



Otago
Regional
Council

Summary Annual Report 2023-2024

Otago Regional Council Summary Annual Report

1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Crown Range, Central Otago

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Richard Saunders, Chief Executive & Gretchen Robertson, Chairperson

Message from our Chairperson and Chief Executive

Tēnā koutou katoa,

The Otago Regional Council's commitment to supporting positive relationships between environment, people and place has been at the forefront of our work over the past year. Our focus has not only been on delivering efficient services to the people of Otago, but on supporting community-led initiatives for positive and impactful outcomes. We recognise that the power of collective skills can surpass what any individual or organisation can achieve alone.

This year, we refreshed ORC's strategic directions, setting clear goals and focus areas to realise our vision for Otago — where our environment and communities thrive, ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea). In

the context of a challenging economic climate, we have placed a strong emphasis on delivering a Long-Term Plan which achieves organisational efficiencies, ensuring that we deliver value for ratepayers' money while continuing to sustain healthy, connected communities. We are also committed to returning an increased dividend from Port Otago to the Otago community as part of delivering greater value.

The value of community-driven efforts in solving problems and creating opportunities is a theme deeply embedded in our work. We are proud to highlight ORC's accomplishments in hazard resilience, significant growth in bus patronage, navigational safety, regional civil defence coordination, environmental science,

biosecurity, and regulatory activities. Alongside these achievements, we remain committed to the principle of actively contributing our skills and resources to empower communities — to foster real outcomes through collective action.

Our valued partnership with mana whenua in Otago continues to underpin much of our work programme. Positive water enhancement work continues through these partnerships, exemplified by the remediation project for Te Hakapupu Pleasant River with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki. We also look for opportunities to partner with other multi-stakeholder initiatives like the Te Mana o te Taieri project and Predator Free Dunedin. ORC remains the primary supporter of the independent organisation Otago Catchment Community Inc., which is helping to build a region-wide network of catchment groups addressing environmental issues. Our ECO Fund was fully subscribed, supporting targeted and general community environmental projects. We have actively fostered community-led catchment management initiatives in The Catlins and Upper Lakes.

Climate change is a crucial focus area for ORC. This year, Councillors endorsed the draft Strategic Climate Action Plan, and we are now looking forward to seeking community input on this important initiative. Our work on natural hazards adaptation programmes continues for South Dunedin, the Clutha Delta, and Glenorchy/Head of Lake Whakatipu, while climate resilience projects for our flood schemes have made significant progress, with work at Riverbank Road, Robson Lagoon, and the Outram Weighting Blanket now complete.

The development of a new Land and Water Programme remains a priority for ORC, with a work programme in place to achieve a notification decision by October 2024. We are also nearing the completion of a significant project to review the Otago Regional Policy Statement, which outlines the aspirations of our communities and stakeholders, identifies obstacles, and proposes solutions to achieve our shared goals.

A review of the Regional Air Plan is underway, with community consultation planned for the 2024/25 year. Additionally, work is in progress to develop and implement a region-wide programme to monitor Otago's native plants and animals. This initiative is part of our science and monitoring team's broader efforts in biodiversity, soil, water, and air monitoring, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of Otago's environment.

In our environmental monitoring and regulatory roles, ORC staff completed 1,411 compliance checks, including consent audits, dairy inspections, and forestry site visits. Our pollution hotline responded to 1,095 incidents, and 101 formal enforcement actions were taken in 2023-24.

Public transport services in Queenstown and Dunedin reached record levels, with almost 1.9 million passenger trips in Queenstown and around 3.4 million in Dunedin over the last financial year — an increase of 51% in Queenstown and 21% in Dunedin.

ORC staff have been actively engaging with communities, providing opportunities to get involved in various activities, including intensive winter grazing, effluent and farm planning workshops throughout Otago, a successful earthworks field day in Queenstown, and a strong presence at the Wānaka A&P Show, where we showcased our broad work programmes and engaged in constructive community conversations.

Availability of ORC information has improved significantly with the launch of our enhanced website, offering a better customer experience and improved accessibility. This two-year project involved mana whenua and stakeholder input, helping to build and strengthen our relationships with the community while highlighting ORC's work in supporting healthy and connected communities.

It's been a busy year, but as we look to the future, we recognise that there is still more work to be done. Together, we will continue striving to ensure that our environment and communities remain healthy and connected, ki uta ki tai.

Kā mihi nui,



Gretchen Robertson
CHAIRPERSON



Richard Saunders
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Development of Māori Capacity to Contribute to Decision Making

He Mahi Rau Rika, the Council’s Significance, Engagement and Māori Participation policy, expresses our intent to actively seek meaningful engagement with mana whenua and to support the Crown’s intention to uphold the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi as prescribed in local government and Treaty settlement legislation.

The Otago Regional Council values its strong relationship with Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka. During 2023-2024 the Council continued to work proactively with iwi partners, supporting the intention of the Crown to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as prescribed in local government and treaty settlement legislation. Over the past year, our focus has been on continuing to strengthen partnership activities and acknowledge the unique, enduring relationship iwi have with this land.

There are four Papatipu Rūnanga in Otago (Ōtākou):

- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki
- Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki
- Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou
- Hokonui Rūnanga

A further three Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Rūnanga have shared interests in the region:

- Awarua Rūnanga
- Waihopai Rūnaka
- Ōraka-Aparima Rūnaka

To reflect on the health of the partnership, Council commissioned a te Tiriti o Waitangi Audit, led by Te Kura Taka Pini (TKTP) and supported by rūnaka. The audit reviewed whether Council is operating in a manner consistent with its commitment to work in partnership with mana whenua, as expressed in several foundational documents, and whether a bicultural approach is demonstrated within its organisation. The results from this audit will help shape and enhance future partnership activities.

At the governance level, Council facilitated participation of Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka in decision-making through the following formal arrangements:

- Mana to Mana: Kāi Tahu ki Otago Rūnaka Chairs and Councillors meet to discuss governance related issues of interest to either side.
- An Iwi representative as Co-Chair of the Environmental Science and Policy Committee.
- Two iwi representatives from Kāi Tahu ki Otago are members of Environmental Science and Policy Committee and Regional Leadership Committee.
- Land and Water Regional Plan Governance Group, with two iwi representatives and two ORC Councillors to guide the development of the Land and Water Regional Plan.
- Iwi participation in the development of Strategic Directions 2024-2034 document.
- Iwi representatives involved with the creation of the Integrated Catchment Management approach.
- Memorandum of Understanding and Protocol (2003) between Otago Regional Council, Te Rūnanga Ngāi Tahu and Kāi Tahu ki Otago for effective consultation and liaison.
- Charter of Understanding (2016) signed with Te Ao Mārama Inc. and Southland Rūnanga.

At an operational level, Council increased active engagement on a range of issues, including land, water and air quality, biodiversity, natural hazards infrastructure, compliance and consenting, climate change and emergency management. Key partnership activities for 2023-2024 were:

- Working with Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama to implement the Catlins Integrated Catchment Management Catchment Action Plan.
- Partnering with rūnaka in ‘Jobs for Nature’ funded projects, such as the Toitū Te Hakaupū: The Pleasant River Catchment restoration project.
- Engagement and expertise provided to engineering, compliance, consent and civil defence and emergency management teams to support business as usual activities.
- Co-design in the Council’s Dunedin Whare Rūnaka (Council House) project.
- Co-design approach to the Council’s website upgrade.
- Participation in the regional biodiversity hui and Freshwater Farm Plan working group.
- Development of a cultural values assessment and statement of expectations for Wai Whakaata/Lake Hayes.

- Engagement to develop project plan for the Regional Biodiversity Strategy and development of ORC's Strategic Climate Action Plan.
- Participation in the Technical Advisory Group for the Deep Lakes.

Recognising the need to invest in building the bicultural competence of our staff, the ORC continued its agreement with the Otago Polytechnic to provide bicultural competency training, which includes modules on Te Reo, Tikaka and te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi.



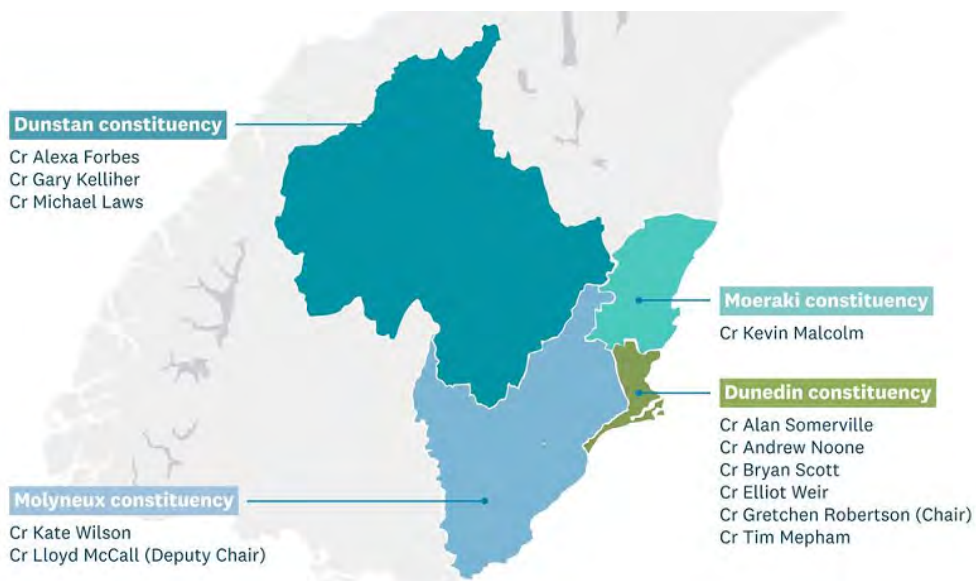
Councillors and Constituencies

Your elected Otago Regional Councillors represent the region's four constituencies – Dunedin, Dunstan, Moeraki and Molyneux.



