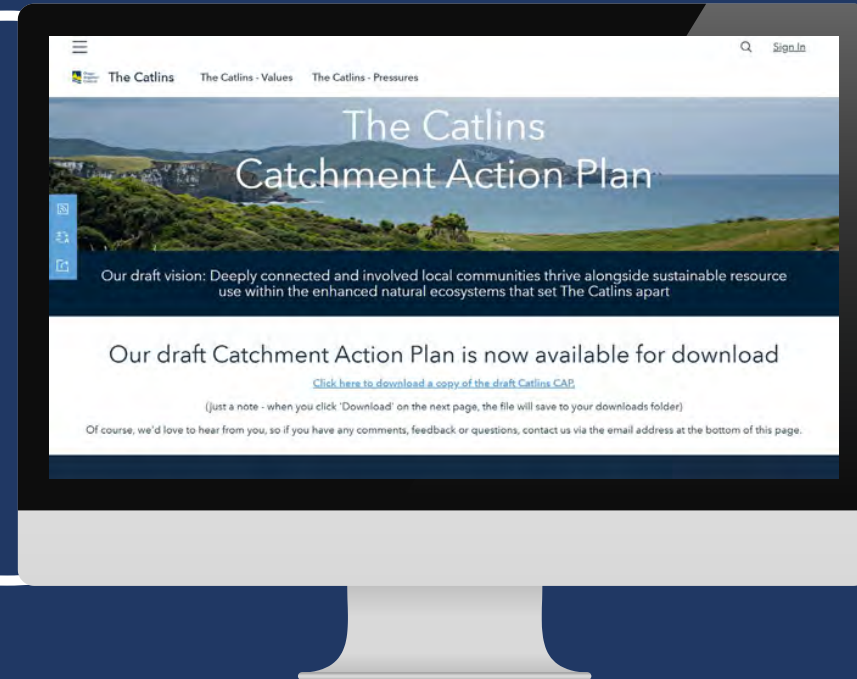
Where to next?

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Delivery framework

Governance group **or** similar	CAP Oversight (quarterly meetings)	Strategy / action details	Review and update
ORC Staff Support	Facilitation and coordination	Project support	Data and reporting
Funding	Direct funding (TBC)	Contestable funding	
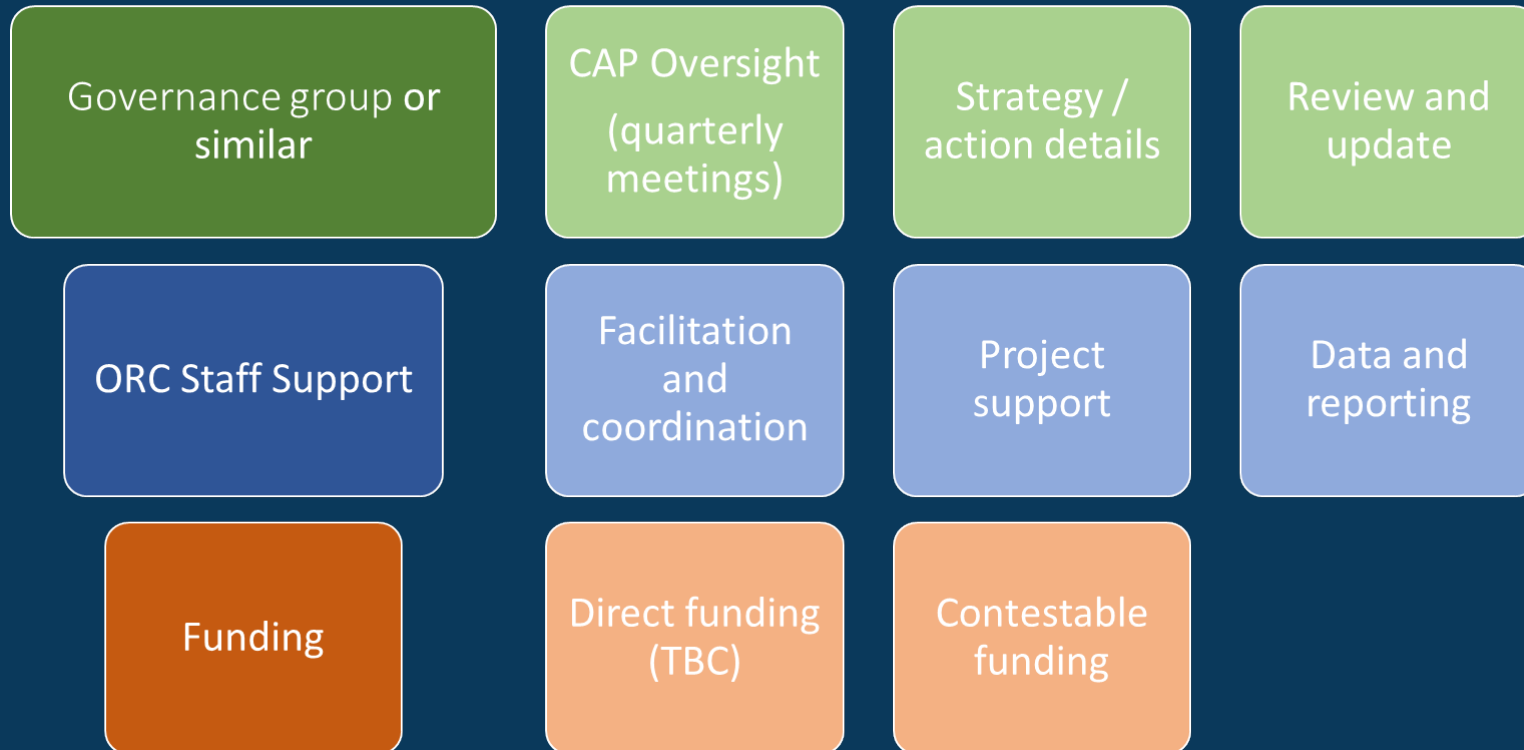
Communicating the plan

- **Media release**
- **Online – hub**
- **Summary brochure**

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Any Questions?

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

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10.2. ECO Fund and incentive criteria review

Prepared for:	Council
Report No.	GOV2444
Activity:	Governance Report
Author:	Anna Molloy (Principal Advisor - Environment Implementation), Elodie Letendre (Environmental Initiatives Funding Coordinator), Libby Caldwell (Team Leader Environmental Implementation)
Endorsed by:	Joanna Gilroy, General Manager Environmental Delivery
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   This paper seeks approval of:

a)   The funding for the 2025 ECO Fund and associated incentive funding.

b)   The recommendations arising from the review of the ECO Fund and associated incentives funding programmes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   The ECO Fund and associated incentive funding (hereafter referred to as the ECO Fund) has been reviewed against the scope noted by Council in May 2024. This review has been informed by feedback from recent applicants to the ECO Fund and from past and present members of the ECO Fund Assessment Panel.

[3]   Overall findings through the review were that:

a)   There are opportunities for better alignment with ORC's work programmes and priorities as detailed in the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034.
b)   The eligibility and assessment criteria, as well as the terms and conditions and terms of reference for the Assessment Panel could be improved to provide better clarity, opportunities for community, and accountability.
c)   The current timing of the annual funding round (March) is suitable for the majority of past applicants who filled out the survey.

[4]   Changes are recommended to the ECO Fund and process as a result of the review.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1) **Approves** *the inclusion of the following incentive budgets in the ECO Fund process, noting these budgets will be 'ring-fenced' to ensure any additional or specific criteria are met:*
   a) *Large scale biodiversity projects – up to $450,000 (increased from $300,000)*
   b) *Sustained rabbit management incentives – up to $100,000*
   c) *Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land – up to $100,000*
   d) *Critical source area enhancement on private land - up to $50,000*
   e) *Weed removal and revegetation - up to $50,000*

2) **Decides** *between options 1 and 2 for the funding of wages criterion (within Table 3) and then* **Approves** *the <u>eligibility criteria</u> for each funding category as set out in Attachment 1.*

3) **Approves** *the revised <u>assessment criteria</u> outlined in Attachment 2.*

4) **Approves** *the <u>terms and conditions</u> for applicants in Attachment 3.*

5) **Approves** *the updating of the <u>Terms of Reference</u> for the Assessment Panel, as suggested in Attachment 4.*

6) **Notes** *that the ECO Fund forms, communications, and processes will be amended to reflect the recommendations approved and streamlined where appropriate to reduce the input required from all parties.*

BACKGROUND

[5] The ECO Fund was established by Council in July 2018 to support work that protects and enhances Otago's environment and enable community-driven environmental activities. To date, the ECO fund has supported 166 projects (from 351 applications) totalling just over $2.59 million (out of $7.58 million requested) over 10 rounds. Each round has averaged 35 applications and has been oversubscribed by 300% on average.

[6] The ECO Fund is reviewed annually with the last major review undertaken in 2021 with changes implemented in the 2022 funding round. The scope of the review is based on the following which was agreed at Council in May:

   a) Ensuring alignment with ORC work programmes and priorities as detailed in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 (LTP) including any further funding. This includes reviewing the scope of the ECO Fund taking into consideration LTP consultation.
   b) Assessing the potential to strategically align the ECO Fund and any other funding with targeted on-ground priorities arising from catchment action plans, or other strategic plans.
   c) Reviewing the timing of the annual funding round to encourage best uptake by the community and to ensure the Fund is efficiently operated and expended.
   d) Reviewing the assessment criteria of the Fund to ensure it is fit for purpose.
   e) Reviewing the Terms and Conditions for funding including eligibility criteria to ensure they are clear and equitable for the purposes of the ECO Fund and ORC objectives.

[7]   The 2024 review includes feedback from staff, past assessors and past ECO Fund applicants. This review is only applicable to 2025 ECO Fund round. A strategic review of ORC environmental funding is currently underway. The outcomes of this review will be implemented from Year 2 of the LTP onwards and could influence the 2026 ECO Fund round. This strategic review will be presented to Council prior to the end of June 2025.

[8]   As part of the 2024 review a survey was sent to 253 past applicants seeking feedback on their experience with the ECO Fund. Fifty-five responses were received from past applicants (22%), 85% of which have previously been successful with one of their applications. A copy of the survey questions for past applicants and a summary of the responses are included in **Attachment 5**. These responses have been used to inform the review and recommendations.

[9]   Another survey was sent to ORC staff members (6) and Assessment Panel members (6) seeking feedback on their experience in assessing ECO Fund applications. Six staff and four out of six Assessment Panel members provided feedback. A copy of the survey and a summary of the responses are included at **Attachment 6**. These responses have been used to inform the review and recommendations.

DISCUSSION

[10]   The following sections address the key parts of the review scope and key findings.

Alignment with work programmes and priorities in Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-34

[11]   Ensuring alignment with work programmes and priorities through the review has focussed on the relevant LTP level of service and performance measures. Table 1 below outlines relevant activities and level of service commitments from the LTP 2024-34. The last column is a recommendation for how the ECO Fund and incentives can align with the level of service (or noting where it is already aligned).

Table 1: Alignment with Relevant Long-term Plan Activities

Activity / Portfolio	Level of Service in LTP	Performance measure in LTP	Recommended changes
Governance and Community Engagement	Provide relevant, timely and accessible communications and engagement activities which enable the community to understand and participate in ORC's programmes and	Customers express high levels of satisfaction with customer service provision	Maintain advertising and promotion of ECO Fund. Email anyone who has lodged an expression of interest with ECO Fund details when ready. Host a community webinar to explain the funding process and answer questions.

	decision making. ⧈		
Regional Planning	Lead a regional approach to climate change in collaboration with mana whenua, local councils, and other stakeholders.	Develop a Regional Climate Change Strategy and implement ORC actions. Draft Actions include: Administer the ECO Fund to deliver projects to improve the resilience of local ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity	The ECO Fund and biodiversity incentives are the mechanism for delivery of this project. No change required.
Land and Water	Promote and enable best practice land management for soil conservation, water quality preservation and the efficient use of water.	ORC led and community/landowner supported workshops and events are delivered which promote best practice land management for soil conservation, water quality and/or the efficient use of water.	While this performance measure is aimed at delivering workshops, funding can be made available to help landowners implement best practice for water quality through enhancing critical source areas. Note: this suggested incentive amends the previous incentive "planting for water quality" which was significantly undersubscribed in 2024.
	Partner with iwi and collaborate with communities and landowners to develop and implement projects which enhance water quality and indigenous biodiversity in selected degraded water bodies.	Site specific projects are developed for selected degraded waterbodies.	This performance measure is aimed at projects initiated and developed by ORC, however the ECO Fund can also contribute to this target.
Biodiversity and Biosecurity	Provide support and funding to selected initiatives and organisations across the region which deliver environmental outcomes that align with our strategic objectives.	Alignment between initiatives and deliverables receiving Council funding, and Council's strategic biodiversity strategic objectives.	The ECO Fund – General and biodiversity type incentives (large scale, protected private land, planting after pest plant removal) are the mechanism for delivery of this project. Note: it is suggested that planting after pest plant removal funding category be broadened to weed removal and revegetation.
	Develop and deliver practices and programmes that give effect to the Regional Pest Management Plan.	Actions within the Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) are progressed.	Incentives for sustained rabbit management deliver on this performance measure. The proposed revised 'weed removal and revegetation'

			fund may also contribute to this.