Back row left to right: Cr Andrew Noone, Cr Alan Somerville, Cr Bryan Scott, Cr Elliot Weir, Cr Tim Mepham, Cr Michael Laws. Insert: Cr Gary Kelliher

Front row left to right: Cr Alexa Forbes, Cr Kevin Malcolm, Cr Gretchen Robertson (Chair), Cr Lloyd McCall (Deputy Chair), Cr Kate Wilson



Acknowledgements

We thank the district and city councils, other institutions, urban and rural industries, Kāi Tahu and the communities of Otago for working constructively with us to ensure the best possible outcomes for our region and its people.

Gretchen Robertson
CHAIRPERSON

Richard Saunders
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



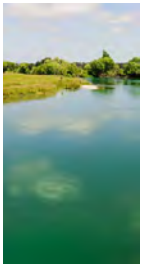
Overview of our Activities

Otago Regional Council's ten activities are arranged into four groups:



Regional Leadership

- Governance and Community Engagement
- Regional Planning
- Regulatory



Environment

- Land and Water
- Biodiversity and Biosecurity
- Air



Safety and Resilience

- Natural Hazards and Climate Change
- Flood Protection, Drainage and River Management
- Emergency Management



Transport

- Transport (including Regional Transport and Public Passenger Transport)

Community Outcomes



Communities that connect with, and care for, Otago's environment



An environment that supports healthy people and ecosystems



Communities that are resilient in the face of natural hazards, climate change and other risks



Te Ao Māori and Mātauranga Kāi Tahu are embedded in Otago communities



Sustainable, safe and inclusive transport



A sustainable way of life for everyone in Otago

Summary Statement of Service Provision

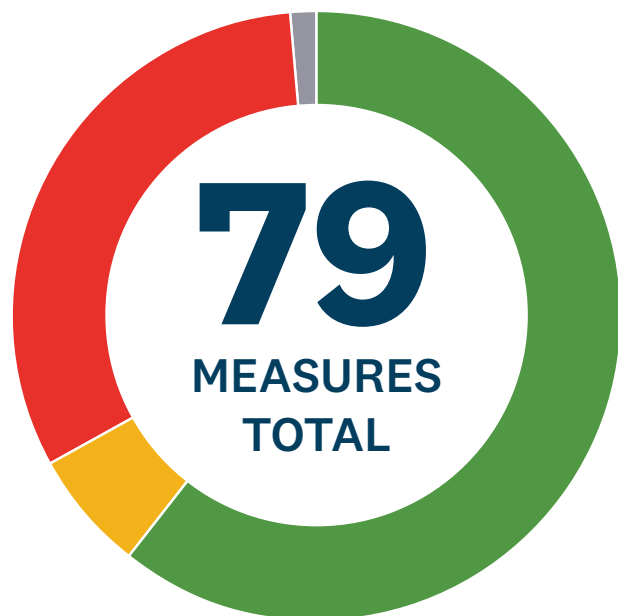
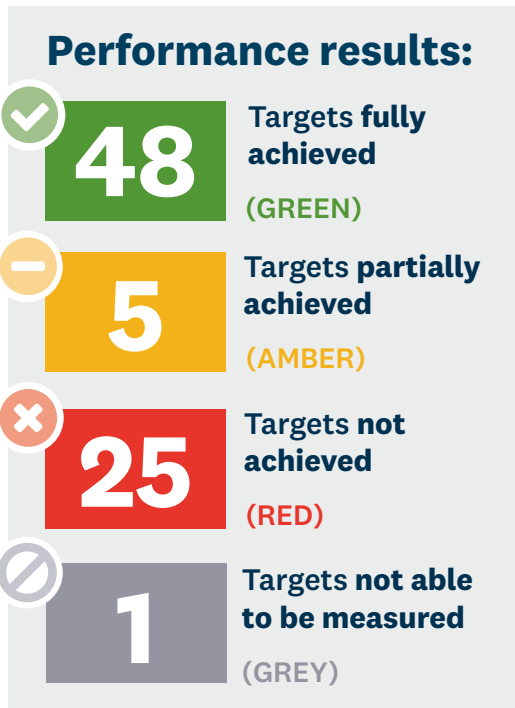
This section reports on Council’s performance against service measures adopted in the Long-term Plan 2021-2031 and as adjusted in the 2023/2024 Annual Plan.

As part of preparing the forecast statement of service provision in the 2021-2031 Long-term Plan, Council made judgements in the selection of service performance measures for its groups of activities.

The measures and targets were selected to reflect the level of service Council is planning to provide to the community. Considerations included national requirements for measurement, understanding delivery over time and availability of baseline information, and the underlying ability to monitor measures and targets. Over this Summary Annual Report period, progress was reported quarterly to Council's Finance Committee.

This Summary Annual Report is based on an adjusted Long-term Plan and contains 37 Level of Service statements, 66 measures and 79 targets. This approximates the quantum and nature of the performance material agreed in June 2021 for the Long-term Plan 2021-2031.

The full audited Annual Report 2023-2024 contains further details on the measures, targets and performance. Copies are available on our website www.orc.govt.nz or by calling our Customer Experience team.



Regional Leadership

This group of activities includes the following council activities:

- Governance and Community Engagement
- Regional Planning and Urban Development
- Regulatory

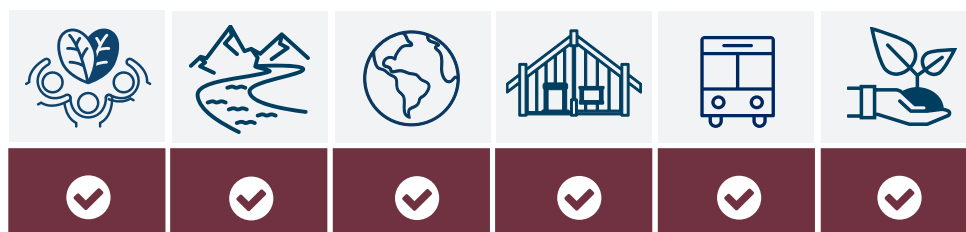
Performance results



Outram Glen

Community Outcomes

Our Regional Leadership activities contribute to:



Governance and Community Engagement



This activity supports Otago’s elected regional council representatives to perform in their roles of decision making and connecting community. Enabling and strengthening our regional democracy is sought and is underpinned by these roles.

Council communications and engagement expertise supports connecting community in a timely and accessible way to Council decision making and work.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Governance and Democracy

We achieved our governance-related targets in the 2023/24 financial year. The 2024-2034 Long-term Plan was adopted by Council on 26 June 2024. We responded to 168 LGOIMA requests, meeting the statutory time frames for all of them. All Council agendas were publicly available two or more working days before the relevant meeting.

Iwi Partnership

Having a strong and enduring partnership with mana whenua continues to be a pillar of the ORC's work. In the 2023/24 financial year, the number of projects we did in partnership with iwi doubled from the 2022/23 year, lifting from 19 to 40.

A te Tiriti o Waitangi audit of the organisation has been completed. The co-design of our new headquarters, as part of the Whare Rūnaka Project, is progressing well, with detailed design nearly complete. Our new website, launched in July, was also co-designed with mana whenua.

Many of the organisation's governance committees, working groups and forums have mana whenua representation, and much of our work is informed and guided by cultural assessments and statements of expectations developed by mana whenua.

We worked closely with Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama in the catchment management area. Through the Integrated Catchment Management Group, we are developing frameworks for a pilot catchment action plan in The Catlins. We also have several projects underway working directly with kā papatipu rūnaka, including Maintaining the Gains – a project to protect and restore indigenous biodiversity – and Toitū Te Hākapupu (Pleasant River Catchment) Restoration Project.

Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama are part of the working group for freshwater farm plan implementation, which incorporates tangata whenua values. They are informing the development of challenges and values associated with catchments and regional training.

Mana whenua are providing invaluable support for the development of the Land and Water Regional Plan, both at a governance level and with input to key parts of the plan and contributing analysis and guidance.

Bicultural Competency

In the last financial year, we had a large number of registrations for both the full certificate and specific courses in our bicultural training programme, exceeding our target of 50 participants. We have confirmed a new bicultural competency programme (potentially with a new supplier). Participants who had partially completed the previous programme have now fully completed it.

Strategy

A key achievement in the 2023/24 financial year was completing our refresh of the organisation's Strategic Directions. This elected regional councillor-led work has resulted in a set of strategic directions with six focus areas and three goals under each area. The new directions are designed to run for 10 years in alignment with the 2024-2034 Long-term Plan.

Our annual report on regional climate change collaboration between the ORC and the territorial local authorities (TLAs) was presented to Council on 26 June 2024. At the same meeting, Council endorsed the draft Strategic Climate Action Plan. There was a strong level of interest and participation in the development of this action plan, which involved councillor workshops and a mix of direct engagement with TLAs and other key stakeholders and online webinars for specific industries, such as agriculture. We expect to publicly consult and complete this work by the end of 2024.

Work has progressed well on the delivery of a regional sequestration study, and a draft report is with ORC staff and members of the Otago Climate Officers Group (staff from the region's TLAs) for review. Although this project did not meet the deadline of 30 June 2024, we expect to deliver it in the first quarter of the next financial year.

We are also working to reduce carbon emissions as part of the Zero Carbon Alliance. The ORC, the Dunedin City Council (DCC), the University of Otago and Health NZ (Te Whatu Ora) are collaborating on an initiative focused on workplace travel planning.

A key piece of work underway is the development of a comprehensive, independent stocktake of issues and opportunities for the Otago Harbour. This work will give us a strong evidence base to support decisions and projects related to the harbour. We are working closely with mana whenua and the DCC and have completed substantial early engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. We plan to deliver this report, which will be underpinned by a cultural narrative, before the end of 2024.

Work has also begun on a review of the ORC’s biodiversity strategy—with the focus for the early stages being to determine the intent, ambition and scope for the new strategy.

The ORC’s baseline report on community wellbeing indicators was completed in June 2023 (at the end of the previous financial year).

Media and Communications

An improved ORC website was launched to provide a better customer experience. This two-year project, which included mana whenua and stakeholder involvement, improved accessibility and public access to ORC information.

A wide-reaching advertising campaign for the ORC’s Long-term Plan included digital advertising which was seen 3,931,791 times, with 19,614 people visiting the website (unique users) and 410 formal submissions received.

Communications have supported a range of key projects and ORC work, including changes to rules following legislative changes, natural hazard adaptation, Land and Water Regional Plan, water quality and pest management.

The relatively new Te Mātāpuna newsletter continues to be well received by residents. The ORC tent at the Wānaka A&P show had a high visitor attendance and showcased a variety of information for the community.

Public transport continues to be of strong public interest. Communications have helped to communicate changes to concessions, route changes and important information for bus users.

Facebook reach was 1.3 million—up almost 400% on the previous year—while there were more than 500 media releases, queries and interviews.

ORC’s Community Survey was completed for the third consecutive year. An action plan followed this and progress continues towards the tasks identified for ORC teams to work on.

Customer Experience

We have compared customer satisfaction benchmarks for several public-facing teams and will use this data to inform the setting of future service level targets.



Lawyers Head, Ōtepoti Dunedin

Regional Planning



We set strategic direction on Otago’s natural resources via a planning framework that guides how people interact with the environment. In this framework, our regional plans set objectives, policies and rules for sustainably using natural and physical resources in Otago, including water, land, air, and the coast.

Other strategies and plans are also needed to support regulation, on-ground action, and community capacity building. Strategic direction and collaboration on important regional issues, such as climate change and community wellbeing, help support better outcomes for Otago communities.

Another important component of this activity is working with Otago’s city and district councils on resource management and urban development. An integrative approach is sought via liaison with other ORC functions, such as engineering, hazards management, and transport planning.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Regional Policy Statement

We are nearing the end of a long process to review the Otago Regional Policy Statement, which identifies the significant resource management issues for the region and explains how national direction on resource management will be applied. It sets out what we want for Otago, what's stopping us achieving this, and how we will solve those problems.

Consistent with a High Court decision in July 2022, the proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement was separated into freshwater and non-freshwater parts. Each part was then drafted and notified for public consultation and hearings. On 27 March 2024, Council made decisions on recommendations from the Hearings Panels on both parts—these decisions have been publicly notified. Five appeals to the High Court on the freshwater parts and 19 appeals to the Environment Court on the non-freshwater parts were lodged. Mediation on the High Court appeals will begin in August, and mediation for the Environment Court appeals is scheduled for November – May 2025. The date that the proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement becomes operative will depend on when appeals are resolved.

Urban Development

Under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, local authorities that are responsible for high and medium growth urban environments need to have a Future Development Strategy (FDS). FDS promote long-term strategic spatial planning to make sure urban environments function well as they develop. In partnership with mana whenua, the ORC has worked with the Dunedin City Council (DCC) and the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) to develop a joint FDS for each area.

The hearing for the joint Dunedin FDS was held in April 2024, with decisions made in time to inform the Long Term Plan, meeting the target time frame. The Queenstown FDS has not met the time frame as its development is delayed by issues with the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment, which is required to inform the FDS. The modelling on the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment was found to be deficient; and therefore, new modelling is needed.

Mapping of Highly Productive Land

To manage urban growth well, we need to implement both the National Policy Statement on Urban Development and the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land. These two policy statements work in tension to ensure that urban growth is occurring in the right way in the right places. We partially achieved our work in this area of having highly productive land mapped by 30 June. Initial mapping has been completed and the work programme is on track for full completion and public consultation in the 2024/25 financial year, subject to any changes the Government might make to the national direction.

Regulatory



As a Regulatory authority, ORC supports the sustainable management of water, land, air and the coast. We process resource consents develop rules for how natural resources are used and managed, monitoring them and ensuring the rules are applied. We investigate activities that don't comply, providing services to ensure activities in Otago are consistent with both national and regional rules in the Resource Management Act.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Consents

The Consents team received 692 resource consent applications over the financial year, consistently meeting required time frames. In the 2023/24 financial year, 100% of consents were processed in compliance with the time frames set in the Resource Management Act 1991, above the target of 98%. Decisions were made on 772 individual consents (cumulative total) in the financial year. The main types of consents processed were for effluent ponds and discharges, earthworks, bores and surface water takes.

The processing of consents for effluent discharges was a focus for the Consents team, and a number of well-received community workshops on effluent management and the consent process were run. Consents for earthworks were a key part of the workload, especially in Central Otago. Along with applications for these, the team has continued to process applications to replace surface water permits. Two reviews of condition of a consent were completed. These related to a rendering plant and community wastewater treatment plants. The team has also played an important role in providing comments on fast-track consent applications.

The Consents team received 2,347 enquiries from the public over the financial year. Of these, 2,333 or 99.4% were answered within seven days, achieving our target. The most common enquiry types are requests for copies of documents, information about discharges to land, farming activities and bores.

Staff have worked on several initiatives to enhance our public enquiries service and other projects over the last financial year. Updates to a number of practice notes, application forms and website content have been implemented alongside system improvements.

Compliance Monitoring

Resource consents holders are often required to submit performance monitoring returns as a condition of the consent. These returns include information ranging from photographs of work to management plans, water quality results and water meter returns. Staff graded 7,807 returns over the year, representing 130% of the target set in the Compliance Plan presented to Council in August 2023.

The Compliance team also carries out a range of audits and inspections, including consent audits, dairy inspections and forestry site visits. In the 2023/24 year, staff completed 1,411 or 141% of the planned resource consent compliance audits and inspections.

Investigations and Enforcement

The ORC pollution hotline has been available 24/7 throughout the year, receiving 1,359 service requests related to 1,095 incidents.

In the 2023/24 year, we carried out 101 formal enforcement actions: we issued 42 infringement notices, 44 abatement notices and 11 formal warnings, and we initiated three prosecutions and sought one enforcement order. The most common causes of these actions were consent non-compliance (33), outdoor burning (9) and water pollution (9). We achieved our target of meeting legislative timelines for all enforcement action.

Education and Engagement

A large part of Regulatory work is education and engagement with landowners, consent holders and the community. In the 2023/24 financial year, we ran media campaigns and organised community events. Our staff also provided a significant level of education and engagement when conducting pollution response and consent auditing and monitoring visits. A highlight this year was hosting, in collaboration with the International Erosion Control Association Australasia, an Earthworks Field Day in Queenstown. It was attended by more than 200 people. Another highlight was the number of intensive winter grazing and effluent workshops held throughout Otago, which were well received.

Staff also provide boating safety advice and information to the community. In line with our target, staff presented a report to Council on our engagement and education activities on 26 June 2024.

Harbour and Waterway Management

One major incident occurred in the financial year and was reported through to Council. On 4 June 2024, an emergency response was activated when the fishing vessel *Tamahine* ran aground at Taiaroa Head. Staff responded to the event along with other agencies.

Throughout the year we had an organisation-wide team trained and ready to respond to oil spills. The next Maritime New Zealand training exercise was programmed for July 2024.

An external review of the Port and Harbour Marine Safety Code will be carried out in November 2024. Our annual Safety Management Systems self-assessment will be completed in July.

Environment

This group of activities includes the following council activities:

- Land and Water
- Biodiversity and Biosecurity
- Air

Performance results



Matakaea / Shag Point

Community Outcomes

Our Environmental activities contribute to:



Land and Water



Our role involves working with Otago communities to manage water quality and quantity. To do this well, we need robust, integrated and consistent regional plans and strategies. Our current work includes an ambitious planning programme to develop a new Land and Water Regional Plan.

We also assess water quality and quantity through our network of monitoring sites across the region, and this data informs planning and future decision making. Our water monitoring and science programmes have expanded to include monitoring estuaries, the coast, groundwater, biomonitoring, land-use and soil monitoring.

We collaborate with communities to protect Otago’s water resources through education, engagement and action. Our implementation programme includes education and support for landowners and catchment groups, as well as involvement in community-led projects and remediation works.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Land and Water Planning

The development of a new Land and Water Plan continued to be a focus for the ORC in the 2023/24 financial year. The draft Land and Water Regional Plan is the first step towards meeting the community's goals for fresh water in Otago. Council resolved in March 2024 not to notify the plan by 30 June 2024, and instead for staff to continue a work programme to have the draft Plan ready for notification by 31 October 2024. Work is progressing and we are on track to meet this deadline.

We did not meet the current target for a review of the Regional Plan: Coast as staff resource has been prioritised on other science and planning work. This reprioritisation is reflected in the 2024/34 Long-term Plan, with a new target of plan notification in June 2028.