[12] Recommended funding categories under ECO Fund provided for in the 2024-25 Annual Plan budget which address the LTP 2024-34 Strategic Directions and Performance measures are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of suggested Funding Categories under ECO Fund for 2025

Incentive	Amount recommended	Objectives	Recommended changes
General (on-ground and education)	$300,000 **No change**	• To protect and enhance Otago's environment. • To enable community-led environmental activities.	The eligibility and assessment criteria have been clarified and are at **Attachments 1 and 2**. This includes an assessment criterion for education / capacity building type projects as these were unintentionally biased against with the current criteria.
Large Scale Biodiversity Projects	$450,000 **Increased from $300,000**	• To protect and enhance native biodiversity. • To enable larger scale projects for significant biodiversity outcomes aligned with regional priorities.	This incentive programme started in 2024 and was oversubscribed by 400%. It is proposed to increase the total amount this year. The eligibility and assessment criteria have been clarified and are at **Attachments 1 and 2**.
Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land	$100,000 **No change**	• To enhance existing protected areas of biodiversity on private land. • To enable private landholders to maintain existing biodiversity.	This incentive programme has not changed. The eligibility and assessment criteria have been clarified and are at **Attachments 1 and 2**.
Sustained rabbit management	$100,000 **No change**	• To manage rabbit populations in new or existing community programme areas. • To enable landowners and community to work together to manage rabbit populations.	This incentive programme has not changed. Eligibility and assessment criteria have been clarified and are at **Attachments 1 and 2**.
Critical source area management on private land (NEW)	$50,000 **No change to the amount but changed objective.**	• To improve water quality. • To support private landholder to manage critical source areas for native biodiversity.	This incentive fund is proposed to replace the undersubscribed 'Planting for water quality' fund. The development of this fund will result in increased awareness of

			good management practice principles related to Critical Source Area management. Eligibility and assessment criteria are included at **Attachments 1 and 2**.
Weed removal and revegetation (NEW)	$50,000 **No change to the amount, but changed objective**	• To improve native vegetation through removal of weeds / pest plants and rehabilitation. • To increase area of native terrestrial biodiversity.	This incentive fund amends the current planting after pest plant removal fund, enabling a more integrated approach to pests and weeds by including the removal and revegetation in the one project and broadens the focus to include invasive plant species which may not be declared "pests" in the RPMP. Biodiversity focus areas are mapped through ORC. Eligibility and assessment criteria are included at **Attachments 1 and 2**.

Potential to align with targeted on-ground priorities arising from catchment action plans, or other strategic plans

[13]   As part of the review, it was assessed what opportunities existed or could be changed to align funding with targeted priorities in CAPs (where they exist) or other strategic plans, such as the Biodiversity Strategy or Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP).

[14]   Two funding programmes already exist which address aspects of the RPMP (Site-led programme) and Biodiversity Strategy (large scale biodiversity grants). These have been reviewed with recommended changes outlined below.

Key findings – Alignment with Catchment Action Plans

[15]   At the time of this review the Catlins CAP was being finalised. Direct funding is being requested to support priority actions from this draft CAP. This is not a part of the ECO Fund review which is focussed on contestable funding. The request for approval of direct funding for Catlins CAP strategies will be through another Council paper to be discussed by Council on 20 November 2024.

Key Findings – Alignment with RPMP Site-Led Programmes

[16]   Site-led programmes are part of the RPMP. They are focussed on managing a suite of pests across large areas. Terrestrial site-led areas in the RPMP are the Otago Peninsula, West Harbour-Mt Cargill and Quarantine and Goat Islands. The Site-led programme is overseen by a working group including ORC staff and representatives from mana whenua.

[17]   In 2024 Council approved directly funding groups undertaking pest management work in these areas to support achieving RPMP objectives. The groups and projects were determined through a site prioritisation process using data from a values, threats and impacts assessment report and cultural values provided by mana whenua representatives. Community groups and stakeholders were approached to discuss capacity to undertake projects. From this information, ORC developed site management plans for how to collectively achieve the goals.

[18]   The Working Group provided recommendations for funding which went via the Assessment Panel, and then to Council for approval. The direct funding worked well for this process as it was important for the projects to be aligned with the site-led programme and enabled engagement directly with groups.

[19]   However, aligning this process with the ECO Fund caused some issues, including:

a)   Confusion about eligibility for groups who wanted to apply for ECO Fund and undertake site-led work (only one application per group is allowed in the ECO Fund process).
b)   Timing for the site-led process was short and created a staff resource issue.
c)   Extra work for the Assessment Panel with no significant value add. That is the Site-led Working Group had already recommended the allocation of direct funding which could easily be provided directly to Council for approval.

Recommended Changes - Site-led Programmes

[20]   It is recommended that the Site-led programmes be run separately to the ECO Fund in 2025, as there is a robust process in place to select high priority sites and ensure allocation of funds is prioritised based on Site-Led Objectives and community group goals and values which can operate and benefit separately from the ECO Fund process. This fund is specific to the sites which are identified in the RPMP for the terrestrial sites which include Otago Peninsula, West Harbour/Mt Cargill and Goat and Quarantine Island to support achieving the objectives identified in the RPMP.

Key Findings – Biodiversity Strategy - Large Scale Biodiversity Fund

[21]   The large-scale biodiversity grants programme is aimed at large scale on-ground change that focusses on priority areas which have been identified through expert panel reports. It contributes to the delivery of outcomes in the Biodiversity Strategy 2018, in particular Outcome 2 - Threatened indigenous species and ecosystems that support them are enhanced.

[22]   This fund has a budget of $300,000 for 2025. This is the same as for the 2024 round, which was oversubscribed by more than 400% ($1,277,800 requested). There is a clear demand for large scale biodiversity grants in Otago.

Recommended Changes - Large-scale Biodiversity Fund

[23]   It is recommended that the large-scale biodiversity grants be increased by $150,000 which would enable a minimum of three large scale projects to be funded. The increased budget can be sourced from existing Environmental Implementation budget for priority projects. This budget has $200,000 and it is recommended $100,000 be used for large scale biodiversity projects.

[24]   Further, the biodiversity budget within Environmental Implementation 2024/25 budget has $50,000 available for "incentives", which is intended to be used for large-scale biodiversity grants. Therefore, the total available for large scale biodiversity projects will be $450,000, if the extra $100,000 is approved.

Review of Objectives and Eligibility Criteria

[25]   This part of the review considered how well the current objectives and eligibility criteria are suited to each funding category, and how the ECO Fund process can be improved for applicants to assess their eligibility more easily.

Key findings

[26]   Past assessors who responded to the survey conveyed that:

a)   While broad, the current ECO Fund objectives do not fully apply to all funding categories. Some have recommended the development of objectives for each funding category to support areas in demand and achieve ORC priorities.

b)   Broadening the scope of ECO Fund to include maintenance activities would allow grant recipients to sustain the benefits of past projects as they transition towards a more viable financial model.

c)   Funding staff wages is currently complex to assess but should remain within the scope. Different opinions were shared on how to best improve this eligibility criterion, including a cap on wages able to be applied for.

[27]   Past applicants who responded to the survey suggested that while they highly value the ECO Fund, it can be improved by:

a)   Extending its scope to include support of ongoing projects or maintenance for existing projects.

b)   Reviewing the '50% wages' funding criterion as it is currently confusing and complex to implement.

c)   Increasing funding options for individual landowners undertaking environmental projects on their land.

[28]   The "native planting for water quality" (2023 and 2024 rounds) and "native planting after pest plant removal" funding categories have previously been undersubscribed.

Recommended Changes

[29]   Following the review, it is recommended that:

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a) The current ECO Fund (general) and 'associated incentives' funding be renamed to reduce the confusion between ORC contestable funding branding and incentives funding categories. That is, the broad programme should be named "ECO Fund" and within that there are funding categories (as outlined in Table 2 above).

b) New funding categories replace and broaden the scope of undersubscribed funding categories, to respond to community demand and maximise the amount of funding distributed each round.

c) Refer to Table 2 for recommended funding category objectives and **Attachment 1** for associated eligibility criteria.

d) Objectives and eligibility criteria be developed for each funding category, to provide more clarity and certainty to funding applicants, and better align ECO Fund with ORC strategies. Key changes proposed to eligibility criteria are to:

i. Allow for the maintenance of projects to enable grant recipients to transition to a more sustainable funding model, capped at two maintenance projects.

ii. Simplify the wages criteria. Two options are presented for wages criteria, for which matching 'wages' funds are not required. The advantages and disadvantages of both options are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of advantages and disadvantages for the wages' criteria options

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1 Wages are capped at: • $25,000 for the General and Large-scale Biodiversity funding categories • $7,500 for all other funding categories	Limited risk of grant recipients' dependency of paying wages via funding. ORC does not become an indirect employer.	Potentially, insufficient share of funding towards wages. Using the $27.80/hr living wage rate, over a one-year period, this option provides: approximately 5hrs/wk. for $7,500 and approximately 17hrs/wk. for $25,000.
Option 2 Wages are capped at: • $50,000 for the General and Large-scale Biodiversity funding categories • $15,000 for all other funding categories	Greater scope of funding benefitting applicants, notably as few funders subsidise wages. Opportunity for applicants to employ human resources dedicated to plan, deliver and monitor the project, resulting in greater chances for success.	Additional time required to process applications if more applications are received. Potential reliance on ORC to fund wages. Outputs from wages-based project can be harder to quantify.

Review of Assessment Criteria

[30] The existing assessment criteria are used to support the scoring of projects in consistent, equitable and accountable way. The current assessment criteria were developed in 2022. Given the change to ECO Fund and the addition of incentives targeted at specific objectives it is appropriate to review the assessment criteria to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

[31] Considerations in developing criteria to assess ECO Fund projects are that criteria should:

   a)   Be sufficient to guide decision-making.
   b)   Be relevant to the funding category.
   c)   Be able to be assessed with some level of certainty.
   d)   Not overlap.
   e)   Be kept simple and minimal.

Key findings

[32] Past assessors who responded to the survey found the assessment criteria fit-for-purpose, although reported some can be difficult to score applications against. A majority recommended the adoption of new assessment criteria for a more equitable scoring of all project types (e.g. on ground versus education projects).

[33] Further, one past assessor recommended that applications with an insufficient score under the assessment criteria be made ineligible.

[34] A few past applicants (17%) advised that Council could help them further with the ECO Fund process by providing "more clarity about assessment criteria". Some also reported difficulties with answering technical questions.

[35] Consultation with the Senior Advisor Iwi Partnerships and Engagement highlighted the possibility for ECO Fund to better put into practice ORC's partnership with mana whenua.

Recommended changes

[36] Following the review, it is recommended changes to the current assessment criteria be made for a more equitable scoring of applications, an easier scoring of applications for assessors and to simplify the application form for applicants.

[37] Suggested changes include:

   a)   Assessing against relevant individual funding category objectives.

   b)   Revising and clarifying the project feasibility criterion (previously linking actions to objectives and best practice).

   c)   Splitting the "impact of the project – scale" criterion into two mutually exclusive criteria to enable a more equitable scoring of on ground vs education projects.

d) Adding a new criterion to acknowledge projects which address cultural environmental values and / or biodiversity values.

e) Clarifying some criteria have a null score resulting in the project being deemed ineligible.

[38] Suggested changes can be found in **Attachment 2**.

Review of Terms and Conditions

[39] Terms and conditions for ECO Fund (T&Cs) detail the general funding process and general obligations from the Otago Regional Council and grant applicants / funding recipients. T&C were reviewed to ensure they are clear and equitable. They have not been formally reviewed in the past.

Key findings
[40] Current T&Cs have a mix of eligibility criteria and general terms and conditions of the ECO Fund including successful recipients' obligations. These T&Cs are not clear how they apply to all funding categories.

Recommended changes
[41]   It is recommended that T&Cs be clarified and tidied up to be easy to understand and apply. The current T&Cs have been amended to reflect feedback from past applicants on what happens post decision, clarify how they apply, and remove any confusion. Suggested amended T&Cs were reviewed by Legal and are in **Attachment 3** along with the original version.

Review of the Terms of reference for the Assessment Panel

[42] While the Terms of Reference for the Assessment Panel were not within the scope of the review as agreed at Council in May, they have been reviewed to ensure consistency with the whole ECO Fund framework. The survey sent to past assessors also included a question on the Assessment Panel composition, which is detailed in the terms of reference.

Key findings
[43] The Assessment Panel is currently comprised of four Council members and one mana whenua representative. Assessment Panel members who responded to the survey recommended that the Panel comprise of three members of council and a mana whenua representative.

Recommended changes
[44] The Terms of Reference for the Assessment Panel have been updated to align with the preference for three Councillors and to describe more clearly what is expected of the Panel. They have also been reviewed by Legal. The changes can be viewed in **Attachment 4**.

Timing and additional comments

[45]   As part of the scope of the review, past applicants were asked about the timing of ECO Fund to understand the most convenient timing of the annual funding round and to enable best uptake by the community.

[46]   The survey also asked several open questions for further comment. These have been compiled here also.

Key findings - timing

[47]   A review of the timing for ECO Fund which is open once a year in March resulted in most responders (91%) supporting the ECO Fund round opening in March each year.

Key findings – additional comments

[48]   Additional feedback from past applicants who responded to the survey included:

a)   They highly value ECO Fund, particularly the broad scope that ECO Fund offers, empowering the Otago community to undertake environmental projects. This feedback is consistent with past assessors' feedback. Examples of the large scope of ECO Fund cited include funding being available for multiple-year projects, funding part wages.

b)   A majority (80%) informed that the ECO Fund application process is easy to follow and understand (49% answered 'Yes' while 31% answered 'Mostly'). In contrast, while some found the online application form easy to fill in, others found it complex, citing its length, the difficulty to answer technical questions, and the repetitiveness of some questions. This feedback will be considered as part of the review of the online application form.

c)   Some respondents have suggested improvements to the process to enable them to better manage their funding application and planning for their project. Some of these improvements are now possible due to the adoption of a new online grant management system. Others will be possible after reviewing the content of our ECO Fund website, to better inform grant recipients of the process post-decision.

[49]   The survey for past assessors included a series of questions to manage risks associated with funding. Feedback was sought on the maximum allowed per funding categories and on the way to manage applications where management agreements or written permissions were not submitted with the application. This feedback has been integrated in the eligibility and assessing criteria.

Recommended changes

[50]   It is recommended that the next ECO Fund round opens in March.

OPTIONS

[51]   **Option1 [Recommended]** Council approves all the recommendations:

Approves the inclusion of the following incentive budgets in the ECO Fund process, noting these budgets will be 'ring-fenced' to ensure any additional or specific criteria are met:
a)   Large scale biodiversity projects – up to $450,000 (increased from $300,000)
b)   Sustained rabbit management incentives – up to $100,000

c)   Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land – up to $100,000

d)   Critical source area enhancement on private land - up to $50,000

e)   Weed removal and revegetation - up to $50,000

Decides on the funding of wages in the <u>eligibility criteria between options 1 and 2 (in Table 3) and then</u> **Approves** the <u>eligibility criteria</u> for each funding category as set out in Attachment 1.