Science and Monitoring

Our Science and Monitoring teams carry out an extensive body of work to understand Otago's natural environment. The data we capture informs the development of policy and regional plans and helps us track how effective they are in making a difference on the ground. Scientific and monitoring data also guides environmental restoration and management projects and is made publicly available through reports and online databases.

Our monitoring work is heavily influenced by the National Policy Framework – Freshwater, and we have maintained our efforts to align with its requirements. This involves implementing work over the longer term. We have met most of our 2023/24 monitoring work programme and associated targets. In the water monitoring network, we captured 98% of data in this financial year.

We partially met the target for estuarine monitoring. Some final reports were not received in time to be reported to a Council meeting in this financial year. However, the monitoring is complete and will be reported early in the new financial year.

We are on track to have a marine monitoring programme set up over the next five years. Phase 3 of a project to map kelp forests along the coast is complete, and work to ground-truth this mapping is underway.

Our land and soil monitoring meets our targets. The regional State of Environment (SOE) soil health monitoring programme is in its third year and has been expanded successfully in the 2023/24 financial year. We also monitor soil moisture and soil temperature at sites across the region. An update report was presented to Council in late June 2024.

The 2022 land use map will be updated and upgraded in the new financial year.

Land and Water Implementation

Part of our role is to support projects led by communities and landowners to conserve soils, improve water quality and use water efficiently. Projects focus on activities to promote and implement best practice in a range of areas, such as intensive winter grazing, stream health and riparian management.

Toitū Te Hākapupu is a multi-year remediation project for Te Hākapupu | Pleasant River run in partnership with Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki. A highlight of the year has been working with landowners to carry out work to protect water quality on their land. The planting of native plants to protect streambanks and wetlands is underway, with 52,000 plants scheduled to go in the ground in the next planting season. We have completed seven kilometres of a 17km fencing project.

Another OCR-led project is addressing hill country erosion across the region. Erosion mapping has been refined to include ORC data and determine priority areas. A review of the regional erosion control strategy is underway, informed by mana whenua, and a communications plan is being developed.

We supported the Otago South River Care project, led a training session for North Otago Sustainable Land Management (NOSLaM) on stream assessments, attended a river clean-up in the Cardrona, undertook monitoring visits for EcoFund projects, and supported stakeholder integrated catchment management meetings for the Catlins and Lake Hāwea.

We fund and meet regularly with Otago Catchment Community Inc (OCC), a group working to connect and support catchment groups across Otago to support water quality improvements across the region. We expect a report to be presented to Council in September 2024, slightly behind our financial year target. A funding underspend in 2022/23 has been reallocated to OCC to fund a 0.5 FTE role over three years to further support catchment groups across the region.

Community education and engagement is an important part of our environmental implementation work, building awareness and supporting community-led action. We led three events to raise awareness about the storage and discharge of dairy effluent. A forestry field day for the Toitū Te Hākapupu project was held in April.

In partnership with mana whenua and in collaboration with local communities, we have projects underway to develop, prioritise and implement management plans

based on ecological assessments for Lake Tuakitoto, Tomahawk Lagoon and Lake Hayes. In the 2023/24 financial year, we continued to implement the management plans, achieving 10 out of 13 of the priority actions.

The implementation plan for Lake Tuakitoto was developed, and delivery is underway. A wastewater education programme was not delivered in this financial year but is planned for the future.

We delivered a stormwater education programme for Tomahawk Lagoon and have supported the set up of a catchment group; this support has since been taken over by OCC.

For Lake Hayes, we supported the Wai Whakaata Strategy Group to develop a cultural values assessment and statement of expectation to form the basis of a strategy for the lake and its catchment. Downstream remediation work in Hayes Creek has also been completed. Work to augment the water flow progressed but has not yet been commissioned – we expect this to get underway in September 2024.

Integrated Catchment Management

The ORC set a pathway for an integrated catchment management (ICM) programme in the previous financial year, establishing the ICM Working Group and selecting The Catlins as the pilot for a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) to be developed in collaboration with mana whenua and the community. The CAP will be accessible online in a format that outlines the long-term goals, shows the current situation, ranks the pressures, and explains what actions can be undertaken to relieve these pressures. We will also be able to track the progress on actions delivered and adapt if we are off track.

Work is progressing well on the pilot Catlins CAP, with positive relationships being developed. We are on track to have the CAP in final draft by October 2024, with presentation of this to Council in November 2024. We have also begun the development of a CAP for Upper Lakes, starting with the community engagement to establish the group.



Routine water quality sampling near Glenorchy (gloves protect against the cold)

Biodiversity and Biosecurity



Otago is home to unique species that we need to look after. Our Regional Pest Management Plan (Pest Plan) sets out the framework for how pest plants and animals will be managed in Otago. It is supported by a Biosecurity Strategy that looks at how we will work with organisations and communities to achieve the goals set out in the Pest Plan.

Our biosecurity work supports the control of prolific pests, such as feral rabbits. We do this by educating our communities, facilitating compliance and through funding projects. Council also plays a lead role in facilitating government funding and overseeing projects such as wilding conifer removal and wallaby eradication.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Biodiversity Implementation

The ORC's Biodiversity Action Plan: Te Mahi hei Tiaki i te Koiora (2019-2024) - the BAP- sets out a framework and work programme to maintain and enhance biodiversity in Otago. The BAP has 15 actions, two of which have not started but will be reviewed in a future plan to be developed.

Various projects are initiated under these actions. The 11 ongoing projects are at various stages of completion, with progress made on all but two over the 2023/24 financial year. Four projects were commissioned in this financial year — all have progressed but two are not at their planned milestones.

Biodiversity Partnerships

In the 2023/24 financial year, we built on work done in the previous financial year to establish biodiversity partnerships. We increased the number of engagement events from nine to 12, and a report on the range of biodiversity projects has been presented to Council on 8 August.

Our funding programmes foster community-led projects that protect and enhance Otago's flora, fauna and environment. In the 2024 round, 33 organisations received \$854,733 in grants, out of a total funding pool of \$918,000. Environmental work supported by the funds includes pest plant and animal control, native species protection and habitat restoration, native revegetation and regeneration.

Meanwhile, grant recipients from 2023 progressed well with their projects. Four were awarded \$40,000 or more in the 2023 round — Hikaroroa Mt Watkin Conservation Group for a two-year project focusing on pest animal control and collaboration, Moeraki MR BLKXVI Ahu Whenua Trust for a rabbit-proof fence, the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group for a rabbit control project, and Save the Otago Peninsula Incorporated Society for a two-year native revegetation project. All are on track and meeting reporting requirements.

In this financial year, we administered and provided funding for all ECO Fund and incentives funding projects in accordance with their agreements. Our catchment advisors support the funding process with site visits and advice.

A report was presented to Council in August 2024.

Biodiversity Science and Monitoring

Work is underway to develop and implement a region-wide programme to monitor the indigenous biodiversity of Otago's ecosystems. This is a new programme that encompasses a wide array of species, environments and ecosystems, often across multiple years. Unlike state of the environment monitoring,

which is based on monitoring specific parameters in fixed locations, biodiversity monitoring requires us to respond to what is happening in the field, check populations at natural sites and follow the movement of species through the environment. It is not possible to meaningfully measure our progress against the current target of capturing $\geq 95\%$ of data for this sort of programme, and so we have scored this as a not achieved.

The programme is being run across three separate workstreams: wetlands, coastal and terrestrial — each at a different stage of development and reporting to Council. Preliminary reports on wetland mapping were presented to Council in July 2023, while we aim to present detailed reports on regional wetland inventory containing information about wetland extent and condition in the 2024/25 financial year. Reports on estuary workstreams will be presented to the Council in the new financial year. A report on monitoring rare ecosystems was presented to Council in June 2023 as part of the terrestrial workstream. An Envirolink Tool Grant, administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and championed by the ORC with researchers from Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, will assist with the mapping and ground-truthing of rare ecosystems in the terrestrial workstream. Further development of monitoring protocols for the terrestrial workstream is underway. In the coastal workstream, ground-truthing of the marine significant ecological spatial mapping project is underway, with hold-ups due to weather. This work will be reported on in the new financial year.

Biosecurity

The ORC's Biosecurity Operational Plan (BOP) sets out the activities we intend to do each year to implement the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP), which outlines how declared pests in Otago will be managed over a ten-year period from 2019 to 2029. We fully or partially completed more than 90% of the actions set for the 2023/24 financial year.

Good progress is being made on compliance and enforcement outcomes, with the new system operating for a full year. However, some further work is needed to optimise the system, in particular tracking non-compliance progress in real time.

The RPMP sets out how the ORC engages with occupiers and/or owners of non-compliant properties. The principal approach following an inspection is through advocacy and education/collaboration (e.g. education-focused Request for Work letters). This is followed by re-inspection and, where appropriate, we require the landowner or occupier to act by issuing a Notice of Direction. The approaches used to progress

compliance differ depending on circumstances, such as pest species, location, infestation level, and the relevant RPMP rule. In some situations, contractors may be tasked to undertake pest control (e.g. boneseed and spartina).

Our work with land occupiers to support them to achieve compliance can take multiple seasons/years, particularly regarding rabbits. This is partly 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). There is clear value in using management plans to work 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.



Air



Good air quality is necessary for health and wellbeing. We are responsible for aligning our region with the government’s National Environmental Standard for Air Quality and, under the Resource Management Act, for controlling the discharge of contaminants into the air.

Meeting air quality standards is especially challenging in areas with extremely cold winter weather and temperature inversions. Otago’s air quality often degrades during winter when domestic heating emissions increase with cold and calm weather and inversion layers occur. Council’s implementation role and approach regarding air quality is ‘on hold’ with a planned strategic refresh. In the meantime, the regional air plan review has been initiated and will assist direction on implementation.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

ORC's air science and monitoring this year focused on monitoring site upgrades and region-wide monitoring in winter, the results of which will help inform the review of our Regional Plan: Air.

Air Monitoring

Otago's air quality is monitored at eight sites to assess pollution from burning, mainly produced by home heating. Data from our monitoring programme is publicly available on the LAWA website, and all air quality exceedances (above the limits for PM₁₀, measured at four of the sites) are reported through news media over the winter.

Our annual air quality report was presented to the Environmental Science and Policy Committee in May 2024. A report on air quality trends to 2023 was presented to the Committee in June 2024.

We captured 92% of data for the PM_{2.5} monitoring network. Data capture for the PM₁₀ network was lower at 96%, as tape issues meant we missed some data from the Alexandra network. Overall, we nearly achieved our target of ≥ 95% data capture, and the air quality network is expected to perform to target in coming months.

Additional monitoring was undertaken during 2023 in Arrowtown for black carbon. Black carbon is a component of PM, and the monitoring showed that the seasonal and hour-of-day patterns are similar to those of PM₁₀. A spatial study was undertaken by NIWA in Alexandra in the winter of 2023. A total of 42 low-cost sensors were used to monitor PM₁₀ across the town. This identified that the area of highest concentrations is located to the northwest part of Alexandra.

Screening monitoring for sulphur dioxide (SO₂) was undertaken in and around Port Otago operational areas during 2023. The monitoring results indicated that SO₂ was generally quite low, and seasonal trends were not identified.

A report on the management options available for meeting the NESAQ and World Health Organization targets in Otago towns was presented to Council in June 2024.

Regional Plan: Air

A review of the Regional Plan: Air is underway, and the issues and options paper was presented to the Environmental Science and Policy Committee on 13 December 2023, in line with our target. Staff prioritisation resulted in a delay to community consultation -- now planned for completion in the new financial year.

Air Implementation Strategy

A draft report on the scope of -- and innovative ideas for- an air quality implementation strategy has been received by Council. We expect to present a final scope to Council in the first quarter of the new financial year.

Safety and Resilience

This group of activities includes the following council activities:

- Natural Hazards and Climate Change
- Flood Protection, Drainage and River Management
- Emergency Management

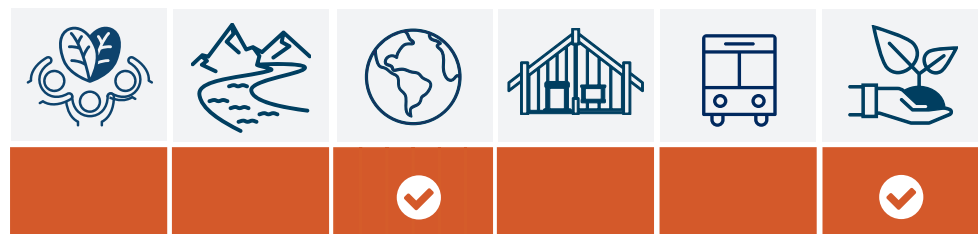
Performance results



Styx Basin, Upper Taiari/Taiari

Community Outcomes

Our Safety and Resilience activities contribute to:



Natural Hazards and Climate Change



We identify, monitor, and investigate natural hazards to provide intelligence that supports community resilience and the ability to adapt to environmental change. Our work includes monitoring rainfall, river and lake levels, and providing public information on water levels and flows, all of which help inform responses to flood events.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Over the last year, we have worked closely with Otago communities and relevant organisations to provide hazard information and technical support, and to guide adaptation to natural hazards.

We made good progress on natural hazard and climate change projects and programmes in South Dunedin, Clutha Delta and the Head of Lake Whakatipu. We continued to gather data that improves our understanding of natural hazards, and to make this data easily accessible to the community.

Risk Assessment and Prioritisation Programme

Our work on a region-wide hazard risk assessment and prioritisation framework progressed well this year. The ORC is undertaking a programme that will enable us to assess risks associated with natural hazards consistently across the Otago region, to see which areas have the highest risks. The prioritisation framework will be used to prioritise future work such as the investigation of options for managing or adapting to natural hazards.

From previous work, we have a good understanding of the kinds of natural hazards (including those associated with climate change) in the Otago region and where they are. We progressed a region-wide natural hazard exposure and risk analysis, which considers how likely each hazard is to occur and what its impact might be. We plan to report on this by November 2024 and make the information available publicly.

South Dunedin

The ORC and DCC approved the South Dunedin Future programme plan in July 2022. The ORC supports this joint work programme through collaboration and funding, and it is a good example of the multi-disciplinary, cross-sector nature of climate change adaptation.

We lead the gathering and analysis of natural hazards information for the programme. Our work in this financial year has focused on continuing the monitoring of groundwater and sea levels and consolidating the information we have about natural hazards so it can

be integrated into programme workstreams and made available through community flyers, website updates and technical reports.

A milestone in our understanding of the behaviour of groundwater beneath South Dunedin was achieved this year. We partnered with GNS Science to produce a study that forecasts when and where groundwater-related hazards are likely to occur in South Dunedin. Based on analysis of data from the ORC-operated groundwater monitoring network, the study looked at what causes changes to groundwater levels, and used modelling to understand how sea-level rise will alter the future fluctuations and elevation of groundwater levels. The findings of the study are informing the South Dunedin Future programme.

Glenorchy and Head of Lake Whakatipu

We have significantly progressed work associated with the Head of the Lake natural hazards adaptation programme. Having built a good understanding of the hazards, we focused this financial year on assessing the risks associated with the main hazards, their social and economic impacts and potential engineering approaches for managing the flood and erosion hazards.

We have also progressed the development of the framework for the adaptation strategy.

The flood hazard assessment for the Buckler Burn at Glenorchy has been completed and the information made available on the ORC Natural Hazards Database.

In conjunction with technical work, we have a sustained programme of community engagement as part of the process for developing a natural hazards adaptation strategy.

Clutha Delta and Other Areas

Over 2023/24, we continued developing the Clutha Delta natural hazards adaptation programme. The natural hazards investigations focused on liquefaction, flood and coastal hazards, in particular on the Koau mouth and Puerua outfall area.

We completed the first stage of the flood hazard investigation programme associated with Middlemarch. The investigation focused on how the capacity of the March Creek channel could be affected by the railway bridge. This investigation will inform potential options to mitigate some of the flooding occurring in this area. The findings of the investigation were presented to the Strath Taieri Community Board. The second stage (investigation at the catchment scale to identify other constrictions and channel limitations) was started and is continuing in 2024-2025. A new rain gauge was also

installed this year in the Rock and Pillar ranges near Middlemarch. The main reason for installing this site is to assist the flood response to Middlemarch.

Progress on Roxburgh and Henley has been slow due to resourcing issues.

Data Capture

LiDAR mapping for almost 4,000 square kilometres around the Manuherekia catchment in Central Otago has been released this year and made available through public websites. The mapping provides high-resolution, 3D ground elevation data and is a valuable tool for identifying, mapping and managing natural hazards, such as flooding, erosion and landslips.

Otago Natural Hazards Database

The Otago Natural Hazards Database is an online portal that makes the information we have about the region's natural hazards publicly accessible so that people can make informed decisions. In the last financial year, we continued to update the database with new information, in particular for South Dunedin

(groundwater) and the Head of Lake Whakatipu area. We also added information on the floodbank risk ratings for the Lower Taieri Flood Protection Scheme.

Flood Response

Our flood management and response system operated without issue over this year. We issued 17 flood warnings as required.

In response to a debris flow which occurred during the September 2023 weather event, we carried out a debris flow hazard assessment for the eastern face of the Makarora Valley.

We have widened the range of forecast information to inform ORC's flood response. This year we worked with MetService to access coastal hazards forecasting for the region. This information will be used to provide early awareness of sea conditions that may cause impacts (such as inundation or erosion) on infrastructure and properties along the coast. Forecast parameters in the seven-day outlook include wave characteristics (height, period, direction), sea height (storm tide), and wind characteristics (speed, direction).