Approves the revised <u>assessment criteria</u> outlined in Attachment 2.

Approves the <u>terms and conditions</u> for applicants in Attachment 3.

Approves the updating of the <u>Terms of Reference</u> for the Assessment Panel, as suggested in Attachment 4.

Approving all recommendations will enhance the operation of the ECO Fund and implement feedback provided to date.

[52]   Option 2: Council can amend any or all of the recommendations above. The risks of changes to these, is that any changes may not fully implement the review and external feedback provided.

[53]   Option 3: Council can reject any or all of the recommendations above. If this option is chosen then the fund will continue to operate as it has to date, which may result in continued feedback about the areas that have been identified for improvements.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[54]   This paper does not trigger Strategic Framework or Policy Considerations.

Financial Considerations

[55]   The total ECO Fund budget approved by Council through the LTP 2024-34 is $900,000.

[56]   If the large-scale biodiversity budget is increased as proposed, then the total amount available in March 2025 will be $1,050,000. There are no financial implications beyond that already budgeted.

Significance and Engagement Considerations

[57]   This paper does not trigger ORC's policy on Significance and Engagement.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[58]   The proposed Terms and Conditions, in **Attachment 3**, and the Terms of Reference for the ECO Fund Assessment Panel, in **Attachment 4**, have been reviewed by the ORC Legal team.

Climate Change Considerations

[59]   The administration of the ECO Fund aims to deliver projects to improve the resilience of local ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, which overall contributes to climate change adaptation.

Communications Considerations

[60]   The outcomes from this review will be communicated as part of the advertising and communications for the ECO Fund March 2025 round. This includes clear guidance around eligibility and assessment criteria.

NEXT STEPS

[61]   Update all templates and processes in line with any approved recommendations in this paper.

[62]   Open the March 2025 ECO Fund round including help with applications, assessment, approval, feedback, financial processing, and reporting.

ATTACHMENTS

1.   Attachment 1 - ECO Fund Eligibility criteria [**10.2.1** - 3 pages]
2.   Attachment 2 - ECO Fund Assessment Criteria [**10.2.2** - 5 pages]
3.   Attachment 3 - ECO Fund Terms and Conditions [**10.2.3** - 5 pages]
4.   Attachment 4 - Terms of Reference for ECO Fund Assessment Panel [**10.2.4** - 3 pages]
5.   Attachment 5 - 2024 Past Applicants Survey and Findings [**10.2.5** - 10 pages]
6.   Attachment 6 - 2024 Survey to Past Assessment Panel Members and Findings [**10.2.6** - 15 pages]

Proposed Eligibility criteria

<u>**General Eligibility Criteria – apply to all funding categories**</u>

- Project must be located in Otago.
- Project cannot be funded for more than 3 years in duration.
- Project must align with the objectives of the relevant funding category (these can be found under the specific eligibility criteria).
- Management agreement(s) or relevant written permission(s) that allow the project to be completed on site must be in place <u>before</u> submitting your application.
- Wages criteria options below:

<u>Option 1:</u>
  Wages are capped at:
  - $25,000 for the General and Large-scale Biodiversity funding categories
  - $7,500 for all other funding categories

<u>Option 2:</u>
  Wages are capped at:
  - $50,000 for the General and Large-scale Biodiversity funding categories
  - $15,000 for all other funding categories

- Maintenance costs for projects previously funded by ECO Fund will only be funded up to two times.

- Final reports for any previous ECO Fund grants received must be submitted using the template provided and accepted before the assessment of new applications takes place.

The following will <u>not</u> be funded:

- Activities required by legislation, regulation, consent conditions or compliance direction
  - Rabbit control costs, includes poisons (e.g. Pindone, Magtoxin) and shooting or rabbit contractor costs
- Resource consent or bylaw amendment application fees
- Projects for commercial or private gain
- Seed capital
- Non-native plants
- Amenity purposes (e.g. cycleway, bridge, amenity planting)
- Retrospective costs for any projects

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Specific Eligibility Criteria

Funding category objectives

Funding category	Objectives
General (on-ground and education)	• To protect and enhance Otago's environment. • To enable community-led environmental activities.
Large Scale Biodiversity Projects	• To protect and enhance native biodiversity. • To enable larger scale projects for significant biodiversity outcomes aligned with regional priorities.
Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land	• To enhance existing protected areas of biodiversity on private land. • To enable private landholders to maintain existing biodiversity.
Sustained rabbit management	• To manage rabbit populations in new or existing community programme areas. • To enable landowners and community to work together to manage rabbit populations.
Critical source area management on private land	• To improve water quality. • To support private landholder to manage critical source areas for native biodiversity.
Weed removal and revegetation	• To improve native vegetation through removal of weeds / pest plants and rehabilitation. • To increase area of native terrestrial biodiversity.

Funding category applicants and projects criteria

Criteria	Funding Categories					
	General	Large scale biodiversity projects	Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land	Sustained rabbit management	Critical source area management on private land	Weed removal and revegetation
Applicants						
Incorporated societies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registered charitable trusts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resident and ratepayer groups	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Unincorporated groups	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Iwi/hapū	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educational institutions	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Private / individual landholders	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Groups of private landholders (multiple adjacent landholdings)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗

Criteria	Funding Categories					
	General	Large scale biodiversity projects	Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land	Sustained rabbit management	Critical source area management on private land	Weed removal and revegetation
Private landowners of property/ies with the following status: • Māori customary land • Māori freehold land • Crown land reserved for Māori • Land within the boundary of an original native reserve, if that land is still owned or partly owned by Māori	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘
State-owned enterprises	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Government agencies	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Territorial authorities	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Projects						
Projects must engage or involve the community	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✓

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Proposed Project Assessment Criteria, Guidance and Suggested Scoring

	Criteria	Guidance	Suggested Scoring This is a guide only as applications may not clearly or easily fit a specific score description		Applies to
1	**Project objectives align with the funding category environmental outcomes**	• This criterion aims to assess how well the objectives of the project will meet or deliver on the environmental outcomes sought from the funding category. • Refer to the stated project objectives. • NOTE: the objectives are different for each funding category.	4	Objectives directly address relevant environmental outcomes sought (as per funding category)	All funding categories
			3	Objectives are mostly relevant to the environmental outcome sought	
			2	Objectives indirectly address the relevant environmental outcome sought	
			1	Project objectives are limited in terms of achieving environmental outcomes sought for the funding category	
			0	Objectives are irrelevant (ineligible project)	
2	**Applicant Capacity (Feasibility)**	• This criterion aims to assess if the project would be able to achieve the stated objectives within the timeframe, and the resources available (people, funds, knowledge). • Issues that might affect timing to be considered could include if consent is required? (e.g. resource consent, Flood Protection Management Bylaw approval, herbicides use by waterways), do they have that consent? do they have land owner agreement? etc. • Also consider experience of the applicant (track record) and/or expertise consulted or utilised in the project. • An unknown 'track record' does not necessarily result in a lower score.	4	Highly likely to achieve outcomes sought based on applicants' capability, and/or project being technically simple, appropriate expertise involved and/ or evidence of past achievements (track record).	All funding categories
			3	Applicant is most likely able to achieve the outcomes sought, project is relatively simple, or some additional training, expertise or capacity development may be required. Track record might be patchy.	
			2	Applicant could achieve the objectives, but the project may be technically difficult, and expertise required has not been sought or is not directly appropriate. Track record, if known, is questionable.	
			1	Capacity of the applicant is questionable for the nature of the project, objectives are unlikely to be achieved within the timeframe, project is technically difficult, and no evident relevant expertise involved.	

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	Criteria	Guidance	Suggested Scoring This is a guide only as applications may not clearly or easily fit a specific score description		Applies to
			0	Project is not feasible, unrealistic, or unachievable (ineligible project)	
3a	Impact of the project – scale	• This criterion aims to assess the geographical extent of the project. • This criterion is for on-ground type projects.	4	Project site is >100ha	All funding categories, except General – Education (see Criterion 3b)
			3	Project site is >10 – 100ha	
			2	Project site is 1 – 10ha	
			1	Project site is less than 1 ha	
			0	Project scale is unclear (score is null)	
3b	Impact of the project – scale	• This criterion aims to assess the geographical extent of the project. • This criterion is for education / capacity building type projects. • It is assumed project develop and deliver education material or events. • On-ground projects with an education component will be assessed against both 3a and 3b and the highest score taken	4	Project plan to engage with a district or region wide audience	General - Education
			3	Project plan to engage with a town / locality wide audience	
			2	Project plan to engage with a Group / School / Organisation wide audience	
			1	Project plans to engage with people, but numbers or audience is not known / estimated	
			0	No engagement or audience (ineligible project)	

	Criteria	Guidance	Suggested Scoring This is a guide only as applications may not clearly or easily fit a specific score description		Applies to

4	**Biodiversity and cultural environmental values**	• This criterion aims to assess the benefits the project might provide, beyond achieving the funding objectives, in terms of native biodiversity and cultural values.
		
		• This criterion assesses how the projects promotes, protects or enhances native biodiversity and/or cultural environmental values.
		
		• A project that promotes additional values is taken to be an education or capacity building type project or activity.
		
		• Additional values include:
		    o Biodiversity focus areas (refer to ORC mapping).
		    o Cultural environmental values, i.e. supports mahika kai species and/or habitat, supports taoka species and/or habitat.
		
		• NOTE: For large scale biodiversity projects only consider the cultural values present (or not) as Criterion 5 will assess the biodiversity values in more detail for these projects
			2	Project promotes, protects or enhances native biodiversity, in or focussed on a biodiversity focus area AND cultural environmental values	All funding categories

			1	Project is in or focussed on a biodiversity focus area OR cultural environmental values (not both)	
			0	Project does contribute to any biodiversity and cultural environmental values	

5	**Special biodiversity values**	• This criterion aims to assess, special biodiversity values associated with a biodiversity project.
		
		• Special biodiversity values include:
		    • at-risk or threatened species,
		    • rare or much reduced ecosystem types,
		    • important or distinctive habitat types.
			4	Project addresses a first-tier biodiversity priority:
				
				• threatened naturally uncommon system,
				• habitats of threatened taxa endemic to Otago, and habitats of 'Nationally Critical' threatened species.
					Large scale biodiversity projects

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	Criteria	Guidance	Suggested Scoring This is a guide only as applications may not clearly or easily fit a specific score description		Applies to
			3	Project addresses a second-tier biodiversity priority: all other naturally uncommon ecosystems, and 'much reduced' ecosystems.	
			2	Project addresses a third-tier biodiversity priority: all other biodiversity focus areas.	
			1	Project does not address a biodiversity priority but has clear biodiversity outcomes.	
			0	Project does not address a biodiversity priority and has no clear biodiversity outcomes (ineligible project)	
6	Level of community engagement	• This criterion aims to assess how much community involvement is being proposed. • This criterion is about assessing the involvement of community engagement in the project as opposed to assessing the community or groups who may be the focus of the project – e.g. audience for education campaign.	4	Project is led by and includes multiple community groups.	- General – On ground - General - Education - Large scale biodiversity projects - Sustained rabbit management - Weed removal and revegetation
			3	Project is led and implemented by one community group	
			2	Not led by community but involves community in the implementation or multiple property owners	
			1	No community groups involved but outcomes will benefit or be utilised by the community.	
			0	No community involvement or benefit (ineligible project)	
7	Value for money	• This criterion aims to assess the level of investment contributed by the applicant, as a measure of value for money. • Applicant investment can include in-kind contributions such as labour or volunteer hours, monetary input from the group itself or project partners.	4	Applicant contribution is greater than 51% of total project cost.	All funding categories
			3	Applicant contribution is between 34% and 50% of total project cost	
			2	Applicant contribution is between 11% and 33% of total project cost.	
			1	Applicant contribution is up to 10% of total project cost.	

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	Criteria	Guidance	Suggested Scoring This is a guide only as applications may not clearly or easily fit a specific score description		Applies to
		• Contributions from other grants are **not** considered applicant's investment and should not be used to leverage funding.	0	Project relies solely on ECO Fund and other grants (not necessarily ineligible, but score is null)	
8	**New applicants**	• This criterion aims to assess the status of applicants in terms of past success with an ECO Fund application. • ECO Fund aims to encourage new applicants to access funding, however, recognises that previous applicants are also typically involved in good works and maintaining momentum can be good.	2	New applicant or previously unsuccessful applicant to the ECO Fund (with eligible project).	All funding categories
			1	Previous successful applicants with all requirements completed on time.	
			0	Previous successful applicant with outstanding / late reports as at the date of Assessment Panel (ineligible project)	

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

ECO Fund terms and conditions - suggested

General

- The ECO Fund aims to protect, enhance and promote Otago's environment.

- The ECO Fund is made up of six funding categories:
    - General (on-ground and education)
    - Large-scale biodiversity
    - Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land
    - Sustained rabbit management
    - Critical source area enhancement on private land
    - Weed removal and revegetation.

- Funding is capped per project, as follows:
    - $15,000 for 'biodiversity enhancement of protected private land', 'critical source area enhancement on private land', and 'weed removal and revegetation' categories.
    - $50,000 for 'general' and 'sustained rabbit management' categories
    - Between $50,000 to $150,000 for 'large-scale biodiversity' category.

Applications

- Applicants can only submit one application per funding round.

- Applicants can not submit additional information to support their application once they have lodged their application.

- Applicants must disclose any other funding they have applied for or received for their project.

- If an applicant is unsuccessful in one round of the ECO Fund, they may apply again in a subsequent funding round.

Assessment

- Applications are assessed by the ECO Fund Assessment Panel. The assessment is limited to the content of the application.

- Applications that do not meet the funding category eligibility criteria are deemed ineligible.

- All eligible applications are assessed and ranked against the ECO Fund assessment criteria for the relevant funding category.

- If an application is not successful in the category it has been applied to, but it meets eligibility criteria for other funding categories, it may be moved by the ECO Fund Assessment Panel to another funding category to increase its chances of funding. It is then reviewed against the assessment criteria of the new funding category.

- There is no obligation for the Otago Regional Council to contact an applicant to request an update for their application to become eligible.

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Decision

- Decisions are made by Council, based on recommendations made by the ECO Fund Assessment Panel.

- Decisions made by Otago Regional Council are final and are made at our sole discretion.

- Applicants may not speak to their applications at the Council meetings or approach representatives on Council to speak on their behalf.

Grant offer

- Grants are approved subject to the Otago Regional Council being satisfied that the information given by recipients is true and correct. Otago Regional Council reserves the right to refuse grant funding, and/or request return of grant funding where it determines that it has been misled, that the applicant or recipient has omitted relevant information, or if the recipient enters into receivership, liquidation or ceases to exist (e.g., removed from register).

- A letter of offer and funding agreement will be sent to successful applicants, detailing the general and specific obligations for both parties.

- Pre-conditions may be added to a funding agreement. The grant recipient will need to meet the pre-conditions prior to being able to claim the funding, which could delay the start of the project. Types pre-conditions include, but are not limited to, those addressing:
  - Health and safety plans for contractors' requirements
  - Resource consent or any formal approvals required (e.g. EPA approval for the use of herbicides by waterways)
  - Management agreements / written permissions from the landowner(s)
  - Insurance
  - Native plants to be used in the project.

- Obligations and responsibilities of successful applicants include, but are not limited to, that they must:
  - accept the grant by signing a funding agreement.
  - pay all costs associated with the project.
  - complete their project within the time specified.
  - meet at least once with ORC staff to discuss progress to date.
  - submit progress reports, where applicable, and a final report on the project outcomes to ORC within a specified timeframe, and account for how funds were spent.
  - report on their project at a council meeting, if requested.
  - acknowledge the grant in publications and any media release relating to the use of the funds.
  - agree to Otago Regional Council promoting their project.

- Funds granted expire six (6) months after Council approval. If the applicant fails to comply with the relevant terms and conditions of the funding agreement, including any pre-conditions, within 6 months (unless otherwise agreed), the funding lapses.

- For multi-year funding, funds will be released annually conditional upon appropriate progress reports being submitted and accepted. The progress report will demonstrate that:
  - milestones have been met or meaningful progress has been made, and
  - funding for the past year has been fully expended, as agreed.

- Applicants must have a bank account, or ability to establish one. ECO Fund grants will be transferred to a bank account in the name of the applicant. Grant funds will not be paid into individuals bank accounts, corporate bank accounts, unless otherwise agreed with ORC.

- If work funded is not completed within the specified time frame or funds are not spent as agreed, Otago Regional Council reserves the right to demand the return of funds.

ECO Fund Terms and Conditions – Current

General
- Projects must meet the objectives of the ECO Fund and align with at least one ORC strategic priority to eligible. Note that projects for Incentives Funding – Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land do not need to meet the objective for enabling community driven environmental activities.
- Except for multi-year projects, projects must be completed within 12 months of receiving funding.
- All applications for each round are assessed and ranked against the ECO Fund assessment criteria (link to criteria to be provided).
- All funding is GST exclusive. All financial information provided in an application must be exclusive of GST.
- The ECO fund supports both one-off projects and those running over multiple years for up to 3 years. For multiple year funding, funds will be released annually conditional upon appropriate project reports which demonstrate meaningful progress being submitted.
- Successful applicants must agree to Otago Regional Council promoting their project.
- Applicants must have completed accountability (final) reports for any previous ECO Fund grants received to be eligible for funding.
- If work funded is not completed within the specified time frame or funds are not spent as agreed, Otago Regional Council reserves the right to demand the return of funds.
- The ECO Fund does not provide funding for:
  - commercial or private gain
  - government organisations
  - projects created to comply with Resource Consent conditions
  - responses to any actual or potential enforcement action (excluding projects under the sustained rabbit control programme)
  - the purpose of seed capital
  - individuals (except for Incentives Funding – Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land).
  - maintenance for existing projects
  - retrospective costs

Applications
- Applicants can only submit one application per funding round.
- Projects must have a defined start and finish date.
- Applicants must disclose any other funding they have applied for or received for their project.
- Funding is capped per project and applicant at $50,000 for ECO Fund and Incentives Funding - Sustained rabbit management; and $15,000 for Incentives Funding - Native planting after plant pest removal, Native planting for water quality, and Biodiversity enhancement of protected private land.
- If funding is requested for salary costs, only 50% will be funded. Applicants need to demonstrate that requested salary funding is not more than 50% of total cost, and detail where the additional funding will come from e.g., applicant 50% contribution to salary could be from other grants, existing group funds, or existing staff capacity or volunteer contributions allocated to the same project position.

Assessment
- All applications are assessed and ranked against the ECO Fund assessment criteria.

- Applicants agree to be available (if requested) for a phone call and/or site visit with ORC staff as part of the assessment process at a day and time suitable to the applicant.
- If an applicant is unsuccessful in one round of the ECO Fund, they may apply again in a subsequent funding round.
- Decisions made by Otago Regional Council are final and are made at our sole discretion.
- Applicants may not speak to their applications at the Council meetings or approach representatives on Council to speak on their behalf.

Decision and Grant
- Successful applicants must accept the grant by signing an acceptance letter and funding agreement.
- Recipients must pay all costs associated with the project. ECO Fund grants will be transferred to recipients' nominated bank accounts.
- Nominated bank accounts cannot be private accounts; it must be an account in the name of the applicant. Grant funds will not be paid into individuals bank accounts, corporate bank accounts or another groups bank accounts on behalf.
- Successful applicants must agree to report on the project outcomes to ORC within a specified timeframe, and account for how funds were spent. Successful applicants must agree to submit progress reports, where applicable, and a final report on the project outcomes to ORC within a specified timeframe, and account for how funds were spent.
- Successful applicants agree to report on their project at a council meeting, if requested.
- Funds granted expire 6 months after Council approval. If the applicant fails to comply with the Otago Regional Council's terms and conditions within 6 months (unless otherwise agreed), the funding lapses.
- Grants are approved subject to the Otago Regional Council being satisfied that the information given by recipients is true and correct. Otago Regional Council reserves the right to refuse grant funding, and/or request return of grant funding where it determines that it has been misled, that the applicant or recipient has omitted relevant information, or if the recipient enters into receivership, liquidation or ceases to exist (e.g., removed from register).

ECO Fund Assessment Panel

Terms of Reference

Previous Version endorsed by Council in February 2022 (Council Resolution CM22-110)

Purpose and function of the ECO Fund Assessment Panel (the Panel)

- Assess all ECO Fund applications and score eligible applications according to the assessment criteria.

- Provide recommendations to full council on ECO Fund applications which should receive funding (noting that recommendations made by the Panel are only recommendations and that final outcomes must be agreed upon by full council).

- Maintain a working relationship with the Environmental Implementation team.

- Provide feedback on the ECO Fund application process and operation of the Panel when the ECO Fund is reviewed annually.

The Panel

The Panel will comprise three members of council.

Members of Council on the Panel will comprise one permanent Chair and two other councillors (one of whom will be a deputy Chair). A permanent chair will be convened for each Council triennium. The other two councillors will be convened prior to each funding round so all councillors are given the opportunity to be on the Panel. The deputy Chair will assume the Chair's duties if the permanent Chair is unable to fulfil them for any reason.

A mana whenua representative will be invited to be a non-councillor member of the Panel.

The Panel quorum will be three members.

Staff assisting the Panel

Environmental Implementation staff will manage the administration of the ECO Fund applications.

Staff will liaise with the Panel Chair to coordinate a meeting of the Panel which staff will attend.

A group of staff with relevant technical expertise (Staff Technical Group) will assess the applications for eligibility and provide scores against the assessment criteria.

Operation of the Panel and scoring of applications

The Panel will meet after each ECO Fund round has concluded and prior to the full meeting of council (which receives the Panel recommendations). The purpose of the pre-council meeting is to assess the merits of the ECO Fund applications.

While the actual length of the Panel meetings will depend on the number of applications received, and their complexity, four hours should be allowed for the Panel to agree on a recommendation; with

the date, time and location of meeting(s) to be managed through the Chair in collaboration with the Environmental Implementation Team.

Full and proper consideration against ECO Fund assessment criteria must be given to each eligible application. The Panel member's scoring should be completed before attending the Panel meeting to enable discussion with a view towards a consensus being reached on each application.

Initial assessments from the Staff Technical Group will be available to the Panel before the Panel meeting for use at their discretion and help inform the Panel members scoring.

If the Panel cannot arrive at a consensus or common understanding for any application, then the disparate views on applications without consensus should be recorded.

Staff will keep records of assessments, scores, rankings, comments, and of collective discussions.

Matters to consider

Each funding category is governed by its own objectives. Each application should be reviewed against the assessment criteria of the funding category it has been applied to.

Panel members are to base their assessments, scores, rankings, and comments on what is contained within the application, the initial scores from the Staff Technical Group assessments, and their own judgment and exclude any other information. Personal knowledge should be excluded from the Panel deliberations.

Panel members must declare conflicts of interest (as set out below) which may impact their objectivity.

It is important to remember that the Panel is making recommendations for the expenditure of public funds, and so value for money should be considered alongside.

The monetary amount of funds available each ECO Fund round should be taken into account when finalising its assessments.

The Panel should note that the applications may be confidential if they contain commercially sensitive information and/or include the intellectual property of an Applicant, and also that the Privacy Act 2020 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) applies to Council.

Applicants may request information about themselves (Privacy Act), other applications and the ECO Fund (LGOIMA). While the names of the Panel members may be redacted in LGOIMA requests the Panel should be aware that comments, scorings and meeting minutes must be released if requested.

Reporting

The Panel will report to the Environmental Implementation Committee and/or Council whichever is the most appropriate due to timing.

Timeframe

The ECO Fund will be reviewed annually. The annual review will determine whether the Panel Terms of Reference will be as set out in this document or require amendments.

Conflicts of Interest

The Panel must maintain a clear separation between its member's personal interests and their duties as elected members (where applicable) and their role as Panel members in order to ensure that they are free from bias (whether real or perceived).

In order to achieve this councillor Panel members must familiarise themselves with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 (LAMIA): https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1968/0147/latest/DLM390003.html?src=qs

Panel members will not participate in any discussion or vote on any matter in which they have an interest, other than interest in common with the general public. This also applies where the member's spouse has a pecuniary interest. Panel members shall make a declaration of interest as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any conflict of interest.

If a Panel member is in any doubt as to whether a particular course of action (including a decision to take no action) raises a conflict of interest, then the Panel member should seek guidance from the Panel Chair immediately. A Panel member may also contact the Office of the Auditor General for guidance as to whether they have a pecuniary interest, and if so, may seek an exemption to allow them to participate or vote on a matter in which they may have pecuniary interest. Guidance must be sought, and approval obtained before any discussion or vote.

NOTE that failure to observe LAMIA could invalidate decisions made, or actions taken, by the Panel (and council). Failure to observe these requirements could also leave a councillor Panel member open to prosecution, and noting that in the event of a conviction, elected members can be ousted from office.

- Declaration of conflict
    - Panel Members and staff are responsible for declaring any real or potential conflict of interest to the Chair as soon as a conflict arises.

- Management of conflicts of interest

    Conflicts of interest will be managed and enforced by the Chair. If a conflict of interest arises involving the Chair, the deputy Chair will be responsible for management and enforcement of the conflict of interest.

    Any Panel member with a conflict of interest will not participate in the assessment or scoring of an application, they will not comment on that application or be involved in the Panel discussion on it.

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

ECO Fund survey

This survey is designed to collect feedback from past applicants to inform the 2024 ECO Fund review, with the aim to improve our process.

About your organisation

What is your organisation's status? *

◯ Registered charity
◯ Community Trust
◯ Community group – unincorporated
◯ Incorporated society
◯ NGO
◯ School
◯ Tertiary education
◯ Iwi / Hapū
◯ Private Trust
◯ Landowner group
◯ Landowner
◯ Other

Please state your organisation's status. *

_____

Where is your organisation based? *

◯ Central Otago
◯ Clutha
◯ Dunedin district
◯ Queenstown Lakes
◯ Waitaki

Which round(s) of the ECO Fund did you apply to? If you have applied more than once, please select all that apply. *

☐ March 2024
☐ March 2023
☐ April 2022
☐ March 2021
☐ October 2020
☐ March 2020

1

☐ October 2019
☐ March 2019
☐ September 2018

Were you successful with any of your ECO Fund applications? *

◯ Yes
◯ No

In which round(s) of the ECO Fund were you successful? If successful more than once, please select all that apply. *

☐ March 2024
☐ March 2023
☐ April 2022
☐ March 2021
☐ October 2020
☐ March 2020
☐ October 2019
☐ March 2019
☐ September 2018

Feedback on the ECO Fund

What did you like about the ECO Fund? *

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What did you not like about the ECO Fund? *

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Did you find the ECO Fund application process easy to follow and understand? *

◯ Yes
◯ Mostly

2

◯ Not really
◯ Not at all

What was not easy to follow and/or understand in the application process? *

[text box]

ECO Fund applications were open in March for the 2023 and 2024 rounds. Is applying to ECO Fund in March a convenient time for you? *

◯ Yes
◯ No

When would be a better time for ECO Fund applications to open?

[text box]

Let us know if you have any comments about the timeliness of the ECO Fund process (e.g. application, decision, being informed of decision, etc).

[text box]

Challenges and Council support for the ECO Fund

Did you seek advice from council staff prior to submitting any of your applications? *

◯ Yes
◯ No

Did you find that advice useful? *

◯ Yes
◯ Mostly
◯ Not really

How could the advice be more useful?

3

What challenges (if any) has your organisation faced in undertaking your ECO Fund project? These might be in relation to the funding agreement and your obligations, or in delivering the project.