Flood Protection, Drainage and River Management



Otago has large, developed areas situated on low-lying river flats often close to sea level. Our flood protection schemes help protect people and their livelihoods in adverse weather events, and our drainage schemes help maintain the productive capability of land.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Area	Progress/Performance
ALEXANDRA FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME	<p>100% of planned maintenance completed.</p> <p>One capital works project: This project (pump station technical upgrades) has been deferred through the LTP process.</p> <p>Linger and Die pumps (x3) were removed and inspected, with further maintenance scheduled for 2024/25 due to timing of the maintenance required and some lead time for parts.</p>
LEITH FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME	<p>Note that planned maintenance on the Leith Flood Protection Scheme was completed under Dunedin Rivers and Waterway Management.</p> <p>Two capital works projects: both in scoping and investigations stage.</p>
LOWER CLUTHA FLOOD PROTECTION AND DRAINAGE SCHEME	<p>100% of planned maintenance completed, 55 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All scheduled mechanical drain cleaning completed as planned. • Scheduled drain and floodbank spraying completed. • Floodbank/drain mowing completed. • All inspections (drain, culvert, bridge, pump station, relief well) for the year completed. <p>Six capital works projects: one project (pump station technical upgrades) has been deferred through the LTP process.</p>
LOWER TAIERI FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME	<p>86% of planned maintenance completed, 12 out of 14 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodbank mowing completed in Q4. • All noxious floodbank spraying completed in Q4. • All floodbank inspections for the year completed. • Tree trimming Riverside Road not complete due to scope change. • Mulching Waipori floodbank not complete due to scope change. <p>Six capital works projects: all progressed as planned.</p>
WEST TAIERI DRAINAGE SCHEME	<p>96% of planned maintenance completed, 22 out of 23 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical drain cleaning mostly completed. Scheduled drain spraying completed. • All inspections (drain, culvert, bridge, pump station) for the year completed. • Tree removal Drain 6, task not complete due to change in scope. <p>Five capital works projects: one project (pump station technical upgrades) has been deferred through the LTP process.</p>
EAST TAIERI DRAINAGE SCHEME	<p>100% of planned maintenance completed, 28 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled mechanical drain cleaning completed. • Scheduled drain invert and pest plant spraying completed. • All inspections (drain, culvert, bridge, pump station) for the year completed. <p>Seven capital works projects: one project (pump station technical upgrades) has been deferred through the LTP process.</p>
TOKOMAIRO DRAINAGE SCHEME	<p>100% of planned maintenance completed, 23 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical drain cleaning completed. • Scheduled drain spraying completed. • Planned tree maintenance completed. • All inspections (drain, culvert, bridge) for the year completed.
DUNEDIN RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT	<p>96% of planned maintenance completed, 203 out of 211 tasks complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme. • An additional 23 reactive works were also completed.

CLUTHA RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

90% of planned maintenance completed, 127 out of 141 tasks complete.

- This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme.
- An additional six reactive works were also completed,

CENTRAL OTAGO RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

84% of planned maintenance completed, 27 out of 32 tasks complete.

- This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme.
- An additional 11 reactive works were also completed.

WHAKATIPU RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

77% of planned maintenance completed, 17 out of 22 tasks complete.

- This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme.
- An additional five reactive works were also completed.

WĀNAKA RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

81% of planned maintenance completed, 17 out of 21 tasks complete.

- This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme.
- An additional nine reactive works were also completed.

WAITAKI RIVERS AND WATERWAY MANAGEMENT

71% of planned maintenance completed, 35 out of 49 tasks complete.

- This data includes planned inspections and contract work that was identified as part of the annual work programme.



Clutha River/Mata-Au at Roxburgh

Flood Protection and Drainage Schemes Works

During the financial year we completed 98% of the planned maintenance programme for the ORC's five flood and/or drainage schemes (Tokomairiro, East Taieri, West Taieri drainage, Lower Taieri flood protection, Lower Clutha flood protection and drainage). This was above the performance target of 90%. A few tasks were deferred or cancelled because their scope had changed. Maintenance of three pumps at the Linger and Die pump station in the Alexandra flood protection scheme was deferred to allow for the lead time for parts – all other scheduled pump maintenance was done as planned. The schemes continue to perform at the level they are designed for, with no breaches.

All 27 planned capital renewal projects met their delivery target in the financial year, above the performance target of 90%. It should be noted, however, that the initial scoping for one project presented funding and resourcing constraints, and was deferred for consideration in the 2024-2034 Long-term Plan.

All schemes remained resilient in weather events, and deferring some renewals did not critically affect their performance.

Climate Resilience Projects

The climate resilience projects have continued to progress well over the financial year. This work programme includes four multi-year projects part-funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) through the Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit Kānoa. Three of these projects (Riverbank Road, Robson Lagoon and Outram Weighting Blanket) are now complete, and we expect to complete construction of the fourth (the Contour Channel project) by December 2024, ahead of the MBIE contract completion date of June 2025. Two bridges have been replaced and most of the floodbank has been reconstructed. Approximately 300 metres of floodbank will be constructed in the 2024/2025 summer season, completing the project.

Taieri Flood Protection Scheme - Floodbank risk Assessment

A risk assessment of the Taieri Flood Protection Scheme was completed in November 2023 and presented to the community through drop-in sessions at Outram and Mosgiel. The risk assessment provides information about the relative risks associated with floodbank failure in the scheme. In turn, this informs how the floodbank and associated assets will be managed. The risk assessment is part of ORC's broader programme of infrastructure resilience work underway for the Taieri.

River Management

The initial work programme identified 476 planned works for the year. This included both planned contract works and routine inspections such as river mouth checks and river inspections. More works were carried out in the Dunedin and Clutha river management areas than in the other areas. This reflects additional monitoring inspections and maintenance done for the various coastal river mouths across Otago.

Our river management programme has a performance target of 90% completion. In this financial year, we completed 425/476 (89%) of works identified when the programme was finalised (Q2). Fifty-one programmed works were not completed, mostly due to consent conditions or regulatory limitations. This work will be reassessed and added to the 2024-25 works programme if required. In addition to the programmed work, we completed 65 reactive works, many in response to vegetation blockages caused by high winds, resulting in a total of 490/541 (90%) activities being completed. The number of reactive works reflects the dynamic nature of river management.

The Engineering team received 292 queries related to rivers, drainage and flood protection schemes in the 2023/24 financial year. Of those, 147 were related to river management. During the year, the River Management team implemented a new process to assign and track queries, making it easier to monitor progress. All of the 147 river management queries were responded to within the 20-day time frame, in line with the performance target of 100%.

Flood Events

No flood events were recorded in the 2023/24 financial year. A rainfall event in September 2023 affected waterways in Central Otago and the upper catchments of Otago's rivers, but did not result in flooding in the downstream flood scheme areas.

An interactive map of our flood repair and recovery programme remains active online, showing repair sites, their programmed completion and status.

Bylaws

The ORC provides flood protection and land drainage across 43,000 ha of rural and urban land in Otago. The new Flood Protection Management Bylaw 2022, which safeguards flood protection and land drainage assets owned or managed by the ORC, came into effect on 1 September 2022. We received 25 bylaw applications during the year, granting 21 and declining one.



Emergency Management



Maintaining and improving our communities' resilience to emergencies is the fundamental reason for ORC's work in emergency management.

Together with territorial authorities, we have responsibilities under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 to ensure Otago's exposure to hazards is reduced, we are prepared to respond to emergencies, and we can recover effectively. ORC administers and coordinates the work of the Otago CDEM Group, operating through a shared service agreement with councils across Otago, while the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) and the Otago CDEM Joint Committee oversee governance and operations.

Performance Results



Performance and Delivery

Emergency Management is a critical activity – planning and preparing for emergencies, and leading the response and recovery effort when events happen. A large part of the Emergency Management work programme is planning and education. The aim is to support communities to build resilience and make sure they are ready to respond in disasters.

CDEM facility

A full-time Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is set up and ready to be activated quickly in an emergency. All areas are functional and passed monthly equipment checks throughout the 2023/24 financial year.

Staff and training

Emergency Management Otago has a core staffing team and is able to draw on a wider group of trained personnel from the ORC and other councils in the region in an emergency.

This wider group are selected and trained to support the function of the Emergency Coordination Centre during an event. We maintained capacity to deliver this training in-house, and during the reporting year we had an adequate number of trained staff.

We continue to take steps to maximise our pool of trained staff, which is influenced by staff priorities and willingness to attend the training on offer.

During the 2023/24 financial year, we filled some team leader vacancies. At the end of the financial year, we had one vacancy for an administrative support coordinator, which we expect to fill in the near future. These vacancies did not significantly affect the work programme, which tracked as expected.

Sector reform

At a national level, a significant body of work is underway to reform the emergency management system and review the regulatory framework that emergency management operates within. The Emergency Management Otago team stays up to date on the reform process, leads consultations with partner organisations and works on submissions to the process.

Transport

This group of activities includes the following council activities:

- Governance and Community Engagement
- Regional Planning and Urban Development
- Regulatory

Performance results



Arrowtown

Community Outcomes

Our **Transport** activities contribute to:



Transport Planning and Public Passenger Transport



Otago Regional Council is responsible for public transport in Otago, and through contracted operators, we provide public passenger transport services in Dunedin and Queenstown. We also provide a region-wide 'Total Mobility scheme' to assist eligible people who are unable to use public transport. These services sit under a wider umbrella of Regional Land Transport Planning and Regional Passenger Transport Planning that we are responsible for, working with Waka Kotahi, Environment Southland, and councils in the Otago Region. Under these plans, we have a role in facilitating some key transport projects in Otago.

ORC has strategic oversight, in partnership with Waka Kotahi (NZTA), on land transport matters. We coordinate regional land transport activities and produce a Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) in partnership with Environment Southland, NZTA and city and district councils. The RLTP outlines future planned transport network improvements and forms the basis of funding applications to the National Land Transport Fund on a three-yearly cycle.

Performance Measures



Performance and Delivery

Bus Patronage

Use of public transport is at record levels in both Queenstown and Dunedin. Following the June 2023 reintroduction of full timetables, 1,897,200 bus trips were taken in Queenstown over the financial year. This is a 51% increase from 2022/23 and is the highest annual figure we have seen since the network's first full year of operation in 2018/19, when patronage was reported at 1,468,057. The 2023/24 figure exceeds this previous high by 29%.

Patronage also rose in Dunedin, where a record 3,397,245 passenger trips were taken over the financial year. This is a 21% increase from the previous financial year, noting that full timetables were reintroduced to Dunedin in February 2023. It is also an increase of 33% from the 2018/19 financial year, which is the last full year period where patronage was not disrupted by COVID restrictions and driver shortages.

Service Reliability and Punctuality

The recruitment of the full number of drivers needed to operate the region's public transport system helped to maintain a high level of reliability for both the Dunedin and Queenstown bus networks over the 2023/24 financial year. Exceeding a target of 95%, we ran 99.9% of scheduled trips in Dunedin and 99.7% in Queenstown. We note that a short-term driver shortage resulted in more services being cancelled in Queenstown over February than average, but this did not significantly affect the full-year results.

Although we ran almost all scheduled services, punctuality was below the target of 95% in both Dunedin and Queenstown. The punctuality of Dunedin's bus services continued to be heavily affected by extensive roadworks and road closures – 82% of services arrived on time. The completion of roadworks in Dunedin's central city will significantly improve service punctuality. Queenstown's services were affected by heavy congestion on the approaches in and out of central Queenstown/Stanley Street at peak times, with punctuality sitting just below the target at 93%.

Passenger Satisfaction

We have a high target for passenger satisfaction (97%) and did not achieve this in either Dunedin or Queenstown. Passenger satisfaction in Dunedin rose to 88%, up 2% from 2022/23. With patronage at record levels, passengers may have higher expectations – while the increase in satisfaction is modest, it is positive to see it moving in this direction after some years of disruption due to COVID and a national driver shortage.

Passenger satisfaction in Queenstown is higher, sitting at 91% for the year. This figure is reasonably stable, even though the network in Queenstown was greatly affected by the national driver shortage and only returned to full service levels in June 2023 after nearly a year of reduced timetables. We note that services were affected by a short-term driver shortage again in February and March 2024.

Satisfaction with Timetable and Service Information

We are continuing to improve our real-time information for bus users, adding real-time tracking of buses on the ORC website and updating signs at the Dunedin and Frankton bus hubs. However, customer satisfaction with our provision of timetable and services information is mixed, rising in Dunedin and falling in Queenstown.

Our target for this measure is to maintain or increase satisfaction from the 2022 baseline results. Against a 2022 baseline of 70%, satisfaction in Dunedin is up 8% to 78%. Note that this is a 14% improvement on the figure for the 2022/23 financial year. Queenstown has a higher baseline figure of 88%, and satisfaction for this year is down 16% from that at 72% (a 9% drop from the 2022/23 year).

Satisfaction with the Total Mobility Scheme

Satisfaction with the Total Mobility scheme came in well above our baseline target of 87%, at 100%. It is likely that this high level of satisfaction was influenced by the increased subsidisation (75%) protecting scheme users from the inflationary pressures of fuel costs.

Regional Land Transport Plan

In April 2024, the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi changed the deadline for submission of the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) to 1 August. Hearings were held in late May and early June. On the recommendation of the Regional Transport Committee, Council approved the RLTP at its meeting on 24 July and the plan was submitted to NZTA on 30 July.

Public Transport Satisfaction Survey Dunedin

Survey taken May 2024

Overall satisfaction

88%



The overall level of satisfaction with the Dunedin public transport system has increased in 2024.

▲ 86% in 2023 ▼ 89% in 2022

Participants

29% aged 65+ years

29% of participants were aged 65+ years followed by 20% aged 45–59 years.



75% non SuperGold cardholders

75% of participants were not SuperGold cardholders.



23% travelling to work

23% of participants used the bus to get to work.



86% would recommend using the bus

86% of participants would likely or very likely recommend public transport to friends or colleagues.



30% 5 or more trips per week

30% of participants use the bus 5 or more trips per week.



Passenger satisfaction

94% Exterior of the bus
▲ 89% in 2023 | 89% in 2022

93% Interior of the bus
▲ 92% in 2023 | 91% in 2022

84% The bus is on time
▲ 68% in 2023 | 73% in 2022

86% How often the service runs
▲ 76% in 2023 | 82% in 2022

91% Value for money of fare
▼ 98% in 2023 | 97% in 2022

95% Having enough seats available
▶ 95% in 2023 | 93% in 2022

92% Ease of getting on and off the bus
▼ 94% in 2023 | 95% in 2022

90% Comfort of the inside temperature
▶ 90% in 2023 | 94% in 2022

93% Helpfulness and attitude of driver
▼ 95% in 2023 | 91% in 2022

96% Personal security during trip
▲ 95% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

97% Satisfaction of current trip
▼ 98% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

78% Information about services and delays
▲ 64% in 2023 | 70% in 2022

92% Travel time
▼ 94% in 2023 | 90% in 2022

94% Convenience of paying
▼ 97% in 2023 | 95% in 2022

89% Ease of getting route information
▲ 84% in 2023 | 86% in 2022

Public Transport Satisfaction Survey Whakatipu

Survey taken 10 – 13 April 2024

Overall satisfaction

91%



The overall level of satisfaction with the Whakatipu public transport system has decreased in 2024.

▼ 92% in 2023 ▼ 98% in 2022

Participants

37%

 aged 25–34 years

37% of participants were aged 25–34 followed by 21% aged 45–59 years.



96%

 non SuperGold cardholders

96% of participants were not SuperGold cardholders.



57%

 travelling to work

57% of participants used the bus to get to work.



86%

 would recommend using the bus

86% of participants would likely or very likely recommend public transport to friends or colleagues.



37%

 2 or more trips per day

37% of participants use the bus 2 or more trips per day.



Passenger satisfaction

93% Exterior of the bus
▼ 94% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

87% Interior of the bus
▼ 90% in 2023 | 93% in 2022

76% The bus is on time
▼ 79% in 2023 | 80% in 2022

72% How often the service runs
▲ 70% in 2023 | 75% in 2022

89% Value for money of fare
▼ 94% in 2023 | 98% in 2022

95% Having enough seats available
▼ 96% in 2023 | 98% in 2022

97% Ease of getting on and off the bus
▼ 98% in 2023 | 98% in 2022

95% Comfort of the inside temperature
▼ 96% in 2023 | 98% in 2022

97% Helpfulness and attitude of driver
▲ 92% in 2023 | 93% in 2022

97% Personal security during trip
▲ 96% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

97% Satisfaction of current trip
▼ 98% in 2023 | 98% in 2022

72% Information about services and delays
▼ 81% in 2023 | 88% in 2022

92% Travel time
▼ 94% in 2023 | 93% in 2022

89% Convenience of paying
▼ 94% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

91% Ease of getting route information
▲ 90% in 2023 | 96% in 2022

Summary Financial Statements



Summary Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$000s	Council 2024	Council Budget	Council 2023	Group 2024	Group 2023
Rates revenue	55,815	55,778	47,342	55,665	47,222
Grant revenue and subsidies	30,401	20,497	26,187	30,401	26,187
Other revenue	16,213	19,519	12,577	147,899	123,584
Dividends interest and investment revenue	25,637	25,250	19,477	3,237	855
TOTAL REVENUE	128,066	121,044	105,583	237,202	197,848
EXPENDITURE					
Employee benefits expense	(33,549)	(35,823)	(28,397)	(77,419)	(65,926)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(4,023)	(4,211)	(4,140)	(16,382)	(16,306)
Finance costs	(9,274)	(9,500)	(5,203)	(8,724)	(4,399)
Other expenses	(80,279)	(71,789)	(72,986)	(109,050)	(101,242)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(127,125)	(121,323)	(110,726)	(211,575)	(187,873)
Other gains / (losses)	2,495	1,265	1,506	9,056	1,998
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) BEFORE TAX	3,436	986	(3,637)		11,973
Income tax benefit / (expense)	-	-	-	(16,790)	(6,280)
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	3,436	986	(3,637)	17,893	5,693
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSES					
Items that may be reclassified to surplus / (deficit):					
Fair value through Other Comprehensive Revenue and Expense financial assets:					
Fair value gain/(loss) on shares in subsidiary	8,830	28,193	23,600	-	-
Cashflow hedges:					
Unrealised movement in hedging interest rate swaps	-	-	-	(1,073)	165
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE	8,830	28,193	23,600	(1,073)	165
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSE	12,266	29,179	19,963	16,820	5,858

Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024

\$000s	Council 2024	Council Budget	Council 2023	Group 2024	Group 2023
Current Assets	101,416	44,573	63,067	115,443	101,927
Non-current assets	921,837	982,272	961,087	975,047	964,232
TOTAL ASSETS	1,023,253	1,026,845	1,024,154	1,090,490	1,066,159
Current liabilities	71,932	21,604	84,188	117,308	115,686
Non-current liabilities	90,528	125,156	91,438	127,776	121,887
TOTAL LIABILITIES	162,460	146,760	175,626	245,084	237,573
NET ASSETS	860,793	880,085	848,528	845,406	828,586
EQUITY					
Reserves	758,326	771,427	747,994	441,971	450,367
Public equity	102,467	108,658	100,534	403,435	378,219
TOTAL EQUITY	860,793	880,085	848,528	845,406	828,586

Summary Statement of Changes in Net Assets/Equity for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$000s	TOTAL COUNCIL 2024					
	Opening Balance 1 July 2023	Other Comp. Revenue and Expense	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Closing Balance 30 June 2024	Council Budget
Public Equity	100,534	3,436	146,009	(147,511)	102,467	121,520
Reserves	747,994	8,830	6,070	(4,568)	758,326	666,120
TOTAL PUBLIC EQUITY AND RESERVES	848,528	12,266	152,079	(152,079)	860,793	787,640

TOTAL GROUP 2024						
Public Equity	378,219	17,893	146,009	(138,686)	403,435	
Reserves	450,367	(1,073)	10,461	(17,784)	441,971	
TOTAL PUBLIC EQUITY AND RESERVES	828,586	16,820	156,470	(156,470)	845,406	