For your last or past project(s), did you feel that the council provided you with adequate support or advice throughout the process? (e.g. advice about project or process, signing the funding agreement, payment of the grant, site visits, or reporting requirements). *

◯ Yes
◯ No

How could the Council help your organisation further with the ECO Fund process? (select one or more options)

☐ Help with projects one to one
☐ Public webinar before round opens
☐ More clarity about eligibility criteria
☐ More clarity about assessment criteria
☐ Longer time to submit applications
☐ Multiple rounds per year
☐ On-site visits during project delivery
☐ Other

How else could the council help your organisation further with the ECO Fund process?

Access to information and notifications

4

How do you know when the ECO Fund round is open? (select one or more options) *

☐ I keep an eye on the ORC posts on social media

☐ I came across some online advertising

☐ I check the information on the ORC website

☐ I ask ORC staff

☐ I read the newspapers in a printed format

☐ I read the newspapers online

☐ I've registered my interest via the ECO Fund Expression of Interest form

☐ I hear about it by word of mouth or from organisations other than ORC

☐ Other

How else do you know when the ECO Fund round is open? *

[   ]

When would you like to receive notifications about the ECO Fund round opening times? (select one or more options) *

☐ Notification one month prior to ECO Fund round opening

☐ Notification one week prior to the ECO Fund round opening

☐ Notification on the opening day

☐ Other

Please let us know when you would like to receive notifications about the ECO Fund round opening times. *

[   ]

How do you rate the information about the ECO Fund on the ORC website? (5 stars is great, 1 star is not good) *

　1　2　3　4　5
　○　○　○　○　○

What possible improvements could be made to ECO Fund content on the ORC website? For example, additional information, better layout, more examples, case studies, etc.

[   ]

Impact of funding for your organisation and project

5

How critical has it been for your organisation (or you) to be awarded some ECO Fund for your project? (If more than one of your projects has been successful, please consider your last project when answering this question.) *

○ The project could not have been delivered without the ECO Fund.
○ The project would have happened at a smaller scale without the ECO Fund.
○ The project would have been delayed without the ECO Fund.
○ The project would have occurred on time regardless of funding allocated.
○ Other

Please state how critical it has been for your organisation (or you) to be awarded some funding from the ECO Fund for your project.

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Since receiving funding, how would you rate the impact of this project now? *

○ The project has made a significant difference and has been expanded upon.
○ The project has made a significant difference and no further action is required.
○ The project made a significant difference at the time, but gains were not maintained.
○ The project made some difference at the time.
○ Unfortunately, the project made no difference at the time.

What has been the biggest win for your project?

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Additional comments

Please provide any other comments you may have regarding the ECO Fund (optional).

6

Please enter your email address if you would like a copy of your feedback.

example@example.com

Submit

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

Survey findings – 2024 ECO Fund survey to past applicants

55 responses received out of 254 past applicants contacted.

Applicant details (number of responses)	Number of responses (percentage of responses)
Applicants' legal status (55 responses)	Registered charities: 20 (36%) Incorporated societies: 14 (25%) Community groups – unincorporated : 7 (13%)
Location (55 responses)	21 from Dunedin district (38%) 19 from Queenstown Lakes district (35%) 6 from Central Otago district (11%) 5 from Waitaki district (9%) 4 from Clutha district (7%)
Funding round applied (94 responses, question allowed multiple answers)	March 2024: 36 (38%) March 2023: 24 (26%)
Application's success (55 responses)	Repsondents succesful with one of their applications: 47 (85%) Respondents unsuccessful with their application(s): 8 (15%)

Positive feedback (number of responses)	Number of responses
Funding round opening time of the year (55 responses)	Support for the funding round being in March: 50 (91%)
Scope of funding (55 responses)	A strong theme that emerged from responses to open survey questions was how past applicants value the scope of ECO Fund: 39 (71%) This includes the support for: - environmental, conservation, pest management and biodiversity projects - wages, multiple-year funding, support community groups / landowners
Easy application process (55 responses)	Yes and mostly: 44 (80%) Not really and not at all: 11 (20%)
Information about the ECO Fund on the ORC website (55 responses)	Score of the ECO Fund information on the ORC website being ≥4 out of 5 stars: 43 (78%) The average rating for the ECO Fund information on the ORC website is: 4.07 / 5, with 5 stars being great and 1 star is not good.

Positive feedback (number of responses)	Number of responses
Helpful staff	14 out of 55 respondents (25%) mentioned that ORC staff are helpful in open format questions. 37 out of 42 respondents (88%) found the advice provided by ORC staff helpful. 42 out of 47 respondents (89%) found that ORC provided applicants with adequate support or advice throughout the process.
Impact of funding for groups (47 responses)	Positive impact of funding • Respondents consider that their project could not have been delivered without the ECO Fund: 23 (49%) • Respondents consider that their project would have happened at a smaller scale without the ECO Fund: 20 (43%)

Themes identified for improvement (number of responses)	Additional comments	Recommendations
Communication impacting the applicant's planning of their project (29)	Communication issues are mainly attributed to groups facing unnecessary uncertainty as a result of our current process. Feedback referred to: • questions being unavailable prior to round opening, • unavailability of ORC staff to write applications on behalf of applicants, • lack of skills of some applicants (e.g. online form and producing an invoice) • lack of information on our website on obligations to meet post-decision, • Unhelpful feedback if unsuccessful. Suggested improvements included ORC staff providing customised advice following site visits.	Review eligibility criteria, assessment criteria and application form content. Review of website content and implementation of a new webinar as part of ECO Fund communication strategy, including a draft version of application form. Continue to answer enquiries about ECO Fund and better promote the possibility for site visits by Catchment Advisors and Community Coordinators – Biosecurity.

Themes identified for improvement (number of responses)	Additional comments	Recommendations
Application form (15)	Some respondents have advised that the application form is: • complex • contains technical and repetitive questions • requires a significant amount of time to fill in, especially for 'simpler' projects.	Refine our forms and communication. Ensure the use of plain English in our communications
Scope of grants should be extended. (11)	Feedback included that the scope of ECO Fund should be extended to allow: • the continuation of projects that have previously received funding or the maintenance of projects. • funding of a higher percentage of wages, • more funding opportunities to private landowners, • funding of projects that promote change via indirect methods (e.g. art). • Allowing applicants that have not had their final report accepted to apply to more funding.	Propose new grant categories that both give effect to Council strategic directions and respond to community feedback where possible. Review eligibility criteria.
Online application form issues (7)	The online application form does not allow downloading to share a draft application within a group. Other technical difficulties were cited, such as not being able to see the whole content of a recorded response.	A new grant management system is being adopted. Technical issues with the previous form are expected to be overcome.
Financials (6)	A few responses referred to the fund being oversubscribed, the need to seek additional funding to carry out projects. Anecdotal feedback included the issue with GST cost for non GST-registered grant recipients.	Council adopted an increased budget dedicated to funding in the 2024-34 LTP. Investigate how GST issue can be mitigated.

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

ECO Fund survey – Past Assessment Panel members ✂

This survey is designed to collect feedback from past assessors to inform the 2024 ECO Fund review, with the aim to improve our process for the 2025 funding round. The review is restricted to ORC contestable funding.

A new grant management system will be implemented for the 2025 funding round. This software will allow assessors to access applications and record their results online. Therefore, the survey does not include any question about improving parts of this process.

You are welcome to fill in this survey, and to request an interview if you wish to share further feedback.

About you

1. Please record your name below.

2. How long does it usually take you to review ECO Fund applications?

ECO Fund purpose and scope

The ECO Fund objectives are:
- *Protect, enhance and promote Otago's environment*
- *Enable community-driven environmental activities*

3. The objectives above, technically, only apply to the ECO Fund - General. However, we have several other incentive categories that do not have documented objectives, such as rabbit management, biodiversity enhancement on private land, planting after pest plant control, and planting for water quality.

   Do you think the ECO Fund objectives should apply to all contestable funding categories?

   ◯ Yes, one set of objectives makes the purpose clear and easy to understand

   ◯ No, we need different objectives for different funding categories

   ◯ Should apply to all, but be amended to be fit for purpose

4. Do you have any suggestion for the ECO Fund objectives to be more fit-for-purpose?

   [   ]

Eligibility criteria

5. Currently, only the fund category for biodiversity enhancement on protected private land allows for an individual private landholder to apply. Should the ECO Fund and other incentives allow applications from private landholders?

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   ◯ Yes, but only for some funding categories

6. If you think some categories of funding should be extended to private landholders, which ones?

   ☐ Sustained rabbit management

   ☐ Planting for water quality

   ☐ Planting after pest plant control

   ☐ Large-scale biodiversity grants

   ☐ ECO Fund (general)

7. The LTP 2024-34 states that funding is required to maintain the gains made through projects previously funded by ORC or central government.

   Should eligibility criteria allow for the maintenance of existing projects?

   This question also frequently arises for pest management projects. How do we ensure that such projects do not lose the benefits of previous funded work and ensure project success in the long-term?

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

8. Please add any comments about funding maintenance projects.

   [ ]

9. Should it be mandatory for applicants to contact ORC staff prior to applying to the ECO Fund?

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

10. Should the ECO Fund allow for late submissions?

    ◯ Yes

    ◯ No

11. What special circumstances could be considered to allow late submissions?

    ┌──┐
    │   │
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12. Should applications be open to groups that do not currently have the landholder's approval or appropriate management agreement in place to undertake the works on the project site (but they intend to seek this if successful)?

    ◯ Yes

    ◯ No

    ◯ Other

13. Please provide any other comment you may have about eligibility, especially any issue with eligibility criteria that may not have been addressed above.

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Scoring applications

14. How easy is it to score applications?

○ Extremely easy

○ Somewhat easy

○ Neutral

○ Somewhat difficult

○ Very difficult

15. Select the criteria that are difficult to score.

You can find a copy of the assessment criteria here: https://www.orc.govt.nz/environment/enhancing-and-protecting/grants-and-funding/eco-fund/assessment-criteria/

☐ Project objectives are realistic and actions are likely to achieve the objectives

☐ Project is technically sound

☐ Impact of the project - scale

☐ Impact of the project - timeframe

☐ Special site values

☐ Level of community engagement

☐ Value for money

☐ New applicants

☐ Other funding

16. Please provide any comments to elaborate on your answer above.

17. Do you find the combined staff assessment helpful when assessing applications?

○ Yes

○ No

18. Should new assessment criteria be developed for some funding categories to provide a more equitable scoring (e.g. education / awareness type projects vs on-ground projects)?

○ Yes

○ No

19. Please provide any comments to elaborate on your answer above.

20. Please provide any other comment you may have about scoring applications, especially any issue that may not have been addressed above.

The Dollar value

Currently, funds for a project are capped as follows:

* ECO Fund - up to $50,000
* Native planting after pest plant control - up to $15,000
* Native planting for water quality - up to $15,000
* Biodiversity enhancement on protected private land - up to $15,000
* Large-scale biodiversity grants - between $50,000 and $150,000
* Sustained rabbit management - up to $50,000

21. Should the same funding cap apply for all funding categories (except the large-scale biodiversity grants)?

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

22. What should this cap be?

   [   ]

23. Should there be a maximum that can be applied by an unformed group? E.g. unformed groups can apply for up to $x.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

24. Please provide any comments to elaborate on your answer above. If suggesting a cap, what should this amount be?

   [   ]

25. How should the ECO Fund cover staff wages?

   ◯ 50% wages criterion (50% of wages supported by ECO Fund, the remaining part of wages needs to be covered) - This is the current approach.

   ◯ Capped amount, e.g. up to $20,000

   ◯ Shouldn't cover wages

   ◯ Other

26. What should the cap for staff wages be?

   [   ]

27. Please provide any other comment you may have about the Dollar value.

Assessment Panel

Currently the Terms of Reference for the Assessment Panel read as follows:

The assessment panel will comprise four members of council, with a permanent chair and three other councillors who will rotate each funding round so councillors are given the opportunity to be on the assessment panel. A deputy chair will take over the chair's duties if they are unable to fulfil them for any reason.

A mana whenua representative will be invited to the assessment panel.

A quorum will be considered 3 members.

28. How many members are required for the ECO Fund Assessment Panel to be efficient?

○ 4 (as per the 2024 round)

○ Other

29. How many members of the Assessment Panel should be community representatives, other than Councillors and Mana Whenua representatives?

○ 0

○ 1

○ 2

○ Other

30. What criteria should apply to select community members to be part of the Assessment Panel?

31. Please provide any other comment you may have about the Assessment Panel.

Making a recommendation to Council

32. What process should the Assessment Panel follow when the remaining funding for a funding bucket does not fully cover the next prioritised project?

○ Always allow for part-funding

○ Allow part-funding when the project allows for it (e.g. wouldn't require a re-assessment of the project)

○ Do not allow for part-funding

○ Other

33. What should happen to underspent categories?

○ Underspent funds should return to the budget for the following round

○ Funds from under-subscribed funds should be transferred to over-subscribed funding categories, within that round

○ The under spend should return to ORC budget

○ Other

34. How should the Assessment Panel final results be calculated?

○ Average of Assessment Panel members and staff combined scores (approach followed in the 2024 ECO Fund round)

○ Average of Assessment Panel member scores only, with a review for any significant discrepancy with combined staff scores (approach followed pre-2024)

○ Other

35. Feel free to share any thought you may have on recommendations to Council.

[   ]

Other

36. Feel free to share any other thought you may have regarding the ECO Fund.

37. Do you wish to be contacted to provide further feedback?

○ Yes

○ No

Attachment 6 – Past Assessors Survey Findings

Findings	Recommendations
Purpose	
No clear preference identified to address the issue of undocumented objectives for incentives funding categories. The first ECO Fund objective could be an overarching objective to all funding categories, and further objectives could be developed for each funding category.	The current ECO Fund (general) and incentives funding are renamed to reduce the confusion between ORC contestable funding branding and incentives funding categories. The broad programme is named "ECO Fund" and within that there are funding categories. Objectives are developed for each funding category, to provide more clarity and certainty to funding applicants, and better align ECO Fund with ORC strategies.
Eligibility	
Overall recommendation to broaden the scope of ECO Fund, so that: - Individual landholders are eligible to more funding than currently and should remain ineligible to large-scale biodiversity grants. - Maintenance costs are carefully considered to support groups who may otherwise lose the benefits of past projects. ORC alone cannot subsidise all maintenance projects but could support groups in their transition to become resilient / sustainable. Criteria should be developed accordingly. Note: maintenance is considered as part of the initiation of a project; however, it may not always be known in advance (e.g. mast year). - Support innovative projects that contribute to our Otago environment. A majority of survey respondents recommend a mandatory contact with ORC staff prior to applying to funding. Applicants will need to know which ORC staff are deemed to be contacted to discuss their project with, and what contact is expected (e.g. attending webinar, or phone call or meeting) Survey responses do not recommend late applications. The only circumstances for a late application would be if the applicant is waiting for information from ORC. Survey respondents recommend that final reports be submitted (and accepted) prior to the	Eligibility criteria are developed for each funding category, which allows for a broader scope of ECO Fund. New funding categories replace and broaden the scope of ECO Fund, giving more funding opportunities to individual landholders. Terms and conditions are reviewed in light of the survey responses, to provide more clarity on ECO Fund. Maintenance costs can be funded by ECO Fund, with a condition to transition to a more sustainable financing model by capping the number of maintenance grants at two for any applicant. Applicants are encouraged to contact relevant ORC staff prior to submitting their application. Mandatory contact might be difficult to resource and enforce at this stage. Website content is updated to further promote contact prior submission. Late applications remain ineligible. Applicants who haven't submitted their accountability report prior to assessment of

assessment panel meeting day. Leniency could be given if special circumstances apply.	applications for their previous project remain ineligible.
There is a wish to support applicants in their project, while mitigating the risks of projects being unachievable if no management agreement or written permission being obtained. To allow applicants without management agreement or written permission to proceed, the application form should request paperwork demonstrating support for the project from the landholder, as well as an indication of when the management agreement could become available.	Evidence of an agreement with landowner(s) is necessary for on ground projects to be eligible.
Feedback included that some applications incorrectly referred to engaging with mana whenua as part of their project.	The online application form is reviewed to include a question about mana whenua engagement for the project.

Scoring	
Assessment criteria do not appear overly difficult to use for scoring applications as 6 out of 10 respondents answered it is somewhat easy to score applications. The criterion which seems the hardest to score applications against is; "Project objectives are realistic and actions are likely to achieve the objectives", followed by "Project is technically sound".	Assessment criteria are reviewed to ensure that they do not overlap.
Additional comments referred to the difficulty to assess applications that are not always developed as discrete projects. Specific advice around this could be made available in the application form to better assist applicants.	The online application form is reviewed to better guide applicants to define their project.
The majority of survey respondents (8 out of 10) recommend the development of new assessment criteria, especially to address issues with urban vs rural and on the ground vs education projects.	Assessment criteria are reviewed to address current un intended bias against education projects.
For a fair review of applications, it has been suggested that volunteer hourly rates be pre-defined. There could be an hourly rate for traditional volunteer work and an hourly rate for more technical work.	The online application form is reviewed.
More emphasis is needed on protection of biodiversity rather than, e.g., enhancement, because this is much more cost-effective if done correctly.	This should be captured through value for money and cost of the grants. Other funding is already aimed specifically at protection.

One respondent queried the possibility to require minimum scores for some assessment criteria, rather than giving extra weight to some categories. "ECO Fund should be seen as a vital part of our outreach and bonding with the wider conservation community. As such, it needs to nurture people, so criteria should be wide and inclusion encouraged."	The scoring of applications is reviewed. Where applicable, null scores against selected assessment criteria result in an application becoming ineligible.
Rabbits	
Half of staff surveyed recommended that the application form for sustained rabbit management remain the same as the form for other funding categories. One staff member questioned whether this funding category allowed for environmental enhancement if it is all about rabbits.	Online application form is reviewed for the sustained rabbit management funding category.
Staff recommended that eligibility criteria be made clearer and supported with clearer instructions.	Please refer to eligibility criteria section above.
A majority of staff recommended that past applicants be eligible to apply for rabbit-proof fencing costs more than once.	The one-year eligibility criterion for rabbit-proof fencing costs is removed.
The dollar value	
Most survey respondents agree that funding categories should have different funding caps. Some of the reasoning for this preference seems to be based on the budget available for each funding category; a $50,000 budget should not allow applications for up to $50,000.	Funding categories cap remain.
A question was asked about unformed groups and their eligibility to access a high amount of funding. Five out of 10 respondents recommend the maximum amount to be capped for unformed groups. Funding could assist them transitioning to a more formal group. Comments from those supporting no cap for unformed groups referred to the projects requirements to achieve environmental outcomes, as opposed to a group's status. One respondent indicated a $15,000 cap for unformed groups.	Funding caps remain for each funding category.
All survey respondents agree that a part of wages should remain funded and that wages criteria, whatever they are, need to be better communicated to avoid ineligible applications.	The online application form is reviewed, to better guide applicants who seek funding for wages.

There is support to keep funding up to 50% of wages, with some respondents recommending that the other 50% be open to other funding sources (e.g. voluntary time equivalent). It is also proposed a cost sharing minimum 1:1 applicant:funding, or to allow applications to fully support wages.	
Assessment Panel	
All assessment panel members who responded to the survey support an ECO Fund Assessment Panel made out of four members. Out of 10 respondents, five do not recommend any community representative in the Assessment Panel. Some cite the existing knowledge within the Panel and councillors being community representatives. Conflicts of interest are also cited as an issue to identifying community representatives. One of the respondents see value in a community representative being part of the Assessment Panel if they have previously applied for funding.	Update the terms of reference for the Assessment Panel to allow for four members. No change to the member composition of the Assessment Panel.
Recommendations	
The survey results show great support to allocate as much funding as possible in a round. This includes support for part-funding to be allowed for projects that allow so under a funding category and the re-allocation of budget from under-subscribed categories to oversubscribed categories. One respondent indicated that the transfer of funds should only be at the discretion of the Panel, depending on the quality of applications. The transfer of funds from some funding categories to others may be dependent on the budget cost allocation of funding categories.	Assessment Panel to agree on a protocol for each funding round.
Past Assessment Panel members were asked how the Panel's final results should be calculated. Three out of four respondents recommended following the 2024 approach, consisting of an average of Assessment Panel members and staff combined scores.	Assessment Panel to agree on a protocol for each funding round.

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10.3. Annual Plan 2025/2026 Transport

Prepared for:	Council
Report No.	GOV2468
Activity:	Governance Report
Author:	Lorraine Cheyne, Transport Manager, and Anita Dawe, General Manager Regional Planning and Transport
Endorsed by:	Richard Saunders, Chief Executive
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1] To enable Council to make decisions on provision of transport work programmes, in light of those work programmes not receiving funding through the National Land Transport Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2] Twenty transport work programmes are included in the Regional Land Transport Plan and Long-Term Plan to support the delivery of ORC's public transport services; sixteen were not successful for grant funding from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

[3] As a result, Council needs to make decisions to inform the 2025/26 Annual Plan in relation to these work programmes/projects. These decisions will impact rates, service delivery and infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1. ***Notes*** *this report.*

2. ***Approves*** *a preferred option for inclusion in the draft Annual Plan in relation to transport as follows:*

    a) *The preferred option for Routes 5/6 and 10 frequencies and/or overall Dunedin network extended service coverage is Option 1/2/3 (select one)*

    b) *The preferred option for Queenstown ferries is Option 1/2 (select one)*

    c) *The preferred option for the Oamaru service is Option 1/2/3 (select one)*

    d) *The preferred option for the Alexandra – Clyde – Cromwell - Queenstown service is Option 1/2 (select one)*

    e) *The preferred option for the Balclutha- Airport- Dunedin service is Option 1/2/3 (select one)*

    f) *The preferred option for the Wanaka Business case is Option 1/2 (select one)*

    g) *The preferred option for public transport infrastructure is Option1/2 (select one)*

3. ***Notes*** *that staff will complete an assessment to determine whether the proposed changes to the Long Term Plan will require a formal consultation procedure through the Annual Plan process.*

BACKGROUND

[4]   The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) sets out regional transport work programmes and projects for the next ten years. Projects and activities need to be included in the RLTP to be eligible for grant funding from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), through inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

[5]   Projects that are listed in the RLTP also need to be in the Long-Term Plan (LTP) to ensure funding of the 'local share'. During the current LTP and RLTP process, there has been a change in direction from the Government, with the latest Government Policy Statement (GPS) focusing on different priorities than those set out in the RLTP and LTP.

[6]   Given a large number of ORC's new work or 'improvement' programmes and projects have not attracted grant funding from NZTA, the decisions made in the LTP on these proposals need to be revisited.

DISCUSSION

[7]   Sixteen of the work programmes/projects that were unsuccessful for grant funding from NZTA need to be reconsidered, to inform the next Annual Plan. A summary of these is set out in the table below, noting that more detailed understanding of rating impacts is being prepared by Transport and Finance staff and will be tabled at the meeting.

Work project	Impact on rates	Alignment with Strategic Direction
Route 5 & 6 increased frequency + extended service coverage		
Option 1 – achieve proposed LOS as set out in LTP	Rate Increase - Increase to year 2 and 3 rates would be required for ORC to fully fund, to cover NZTA grant revenue not being provided.	✓ Carbon emissions are reduced, and air quality is improved across the region, supported by our public transport services. ✓ The carbon footprint of our organisation is reduced in line with our climate change strategy, and we are supporting and collaborating with others to do the same. Supports dual **goals** to reduce ORC's own Carbon emissions for and through collaboration with DCC to support that Council's wider goals for Dunedin in its Zero Carbon 2030 plan.
Option 2 – either increase frequency on Routes 5 & 6 OR extend service coverage	No Change - Would apply both parts of the proposed Year 2 rate and deliver one of the services.	Retaining a level of investment in Y1 -3 maintains Council's ability to deliver improvements to the Dunedin network over the lifespan of the LTP.
Option 3 (preferred) – maintain existing LOS	Rate reduction – Remove years 2 and 3 rates for these activities	Risks the ability to maintain PT services and for Council to continue to achieve its transport **goals** over the longer term, i.e. is likely to require higher levels of investment in later years of the LTP.
Queenstown Ferries		
Option 1 (preferred) –	Rate reduction - No Year 2 rates	✓ Active transport is the preferred mode

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maintain existing LOS	increase would be required to support increased frequency *(subject to current ferry contract negotiations outcome, which will be separately reported to Council)*	for short journeys in urban areas. Moderate alignment with Council's **goal** of promoting active transport in urban areas – ferries support trips to central Queenstown, in particular, where destinations can be accessed on foot.
Option 2 – increase LOS as per LTP (hourly frequency all day)	Rate increase. Increase of years 2 and 3 rates would be required to enable ORC to fully fund, as no NZTA grant revenue being received.	✓ Congestion is reduced and connection is increased throughout the region. Weak alignment with Council's **goal** to improve transport choice and reduce congestion, noting conventional understanding of value for money from the QPTSBC.
Oamaru Service		
Option 1 – investigate an alternative delivery model for the $ already rated, to achieve an 'around town' option	No change to that proposed in the LTP budget as local share would be required.	✓ Designing and delivering initiatives that contribute to accessibility and connectivity within communities. Good alignment with ORC's **role** to improving the accessibility of the region's people and communities to health, education, employment and social opportunities.
Option 2 (preferred) – investigate an option of connecting to the Dunedin network as an alternative to an 'around town' option	No change to that proposed in the LTP budget as local share would be required.	Subject to consultation with the WDC and local community, this option would support Council's **role** of improving the accessibility of a transport disadvantaged community to health/medical, education, employment and social opportunities in Dunedin city.
Option 3 – investigate a community trust type model	Rate reduction – year 2 rate not required until investigation is complete and decisions are made	Good alignment with ORC's **role** of improving the accessibility of the region's people and communities to health, education, employment, and social opportunities.
Alexandra - Clyde - Cromwell		
Option 1 – do not deliver a service (maintain existing LOS)	Rate reduction - No Year 2 rates would be required	✓ Congestion is reduced and connection is increased throughout the region. No investment risks Council failing to achieve its **goal** to improve transport choice and reduce congestion within a what is an increasingly key connectivity corridor
Option 2 (preferred) - small funding investment to investigate how to move workers from Alexandra /Cromwell through to Queenstown	Rate reduction - Year 2 rate required but less than that included in the LTP. Approximate reduction from $194k to $50k.	Consideration of shared transport options within the corridor in Y1-3 will enable Council's movement towards its wider strategic direction for transport – over the longer term.
Balclutha – Airport - Dunedin		
Option 1 – do not deliver a service (maintain existing LOS)	Rate reduction - No Year 2 or 3 rate would be required	✓ Designing and delivering initiatives that contribute to accessibility and connectivity within communities.
Option 2 – investigate community trust model	Rate reduction - No Year 2 or 3 rate required. Investigation to be completed using existing funding and decisions made on future rate requirements	It is unlikely that ORC could operationally support at CVT operation in competition with commercial operations (such as those servicing the Airport). There is weak alignment with Council role of contributing to accessibility and connectivity within the community, in that a CVT model may support access to specific opportunities (i.e. medical/education).