Summary Statement of Changes in Net Assets/Equity for the year ended 30 June 2023

\$000s	TOTAL COUNCIL 2023					
	Opening Balance 1 July 2022	Other Comp. Revenue and Expense	Transfers In	Transfers Out	Closing Balance 30 June 2023	Council Budget
Public Equity	105,019	(3,637)	123,038	(123,885)	100,534	121,520
Reserves	723,546	23,600	4,131	(3,283)	747,994	666,120
TOTAL PUBLIC EQUITY AND RESERVES	828,565	19,963	127,169	(127,168)	848,528	787,640

TOTAL GROUP 2023						
Public Equity	372,916	5,693	123,038	(123,428)	378,219	
Reserves	449,811	165	3,673	(3,283)	450,367	
TOTAL PUBLIC EQUITY AND RESERVES	822,727	5,858	126,711	(126,711)	828,586	

Summary Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$000s	Council 2024	Council Budget	Council 2023	Group 2024	Group 2023
Cash flows from operating activities	3,297	3,939	(3,792)	31,445	20,003
Cash flows from investing activities	(4,504)	(9,566)	(4,153)	(32,427)	(59,513)
Cash flows from financing activities	(19)	-	9,532	(244)	41,072
NET INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(1,226)	(5,627)	1,587	(1,226)	1,562
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AS AT 1 JULY	14,830	11,668	13,243	14,885	13,323
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AS AT 30 JUNE 2023	13,604	6,041	14,830	13,659	14,885

Council Funding Impact Statement for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$000s	Annual Plan 2022/23	Actual 2022/23	Annual Plan 2023/24	Actual 2023/24
WHOLE OF COUNCIL				
Sources of operating funding	100,069	105,626	121,043	128,088
Applications of operating funding	99,322	106,553	117,111	122,871
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF OPERATING FUNDING	748	(927)	3,931	5,217
Sources of capital funding	420	10,874	4,000	874
Application of capital funding	1,168	9,947	7,931	6,091
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF CAPITAL FUNDING	(748)	927	(3,931)	(5,217)

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES	Long Term Plan 2022/23	Actual 2022/23	Long Term Plan 2023/24	Actual 2023/24
Regional Leadership				
Revenue	22,686	21,729	24,782	25,745
Expense	(22,940)	(24,869)	(24,616)	(24,695)
Net operating surplus/(deficit)	(254)	(3,141)	166	1,050
Capital expenditure	51	144	21	97
Environment				
Revenue	25,355	27,825	27,524	30,672
Expense	(26,010)	(29,054)	(27,898)	(30,167)
Net operating surplus/(deficit)	(655)	(1,229)	(374)	505
Capital expenditure	1,779	999	757	1,387
Safety and Resilience				
Revenue	16,132	17,518	16,201	20,397
Expense	(13,355)	(13,751)	(14,459)	(17,926)
Net operating surplus/(deficit)	2,777	3,767	1,742	2,471
Capital expenditure	3,957	1,725	2,209	2,589
Transport				
Revenue	33,408	33,066	36,651	42,837
Expense	(35,260)	(35,470)	(37,295)	(42,001)
Net operating surplus/(deficit)	(1,852)	(2,404)	(644)	836
Capital expenditure	-	-	-	436

Notes to the Summary Financial Statements

Shotover River, Central Otago

Basis of Reporting

Reporting Entity

The Council is a regional local authority governed by the Local Government Act 2002.

The Council Group (Group) consists of the Council and its subsidiary Port Otago Limited (100% owned). The Port Otago Limited Group consists of Port Otago Limited, its subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures.

The primary objective of the Council is to provide goods or services for the community or social benefit rather than making a financial return. The principal activities of the Group entities are port operations and property investment. Accordingly, the Council has designated itself and the Group as public benefit entities for financial reporting purposes.

Full Annual Report

This Summary Annual Report has been extracted from the full audited Annual Report dated 23 October 2024, and authorised for issue by Council on that date. The Summary Annual Report does not include all the disclosures provided in the full Annual Report and cannot be expected to provide as complete an understanding as provided by the full Annual Report.

The full Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002, which includes the requirement to comply with New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (NZ GAAP). The full Annual Report complies with Public Benefit Entity Public Sector (PBE (PS)) standards and has been prepared in accordance with Tier 1 PBE standards.

A copy of the full audited Annual Report for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, which received an unqualified audit opinion, is available by telephoning (03) 474 0827 or on our website www.orc.govt.nz.

This Annual Report Summary has been prepared in compliance with PBE (PS) FRS-43 Summary Financial Statements, and is presented in thousands of New Zealand dollars.

Commitments for Capital Expenditure

At 30 June 2024 the Group had commitments for capital expenditure of \$45.7 million (2023: \$17.3 million). Included in the above amounts are Council commitments of \$1.7 million (2023 \$3.2 million) relating to property, plant and equipment acquisitions and contracts for capital expenditure. Port Otago Limited had commitments for capital expenditure of \$44.0 million (2023: \$14.1 million) which relates to purchases and refurbishments of port assets and investment property.

Related parties

During the 2022 year Council and Port Otago Limited, entered into an agreement whereby Council provides an unsecured related party loans facility of up to a maximum of \$100 million. This was increase to \$150 million during 2023. The related party loan amounts, interest rates and repayment dates ranging from August 2024 - December 2030 (2022: November 2023- April 2030) match loans provided by the New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency (LGFA) to Council. Port Otago Limited pays all reasonable costs and expenses incurred by Council in connection with the establishment of its LGFA facility and ongoing fees associated with related party borrowing. Council or Port Otago Limited may terminate the related party loan agreement by giving 24 months notice to the other party. All related party loans under the agreement are unsecured.

As at 30 June 2024 Otago Regional Council had advanced loans of \$113,678,000 to Port Otago Limited (2023: \$125,088,000). Details of these transactions are included in the notes to the financial statements in the full Annual Report.

Subsequent Events

On 3rd and 4th October 2024 a red heavy rain warning event occurred in coastal Otago from Palmerston to the Catlins, and inland to the Manuherikia River in Central Otago. An assessment of any potential damaged caused by this flood event is still being completed as river levels recede.

Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Council only Contingent Liabilities

Otago Regional Council was previously a member of the New Zealand Mutual Liability Riskpool scheme ("Riskpool"). The Scheme is in wind down, however the Council has an ongoing obligation to contribute to the scheme should a call be made in respect of any historical claims (to the extent those claims are not covered by re insurance), and to fund the ongoing operation of the scheme. The likelihood of any call in respect of historical claims diminishes with each year as limitation periods expire.

However, as a result of the Supreme Court decision on 1 August 2023 in Napier City Council v Local Government Mutual Funds Trustee Limited, it has been clarified that Riskpool has a liability for that member's claim in relation to non-weather-tight defects (in a mixed claim involving both weather-tight and non-weather-tight defects). Riskpool has advised that it is working through the implications of the Supreme court decision. At this point any potential liability is unable to be quantified.

The Council has also been advised of potential claims in relation to the issue of resource consents. The Council does not expect any material uninsured liability to arise from these potential claims, (2023: \$Nil).

Consistent with the nature of the Council's activities, the Council is involved in Environment, High and District Court proceedings resulting from decisions made by the Council as a planning and consenting authority under the Resource Management Act.

Council Only Contingent Assets

The Council does not have any contingent assets as at 30 June 2024 (30 June 2023: \$Nil).

Group

There are no other contingent liabilities or assets at 30 June 2024 (30 June 2023: \$Nil) other than those arising in the normal course of business.

Local Government (Financial Reporting and Prudence) Regulations 2014

The Local Government (Financial Reporting and Prudence) Regulations 2014 require that the Council disclose its financial performance in relation to various benchmarks to enable the assessment of whether the Council is prudently managing its revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, and general financial dealings. The regulations also require the disclosure of rating base information and information regarding the insurance of assets.



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE READERS OF OTAGO REGIONAL COUCIL AND GROUP'S SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

The summary of the annual report was derived from the annual report of the Otago Regional Council (the Regional Council) for the year ended 30 June 2024.

The summary of the annual report comprises the following information on pages 9 to 48:

- the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024;
- the summaries of the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2024;
- the notes to the summary financial statements that include accounting policies and other explanatory information; and
- the summary statement of service performance.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the annual report; and
- the summary statements comply with PBE FRS-43: *Summary Financial Statements*.

Summary of the annual report

The summary of the annual report does not contain all the disclosures required by generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand. Reading the summary of the annual report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the full annual report and the auditor's report thereon.

The summary of the annual report does not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our auditor's report on the full annual report.

The full annual report and our audit report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the information we audited in the full annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 in our auditor's report dated 23 October 2024.

Council's responsibility for the summary of the annual report

The Council is responsible for preparing the summary of the annual report which includes preparing summary statements, in accordance with PBE FRS-43: *Summary Financial Statements*.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the full annual report and whether the summary statements comply with PBE FRS 43: *Summary Financial Statements*.

Our opinion on the summary of the annual report is based on our procedures, which were carried out in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Professional and Ethical Standards and the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

In addition to our audit, we have carried out engagement for Debenture Trust Deed Reporting and a document management security controls review, which is compatible with those independence requirements. Other than these engagements, we have no relationship with, or interests in, the Regional Council or its subsidiaries and controlled entities.



Heidi Rautjoki,
For Deloitte Limited
On behalf of the Auditor-General
Dunedin, New Zealand
23 October 2024



Lake Hayes, Central Otago