Option 3 (preferred) – investigate a PT option to connect to existing Dunedin services	No change – Use year 2 rates to complete investigation into PT option.	Good alignment with ORC's **role** of improving the accessibility of the region's people and communities to health, education, employment, and social opportunities.
Wanaka Business Case		
Option 1 (preferred) – do not deliver a service (maintain existing LOS)	Rate reduction - No Year 2 or 3 rates would be required	✓ Active transport is the preferred mode for short journeys in urban areas. ✓ The carbon footprint of our organisation is reduced in line with our climate change strategy, and we are supporting and collaborating with others to do the same. Council could elect to pursue its **goal** to make active transport the preferred mode in urban areas, in this case, Wānaka.
Option 2 – continue to investigate options for the delivery of PT in Wanaka / Upper Clutha	Rate increase – Use local share to complete business case to enable a future application for co-funding to NZTA	The current GPS does not mention PT investment outside of Auckland & Wellington, and the case for further investigation and/or trialling of PT options in Wānaka lacks merit.
PT Infrastructure		
Option 1 (preferred) – Deliver PT infrastructure improvements to the value of the local share currently provided for in the LTP. Prioritise infrastructure spend based on - Health and Safety Risk; and - Functionality With a view to understanding what can be delivered over a longer period of time.	No change – Year 2 and 3 rates are retained as included in the LTP budget as local share.	✓ Designing and delivering initiatives that contribute to accessibility and connectivity within communities. Providing a minimum investment in PT infrastructure aligns with ORC's **role** of improving the accessibility of the region's people and communities to health, education, employment, and social opportunities. It will mitigate against higher expenditure in later years of the LTP.
Option 2 - Do not deliver any PT infrastructure improvements	Rate reduction. Remove year 2 and 3 rates included in the LTP for this activity as local share not required.	No investment risks Council failing to achieve its **goal** of designing and delivering initiatives that contribute to accessibility, and being physical assets, the risk of increasing cost later in the LTP due to 'deferred maintenance'.

OPTIONS

[8]   Council needs to make decisions on each of the listed work programme/projects, to inform the Annual Plan development.

[9]   Each of the programmes included in the table above has options for Council to consider. Each option has a different rating impact.

[10]   Staff recommend Council give careful consideration to fully funding activities without NZTA funding due to the rating impact and the potential precedent impacting future applications for co-funding.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[11]   The provision of public transport, and associated decisions around infrastructure contributes towards the *Environment, Climate, Transport,* and *Communities* strategic goals for Otago.

Financial Considerations

[12]   Each decision on the above projects or programmes may have a rating impact which will be reflected in the draft Annual Plan document.

[13]   As Council made the decision to fully fund public transport services within each year of the long term plan any decision to remove funding for the ORC portion of a project or programme will result in a reduction in rates for the 2025/26 year.

Significance and Engagement

[14]   It is noted that in consultation on the Long-Term Plan on its transport investment proposals and related levels of service, Council identified that all of the proposals outlined in this report relied on co-investment from NZTA.

[15]   Depending on the significance of the impact, changes to public transport may require consultation on the Annual Plan. If that is the case, that consultation will satisfy the requirements of *He Mahi Rau Rika*.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[16]   There are no particular legislative considerations. The RLTP has been developed in accordance with legislation. Any requirements associated with the Annual Plan will also be met.

Climate Change Considerations

[17]   Decisions in relation to public transport can impact on climate change considerations, especially where they may encourage or discourage additional users of the public transport network.

Communications Considerations

[18]   Any decisions made will need to be carefully communicated, especially as a number of the services being considered were aimed at connecting our rural communities to main centres.

NEXT STEPS

[19]   The Transport team will work with the Finance team and the Annual Plan team to understand the full rating impact of the decisions made, to inform future decisions on the Annual Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

10.4. Extraordinary Vacancy at Otago Regional Council - Resignation of Cr Bryan Scott

Prepared for:	Council
Report No.	GOV2460
Activity:	Governance Report
Author:	Amanda Vercoe, General Manager Strategy and Customer
Endorsed by:	Cr Robertson, Chairperson
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   To decide how to manage the vacancy created by the resignation of Cr Bryan Scott from the Otago Regional Council on 25 October 2024, in accordance with the Local Government Act and the Local Electoral Act.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   Cr Bryan Scott resigned from the Otago Regional Council on 25 October 2024. Under the Local Government Act, and Local Electoral Act, Council now needs to decide how to manage the extraordinary vacancy that the resignation has created.

[3]   Due to the resignation taking place within 12 months of the next local body election (due on 11 October 2025), options available to Council to manage the vacancy include appointing a named person who is qualified to be elected as a member to fill the vacancy or leaving the vacancy unfilled.

[4]   If Council chooses to leave the vacancy unfilled, subsequent decisions on alternative nominations for the roles Cr Bryan Scott filled on the Council, and how to distribute the remaining remuneration allocation also need to be made.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1) *Notes this report.*

Either

2) *a. Decides to leave the vacancy created by Cr Bryan Scott's resignation unfilled, under Section 117(3)(b) of the Local Electoral Act.*

    b. Decides to appoint (named person) who is qualified to be elected as a member to the role of Otago Regional Councillor under Section 117(3)(a) of the Local Electoral Act.

If Council decides to leave the vacancy unfilled:

3) *Appoints (named councillor) to the role of Co-Chair Environmental Implementation Committee.*

4) *Appoints (named councillor) to the role of Co-Chair Regional Leadership Committee.*

5) *Appoints (named councillor) to the role of Otago Catchment Community Governance Group.*

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6) **Appoints** (named councillor) to the role of Dunedin Tracks Network Trust (alternate)

7) **Agrees** that the remuneration allocated to the vacancy be redistributed equally amongst the 10 remaining councillors (excluding the Chair), as per the attached table.

8) **Agrees** that the attached table be forwarded to the Remuneration Authority, to be included in the Authority's next Remuneration Determination.

BACKGROUND

[5] On 25 October 2024, Cr Bryan Scott tendered his resignation to the Otago Regional Council Chief Executive. Under the Local Government Act (Schedule 7, Section 4(2), the member's resignation takes effect the day it is tendered to the Chief Executive.

[6] Due to the resignation falling within 12 months of the next local body elections (due 11 October 2025), under the Local Electoral Act, Council has two options available to consider for managing the vacancy.

[7] Under Section 117(3)(a) Council could determine by resolution that the vacancy will be filled by the appointment of a person named in the resolution who is qualified to be elected as a member. Or, Under Section 117(3)(b) Council could determine that the vacancy is not to be filled.

DISCUSSION

Remuneration

[8] The Remuneration Authority advises that if the Council decides not to fill a vacancy (Section 117(3)(b) of the Act) the amount not being paid as a result of the vacancy must be reallocated among the remaining councillors.

[9] Should Council opt to keep the vacancy unfilled, a proposed spreadsheet detailing the proposed redistribution of remuneration is attached. The spreadsheet proposes an equal distribution of the salary across the Deputy Chair and councillors (excluding the Chair).

[10] In all cases where there is a change, councils need to wait till an amendment determination is gazetted by the Authority before they can make the changes to their elected members' remuneration. However, all amendments (including adjustments to annual remuneration) are generally effective on and from the day after the day on which the Council confirmed the position(s) of responsibility and the associated remuneration. Amendments are backdated in the amending determination to the effective date.

[11] The next amending determination is scheduled to be issued in March 2025. Proposals for changes from councils to be included in this amending determination need to be submitted in early 2025.

Other appointments:

[12] Cr Bryan Scott held the following additional responsibilities while on the Council. Replacements for these roles should also be considered if Council opts to keep the vacancy unfilled.
   - Co-Chair Environmental Implementation Committee
   - Co-Chair Regional Leadership Committee

- Otago Catchment Community Governance Group
- Dunedin Tracks and Trust (alternate)

OPTIONS

[13] As outlined above.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[14] Nil.

Financial Considerations

[15] Nil.

Significance and Engagement Considerations

[16] Nil.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[17] The process of managing the resignation of an elected member is guided by the Local Government Act and the Local Electoral Act.

Climate Change Considerations

[18] Nil.

Communications Considerations

[19] Nil.

NEXT STEPS

[20] If Council opts to keep the vacancy unfilled, to submit the approved table to the Remuneration Authority, and once gazetted action the changes with payroll.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2024 ORC proposed remuneration allocation for councillors using dollar amount [**10.4.1** - 3 pages]

Instructions for Calculating and Distributing the Governance Remuneration Pool Covering Councillors (Elected Members) Using <u>DOLLAR</u> Amounts

The DOLLAR worksheet (see tab below) or the RATIOS worksheet must be used for submitting proposals to the Remuneration Authority for changes to councillors remuneration following a local authority's review of their positions of responsibilities during a triennium (ie: between local elections).

Note:
- the local government members determination on the Remuneration Authority's website contains the current governance remuneration pool and councillors minimum allowable remuneration rates for each council.
- the determination may also show the current remuneration rates for the council's position(s) of responsibility and the base remuneration for councillors with no additional responsibilities.
- the pool includes the remuneration for the base councillor position and all positions with additional responsibility such as deputy mayor, deputy regional council chair, committee chair, deputy committee chair, etc.
- the pool does not include the remuneration of mayors, regional council chairs, Auckland Council local boards members or community board members.
- the entire pool must be allocated.
- the base remuneration proposed for a councillor with no additional responsibilities CANNOT be set below the prescribed councillor minimum allowable remuneration rate as shown in the current local government members determination.
- the proposed new remuneration rates are effective on and from the day after the date on which the positions and remuneration were confirmed by council resolution.
- the council will need to wait until the amending determination containing its new remuneration rates is gazetted before it can pay (backdate) the new remuneration rates for the position(s) of responsibility and base councillor position.

Use the DOLLAR worksheet to calculate and specify, using dollar amounts, the proposed remuneration for positions with additional responsibilities:

- You can only enter and change data in the cells that are shaded in   green
1. Enter the legal name of local authority/council as listed in schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 2002
2. Enter number of elected members (excluding the mayor or regional council chair) on the council
3. Enter local authority's governance remuneration pool, as shown in the explanatory memorandum appended to the current local government members determination
4. Enter councillor minimum allowable remuneration, as shown in the current determination
5. Enter proposed base remuneration for a councillor with no additional responsibilities as decided by the council (note: this figure must be equal to or greater than the councillor minimum allowable remuneration) or if no change enter the councillor with no additional responsibilities remuneration as shown in the current local government determination
6. Enter the date that the position(s) of responsibility and/or changes to councillor's remuneration were adopted / agreed / approved / confirmed / resolved by council
7. Enter title of the proposed position(s) with additional responsibilities (ie: the title to be displayed in the amending determination)
8. Enter number of elected members per proposed position with additional responsibilities
9. Enter amount of proposed additional remuneration for the position

- If you wish to clear a cell shaded in green use the Clear Contents command within the Editing group on the Home Tab Ribbon or use the Delete key.
- You cannot change the information contained in the cells shaded in blue.

The worksheet will calculate the proposed annual total remuneration per elected member and confirm that the governance remuneration pool is fully allocated. If the pool is over or under allocated the dollar amounts will need to be adjusted until the balance of pool shows 0.

Return the completed worksheet together with a brief description of each position of responsibility to: info@remauthority.govt.nz

2022/25

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

Proposed Remuneration for Councillors Using Dollar Amounts

Resulting from changes to a council's governance structure and position(s) of responsibility during a triennium

RemunerationAuthority
Te Mana Utu Matua

Use this worksheet to calculate the proposed remuneration for positions with additional responsibilities using <u>DOLLAR</u> amounts and/or adjusting the base remuneration for a councillor without additional responsibilities.

Before completing this worksheet, read the instructions sheet in the tab below for detailed guidance.

1) Enter legal name of local authority, as listed in schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 2002:	**Otago Regional Council**
2) Enter number of elected members (excluding the mayor or regional council chair) on the council:	10
3) Enter local authority's governance remuneration pool as shown in the current local government members determination ($):	762,059
4) Enter councillor minimum allowable remuneration as shown in the current determination ($):	52,714
5) Enter proposed remuneration for a councillor with no additional responsibility or if no change enter the remuneration as shown in the current determination ($):	52,714
6) Enter date of local authority's resolution proposing the amendment to the position(s) of responsibility and/or councillors' remuneration:	**20 November 2024**

7) Enter title of proposed position **with additional** responsibilities (ie: the title that will be displayed in the amending determination)	8) Enter number of members per position	Councillor with no additional responsibilities ($)	9) Enter proposed additional remuneration ($)	**Effective Date*** Proposed annual total remuneration per member ($)	**21 November 2024** Total ($)
Deputy Chair	1	52,714	42,040	94,754	94,754
Co-Chair Regional Leadership Committee	2	52,714	21,431	74,145	148,290
Co-Chair Safety and Resilience Committee	2	52,714	21,431	74,145	148,290
Co-Chair Environmental Implementation Committee	1	52,714	21,431	74,145	74,145
Co-Chair Public and Active Transport Committee	2	52,714	21,431	74,145	148,290
Co-Chair Finance Committee	2	52,714	21,431	74,145	148,290
Councillor with no additional responsibilities	0	52,714	n/a	52,714	0

Grand total ($):	762,059
Balance of pool ($):	0

* = the effective date is the day after the date of the local authority's resolution.

A brief description must be provided for each position of responsibility ie: specify the additional responsibilities over and above the base councillor role - covering duties, delegations, deputising and reporting obligations and the extra time involved in carrying out the additional responsibilities.

Return this completed worksheet together with a brief description of each position of responsibility to: info@remauthority.govt.nz

2022/25

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

Proposed Remuneration for Councillors Using Dollar Amounts

Resulting from changes to a council's governance structure and position(s) of responsibility during a triennium

EXAMPLE

Use this worksheet to calculate the proposed remuneration for positions with additional responsibilities using <u>DOLLAR</u> amounts and/or adjusting the base remuneration for a councillor without additional responsibilities.

Before completing this worksheet, read the instructions sheet in the tab below for detailed guidance.

1) Enter legal name of local authority, as listed in schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 2002:	**Belmont Hills County Council**
2) Enter number of elected members (excluding the mayor or regional council chair) on the council:	7
3) Enter local authority's governance remuneration pool as shown in the current local government members determination ($):	300,000
4) Enter councillor minimum allowable remuneration as shown in the current determination ($):	32,000
5) Enter proposed remuneration for a councillor with no additional responsibility or if no change enter the remuneration as shown in the current determination ($):	35,000
6) Enter date of local authority's resolution proposing the amendment to the position(s) of responsibility and/or councillors' remuneration:	**17 October 2023**

7)	8)	9)		Effective Date*	18 October 2023
Enter title of proposed position <u>with additional</u> responsibilities (ie: the title that will be displayed in the amending determination)	Enter number of members per position	Councillor with no additional responsibilities ($)	Enter proposed additional remuneration ($)	Proposed annual total remuneration per member ($)	Total ($)
Deputy Mayor	1	35,000	25,000	60,000	60,000
Committee A Chairperson	1	35,000	10,000	45,000	45,000
Committee B Chairperson	1	35,000	10,000	45,000	45,000
Committee A Deputy Chairperson	1	35,000	5,000	40,000	40,000
Committee B Deputy Chairperson	1	35,000	5,000	40,000	40,000
Councillor with no additional responsibilities	2	35,000	n/a	35,000	70,000

Grand total ($):	300,000
Balance of pool ($):	0

* = the effective date is the day after the date of the local authority's resolution.

A brief description must be provided for each position of responsibility ie: specify the additional responsibilities over and above the base councillor role - covering duties, delegations, deputising and reporting obligations and the extra time involved in carrying out the additional responsibilities.

Return this completed worksheet together with a brief description of each position of responsibility to: info@remauthority.govt.nz

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10.5. LWRP Next Steps

Prepared for:	Council
Report No.	GOV2471
Activity:	Governance Report
Author:	Tom de Pelsemaeker, Team Leader, Land and Freshwater, Fleur Mathews, Manager Policy and Planning, Anita Dawe, General Manager Regional Planning and Transport
Endorsed by:	Richard Saunders, Chief Executive
Date:	20 November 2024

PURPOSE

[1]   The purpose of this paper is twofold – to respond to the Governments offer of working with the Ministry for the Environment to develop the replacement National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) and, to inform Council of work to identify any issues resulting from delaying notification of the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) for Otago.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[2]   The decision on whether to notify the draft proposed LWRP for Otago in October was deferred after the Government amended the Resource Management Act (RMA) to prohibit regional councils from publicly notifying a freshwater instrument before 31 December 2025 or the date on which a replacement NPSFM is published, whichever date is the sooner.

[3]   There is an offer from key Government Ministers, through ongoing correspondence with Council, for ORC to work collaboratively with Government officials on the replacement of the NPSFM.

[4]   The delay in notification of the LWRP and recent amendments to national regulations create some issues that will need governance direction before a replacement for the Regional Plan: Water and Regional Plan: Waste is notified. The issues primarily stem from reliance on the operative Regional Plan: Water for Otago (RPW). Potential issues identified include:
   a. How the current RPW framework manages rural diffuse discharges;
   b. The consequences of the revocation and phasing out of specific NESF regulations;
   c. The absence of an appropriate plan framework to enable the development of a grazing management plan for the Taieri Scroll Plain; and,
   d. The current framework for consenting water permits in the RPW.

[5]   Staff intend to report back to Council in early 2025 on the issues identified, and some potential solutions, if required, to respond to the issues. As part of the issue identification process, staff intend to, as required, work alongside Ministry officials as solutions are developed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:
a) **Notes** this report.
b) **Agrees** that work on a grazing management plan for the Upper Taieri/ Taieri Scroll Plain should cease.
c) **Directs** staff to draft a response to the letter from the Ministers for Resource Management Reform, Environment, and Agriculture, to be signed out by the Chair.
d) **Directs** staff to report back to Council by March 2025 with advice on solutions for any issues identified that have resulted from the delay to notification of the draft Land and Water Regional Plan.

BACKGROUND

[6]   In 2018, ORC, in partnership with Kāi Tahu, started developing a new regional plan to manage land and freshwater with the aims of achieving a fit for purpose plan that gives effect to all relevant regional and national higher order planning instruments, including the NPSFM 2020.

[7]   A draft of the pLWRP and Section 32 Evaluation Report was scheduled to be considered by Council for a decision on notification on 23 October 2024. However, that decision was deferred after the Government introduced an amendment to the RMA, with retrospective effect, that would in effect prohibit regional councils from publicly notifying a freshwater instrument earlier than the sooner of the following dates:
    a.   The date on which a new NPSFM, replacing the NPSFM 2020, is published; or
    b.   31 December 2025.

[8]   While the amendments to the RMA prohibiting notification contains some exemptions (under new clause 40B of Schedule 12 of the RMA) for circumstances such as for flood protection or remediation works, housing development, infrastructure related purposes, the immediate effect was to defer the notification decision.

DISCUSSION

[9]   In recent correspondence with Council, the Government has indicated that it is keen to work together collaboratively on the review and replacement of the NPSFM[1] and will work with ORC to ensure that unintended consequences of delayed notification do not negatively impact on resource users or pose an unnecessary burden on ratepayers[2].

[10] Because some aspects of the RPW are timebound and were developed to be replaced by a new framework for managing land and freshwater by 2026, there will be implications resulting from the deferral of the notification decision. The issues include potential significant consequences associated with the provisions for managing rural diffuse discharges, which are unworkable, coming into effect, and the community perception of the short-term consent framework for new and existing water permits remaining in place for longer than ORC committed to.

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[1] Letter from Hon. Chris Bishop, Hon. Todd McClay and Hon. Penny Simmonds to the Chair of the Otago Regional Council, dated 23 October 2024.
[2] Letter from Hon. Penny Simmonds to the Chair of the Otago Regional Council, dated 26 September 2024 October 2024.

[11]   In addition, the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F) has a number of provisions that expire on 31 December 2024 (or when a regional plan has alternative provisions in place) or that have been revoked through recent amendments. The delay in notifying the LWRP means that the activities in the NES-F will no longer be regulated in Otago. Some of these activities have previously been identified as high-risk activities in relation to their impact on water quality, including land use intensification and intensive winter grazing.

[12]   Finally, the deferral of the notification decision creates uncertainty in relation to the exemption from the Stock Exclusion Regulations for the Upper Taieri Scroll Plan. That exemption intended to provide for the development of a grazing management plan for the Upper Taieri Scroll Plain to better manage the wetlands, to be included as part of the new land and freshwater plan.

Engagement with MfE on the replacement of the NPSFM

[13]   A letter from the Hon. Chris Bishop, Hon. Todd McClay and Hon. Penny Simmonds to the Chair of the ORC dated 23 October 2024 indicates that the NPSFM 2020 will be replaced in mid-2025 and states that the Government is "*keen to work together collaboratively on freshwater matters going forward, including drawing on your experience and expertise in our review and replacement of the NPSFM.*" The letter is appended to this report as Attachment 1.

[14]   Further discussion with officials from the MfE suggests that the letter suggests collaboration on the review and replacement of the NPSFM prior to the consultation with the wider community (which is likely to happen in early 2025). The expectation is that staff will work with Ministry officials, and there may be an opportunity for involvement at a governance level alongside staff input. Staff expectation is that any early engagement would mean being bound by non-disclosure agreements.

[15]   Staff suggest that Councillors respond to the letter, accepting the offer for staff to work with Ministry officials, and also request to have specific Councillor level engagement.

[16]   The key messages to be conveyed, which are set out in a draft letter, which is appended to this report as Attachment 2, include the following:
   a. ORC would like to collaborate with MfE and Ministers on the review and replacement of the NPSFM at both staff and Councillor level. This will enable ORC's experience and expertise and the region's needs to properly inform the review process.
   b. It is proposed that ORC staff engage directly with MfE officials, as soon as possible, on the review of the NPSFM.
   c. If Councillor involvement is appropriate, staff will provide support, likely through the Environmental Science and Policy Committee. This would enable discussion between parties on the review of the NPSFM.
   d. ORC would like to work with MfE officials on providing advice to Ministers and Council on whether support to address unintended consequences of delays to notification is needed. Any issues that require resolution would be brought to Council early in 2025, before any approach to the Government for support/assistance if required.

OPTIONS

[17] Council could decide not to write to Ministers to take up the offer of early engagement on the new NPSFM. This would remove an opportunity to get early exposure and provide an Otago perspective to new national direction.

[18] Council could also direct staff not to advance work on the issues resulting from time bound aspects of the existing RWP and/or the removal of the NES-F. This could mean there are consequences for resource users that are not resolved for some time.

[19] Council could also direct work on the Upper Taieri/ Taieri Management Plan continue. This would create resource issues, and require a reasonable plan change to the existing RPW to create a framework that would support the Management Plan.

[20] These options are not recommended as staff consider that being proactive about the opportunities provided by Ministers is preferable. Staff currently propose to report back to Council on plan issues and potential solutions in early 2025.

CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Framework and Policy Considerations

[21] There are no particular strategic framework and policy considerations as a result of this paper. The strategic framework and policy considerations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as the work programme to address these matters is further developed.

Financial Considerations

[22] The financial considerations of this paper are minimal, as the only expenditure relates to staff time. The financial implications of addressing any solutions that may be required to manage the RWP will be considered in the advice provided to Council next year.

Significance and Engagement Considerations

[23] This paper does not trigger any requirements of *He Mahi Rau Rika: Significance, Engagement and Māori Participation Policy 2021*.

Legislative and Risk Considerations

[24] Legislative and wider risk considerations associated will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as the work programme to address these matters is further developed.

Climate Change Considerations

[25] There are no climate change considerations associated with this paper.

Communications Considerations

[26] There are no communications considerations associated with this paper.

NEXT STEPS

[27] The next steps are to send the letter to the Ministers, establish a preferred method of engagement with Ministers, and for staff to work on understanding issues with the RWP resulting from the deferral of the plan notification decision.

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ATTACHMENTS

1.   ORC Letter Ministers dated 23 October 2024 [**10.5.1** - 1 page]
2.   Draft response to Ministers letter [**10.5.2** - 1 page]

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister for Sport and Recreation
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance

Cr Gretchen Robertson
Chairperson
Otago Regional Council

23 October 2024

Dear Gretchen,

We are writing to inform you that yesterday we introduced an amendment to the Resource Management (Freshwater and Other Matters) Amendment Bill that restricts regional councils publicly notifying freshwater planning instruments ahead of the replacement of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM). This amendment to the Bill was voted on and passed yesterday. The Bill will be read for a third time today, and if passed, we expect Royal Assent will be given tomorrow, with it coming into force on Friday.

As amended the Bill will restrict public notification of freshwater planning instruments on and from 22 October 2024.

We're making this change to the RMA to reduce the risk of duplication and to provide certainty to councils and resource users, that freshwater planning instruments will not be notified prior to the NPS-FM being replaced, which we expect to happen by mid-2025.

We do acknowledge some councils may need to progress targeted plan changes within the restriction period, so we have provided an exemption regime to accommodate this. The Minister for the Environment will be able to exempt a freshwater planning instrument (or parts of one) from the restriction on notification in certain circumstances, including to address unintended consequences or inefficient outcomes. You may wish to consider if an exemption is something Otago might pursue, given some of the matters you have previously raised with us.

We are keen to work together collaboratively on freshwater matters going forward, including drawing on your experience and expertise in our review and replacement of the NPS-FM.

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

Hon Todd McClay
Minister of Agriculture

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand | +64 4 817 6802 | c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz

Council Meeting - 20 November 2024

xx November 2024

Hon Chris Bishop, Hon Penny Simmonds and Hon Todd McClay
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

via Email: c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz, p.simmonds@ministers.govt.nz,
todd.mcclay@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Ministers Bishop, Simmonds and McClay,

I am writing to you on behalf of ORC, in response to your letter from 23 October 2024 where you expressed a desire to work together collaboratively on freshwater matters including the review of the current National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and its replacement.

Otago Regional Council is keen to ensure that the region's needs are properly considered in the NPSFM review process and both councillors and staff are keen to share their experience and expertise with your officials who are undertaking this process.

Our staff has had initial discussions with Ministry officials and if there were to be an opportunity for Councillors to be involved in a workshop with officials, alongside the usual staff engagement, we would be keen to enable them.

We consider our staff well suited to assist with exploring ideas and providing feedback on proposals, alongside how they may work in the Otago context. As Councillors closely engaged with our community, we are also keen to share our experiences to help shape the land and freshwater framework.

On a separate but related note, we wish to advise that our staff have commenced early work on understanding the full extent of issues resulting from the deferral of the notification decision on the draft Plan and the withdrawal of the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F). We have some early understanding of issues such as managing diffuse discharges, consent durations and the gap in managing some rural based activities, and are keen to explore how these might be resolved, including if required, taking up the offer of Central Government assistance for these issues. Staff intend to report back to us in early 2025, and we will similarly provide an update to you once we have a better understanding of the options.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Gretchen Robinson
Chairperson

11.1. Recommendations of the Finance Committee
 Resolution

That the Council adopt the recommendations of the 6 November Finance Committee.

Report	Resolution	Res#	Mover/ Seconder
Rates Strike Collection - 31 October 2024	1. ***Recommends*** *to Council that staff are requested to prepare a paper for the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee meeting in December which identifies the cause of the rating issues, the response by the Chief Executive including notification to the public and Councillors and identifies any necessary process improvements to reduce operational and reputational risks to the organisation.*	FIN24-153	**Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Robertson Seconded**

11.2. Recommendations of Environmental Implementation Committee
 Resolution

That the Council adopts the resolutions of the 7 November 2024 Environmental Implementation Committee.

Report	Resolution	Resolution #	Mover/Seconder
GOV2445 Corbicula Fluminea Update	**2. Recommends to Council** that the Chairperson works with other South Island regional councils to write to the Minister for Biosecurity emphasising the high level of concern at the risk of *Corbicula fluminea* and *Corbicula australis* spreading to the South Island and urging the Minister to ensure adequate funding is in place for containment measures and introducing appropriate requirements for all waterborne items to be suitably cleaned prior to departing the North Island.	**Resolution EIC24-116:**	**Cr Kelliher Moved, Cr Malcolm Seconded**

11.3 Recommendations of the Safety and Resilience Committee

Resolution

That the Council resolves to adopt the recommendations of the 7 November 2024 Safety and Resilience Committee.

Report	Resolution	Res#	Mover/ Seconder
HAZ2403 Head of Lake Whakatipu Natural Hazards Adaptation Programme	*That the Committee:* **3. Recommends** *that Council endorses the use of the information presented in the recent reports 1) Glenorchy and Kinloch natural hazards risk analysis, and 2) assessments of floodplain management interventions for the Dart and Rees Floodplains to inform natural hazards management and adaptation planning for the Head of Lake Whakatipu area.*	**Resolution SRC24-114:**	**Cr Somerville Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded**