

Community feedback on
what we're proposing for the

Annual Plan

2023-24

Community Feedback to the Annual Plan 2023-24

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What do you think of the proposed changes to rates?	Let us know if you have any other feedback on any topic related to the proposed Annual Plan 2023-24 (optional).
<p>At first you got your maths wrong ! An increase of 18.8% instead of 12.0% is not "6.8% higher than that signalled" as you write but 56.67%; this equals 6.8% points more than signalled. So how much can we trust your overall budget? I have not been able to quickly find information why this additional increase is proposed! So, no, I am against it.</p>	
<p>To much</p>	
<p>Rates increases will be more palatable if the ORC uses the money to actively protect communities at risk</p>	<p>With urgency the ORC need to maintain the Silver Stream and other important flood protection waterways on the Taieri. The Gordon Road Floodway was designed and built to activate when the flow in the Silver Stream reached 175 cumecs. In 2018 the floodway activated when the flow was just 115 cumecs due to aggradation, subsidence and a lack of maintenance. The ORC knows what needs to be done to maintain the waterway but is evaluating the cost versus the benefit putting communities on both sides of the Silver Stream knowingly at risk. In the meantime the ORC are spending ratepayers money trying to elevate the Hazard Overlay on the Floodway to effectively red-zone 40 affected home owners. The Silver Stream and other waterways need to be maintained by the ORC to offer the maximum possible resilience in the event of heavy rain - that is what we pay our rates for!</p>
<p>Any change in rates needs to be quantified and reported back to the community it come from not only that but it needs to be spent in that community. Currently council rate funds are not used wisely or correctly. Wasting money on unnecessary research on a new orc building is a good example of waste. To much time is also spent on consultants that have no idea of the area. History or hazards.</p>	
<p>The proposed rates rise is too high. A rise of this size would be irresponsible in good times, let alone during a cost of living crisis.</p>	<p>The plan to effectively red zone properties along the silver stream floodway is concerning.</p>
<p>Due to the fact that the ORC have not used any part of the rates I have paid in recent years to keep up the maintenance on the flood banks to protect the people of the Taieri then I say no change should be made to rates. They have nearly doubled every year for the last few years to pay for high salaries to staff and to fund an office for the overpaid employees.</p>	<p>I see the the ORC are ducking their responsibilities as the maintenance hasn't been done to the flood banks during last few years and now it's going to cost too much because the money the Taieri people have paid hasn't gone where it should've gone. I strongly object to ORC changing the zones to suit their own purpose instead of protecting the residents of the Taieri Plains.</p>
<p>Should be spent on taieri flood protection and drainage scheme - specifically Silverstream and Owhiro</p>	<p>Enable a pedestrian/cycle bridge to be built spanning the taieri river - at some point that suits best</p>
<p>Far too high. It should be at least kept in line with the estimates</p>	<p>You must spend our rates on flood protection for Gordon Road</p>
<p>I think it's ridiculous that rates will increase this much purely because the DCC can't manage there commitments to using the money in the appropriate way. In the most basic of jobs needing done and maintained these things are the ignored then say it's a problem. Why wasn't this flood bank maintained as it would have been years ago. Why isn't there grones put in at St Clair and I could go on. Do your job DCC and Otago Regional Council. If you leave things for years and years and don't maintain them of course there will eventually be a problem. Don't put flooding down to climate change. No it's your own incompetence.</p>	<p>Do you your job you are paid by our rates to do . Look after our district.</p>

<p>It sucks that you slap another significant rates increase on top of the expected increase when the cost of living has also increased and is putting pressure on people. The increases have been huge over the last few years. I do understand that costs have increased but how about not wasting money on changing the DCCs plans and get on with the work?</p>	<p>Stop wasting rate payers money on changing the DCC zoning In Mosgiel. Instead spend the money on doing the repairs to the Silverstream Flood protection scheme that you should be doing. With the increase in adverse weather events, flood protection of Mosgiel is going to need to continue so the scheme will need to be repaired. A much better use of money than getting the DCC zoning change made which is not going to prevent damage to properties unlike the work on the flood protection scheme.</p>
<p>I would like to see my rates being spent on essential flood protection maintenance</p>	
<p>Not happy with the way the rates are being used.</p>	<p>That rates are being spent on essential flood protection maintenance. To date the maintenance work has not been done. The ORC's appeal to the 2GP is unresolved and is now tied up in a protracted action between the ORC and the DCC in the Environment Court. Both councils have already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars each squabbling over 2GP appeals. Now the residents of the Gordon Road Floodway have been forced to commit tens of thousands of dollars to ensure that their interests are represented in the Environment Court action. The councils are spending ratepayers money, your money, on what could be considered a 'blue on blue' action. If you live in Otago you are paying at least once to fund this action, via your ORC rates. If you live in Dunedin you are paying twice to fund both sides of this action, via your rates to both councils. And the affected residents of Dukes Road and Riccarton Road are now paying three times!</p>
<p>Dreadfull</p>	
<p>The Gordon road flood way appeal is ridiculous and incredibly inconsiderate for all residents living in that area. Why is this being pursued and in the meantime, a rates hike occurs without any of those funds going towards improving the waterways - which are in dire need of maintaining? Why are you creating headaches for residents of that area and for the wider area of Mosgiel by looking after what we already have? It's backward thinking and suggests to be, you're not capable of looking after what is already in place. Fix the waterways, roading and key infrastructure because you start causing new problems !</p>	<p>See above. You're not currently representing the needs of Mosgiel. There's been little consultation and very little interest in what might be best for the residents.</p>
<p>Why are my rates going up? To fund wage increases and not to have services improved or even maintained as they should be.</p>	
<p>Not happy</p>	
<p>While I understand that the pressures of inflation and the changing work environment may equate to higher costs for the ORC to maintain its commitment to ongoing work, it's completely unsustainable to continue to just ask for more from ratepayers. If it means rethinking/postponing work in order to lessen the financial impact on ratepayers then that is the responsible choice the ORC should make.</p>	<p>I don't understand the current situation facing homeowners in the Gordon Rd spillway area, imposed on them by the unnecessary restrictions proposed by a 1a hazard rating from the ORC and how that aligns with your commitment 'to help build flood resilience for communities across Otago region'. It appears that I instead of upholding your responsibilities with maintenance on the spillway, your answer is to make it the problem of the homeowners? It is unfathomable that the ORC can justify this 1a classification, effectively red zoning these properties and destroying the financial security for those homeowners. Instead of supporting your community, problem solving alongside your community, you're shafting your community. Not acceptable.</p>
<p>Too expensive.</p>	<p>Re instate the differed maintenance on all storm water channels.</p>

<p>Am ok with this if money is spent in the correct places</p>	<p>Wondering where the plans are for carrying out the promised maintenance of the Silverstream? This is work that is well overdue and should have been carried out already. If this had been done already as it should have been then perhaps the very expensive arguments between the ORC and DCC over zoning of the Gordon road spillway area would not be taking place. Not only have my previous rates paid not been used as they should have been - for the promised maintenance, my current rates are being wasted on arguments between councils. As a resident who's house is on the banks of the Silverstream I am extremely concerned about these issues. Not only is my house being put at risk because maintenance hasn't been carried out as it should have been. But there is the worry that proposed zoning/building restrictions for the properties in the Gordon road spillway area could be extended to other areas bordering the Silverstream. This topic needs to be addressed in the annual plan.</p>
<p>You provide very little for what we pay now - so unless you start actually doing something it's just revenue spent on nonsense</p>	<p>How about spending the money you collect from us for flood protection on that? Lived next to Siversteam for 30 years and NO work has Ever been done !</p>
<p>I think rather than raising rates, I would like to see less frivolous spending. The ORC needs to look at how to better manage the budget they already have.</p>	<p>Spend money on preventing flooding rather than submitting appeals. Restore previous flood prevention measures for silverstream.</p>
<p>Until you spend the money on things they are meant for ie flood protection instead of lawyers fees(fighting dcc for example) , you shouldnt increase them</p>	<p>Mosgiel is on a flood plain, therefore protecting and maintaining the flood protection assets we have should be a priority. A portion of our rates goes towards this but it is not being used properly. My understanding is no maintenance (dealing with slippages etc that are constricting the flow of flood waters) has been done since you knew of issues in 2019. This is not good enough. While you strengthen the east side of the silver stream stop banks you could ensure it's durable enough for the bike track (and horse riders) to use it so the waihola to Mosgiel- dunedin section can be completed. That would bring financial benefits to the region. Victoria Chapman 230 bush rd Mosgiel.</p>
<p>The rates are already too high and wasteful items like using our money to fight us in court cases should be terminated immediately.</p>	<p>Outram and Mosgiel flood-risks need immediate work by men and machines, instead of wasteful spending on investigations and rezonings. The Outram floodbanks need reinforced at the Balmoral area and in the event of a spillover the SH87 drains and culverts need greater capacity. Staff tell us this is not ORC responsibility and the SH87 authority do not want to pay. I am sure the residents would prefer that ORC pay so they can feel safe. The Mosgiel overflow issue and the rezoning is all easily fixed - just dig out the Silverstream bed, especially in the Riccarton Rd area, to give it greater flood carrying capacity.</p>
<p>I want my rates spent on maintaining the original Gordon Rd Flood plan, instead of wasting time in court on this council overreaching.</p>	<p>Stop wasting our rates on court costs and just maintain our waterways.</p>
<p>not impressed</p>	<p>It is important that the work is maintained to ensure that the Silverstream Flood Protection scheme is to a standard where it will protect the residents of Mosgiel in the case of floods, especially with the increase in climate change.</p>
<p>Rates have already increased dramatically. If I remember correctly it was about a 100% increase. That's too much. Why would it increase that much? Rates should not increase again.</p>	<p>The Gordon Road spillway needs maintenance as it is supposed to have. Red zoning properties in the area (that have never flooded) is not acceptable. If it was good enough to build on after the spill way was introduced, why is it a problem now?</p>
<p>We do NOT need rate increases. The ORC needs to put their money into the job at hand, (maintenance & infrastructure) NO new offices etc. You are the 'regional' council. Have people in the 'regions' not in Dunedin city.</p>	<p>In view of the weather disaster that happened up north, ok, we won't have a cyclone down here but in the 'probable' likelihood that a huge rain event will happen (don't bury your head in all the gravel building up in the silverstream) the run off from the hills north & west of Mosgiel, together with smaller amounts of slash, debris etc.... we are just a ticking timebomb 🧨</p>
<p>I think increased rates are necessary to continue working to a high standard for the community.</p>	

<p>"For the proposed rates increase to be adjusted up to 18.8%, I'm assuming that all proposed work as per the ORC LTP will proceed as you indicate in the paragraph headed "What has changed" If that is true, why can I not see any mention of the Harbour Plan that was committed to following feedback to the LTP? The extract below from the ORC Final LTP 2021 describes this initiative and the funding to facilitate it yet I see no evidence of that funding being used, or being in planning for future use.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Regional Leadership</p> <p>Council made two adjustments to the draft LTP in response to submissions being: establishment of a harbour facilities and management plan in a collaboration with Iwi, Community boards and groups, Dunedin City Council and Port Otago, with budgeted funds of \$100,000 in each of financial years 2 and 3 LTP; and a policy for assisting with resource consent costs for environmental enhancement projects being implemented with a budget of \$50,000 included in the LTP</p> <p>-----</p> <p>I would like to see the Annual Plan amended so that progress can be made with the Harbour Plan. There are current issues affecting public access to Otago Harbour and use of amenities surrounding the harbour. My answer to Question 2 of this survey describes a current issue affecting Back Beach, Port Chalmers and is a good example of the issues that the LTP and this Annual Plan should be addressing.</p>	<p>As one of the actions for the proposed Harbour Plan mentioned in Question 1, I would like to see urgent redevelopment of the Back Beach area at Port Chalmers. This area has been under increasing pressure due to the arrival of commercial boat operators that are now using public amenities in the area. Increased cruise ship visitor numbers and the pending completion of the west harbour cycle track will bring about even more congestion next summer season. That congestion has lead to safety issues and it will only be worst next summer. This is an example of why we need a Harbour Plan and why it needs to be acted on as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Just so incredibly unfair. I'm in the lower pond on the East Taieri side where our rates are just out of control. Circa half the targeted rate is paid by 20 people. The other half is paid by 15,000 people. This just isn't fair. My 19% increase this year equates to circa another \$6,300 on top of the \$33,000 I paid last year. Theses increases are truely become unsustainable.</p> <p>Our targeted rates should be frozen until the rating review has been completed.</p>	<p>I attended the Outram drop in session and was promptly shown the large increase in operational costs for the East Taieri drainage. When I asked why, no staff member there was able to tell me why. Sort of makes the drop in session a bit of a waste of time. Michelle Mifflin committed to coming back to me with an answer but I haven't heard anything yet so a bit hard to make comment.</p>
<p>For our property in East Taieri the ORC Rates Calculator shows a 27% annual increase in the East Taieri Drainage Rates. This is a \$16,602 increase! These massive increases, with no upgrade in drainage assets or scheme performance are grossly unfair and completely unsustainable, especially for the few properties that bear the most significant proportion of these drainage rates. There should be no need for an increase in East Taieri Drainage rates this coming year.</p>	<p>A review of the Lower Taieri Flood Control and Drainage Schemes Rate Classification needs to be undertaken in 2023/2024.</p>

<p>We support rates to be set at a level appropriate to deliver ORC's planned work programme</p>	<p>Through Jobs for Nature, Covid delivered a once-in-a-generation upsurge in funding to accelerate environmental initiatives across Aotearoa New Zealand. Jobs for Nature has been particularly successful in the Queenstown Lakes district, where every sector of our district is economically dependent on a healthy environment. Jobs for Nature funding enabled groups such as WAI Wānaka to scale, powering up community-led action and providing meaningful work for people affected by the loss of tourism.</p> <p>Since 2018, WAI Wānaka have directly generated \$6m new government funding for the benefit of the Upper Clutha. With our Jobs for Nature funding ending on 30 June 2023, we are asking ORC to provide \$135,000 in interim support for the 2023/2024 financial year, to underpin the connection, collaboration and coordination of effort needed to preserve the natural beauty, biodiversity and resources of our district for the benefit of future generations.</p> <p>ORC funding will enable community effort to be harnessed (5,000+ hrs/annum), ensure our education programmes align with ORC priorities, provide ongoing support for rural and urban catchment group activities and enable collaboration with local, regional and national initiatives relating to fresh water, ecosystem health, biodiversity and sustainability.</p>
<p>I think the percentage rise is probably necessary given all of the areas the ORC is expected to cover under government legislation</p>	<p>I am concerned that after my prior reading that the ORC is also responsible for air quality there is nothing in your 2023 to 2024 plan relating to improving your monitoring of air quality. There is a lot about land and water. Of concern to me locally is the fact that after years of discussion on the topic there still does not appear to be any "public" emissions testing being done at the Port in the harbour basin. Especially now with the return of more than 100 cruise ships over the summer idling at the wharves for up to 10 hours a day. Please correct me if I am wrong. I would appreciate it if the ORC did begin to independently collect this data and make it publicly available as an area of community discussio. My contact details are raewynne@pedofski.co.nz</p>
<p>Rate increases will always be unpopular with communities during tough financial times.</p>	
<p>I have little faith based off ORC's performance in the 5 years I've lived here. I would support ORC being dissolved, it's just another unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.</p>	<p>ORC has been promising an improved bus service for as long as I can remember and continues to fail to deliver. As a West Harbour resident my family and I have been heavily impacted by the incompetence of ORC, Ritches Buses & Port Otago to effectively manage the transportation of cruise ship passengers and this has been going on as long as the cruise ships have been coming and has been worse since the Taire Gorge train ceased operating.</p> <p>Outside of cruise ship season the service is still hit and miss with break downs and driver illness.</p>
<p>I agree with your goals and believe the rates have to reflect these.</p>	<p>I think there needs to be more attention paid to one of the biggest changes across the territory and that is all the cycle trails as a regional network of active transport. This network has been created by trusts but needs active support and enablement through the regional transport plan and also through some sponsorship to those looking to fill the gaps in the network. This also means enabling the use of the Otago Regional Councils assets like stop banks etc to support off road shared paths which are safe for communities to use. Over 50% of cycling deaths are on rural roads. Vehicles are travelling fast on rural roads, they are narrow and do not have room for cyclists. They often have steep gravel verges and also have a lot of rural farm machinery/vehicles and trucks which take up a lot of space on the road. Off road shared paths make it safe for walkers and cyclists alike and create great linkages to local communities for active transport and recreation and across the region they are creating a great economy through cycling/walking tourism that is low carbon and increases the health and wellbeing of both local communities and tourists alike. Trails also create access for pest control and plantings. I think to have a great public transport system you need to have enough bus drivers - this means paying them well and looking at the split shifts system as otherwise they are working long hours.</p>

<p>I wouldn't mind if we were getting the service you claim to provide. The bus service is unreliable. The roadworks rubbish, poorly built roads that need repairing after only a couple of months of use. Too many road cones everywhere that are not removed once work completed, probably because they continue to charge a hire fee, while they sit unused at the side of the road and blow into the sea. Leave the Wilding pines alone. why pay millions of \$ to plant pines as carbon credits and then destroy pines that naturally grow where nothing else does. seems a waste of our rates \$ to create an eyesore of dead trees on the hillsides. Orc needs to spend our rates \$ more efficiently, not waste them on building luxury offices in Dunedin, with carparks for their staff, who apparently need car parks where the general public/ ratepayers don't need car parks, we have to stand at the side of the road in the freezing cold wind, to wait for a bus that might come, if you are lucky.</p>	
<p>Currently not seeing the difference one would expect in our area</p>	<p>Big concerns how waterways and native bush is not being protected when the forestry industry is involved, even though regulations are currently very insufficient. This is very evident in Hindon where the lack of respect for the environment is disappointing, with the complete disregard for the motu that is blatantly happening within this industry by commercial operators with what appears to be no accountability when breaking the law.</p>
<p>acceptable</p>	
<p>Support the proposed changes.</p>	<p>We emailed our submission through to all councillors on 14/04/2023 at 3.40pm and would appreciate this being considered. Thanks in advance. Paul from the Southern Lakes Sanctuary</p>
<p>Awful. Lower them. How do you think the average person with a family of two is going to live? The DCC awful rate hikes, the cost of food, the cost of interest on mortgages by immoral banks if one is fortunate to own a home these days, or the extreme rentals... the cost of building, the cost of living. You can't get blood from a stone. So stop it! We have no more money to give you.</p>	<p>Clean up the rivers!!!! Clean up the air!!! Act as though the future of planet earth is at stake. Oh wait, it is.</p>
<p>Diabolical. 15% increase for me. Not justifiable. 7% increase in my income is completely out of kilter.</p>	<p>Trim the fat. Get the General Rate back down to the proportion it used to be. Ever since ORC realised they could dump EXTRA charges on us (aka Forsyth Barr Sports Stadium) they've never looked back. Each year sees another pile on.</p>
<p>The proposed increase is ridiculously high and continues the unsustainable increases on the Taieri Flood and Drainage Schemes. The basis of rating these schemes should be reviewed as a matter of urgency and a moratorium put on any rate increases for the Taieri Flood and Drainage schemes until the review is undertaken. The level of expenditure proposed for these schemes is too high, and could not be explained in sufficient detail by the staff present at information meetings held in Outram. This supports a moratorium on non-essential expenditure and rate increases.</p>	

Otago Regional Council - Annual Plan 2023/24

Business South Inc welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on Otago Regional Council's Annual Plan 2023/24. We note the ORC is not formally consulting on the plan as there are no significant changes to the 2023-24 Annual Plan from the Long-Term Plan 2021-31, aside from a change to the proposed rating increase of 12% to 18%, which is more than what was planned.

Our key role is to advocate for over 1,200 business members to give the region an influential voice on important issues. We are proud to be the voice of business in the south, for businesses of across sectors and districts, and all sizes, a significant number of whom are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups.

Impacts for businesses

Business South Inc is advocating on behalf of our members against the relentless cost pressures facing business owners, which has changed significantly since our April 2022 submission.

Informed by our recent Quarterly Southern Business Survey, Pulse Checks, and development of the Election Manifesto that will provide opportunities for local and central government (to be released by early June 2023), these are the critical issues for our members.

1. **Engagement with business community** - Business South Inc wants to build on the relationship with ORC and be involved in the Long-Term Plan 2024-34 engagement before the formal Long-Term Plan consultation process in 2024. We would like to continue discussions with the ORC on how we can have a greater involvement in ensuring the business community's voice is considered in future strategic planning.
2. **Otago's Regional Economic Development Plan** – This plan is guiding investment in the region from government, and the current focus is on two of the four priority areas - collaboration and lifetime value of visitors. Business South Inc is supportive of the collaborative Strategic Doing workshops and will work with the stakeholders to grow these skills in the region. As a next step, the business community would like to understand the benefits to them from the work carried out within the plan.
3. **Rate increases** - Feedback from the business community is strong in that rate increases are not sustainable for our business membership, during unprecedented times of rising compliance costs and taxation, cost increases, inflation, wage pressures, and lack of staff availability (see **Appendix 1** for more details). SMEs in particular keep getting hit with additional costs. Greater thought needs to be put into consideration in changes in policy that may directly or indirectly impact SMEs.

A strategic focus for Business South Inc is to support existing businesses and attract new businesses to the region. To do that, one aspect we need to consider is the environment in which businesses operate. Higher rate increases run a risk of driving away the business sectors and council needs to consider the impacts of additional costs on business (not just

rates alone). What businesses pay is disproportional to what services they get. Council needs to look at alternative methods of funding.

The proposed rates increase will have a flow-on effect on all members of the community, not only the business and commercial sector. Property owners will be forced to recover these costs through increased rental levels, while business owners will have no choice but to recover these costs through increased costs for products and services. It is also unclear what the additional rates are funding and whether it is beneficial to the business needs.

4. **Compliance costs and policies**

Compliance costs from both central and local government are escalating, with decisions made in silos and implemented in an ad hoc way, resulting in unintended consequences. These costs are hurting all businesses on top of the cost-of-living crisis.

These compliance costs often have a disproportionate impact on SMEs, which make up approximately 97% of total businesses in our economy – the backbone of the economy. Failure to recognise that SMEs are the product and service suppliers to larger businesses. They keep on being hit with costs that impact the livelihood of staff and business owners and go onto impact local communities.

Business South Inc would like to work with the ORC to:

- a. ensure policy impacts on business are assessed before decisions are made;
- b. help inform businesses to stay up with the latest changes from local government and any relevant ones from central government; and
- c. where appropriate establish forums to help provide input to ORC policy-setting and decision-making.

5. **Consent processing times** Members of the business community have asked for clarity on the following questions:

- a. Does the ORC currently meet the legislative application process timeframes? What is reported to the Ministry for Environment?
- b. Is the 2023/24 target achievable – has the council costed the implications for businesses in any delays and have a discount policy in place when delays occur?

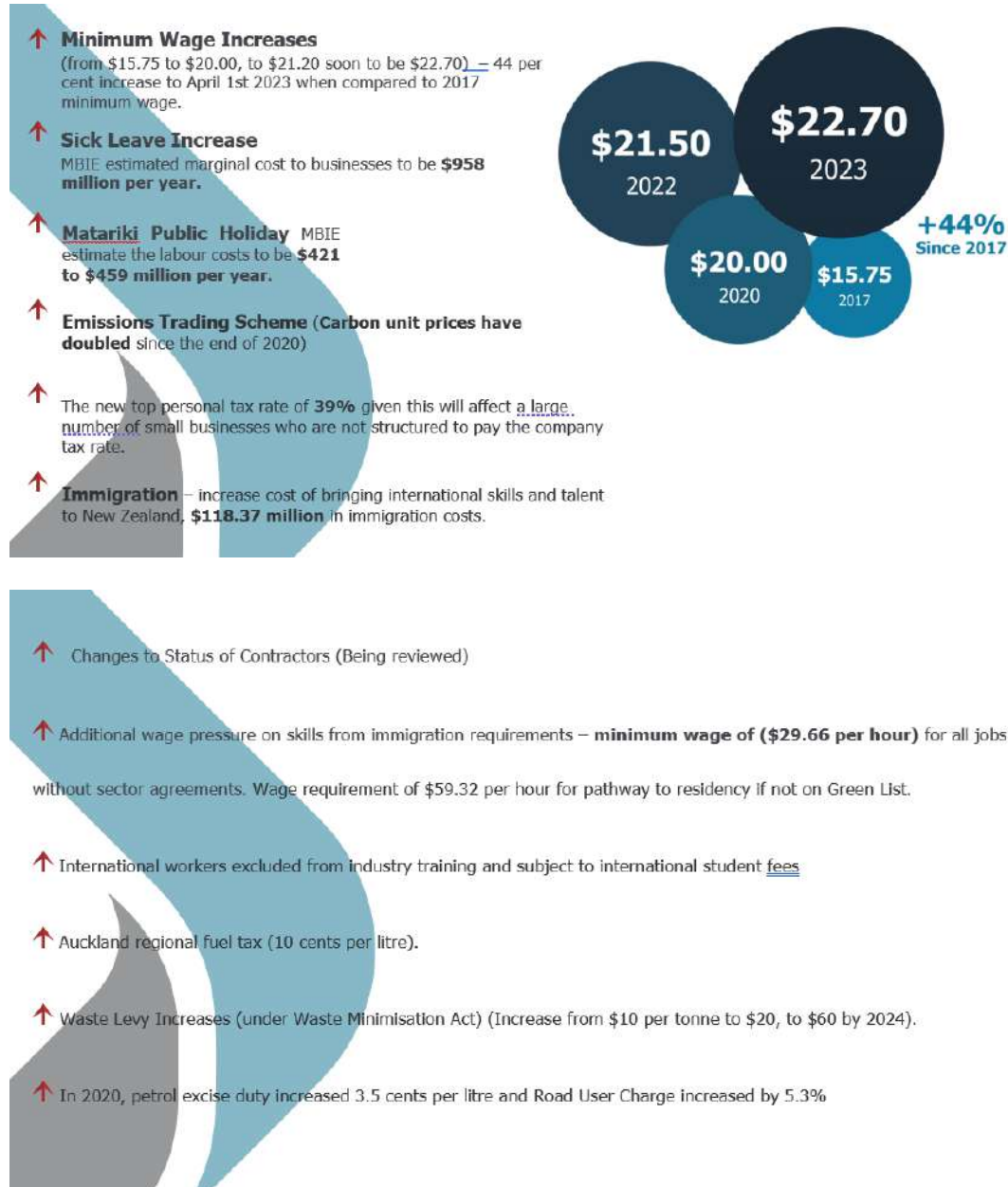
6. **Resource Management reforms** – Business South Inc is prepared to work with the ORC to help inform businesses about the reforms as the Acts get implemented.

On behalf of our members, thank you for considering this submission.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, contact the Chief Executive Officer, Mike Collins, 03 479 0181.

Appendix 1. Cost increases for businesses



Other Costs:

- ↑ Local Govt General Rates Increases, proposed rate increases for next year are between 3.93% and 29% (Only one council is proposing a rates decrease).
- ↑ Rising Electricity Costs: Industrial electricity prices:
2022: 17.13c/kWh
2020: 14.58c/kWh
2017: 12.54c/kWh
- ↑ Increased International air & sea freight costs: At the time of writing "The latest Drewry WCI composite index of \$1,757 per 40-foot container is approximately 30% higher than average 2019 (pre-pandemic) rates of \$1,420."
- ↑ **Inflation – 7.2 per cent CPI increase, 30 year high.** Affects buying power of everyone, including businesses.
- ↑ Commercial Insurance Costs Increases: In 2021, one insurance provider **increased commercial rates by 4 per cent year on year.**

Otago Regional Council Annual Plan 2023-2024

Submission

C. D. Scurr

100 Allanton Road

Outram 9073

12/04/2023

My submission on this Annual Plan relates to the Lower Taieri Flood and Drainage Schemes.

East Taieri Drainage Rate

I ask that the proposed increase in this rate not occur to 2023/24 rate collection.

Reason

The work project “Gordon Road Silverstream Improvement” which is in the 21/24 Long Term Plan has been removed from the East Taieri Drainage Scheme where it had been incorrectly assigned. This \$300k project cost has now been removed from the 23/24 work program and therefore there is a reduced need for this increase rate collection this year.

The drainage rate for my Riverside Road property has a 25.3% rate increase according to the ORC Rate Calculator for 2023/2024.

Lower Taieri Flood and Drainage Schemes Rate Classification Review

I ask that a review of the classification of these targeted rates be undertaken in the 2023/2024 year.

I ask that the funding for this review be provided for in the 2023-2024 Annual Plan.

This would enable the review to be consulted on with the 2024-2027 Long Term Plan.

Reasons

1. The present classification from 2011 was strongly objected to when first proposed and over the years since. One of the issues covers the land highlighted in the ODT in recent weeks. The Gordon Road Spillway Hazard Zone receives flood water from the Silverstream Spillway below Gordon Road on the West side of the stream. This significantly reduces the flood risk to Mosgiel township on the East side.

The targeted rate for the West hazard zone is higher than the targeted rate for Mosgiel. For the 2023-2024 year Mosgiel pays \$1.62 per

\$100,000 property Capital Value and gets the protection while the Hazard Zone properties pay \$1.72 per \$100,000 CV and gets the flood risk and land use restrictions. Where is the equity in this?

The 2011 Rating Classification for the Lower Taieri has a number of inequities, similar to this, such as areas paying the highest flood protection rate for the flood risk caused by raised Silverstream banks causing higher ponding levels, also the high drainage rates for the East Taieri Ponding areas to pump water held back by the flood banks.

2. The land use on the Taieri Plains has seen significant changes over the last decade. We see intensification and extension of Mosgiel which now has much greater assets to protect and should be contributing for the greater benefit.

The ORC is now using the DCC District Plan to further restrict land use on certain areas within the Taieri Flood Scheme (ref. ODT April 3rd). This is another justification for a review to account for these changes.

With the Taieri Schemes Performance Review being completed in time for the next Long Term Plan it is appropriate to use this information in a funding classification review at the same time.

I am available to speak to my submission for explanations and questions.

Colin Scurr

Our organisation (Community Networks/LINK, Wānaka) is neutral on the proposed rate changes, although note that the proposed increase will be a further drain on household incomes at a time when many residents are struggling to make ends meet.

Let us know if you have any other feedback on any topic related to the proposed Annual Plan 2023-24 (optional).

This submission provides feedback on a topic whose time has come... public transport in Wānaka / Upper Clutha. While not requesting a specific financial contribution from the 2023-24 Annual Plan, we are reporting on our work in this space, and requesting a commitment to actively pursue a solution to affordable, environmentally friendly shared transport that reduces the region's carbon footprint. In particular, developing an investment strategy for public transport in the Upper Clutha to be included in the next Long Term Plan iteration, working with stakeholders QLDC and Waka Kotahi over the next ten years.

Who are “we?” Community Networks/LINK is the Upper Clutha's one-stop community support and connection centre. A unique social services and community development organisation that sits at the centre of community, identifying and acting to meet needs and opportunities. In recent years, the issue of public transport has been raised by young people, older people, and other vulnerable residents who do not have access to their own transport options.

In addition to these “transport disadvantaged” residents, commuters and others seeking an affordable option that also addresses environmental concerns have raised their voices. Particularly with a growing population in Hāwea, driving in and out of town becomes prohibitively expensive. With so many workers needed in the region (both within the Upper Clutha and beyond to Central Otago and Queenstown) the lack of public transport becomes an economic drain as these workers often don't have vehicles and can't get around.

We know public transport is a long-term issue to be addressed by multiple parties, including and especially Otago Regional Council. Even with our growing population base, it became clear no short-term action was imminent. Our research and feasibility work led us to believe we could trial a version of public transport for a short time, and collect data to inform longer term planning.

With multiple funding sources and collaborative in-kind support, Community Networks/LINK launched a three-month Community Shuttle Trial connecting outlying townships to Wānaka in late 2022. The results of this trial are summarised on our website (communitynetworks.co.nz/shuttle-trial), and a video showcasing the shuttle service can be viewed on our Youtube channel (youtube.com/watch?v=RSL3PMz3l0w). This report also outlines our plans for a second trial in 2023, building on the positive feedback from the first trial and creating a larger data set to contribute to long term planning. Momentum has gathered behind this effort, as evidenced by some media stories you can read here: <https://www.communitynetworks.co.nz/news>.

We are delighted that so many partners have come together to make public transport a short-term reality in the Upper Clutha. QLDC is the key funder of our second Trial through their Climate Action and Biodiversity Plan, and Lake Wānaka Tourism is also providing financial support - both recognising the importance of initiatives seeking to reduce carbon emissions and combat the climate crisis.

We now invite ORC Councillors and managers to review our work and act on the promises and aspirations made in your own planning documents. We note that in the 2023-24 Annual Plan you are “sticking to commitments made in the 2021-31 LTP,” including “effectively engage with communities and focus on customer needs,” and “collaborate to deliver.” Progressing public transport planning based on this community-led work ticks these boxes.

ORC’s 2021-31 Regional Public Transport Plan outlines a “vision for inclusive, accessible, innovative public transport that connects Otago and contributes positively to our community, environment, and economy.” Hopes were raised in the fine print of this document, with Wānaka and surrounds being listed as proposed trial units, only to be dashed with the footnote that funding had not been attached to this proposal. In the absence of an ORC-funded trial, our Shuttle Trial efforts have captured the attention of a community ripe for new options – and the Trial certainly has met your visionary goals of being inclusive, accessible, and innovative.

So over to you. Over to you to review the work this community organisation has done in the absence of ORC investment; to include the Upper Clutha in transport business case development (vs focusing solely on the Whakatipu); and to invest in our community’s future.

We will keep you updated as our second trial runs in coming months, and will continue partnering with ORC to keep moving toward the ultimate goal of a full public transport service here. We extend thanks and gratitude to Councillor Alexa Forbes for her support, Garry Maloney for his advice on the first trial, and Doug Rodgers for his collaboration on the second.

We close with this whakatauki – I orea te tuatara ka patu ki waho. A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions. Those solutions can come from many parts of the community, and we look forward to continuing to collaborate with the ORC in coming months and years.



Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

April 2023

To Otago Regional Council

Please find attached DPA's submission on ORC Draft Annual Plan 2023-24

For any further inquiries, please contact:

Chris Ford

Regional Policy Advisor (Local Government)

Kaititui – Dunedin Region

policy@dpa.org.nz

Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

We work on systemic change for the equity of disabled people

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a not-for-profit pan-impairment Disabled People's Organisation run by and for disabled people.

We recognise:

- Māori as Tangata Whenua and [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand;
- disabled people as experts on their own lives;
- the [Social Model of Disability](#) as the guiding principle for interpreting disability and impairment;
- the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) as the basis for disabled people's relationship with the State;
- the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](#) as Government agencies' guide on disability issues; and
- the [Enabling Good Lives Principles](#), [Whāia Te Ao Mārama: Māori Disability Action Plan](#), and [Faiva Ora: National Pasifika Disability Disability Plan](#) as avenues to disabled people gaining greater choice and control over their lives and supports.

We drive systemic change through:

- **Leadership:** reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.
- **Advocacy:** supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.
- **Monitoring:** monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DPA was influential in creating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD),¹ a foundational document for disabled people which New Zealand has signed and ratified, confirming that disabled people must

have the same human rights as everyone else. All state bodies in New Zealand, including local and regional government, have a responsibility to uphold the principles and articles of this convention.

There are a number of UNCRPD articles particularly relevant to this submission, including:

- **Article 4.3: General obligations – representation of disabled people and our organisations in decision making**
- **Article 8: Awareness raising**
- **Article 9: Accessibility**
- **Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**
- **Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community**
- **Article 20: Personal mobility**
- **Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**
- **Article 29: Participation in political and public life**

New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026

Since ratifying the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Government has established a Disability Strategy² to guide the work of government agencies on disability issues. The vision is that New Zealand be a non-disabling society, where disabled people have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and that all of New Zealand works together to make this happen. It identifies eight outcome areas contributing to achieving this vision. There are a number of Strategy outcomes particularly relevant to this submission, including:

- **Outcome 5 – Accessibility**
- **Outcome 6 - Attitudes**
- **Outcome 8 – Leadership**

The Submission

DPA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Otago Regional Council's Annual Plan 2023-24.

Firstly, DPA valued the opportunity to meet and engage in constructive dialogue with key councillors and staff in earlier this year. We would like to reiterate the importance of having DPA around the decision-making table on disability issues as they relate to council given our status as a disabled people's organisation (DPO) which is recognised under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Secondly, we emphasise the need to take a disability lens to every issue, including public transport, climate change and responsiveness to civil emergencies. Our submission focuses upon those areas being concentrated on in this draft annual plan and which also flow on from the response provided to us by ORC officials.

Thirdly, we also briefly mention our positions on other areas not being discussed in the plan around the need for council to make its new offices fully accessible, our desire for a disability issues advisory group (as the Dunedin City Council has) to be established, disability responsiveness training for staff, and the accessibility of all council communications.

Public transport

DPA acknowledges the steps that have been made in improving transport accessibility over the last few decades. The placement of more wheelchair user friendly buses on most routes in Dunedin is an improvement on what went before.

DPA also notes that there have been measures taken by Council in reaching out to the local disabled community on transport accessibility issues in recent years, some of which we have a been part of.

However, there are still issues that need to be addressed and remain of concern to the disabled community including:

- the reliability of bus services,
- the ongoing need for disability training and responsiveness for new bus drivers,
- the inaccessibility of some bus routes,
- lack of accessible public transport options in regional centres and

- working with the Dunedin City Council and other territorial authorities on making our bus shelters and stops fully accessible, comfortable and user friendly.

On the issue of disability training and responsiveness for drivers, we note that this is being currently delivered by Living Well Resource Centre (formerly Disability Information Service).

We note that with the increasing number of new bus drivers being recruited due to improved hourly pay rates and the easing of migration barriers, there will be more drivers who need to have this training.

DPA recommends that Council increase the level of funding for disability responsiveness and awareness training for newly recruited bus drivers and ensure that programmes are delivered in culturally appropriate and accessible ways.

DPA recommends that, in cooperation with the DCC and Queenstown-Lakes District Council, further improvements be made to bus stops and shelters so that all stops and shelters are accessible.

DPA supports the proposal to further develop real-time transport information in Queenstown and Dunedin.

DPA recommends that real-time transport information be accessible and available in both written (i.e., Large Print, Braille) and audio formats as well as New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to ensure accessibility for everyone.

Climate change and emergency responsiveness (safety and resilience)

In our last ORC annual plan submission, we touched upon the need for DPA and other locally based disabled people's organisations (DPOs) to be involved in discussions around climate change given the disproportionate impact that this is having on disabled people both locally and globally.¹

¹ Schulte, C. (2020, March 28). People With Disabilities Needed in Fight Against Climate Change. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/28/people-disabilities-needed-fight-against-climate-change#:~:text=People%20with%20disabilities%20are%20at,said%20in%20a%20recent%20report.>

We outlined our idea around co-designing a Climate Change Responsiveness plan aimed at the disabled community along the lines of that developed in Bristol, UK with the Bristol Disability Equality Forum there.²

DPA recommends that there be discussions commenced during this coming year on the development of a co-designed, disabled people's driven and led Climate Change Responsiveness Plan between the DCC/ORC and DPA and other locally based DPOs including Blind Citizens, Deaf Aotearoa, Muscular Dystrophy Association, and People First. Other disability organisations can be brought into this as well through the Access for All Group.

DPA wishes to acknowledge that we have had dialogue with the ORC/DCC funded South Dunedin Future project on the impacts of climate change as the suburb contains a relatively high number of disabled people within its population. We plan on continuing this dialogue going forward.

DPA supports funding for additional climate change hazards staff and additional funding for flood protection works due to inflationary pressures as being important investments for both fighting and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

In terms of emergency responsiveness, DPA supports increased planning for emergency management response. DPA acknowledges the efforts that have been made by the Council over this past year including having local disabled community members and service provider representatives presenting at a recent Welfare Coordination Group (WCG) meeting.

DPA recommends that DPA be included in the Regional Civil Defence WCG alongside other disability organisations who have been invited to join including Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People and Your Way Kaiaroha.

We welcome and acknowledge the inclusion of these important disability sector organisations on the WCG. However, DPA can add a lived disabled person's perspective as well as policy and strategic planning expertise, something that is vital

² Bristol Disability Equality Forum (2020). *Community Climate Action: Let's Make Change with Bristol Disability Equality Forum*. Retrieved from (<https://bristoldef.org.uk/community-climate-action/>)

when planning for civil emergencies and disasters. DPA, as a pan-impairment disabled person's organisation, should also be involved given the importance we have as co-partners to all central and local government organisations in decision making under Article 4.3 of the UNCRPD.

New office building

DPA had a very constructive discussion in February with staff and councillors regarding the ORC's planned new office building, Whare Rūnaka. We understand that advice has been taken from the Government Property Group on incorporating Universal Design (UD) principles into the build. We welcome universal design principles being included to ensure that everyone, including disabled and older people, can easily access the building from day one.

DPA thanks the ORC for its pledge to consult with DPA over this new build as a starting point.

Establishing a disability issues advisory group

DPA is very pleased that Council is open to looking at the establishment of a disability advisory group given that the DCC and other local authorities throughout New Zealand already have them.

DPA recommends that Council co-designs a terms of reference for a disability advisory group with DPA and the wider Otago disabled community as a first step in this process with a view to beginning meetings within the upcoming financial year and that funding is set aside for this purpose.

Disability responsiveness training for staff and employment of disabled people as staff

DPA was also pleased to hear from officials that while disability responsiveness training was currently not offered to staff or councillors, that this could be included as part of a work programme focused on diversity and inclusion slated for the 2023/24 business plan.

DPA recommends that ORC prioritises the incorporation of disability awareness and responsiveness training for both staff and councillors into the diversity and inclusion work programme for 2023/24.

Due to the hiring of extra staff anticipated in this annual plan, DPA recommends that disabled people with suitable qualifications and skills be prioritised for employment by ORC. As discussed with Council in February, our Mahi Tika programme can advise on how to remove the barriers to employment for disabled people.

ORC communications with the disabled community

DPA was pleased to hear that the contract for the updating of the council's website has prioritised making it more accessible for everyone, including disabled people.

However, accessible communications are about much more than building an accessible website. DPA was involved in initial discussions during 2020 on an accessible communications policy but the process was never completed due to Covid-19 and concerns raised by the blind community.

DPA recommends that the ORC engages with the local disabled community to progress developing an accessible communications policy by 2024.

DPA's Recommendations

Recommendation 1: that Council increase the level of funding for disability responsiveness and awareness training for newly recruited bus drivers and ensure that programmes are delivered in culturally appropriate and accessible ways.

Recommendation 2: that, in cooperation with the DCC and Queenstown-Lakes District Council, further improvements be made to bus stops and shelters so that all stops and shelters are accessible.

Recommendation 3: that real-time transport information be accessible and available in both written (i.e., Large Print, Braille) and audio formats as well as New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to ensure accessibility for everyone.

Recommendation 4: that DPA be included in the Regional Civil Defence WCG alongside other disability organisations who have been invited to join including Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People and Your Way Kaiaroha.

Recommendation 5: that Council co-designs a terms of reference for a disability advisory group with DPA and the wider Otago disabled community as a first step in this process with a view to beginning meetings within the upcoming financial year and that funding is set aside for this purpose.

Recommendation 6: that disabled people with suitable qualifications and skills be prioritised for employment by ORC when hiring new staff.

Recommendation 7: that the ORC engages with the local disabled community to progress developing an accessible communications policy by 2024.



DUNEDIN TRACKS NETWORK TRUST

customerservices@orc.govt.nz
2023-2024 Annual Plan
Otago Regional Council

Dunedin Tracks Network Trust (DnTNT) Submission:

Otago Regional Council; 2023-2024 Annual Plan

The Dunedin Tracks Network Trust thanks you for this opportunity to submit.

The Dunedin Tracks Network Trust (DnTNT)

DnTNT was incorporated as a charitable trust on November 13th 2020 with the vision being:
"To develop and promote a shared vision for a world class network of publicly accessible tracks".

Here, the Trust asks that the Otago Regional Council adopt a bold vision ...

Otago; A world class cycling destination – A bold vision for our region’s territorial authority

Looking with a regional perspective

The Otago Regional Council has 7 of New Zealand’s 23 Great Rides within or linked with its territorial authority; Otago Central Rail Trail, Alps to Ocean, Clutha Gold, Roxburgh Trail, Dunstan Trail, Clutha Gold and Around the Mountains.

Further, with the Kawarau Gorge Trail progressing, Otago is a step closer to the largest contiguous cycle trail in the southern hemisphere. When completed this will constitute 536km of continuous trail. Plans are also advanced to connect Wānaka to Cromwell by cycle trail and add another 13 kilometres to the missing section of the Roxburgh Gorge Trail from Doctors Point to Shingle Creek.

Central Otago mayor Tim Cadogan said the possibility of one day connecting Dunedin Airport to Queenstown Airport by cycle trail was very attractive to his district.

"We're right in the middle of that here in Central Otago and the growth we've seen even from the Lake Dunstan Trail between Clyde and Cromwell has been phenomenal - 87,000 people rode it last year. That's just a stream of gold coming into the district, as the [Otago Central] Rail Trail has been for a very long time coming from Middlemarch."

Waitaki Mayor, Gary Kircher, is thinking along the same lines stating ‘a proposed multimillion-dollar cycle trail linking Dunedin and Oamaru is an “exciting opportunity” for the Otago region.’

This proposed route would boost cycle trail tourism and recreational opportunities for residents, bringing benefits to Oamaru, Dunedin and the communities in-between, he said. This trail would also provide an important link in an expanding network of cycle infrastructure being developed, or planned, across Otago, linking Dunedin with the Alps 2 Ocean cycle trail and, in time, Central Otago trails.

Dunedin City, largest populus with international airport

Work is underway across the city with the peninsular and harbour trails nearing completion, the Dunedin City Council committing to the Dunedin Tunnels Trail (linking the city and the Taieri), and the Dunedin Tracks Network Trust funding feasibility studies for a) The Taieri Trail, linking the city to the Clutha Gold at Waihola and b) East Coast Communities Trail going a way to connecting Dunedin, Waitati and Waikouaiti.

Links within the Dunedin City boundary are critical to enabling connection to trails to the north (the Alps to Ocean) and central (the Central Otago Rail Trail and the Clutha Gold) and to join the regions two international airports.

A bold vision for the Otago Regional Councils territory

A clear vision for those in Otago Regional Council's territory is:

“The Otago region will be known globally as a region to come cycling. That it will become a hub for cycling at a world level.”

The Otago/Southland Regional Transport Plan Direction 2018 supports this vision;

“The Otago/Southland Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) was updated in 2018 and sets out the opportunity to create a network of cycle rides in southern New Zealand. Growing the cycle network in Otago and Southland is a key focus for the joint Regional Transport Committees (RTCs). The RTCs see the opportunity to expand cycle tourism and to see much larger numbers of people travelling by cycle in urban and peri-urban areas.”

When completed the Queenstown, Central Otago and the Waitaki off road trails linking through Dunedin will be 948 km of continuous trail and the longest regional active transport project in New Zealand and the Southern Hemisphere.

Under the Local Government Act (2002), the Otago Regional Council has responsibility for regional land transport planning. The ORC's Regional Transport Committee approves the Regional Land Transport Plan.

Additionally, under the Resource Management Act 1991, the Otago Regional Council is responsible for the integrated management of the physical resources of a region.

The Dunedin Tracks Network Trust, advocates for

a world class network of integrated regional trails, and asks the following:

1. That the Otago Regional Council support and enable the vision of a world class network of integrated regional trails across its territory.

2. That the Otago Regional Council support the identification of gaps across the regions trail network

3. Commit to co-funding Tracks Network Project Managers with trusts that are working to build and maintain the network. It is envisaged the contractor(s) alongside trustees, will work with community groups, iwi, business's, volunteers, central and local government, and funding providers to ensure key trails of the network come to fruition. Co-funding trusts is a very cost-effective way for regions to develop trails.

4. In the ORC's role for the integrated management of physical resources that they enable and support the development of shared trails leading to and running beside waterways – including the Otago Regional Council's stop bank networks.

5. That the Otago Regional Council continue to work with the Dunedin Tracks Network Trust on an off-road shared path between Wingatui and Waihola, where feasible supporting the use of stop banks and assisting in the design of bridges as a part of this trail.

This is a matter of urgency as the Clutha Gold Trail finishes at Waihola at the end of 2023 and the existing on road route puts riders at risk of death or serious injury. Over 50% of cycling deaths are on rural roads and the risk of serious injury is higher given the high speeds of rural roads and they are often narrow with steep verges and no room allocated to cyclists.

We believe these commitments will promote:

- Active transport
- Lower carbon transport
- Health and Wellbeing outcomes
- Off road shared paths create a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage the increased use of active transport
- Integrated trail development
- Access to outstanding natural features and landscapes
- Access to traditional food gathering practices and for hunting and fishing
- Access for recreational pursuits
- Fantastic recreational and lifestyle assets for communities
- Attract people to live in the region
- Attract tourism which is spread across the region
- Create jobs and grow the economy

We thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Lindsay Dey, Chair

On behalf of the Dunedin Tracks Network Trust



Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Feedback on the Otago Regional Council Annual Plan 2023/2024

14 March 2023



FEEDBACK TO OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL ON ANNUAL PLAN 2023/2024

To: Otago Regional Council

Name of submitter: Otago Province, Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Mark Patterson
President
Otago Province
Federated Farmers of New Zealand

Contact person: James Sutherland
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ABOUT FEDERATED FARMERS

Federated Farmers of New Zealand is a membership organisation, which is mandated by its members to advocate on their behalf and ensure representation of their views. Federated Farmers does not collect a compulsory levy under the commodities levy act and is funded from voluntary membership.

Federated Farmers represents rural and farming businesses throughout New Zealand. We have a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of New Zealand's farmers.

Federated Farmers aims to empower farmers to excel in farming. Our key strategic outcomes include provision for an economic and social environment within which:

- Our members may operate their business in a fair and flexible commercial environment;
- Our members' families and their staff have access to services essential to the needs of a vibrant rural community; and
- Our members adopt responsible management and sustainable food production practices.

1. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Federated Farmers welcomes the opportunity to present feedback to the Proposed Annual Plan. Federated Farmers is concerned about the overall wellbeing impacts of this Annual Plan on our farmers and the flow on effects to the rural communities within Otago. We are hopeful that council will limit spending to fit within budgetary and inflationary pressures, resulting an over 10% rate increase. Federated Farmers believes it would be fiscally responsible for council to cash-up its port assets and invest that into the community, reducing the wellbeing impacts of such a rates rise. We recognise the need for council to achieve its visionary work-programs some of which is set out of their control, but we are concerned that there would be degradation to rural communities and farmers wellbeing's as a result, as larger increases in rates per dollar terms equates to more than the approximate \$84.00 rate rise scripted in the Proposed Plan. We strongly urge council to increase UAGC to the legislative limit to make rates more equal across the region. Council may also need to review what they fund and to who's benefit, such as Predator Free Dunedin and the buses, perhaps these services could be administered by another Local Authority. Council continues to make strides in engagement with the community, particularly rural. We understand the savings made from only consulting on feedback, however the rates rise did deserve proper community engagement, we hope council will consider any future Annual Plan proposals consultations to be more formal.

2. FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED ANNUAL PLAN

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO RATES, AND ANY OTHER FEEDBACK ON ANY TOPIC RELATED TO THE PROPOSED ANNUAL PLAN 2023-2024?

1. Federated Farmers welcomes the opportunity to present feedback to the Proposed Annual Plan. We find it concerning that with rates increase of over 10% than what was prescribed in the Long-Term Plan is only open to feedback. We feel that the proper submission/consultation process would be more appropriate and beneficial for council to undertake the proper time to consider the implications of such an increase on the ratepayer, especially in rural areas of Otago. We are concerned that revenue appears not to cover the full operating costs for the financial year. Economically the council is now spending more that it is earning. Federated Farmers is concerned that this will result in some of the costs occurred this year being pushed into later years, which risks pushing council to make more significant rises to rates, the wellbeing impact of this would be devastating for Otago's ratepayers.¹
2. Federated Farmers of Otago find proposed changes to the rates in Otago region concerning in part due to the economic climate the country is currently in, whilst

¹ [agenda-council-20230222.pdf \(orc.govt.nz\)](#) (Page 29)

recognising the strong financial investment that the council has access too. The Council continues to own 100% of Port Otago, whose profits continue to grow. In the last six months to December 2022 there was a reported \$9.2 million profit, which was reported being up 42% on the 2021/22 result of \$6.5 million². The Port of Otago also owns 100% of Chalmers Properties which involved in substantial commercial property investment across Dunedin, Auckland and Hamilton.

3. ORC has significant reserves to access. The feedback document made mention of the need to continue with the commitments set out in the Long-Term Plan. The document makes no mention for use of reserves to reduce the burden on the ratepayer, or any review of program reduction to reduce the burden on ratepayers. We strongly suggest that council reviews their reserves, especially in the current economic climate we are experiencing for example speeding up property sales, which has been delayed to inject cash into the council³.
4. Council still appears to maintain in their policy to allocate 25% of the *General Rate* through the UAGC. There is wider scope in this Annual Plan to increase the rate from 22.6% to 25%. This would not add much to urban rates but make a marked difference for farmer ratepayers across Otago.
5. Under s21 of the Local Government Rating Act, council has the ability to recover up to 30% of total rates revenue (including Targeted rates) through the UAGC. There is significant scope for council to increase the UAGC and remain within the legislative cap, rather than a self-imposed limited.
 - a. Under s101 of the Local Government Act, council must consider who benefits from the underlying expenditure when allocating rates. Page 8 of the Annual Plan consultation document notes:
 - i. *Approximately half of the \$3.1 million increase is related to the inflationary impact on wages: a quarter to regional leadership activity. Emergency management increases added in year 2 were not in the LTP. There are also a range of increases associated with science, air policy, and safety and resilience activity.*
6. This additional spend benefits all Otago ratepayers, equally, and should be funded through the UAGC. While we are not advocating for council to relinquish the targeted rating approach it currently uses for most regional activities, there is undeveloped use of uniform charges instead of relying upon General Rates.

² Port Otago Interim Report

³ [orc-longtermplan-web-144dpi.pdf](#) (Page 58, what reserves are used for)

7. The council rating system is not equitable for all rate payers across Otago. Rates applied to farms create financial burdens and are based on overall capital value with no reflection of the EBITRm⁴ per hectare. Some of the largest properties in Otago are classified as harder hill country, with a lower stocking rate and therefore a lower farm profit before tax. Council has not taken into consideration the further global trends of trade and the impacts of additional regulation on farmers wellbeing, meaning farm profits will be lower than expected.
8. ORC continues to wrongly assume that the larger the size of your property, should reflect how much more you should pay on rates. A continued reliance on rates will impact those with significantly larger properties, particularly our farmers. A 1% rate increase means more to a farmer in dollar amounts than that of a residential ratepayer. Rates increase need to be absorbed somehow and cannot be passed on through prices such as business can in the selling of their products. Over 90% of farm production is exported and prices are determined by the international market, and economic climates of overseas. That affects what is left at the farmgate, and the farmers wellbeing, with less finance to work with does mean a reduced participation in their local rural economies which are still trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. It should be recognised that all additional rate increased imposed by council are occurring at a time where farmers and rural communities are facing significant cost and mounting compliance pressures, and a large number include significant areas managed by regional council. Stressfully drawn-out legal processes, topped with greater levels of compliance for water quality, quantity, biodiversity, animal grazing, and pest management all come at a huge cost to the farmer and farming communities of Otago. These costs are not just financial, they also include time, manpower, significantly impacting the health and wellbeing of a farmer and farming communities. Council needs to take the wellbeing of the rural sector more into consideration when setting further rate increases.
10. The Otago economy is more than ever dependent on our supply chain products, our infrastructure, highways and byways, airports, and ports. All of Otago's settlements rely on safe access to these for their safety and economic wellbeing. As climate – change related events as such seen up north become more frequent the council needs to invest more heavily into resilient infrastructure. Federated Farmers acknowledges the

⁴ Earnings before Interest, Tax, Rent, and any paid manager expenses. This places all farms on a standardised basis

additional funding to flood protection works and flood protection in the Taieri but does question the judgement for the need of additional climate change hazard staff. Additional staff will be better placed to be funded by central government, not local, especially in a cost-of-living crisis when the Prime Minister wants the country to focus on '*bread and butter issues*'⁵.

11. Federated Farmers strongly urges the council to provide sufficient detail on the affect to rural properties from the rating increases. Ratepayers should be provided with breakdowns on the average rate per urban, rural, rural residential and business across Otago. Providing breakdowns on areas provide a realistic lens for ratepayers to understand the wellbeing impact the most in increases⁶.
12. We continue to note the that the council has a priority to implement the Pest Management Plan. We would like to draw the council to a principled approach to equity between who benefits and who pays. We recognise that pest issues are very significant within many of the regions urbanized areas, as reflect in the targeted pest programs in the targeted rate charge such as Predator Free Dunedin. The argument of 'who' really benefits does not necessarily fit well with the rural community who already proactively manage pests within their own properties, much of this self-funded. The argument is also why just fund Dunedin in pest management, what about Central Otago who arguably has a larger pest problem that what is equated in the Dunedin city area. All farmers already do more than what is currently prescribed in the Regional Pest Management Plan, through self-funding. We argue Dunedin City residents can do the same. Farmers are also facing an influx in pests from DOC land throughout Otago coming onto their farmland who don't have the same responsibilities, and lifestyle blocks that don't have the same wellbeing need to protect their land. We suggest council liaise with DOC to get include DOC administered Otago land into the Pest Management Plan as a member of Otago's community.
13. Council should increase the UAGC to fund the proposed increase in prosecution funding, as then the funds are spread evenly across the community. We instead encourage educational methods to educate ratepayers on actions and how they can actively change. Hard-line tactics should only be used in the most severe of cases, and where all other avenues have been exhausted.

⁵ [New Cabinet focused on bread and butter issues | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/news/new-cabinet-focused-on-bread-and-butter-issues)

⁶ [orc-what-we-are-proposing-for-the-annual-plan-2023-2024.pdf](#) (Paying for these Services)

14. Council should clarify the additional expense in relation to the increased to executive support, this is unnecessary with no net gain for the ratepayers. Council should provide clarity to the ratepayer in the Proposed Annual Plan, then what is currently stated. We feel that this is not a '*bread and butter issue*' and can be reviewed when economic conditions improve.
15. Federated Farmers believes that Transport should not be a regional council priority and should sit with the respective local councils such as Dunedin City Council, and Queenstown Lakes Council. This will enable more efficient use of capital spending while reducing councils carbon footprint. Council has highlighted the continued significant cost of running the service, Council could save significantly by relieving themselves of this burden. Alternatively, council could significantly increase the Targeted Rates for Dunedin City residents and Queenstown Residents to fund the service, we also acknowledge this would be a hard approach to take.
16. Council should consider catchment groups to craft their own Integrated catchment action plans, further than what's prescribed in the NPS for Freshwater Management, reducing the burden on council to employ staff, whilst allowing the community craft plans that work their environment and needs. This would address some of the 6.8% increase proposed. Council needs to utilise community knowledge in an economically pragmatic way to reduce their own financial costs that burden ratepayers, allocating funds for community led direction would also aid in this approach. economically pragmatic way to reduce their own financial costs that burden ratepayers. We acknowledge that council has already done significant groundwork on this. We acknowledge the chair and incoming CEO for their relationship building with the sector, especially catchment groups. Farmers are already paying membership fees to be involved in catchment groups. The council could give rate concessions for those that are in catchment groups, for the wellbeing driven change they are implementing for our environment, this would create many beneficial outcomes for the rural community.
17. Federated Farmers welcomes the pausing to the implementation work with 'Air Quality' but find it concerning that 'Additional air policy staff' are required. We feel this is contradictory to pausing the implementation work. Are staff really required or can additional capacity be found within existing staff structure. We advocate for upskilling existing staff to meet the needs of Otago, not expanding the workforce unnecessarily.

18. We are concerned about the increase in fees and charges for interactions with council staff. It is fiscally irresponsible for council to pass these fees and charges onto ratepayers in the middle of record high inflation of 7%, where many families across the region will be feeling the financial squeeze. Council could have absorbed these using reserves until inflationary pressures are contained. Farmers who use these services the most will be the largest wellbeing affected group of ratepayers, which does conflict with councils' commitment of '*focus on customer needs*'.
19. We congratulate council for the continued investment in wallaby eradication and Jobs for Nature program, which are non-ratepayer funded. We strongly urge council to lobby central government for more funding to continue beneficial programs for improving Otago's environment, and wellbeing.
20. We strongly welcome councils' commitment to '*effectively engage with communities and focus on customer needs*'. We continue to welcome dialogue and creation of partnerships with council through formal and informal engagement to work for our rural ratepayers and their wellbeing.

Let us know if you have any other feedback on any topic related to the proposed Annual Plan 2023-24 (optional).

'Forest & Bird implore ORC to integrate the use of Nature Based Solutions to achieve their annual plan/long term plan commitments.

New Zealanders received a wakeup call about the impacts of climate change with the immense devastation caused by Cyclone Gabrielle and the Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland floods.

As we look to recover from these disasters and reduce the impact of future extreme weather events, nature has a key role in helping us to adapt. By protecting nature, we can protect ourselves and our communities.

One key lesson from the years since Cyclone Bola, is that action which should have been taken to build resilience has been neglected, and where action was taken, it was not properly thought through, which has resulted in the damage from forestry slash. We cannot afford to repeat these mistakes.

There are limits to adaptation and other parts of the world, and some of our own communities, lack the resources needed to adapt. We must step up action to reduce emissions and minimise unavoidable climate change.

Critical actions in the light of Cyclone Gabrielle include:

- Creating 'room for rivers'
- Doubling wetlands
- Restoring and expanding native forest and shrublands
- Improving land use
- Adapting in ways that protect and enhance nature
- Keeping emission reductions at the core of climate change policy

Improving land use, not overly relying on flood protection works, and the role of native forests were all understood after Cyclone Bola in 1988. It is now time for the best available knowledge to be applied to build our resilience.

There is scope for ORC to facilitate collaboration between established and new conservation groups across the region. These groups are generally community based volunteer groups who are striving to make a difference to the quality of biodiversity with their native forest replanting, weed control, pest eradication, riparian planting, species monitoring etc. They are generally time rich, resources poor and enthusiasm driven.

With robust leadership (whether from within ORC or from outside the organization) and long term funding to deliver on coordinated plans there can be a lot of positive gains achieved by these groups for the good of the land and the people of Otago.

ORC should step strongly and boldly in to this space so to bring communities (volunteers, businesses, industry groups) together and enable them to achieve great things efficiently and thoroughly.

A more complete proposal with funding request will be provided for the LTP planning round next year, this is simply a message to encourage you to think of the power in the communities and how to provide continuity of funding across a 30 year program that will deliver faster and more extensive enhancements to the environment than business as usual is achieving to date.

Matt Hollyer

M: +64 27 293 0054 | **E:** matth@bungy.co.nz

From: Matt Hollyer

Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 1:59 PM

To: Mike Roesler <Mike.Roesler@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: ORC plan submission

Hi Mike

I have been supported in this submission by the following groups:

Forest & Bird (Central Otago Lakes Branch)
Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust
WAI Wanaka
Mana Tahuna Charitable Trust
Whakatipu Wildlife Trust
Glenorchy Community Association
Southern Lakes Sanctuary

I have contacts with a number of other Conservation groups who may join in as well, currently waiting for their confirmation, so I'll just leave you with this list at the moment.

Regards

Matt



MOSGIEL-TAIERI COMMUNITY BOARD

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Submission to the Otago Regional Council Annual Plan 2023-2024.

Submission on behalf of the Mosgiel Taieri Community Board.

Contact: Andrew Simms, Chair 0274 346 394 andrew@simms.co.nz

We wish to be heard and would be pleased to speak to this submission.

1. **Flood Resilience on the Taieri Plain.** The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board along with the community that we represent are highly concerned about the flood resilience of our area. We face elevated risk due to climate change and there is a rightful expectation from our community that the ORC is doing everything that it can to protect life and property from an adverse rain event. Much of our community pays a heavy targeted rate for flood protection which adds to the expectation that the required maintenance and improvements are being done. The aspects of greatest concern are:
 - a. The integrity of the Taieri flood bank that protects Outram. The porosity of this flood bank is a known issue to the ORC. We submit that the remedial work should be undertaken without delay as the failure of this flood bank poses a significant risk to life and property in the Outram township and surrounds. In addition to the protection of Outram, it was once common practice for the gravel aggradation in the Outram Glen stretch of the Taieri to be removed improving the flow and capacity of the river. In response to a question at the recent ORC community engagement in Outram, the ORC have stated that in the past the removal of this gravel was undertaken by a contractor for the value of the gravel removed, but this is no longer economically viable and the practice has ceased. The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board submits that the gravel should be removed as essential flood protection maintenance and should be undertaken whether or not the gravel removed is saleable.
 - b. The maintenance of the Silverstream flood protection scheme. This scheme was built in 1974 by the Otago Catchment Board to protect Mosgiel from the water of the Silverstream which has a large catchment area and is prone to rising very quickly in the event of heavy rain. The scheme was engineered to cope with a flow of 175 cumecs at the Gordon Road Bridge before the spillway activates. The Board has learned that the Gordon Road spillway now activates at just 115 cumecs due to aggradation of the stream bed and degradation of the banks due to erosion. This elevates the risk of overflow and the severity of any overflow flooding those houses located to the west of the Silverstream. The reduction in capacity also poses a risk to Mosgiel as the eastern bank will also overflow earlier than it would if the Silverstream had been maintained to specification. The Silverstream flood protection was designed and built to cope with a 1 in 50-year event, this is no longer the case. The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board is aware that the ORC is fully aware of this loss of capacity, the elevated risk that this creates for life and property on the Taieri, and what needs to be done to restore the Silverstream channel to its original specification. The Board is gravely concerned that this essential maintenance is not being done due to the cost of completing the work, on a cost versus benefit basis, despite this decision risking life and property. We submit that the Silverstream should be restored to its full capacity and that our communities have a right to expect this be done without further delay.
 - c. The maintenance of the Owhiro Stream and its tributaries. The Owhiro Stream and its tributaries drain low lying areas to the east of Mosgiel. This area has significant developments underway which will add increased stormwater into the stream. Several



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residents have raised concerns with the Board regarding the maintenance of the Owhiro as several sections appear overgrown and obstructed. The Board submits that the Owhiro Stream along with its tributaries should be regularly maintained and kept clear at all times.

- d. The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board submits that all the drainage and pumping infrastructure across the Taieri should be assessed and improved to meet the increasing risk of an adverse rain event.
- e. The Board also has concerns about pollution of the Owhiro Stream and the Silverstream caused by run off from Urban areas which ultimately ends up in the Taieri River. The Taieri River is an important source of food and recreation for many people.

2. Cycle Trails across the Taieri. The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board is fully committed to supporting the Taieri Trail Group and the establishment of an off-road cycle trail connecting to the Clutha Gold Cycle Trail at Waihola, through to Outram, and then on to Mosgiel. There are numerous benefits to our community and to wider Dunedin.

- a. The economic spin off for Outram, Mosgiel and Dunedin from cycle tourists continuing their journey from Central Otago onto Dunedin. This will bring employment, ancillary businesses, and provide a boost to the communities on the Taieri.
- b. The contribution to the ORC's Carbon Zero goals by providing a flat commuting option between Outram and Mosgiel for adults and college students. A significant reduction in car journeys as a result.
- c. The creation of an important low-cost, low carbon, safe family recreation amenity for all Dunedin residents including the elderly and children.
- d. The creation of a significantly safer option than the current on-road route from Waihola which includes death-defying crossings of SH1 and several narrow rural roads.

The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board submits that the ORC should give urgency to a favourable response to the Taieri Trails Group application to utilise ORC land and assets to make this Trail a reality.

3. Bus Services to Taieri Communities. The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board regularly receives concerns from the community about the availability and frequency of public transport throughout the Taieri. The most common requests received are:

- a. The restoration of school bus services to outlying areas of the Taieri including Outram and Allanton. The recent cessation of these services has significantly increased the number of car journeys into Dunedin each day, by upwards of 100 trips each way.
- b. The re-routing of the existing loop buses to incorporate new suburbs further out from the centre of Mosgiel.
- c. Consideration should be given to smaller PSV's servicing Outram, Allanton and the Airport joining with larger express buses then travelling from Mosgiel into Dunedin.

The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board submits that a full review of public transport is warranted in conjunction with the development of the Mosgiel Park and Ride facility.

The Mosgiel Taieri Community Board thanks the ORC for this opportunity to submit to the Annual Plan which will hopefully drive some changes to the LTP and improvements on the Taieri.

Thank you.



15 April 2023
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin, 9054

Submission on the 2023 - 2024 Annual Plan

This Submission is provided on behalf of the Otago Fish & Game Council (**Fish and Game**). For additional information please contact Nigel Paragreen using the details below.

Submitter Details

Submitter: The Otago Fish & Game Council
Contact person: Nigel Paragreen, Environmental Officer
Email: nparagreen@fishandgame.org.nz
Office phone: 03 477 9076
Postal address: PO Box 76, Dunedin 9016

Introduction

1. Fish and Game is the statutory manager of sports fish and game bird resources within Otago. It holds functions and responsibilities set out in the Conservation Act 1987. The organisation's functions include managing, maintaining and enhancing the sports fish and game resources of Otago in the recreational interests of anglers and hunters; representing the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process; and advocating the interests of the Council, including its interests in habitats. This submission has been developed in line with these functions.

A long history of environmental and policy failure

2. To understand the issues raised in this submission, it is critical that they are placed within a historical environmental and policy context.
3. Anglers and hunters have a long history with the Otago environment. Fish and Game, and the Otago Acclimatisation Society which preceded it, have been working in environmental fields for over a century – longer than most European institutions in the region.
4. In this time, the quality and scale of water bodies in the region has diminished greatly. Research clearly indicates that the main cause of this degradation arises from land use changes,¹ however, I also acknowledge the impact that the introduction of trout and salmon have had on native aquatic species.

¹ Joy, M., & Death, R. (2004). Application of the index of biotic integrity methodology to New Zealand freshwater fish communities. *Environmental Management*, 415 - 428.



5. As it stands currently, many water bodies in Otago are degraded. For example:
 - a. The mean allocation sought for deemed permit applications that Fish and Game was an affected party to in the lead up to 2021 was 522% of the 7-day mean annual low flow (**MALF**), with the mean residual flow from the same dataset being just 24% of MALF.² Emerging general guidance suggests that these are magnitudes higher than the levels required to ensure abstraction does not cause ecological degradation. With Plan Change 7 essentially rolling over surface water consents for the short term, it is prudent to expect current allocations are similar to these figures.
 - b. 63%³ of all State of Environment monitoring sites in Otago did not meet one or more national bottom lines from the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020. In some rohe this number was much higher, such as:
 - i. 100% of sites were below a national bottom line in the lower Clutha rohe;
 - ii. 88% of sites were below a national bottom line in the in Dunedin & Coast FMU; and
 - iii. 87% of sites were below a national bottom line in the in the North Otago FMU.
6. Some of these issues have developed recently, others have been around for a decades. Water quality issues, particularly in the lower Clutha rohe, are relatively recent and Fish and Game's experience is that they have arisen with the increased prevalence of intensive land use in the last few decades. The significant impact of deemed permits have been long observed but they were supposed to have been resolved within the Resource Management Act system, with its aim of sustainable management, by 2021. While most deemed permits are now transferred to resource consents, sustainable management is yet to be achieved.
7. For many years, particularly in the 2000's and 2010's, the ORC has invested just a fraction of what it should have in the fields of policy; freshwater science; and community and stakeholder engagement. Years of underinvestment have benefited residents by keeping rates low but have meant that the ORC dropped behind the curve in terms of knowledge about the region's water bodies, developing policy to tackle issues and relationships with communities and stakeholders to implement solutions.
8. It is now broadly recognised that the Regional Plan: Water for Otago (**RPW**) is out of date and ill-equipped to implement modern central government policy. In recent years, three present or past Environment Court judges have commented on the inadequacy of the RPW, including

² Plan Change 7 Evidence in Chief of Nigel Paragreen, paragraph 83

³ Otago Regional Council. (n.d.). *State and Trends of River and Lake Water Quality in the Otago Region 2000 - 2020*. Dunedin: Otago Regional Council. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.orc.govt.nz/media/9781/state-and-trends-of-lake-and-river-water-quality-in-the-otago-region-2000-to-2020.pdf>



that it makes barely any effort to manage water volumes,⁴ provides no direction on environmental outcomes⁵ and is not fit for purpose.⁶

9. Environmental outcomes in Otago's water bodies are poor and the policy regime guiding decisions is not fit for purpose. A massive effort will be required by all to make it right – the ORC and Fish and Game included.

A path forward

10. Combined, the Essential Freshwater Package and the ORC's agreed workplan with the Minister for the Environment provide a potential pathway to resolve the significant issues facing Otago water bodies.
11. The development and implementation of a Regional Policy Statement and a Land and Water Regional Plan, properly focused on the concept of Te Mana o te Wai and meaningfully restoring degraded ecosystems, should be a priority.
12. Fish and Game supports this pathway and implores the ORC to resource it adequately.
13. Fish and Game also supports the focus in this Long Term Plan on engagement with the public on resource management issues. As discussed above, the freshwater issues in the region are significant and it is helpful for Council to have people on the ground, discussing the issues, regulatory context and the potential options to move forward.
14. It is critical that the Regional Council is honest with the public about the nature of freshwater issues and the direction of travel required to resolve them. The public should be forewarned and assisted in understanding the justification for actions to overcome environmental issues where they are required - returning allocated water to water bodies, increasing minimum flows, curtailing the discharge of nutrients or re-designing existing urban stormwater systems for example.
15. Change of this nature is foreseeable in the development process of the Land and Water Regional Plan and, as elected leaders, Council should be preparing the public for these actions if they seem likely to occur. Thoughtful engagement with the public now is likely to reduce the scale of conflict down the line.

⁴ *Lindis Catchment Group Incorporated v Otago Regional Council* [2019] NZEnvC 166 at paragraph 3.

⁵ *Otago Regional Council* [2021] NZEnvC 164 at paragraph 321.

⁶ Skelton, Peter. 2019. *Investigation of Freshwater Management and Allocation Functions at Otago Regional Council*.

Clutha Lagoon restoration

16. The Clutha Lagoon continues to find itself subject to significant alteration at the hands of humans. Very poor water quality and algal blooms are a common occurrence. Disconnection from the Clutha River / Mata-au mouths, flood protection schemes and discharges from surrounding intensive land use are likely the main causes. With the onset of climate change, Fish and Game expects the current issues to be exacerbated.
17. The below photograph, taken during Fish and Game paradise shelduck / pūtangitangi (*Tadorna variegata*) monitoring flights in January 2023 are an excellent visual expression of the water quality issues.



18. Despite this, the lagoon's ecosystem is home to an array of species, including whitebait spawning and a popular fishery. The ecosystem has proved to be remarkably resilient and Fish and Game expects that it could be dramatically improved if the water quality issues were resolved.
19. Because of the significance of the lagoon and the species present, there are a number of parties that have a keen interest in this water body. There are also a variety of internal and external funding sources which could be brought to bear. For these reasons, it presents as an excellent opportunity for the Regional Council to partner with key organisations to enhance ecosystems and biodiversity and climate resilience.
20. Fish and Game is aware that such a project is being developed by Council staff and wishes to show its support and desire for the project to be prioritised.



Conclusion and relief sought

21. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on annual plan.
22. Fish and Game seeks that:
 - a. the ORC continues to correct its historic underinvestment such that water bodies are protected, and restored where degraded, within a generation;
 - b. a joint project to restore the Clutha Lagoon is along with Fish and Game and other key organisations is prioritised; and
 - c. the funding required to contribute towards these goals in this annual plan is provided in full.
23. Fish and Game does not wish to speak to its submission at a hearing.



Otago Regional Council Annual Plan 2023

**Submission from the
Otago Peninsula Community Board**

The Board thanks the Otago Regional Council for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2023 Annual Plan on behalf of the Otago Peninsula Community.

Otago Harbour Management

The Otago Harbour is central to our community for recreation, play, business, biodiversity, transport and food. Our community and its whanau are reliant on its health and management by the Council for the benefit of our community and the wider region. With a significant number of stakeholders and the reliance of them on the harbour for a broad range of reasons greater co-ordination of governance, capital investment and development is required.

- The Board submits that a joint Harbour Management Plan be developed detailing health, recreational development and monitoring outcomes and programmes.
- The Board submits that greater financial investment is required by the Council for recreation, biodiversity and tourism

The Board notes again that recent Ministry for the Environment on the impact of plastic on marine ecosystems. At Pilots Beach on Otago Peninsula, it is reported that:

- There are 15 items of rubbish for every 100sqm of beach, of which 23% is hard plastics and 23% are food wrappers.
- The Board seeks action by the ORC to enforce stormwater provisions, manage better pollution responses and work proactively with industry and local government to improve the health and well being of our harbour from micro-plastic waste that affects our biodiversity.

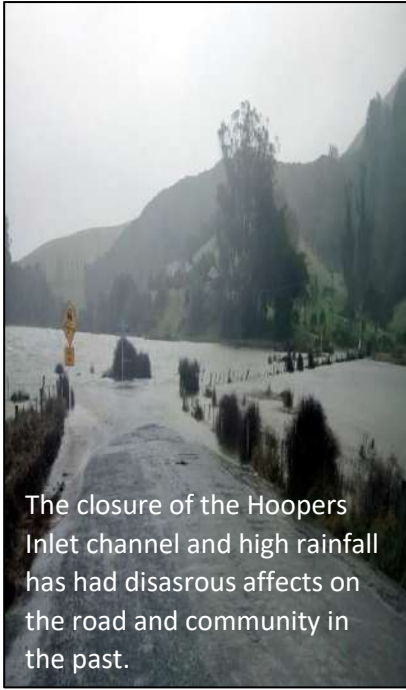


Figures 3&4 show the type of stormwater filters utilised in removing plastics that enter in significant waterways like the Otago Harbour.

In March 2023 Keep New Zealand Beautiful reported in its National Litter Audit that:

- Plastic litter around Otago has increased by nearly 900% over the past three years, the latest Keep New Zealand Beautiful National Litter Audit shows.
- It was among the most prolific types of litter found during a survey of 20 sites around the region in 2022.
- In 2019, 0.76 litres of plastic litter was found per 1000sq m. But in 2022, the amount ballooned to 7.59 litres per 1000sq m.
- Nationally, the 2022 audit found there had been a 335.9% increase in plastic litter — from 7.35 litres in 2019, to 32.04 litres in 2022.

Dredging of Hooper's Inlet



The Hoopers Inlet channel is rapidly becoming shut off from the ocean as a prolonged period of north-easterly wind has driven sand into it, narrowing the outlet. This closure has occurred before with disastrous results for the Allan's Beach Road and its community. High rain events (pictured) exacerbated by the narrowing and eventual closure of the channel make the area impassable.

- The Board submits that ORC needs that urgent action is required to maintain the channel to reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Public Transport

Public transport is essential for many people within our community and the efficiency and regularity of that service must be continued to ensure our community thrives. However, like any service there needs to be constant adjustment to improve patronage and the level of service.

The Board submits that:

- That the Council provide an additional afternoon commuter service from 3.05pm for the City to Harington Point route to improve the safety of commuters from overcrowding.
- Consultation and implementation of bilingual place names and signage on the Otago Peninsula including work with the ORC over bus signage as pictured.
- That the Otago Regional extend the Peninsula service to Taiaroa Head



Biosecurity – Pest Plants and Animals

The location of the Otago Peninsula and its importance to the region as a hub of biodiversity means that the area faces unique challenges for both public and private landowners who are working to improve their property for the benefit of biodiversity on the Otago Peninsula. Pest plant control is a major component of ecological restoration and one that many landowners and groups spend significant resources on to achieve.

The rabbit problem in our community is high and this creates serious problems with predator/prey relationships for our area due to increased numbers of mustelids surviving on rabbits. This creates high risk for iconic species of birdlife such as Yellow-eyed Penguin and Blue Penguin through predation that the Peninsula and the City relies on for economic wealth and development. While the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust has made excellent inroads in the possum numbers of the Peninsula and has formed a model of community led control, the opportunity is now required to extend that model onto the rabbit/mustelid issues that we have on the Peninsula.

- The Board submits that this should be a priority for the Otago Regional Council so that conservation and biodiversity gains made on the Peninsula and other areas are able to be built on and enlarged.
- It is the submission of the Peninsula Community Board that resources in control, research and advocacy are required from the Otago Regional Council to support landowners and organisations who are undertaking this type of animal control on the Otago Peninsula. Again there is opportunity for information and resource sharing from the ORC and other agencies.



Tomahawk Lagoon and Sand Mining Issues

While progress has been made with the community on the lagoon project and this has been part of the Council's Annual Plan there is always more that can be done to support the freshwater health of the area. The community must also be reassured that the potential of flooding through the continued lowering of the beach by sand mining does not irrevocably damage private properties in the area.

The Board submits that:

- The community have constantly challenged the Council over the consent and contractors activities in this area. With the threat of sea level rise from climate change it is timely that this activity be changed for the benefit of this community and the lagoon ecosystem.

The Otago Peninsula Community Board appreciates the support Otago Regional Council has already given to our priorities and the considerable work staff have undertaken to progress many of them to their current stage. The stronger working relationship we have established with the Otago Regional Council in recent times is greatly valued by the Board. We look forward to working with the ORC to complete these projects for the benefit of the Otago Peninsula community and the wider city.

Paul Pope - Chairman

On behalf of the Otago Peninsula Community Board

21 April 2023

via email: mike.roesler@orc.govt.nz

To whom it may concern,

SUBMISSION ON THE OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2023-2024

Thank you for the opportunity to present Queenstown Lakes District Council's (QLDC) submission to the Otago Regional Council (ORC) Annual Plan 2023-2024. QLDC is also grateful for the one-week extension to the deadline for submissions.

This submission provides feedback on some of the key issues relevant to the district, such as public transport, environment and biodiversity, resilience, natural hazard management and emergency management. A common theme is the desire to continue to build a collaborative partnership with the ORC to achieve good outcomes for the district's communities.

QLDC welcomes a closer working relationship with ORC through the changing landscape of local and regional government due to central government reforms.

QLDC would like to be heard on its submission. It should be noted that due to the timeline of the process, this submission will be ratified by full Council retrospectively at its next meeting.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,



Glyn Lewers
Mayor



Mike Theelen
Chief Executive

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Council recognises that the Annual Plan process focuses on key changes affecting service delivery from what is set out in the Long Term Plan. QLDC's submission therefore focuses on recommendations and opportunities based on activities where ORC and QLDC are currently collaborating. Across the board, QLDC welcomes every opportunity to partner with ORC by building on existing processes for sharing of information, use of common data and evidence and joint engagement with stakeholders.

2.0 Public transport and active travel networks

- 2.1 The provision of effective public transport continues to be a vital issue to the Queenstown Lakes District. Whilst QLDC supports the proposed adjustments by the ORC to its 2023-2024 Annual Plan to provide additional funding to develop real-time transport information and increase driver wages, QLDC recommends that a significant overhaul over and above these actions is needed in order to achieve the necessary mode shift for transport in the district.
- 2.2 This involves moving beyond the paradigm of a demand-led public transport provision, to an approach that drives behaviour change through the provision of effective, customer-centric public transport solutions that align with the needs of our communities. This will include routes that reflect travel pattern demands, significantly reduce emissions and provide affordable intercity and regional connections.
- 2.3 The current Public Transport Business Case for Queenstown needs to consciously move away from services being a lag indication of demand to becoming a lead indicator of demand. This will require earlier, and more significant investment in services but is a well-proven strategy for building demand and influencing behaviour.
- 2.4 Transport is the highest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the district, with all modes of transport accounting for 45% of gross emissions¹. The ORC needs to recognise its role in the development of a strategic programme to counter this and help target net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as per the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act. Ambitious district level emissions reduction targets have also been adopted within the Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-25 (44% reduction in carbon emissions across the district by 2030) and the "Travel to a thriving future: Regenerative Tourism Plan"² (decarbonisation of the local visitor economy by 2030). The roadmap to achieving these targets is contingent on transformative investment in both public transport and active travel networks.
- 2.5 Through the QLDC Ten Year Plan, Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2022-25, Travel to a thriving future: Regenerative Tourism Plan and Annual Plan processes, the district's communities have communicated a strong demand for enhanced public transport across the Whakatipu basin and for the provision of public transport in the Upper Clutha to reduce emissions and enhance community connectivity.
- 2.6 On demand service provision has shown to be successful in places like Timaru. The growth of Wānaka, Albert Town, and Luggate provide the opportunity to develop and deliver a bespoke public transport service to make public transport a real choice for these communities, and we encourage ORC to lead that change.

¹ [otago-region-ghg-profile-report_v4.pdf \(orc.govt.nz\)](#)

² [Travel to a thriving future: Regenerative Tourism Plan](#)

- 2.7 QLDC is taking a lead role with trialing new shuttle service options for areas of our district that are not currently served by public transport networks. QLDC is the primary funder for an extended trial of the Wānaka and Hāwea community shuttle service that is being managed by Link Upper Clutha. This trial will test different network routes, timetable options and demand levels for a public transport service between these two communities. This project delivers upon the commitment made in section 5.3.2 of the Regional Public Transport Plan. QLDC urges ORC to dedicate resourcing to support the delivery of this project and to take ownership of the valuable data set that the project will generate. This data set will provide an important foundation for future planning of permanent public transport in the Upper Clutha.
- 2.8 QLDC notes that central government has made strong commitments to decarbonising the national public transport bus fleet. By 2025, only zero-emission public transport buses can be purchased and the full national public transport bus fleet needs to be decarbonised by 2035. QLDC encourages ORC to take an ambitious approach to investing in innovative, low-emissions public bus solutions that are fit for the alpine environment of the district. Hydrogen and electric models could offer a bold, progressive step towards emissions reduction and a clear signal of the ORC's commitment to climate action across the region.
- 2.9 QLDC will continue to work with ORC through the Grow Well Whaiora Partnership to complete and implement a mode shift plan for the district to encourage the use of public transport and active travel. Current work on the Future Development Strategy will go beyond transport and ensure there is an aligned strategic approach that meets the Government's, QLDC's, ORC's and Kāi Tahu's objectives, and results in best possible urban growth and environmental outcomes in the Queenstown Lakes, while delivering the best possible value for money for infrastructure investment.

3.0 Resilience, Natural Hazard Management and Emergency Management

- 3.1 Community resilience remains imperative in the district, given the high probability of seismic activity and the increasing risks associated with climate change. The Queenstown Lakes district is particularly vulnerable to a wide range of disruptive events which could sever major lifelines and lead to an unprecedented level of welfare demand and mass evacuation coordination. These vulnerabilities necessitate that ORC continue to increase its investment into the district's emergency preparedness.
- 3.2 A key area of resource investment is Lifelines programme management. Due to past under-resourcing there is a significant backlog of lifeline response plans that need reviewing or gaps where no plan exists. Coordination of Regional Lifelines forums, development of stakeholder networks and delivery of key capability building projects also need significant attention. Currently these responsibilities are being coordinated by a fixed-term staff member within the Emergency Management Otago team. QLDC recommends that ORC allocates budget to ensure that this important position is transitioned to a full-time equivalent role.
- 3.3 The work of the ORC Natural Hazard team and its leadership in driving forward key climate adaptation work programmes in the district is of paramount importance. The Glenorchy 'Head of the Lake' project in particular continues to be a major undertaking. QLDC looks forward to progressing the partnership between ORC, iwi, Department of Conservation and community stakeholders in the delivery of this important project. Creating and implementing pragmatic and achievable interventions that reflect both short- and long-term risk, as well as recognising the longstanding community investment and ownership of the township and locals is important. Our communities need to be

part of creating practical solutions that carefully balance risk as well as reality and provide several levels of certainty for them and other communities.

- 3.4 QLDC acknowledges the gains made in the natural hazard area such as additional ORC climate change hazards staff, and requests that ORC progress robust data and mapping work as a priority, to ensure evidence-based decision making in relation to resilience, natural hazards, and emergency management. Recent amendments to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 relating to Land Information Management reports (LIM) have brought to forefront the legal requirement for a single source of truth that is accurate and accessible for the community.

4.0 Environment and biodiversity

- 4.1 Biodiversity and biosecurity are critical to environmental sustainability and improvement. They play a crucial role in the sequestration of carbon to offset climate warming by preventing ingress of unwanted diseases and pests, and by promoting development of indigenous vegetation communities. QLDC recommends that ORC further invests in the biodiversity and biosecurity of the district and in particular, dedicate funding and resource to key actions in the QLDC Climate and Biodiversity Plan in this area. The conservation and biodiversity sector in the district (both funded and volunteer-driven) is high-functioning and well-respected. QLDC encourages ORC to consider increasing the available funding to these groups in order to accelerate ORC's outcomes in the district.
- 4.2 QLDC supports the increase in ORC capacity in the 2023-2024 Annual Plan towards implementing the regional pest plan and operations plan. QLDC has done a significant amount of work in this space, such as extensive rabbit-proof fencing of Council land, in line with ORC best practice guidelines. QLDC recommends that ORC pursue site-led pest programmes for feral goat control in the Whakatipu Basin, such as the high biodiversity Ben Lomond area.
- 4.3 The new National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL) ensures the availability of New Zealand's most favourable soils for food and fibre production, now and for future generations. QLDC requests that ORC confirms adequate funding to progress mapping for the NPS-HPL is completed at pace, in order to inform the management of this non-renewable resource.

5.0 Future Development Strategy

- 5.1 QLDC is pleased to partner alongside ORC on the QLDC Spatial Plan Implementation, the new Future Development Strategy and other future partnerships such as the new Spatial Planning and Natural and Built Environments legislation. Continuing to develop a strong partnership approach is important, as is ensuring that policy directions are matched with funding and work programmes and achieve strategic goals and outcomes. In particular, public transport, hazard mitigation, and water management play a significant role in the ability of communities to achieve their development aspirations. The continued ability of ORC to support the process with staff, resources and funding, and action is critical for mutual success in these areas.

6.0 Regional climate mitigation coordination

- 6.1 QLDC welcomes every opportunity to partner with ORC in relation to climate action and to build on the work that is already underway. Efforts to collaborate in the development

of a consistent approach to data and emissions measurement are already in progress.

6.2 QLDC recommends that ORC ensure sufficient funding and resources are provided through the 2023-2024 Annual Plan to continue to increase its role in regional coordination on climate action, develop a regional climate change strategy, and deliver sufficient climate action that aligns with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.

12 April 2023

To: Otago Regional Council

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the 2023/24 Annual Plan.

The Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter Trust is responsible for raising community funds to support the provision of rescue helicopter services across our region. Our target is to raise a total of upwards of \$900,000 each year.

We greatly appreciate the long-term contribution from the Otago Regional Council towards this hefty community funding requirement and we are grateful that the annual donation of \$350,000 is budgeted to continue across the ten years covered by the Long-Term Plan.

There is ongoing growth in demand for the Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter Service that provides a world class critical care response 24/7, 365 days a year, across the vast and geographically challenging area covered, taking care to patients in often remote and desperate situations.

The recent addition of new IFR (instrument flight rules) routes into even more towns across the region further enhance the calls that can responded to where weather conditions would otherwise prevent a response. Over the past year, the Trust has funded well over \$200k of new and replacement equipment further lifting the scope of care that is taken to patients. This has included replacing the set of night vision goggles that were introduced here sixteen years ago as a world first in rescue helicopters. All these new initiatives enable the teams of highly skilled pilots and paramedics to save more lives.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. We look forward to presenting to Council later this year.

Yours sincerely



Martin Dippie
Chair Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter Trust

19 April 2023

Otago Regional Council
Philip Lain House
Level 2/144 Rattray Street
Dunedin 9016

Email: mike.roesler@orc.govt.nz

Saddle Hill Community Board – Annual Plan Submission

Please accept our apologies for the late submission.

Over the past 16 months we have been working with the Otago Regional Council and advocating on behalf of the community and most importantly our young people with respect to school buses, their frequency and occupancy rates.

We appreciate the staff listening to us and as a result the changes made. The service has improved but unfortunately, we are still seeing the occasional challenge and regular overloading of the bus which has meant the school children have missed the ride to and from school. An example of this is that on Wednesday 5 April 2023, the school bus was so full that a bus load of children were left in Green Island while the bus went to Kings and Queens High Schools, had the pupils disembark and return to Green Island to collect the remaining pupils. Whilst grateful the children got to school, they were all late. Not only is this frustrating but we have winter arriving and children left outside for at least 30 minutes in cold, wet weather will result in preventable illnesses.

We strongly request that the ORC and MOE return back to dedicated school buses at peak times to get our young people to and from school and that they increase the numbers required to accommodate the number of pupils using the service.

I would like to speak to our submission please and look forward to hearing back from you.

Regards

Paul Weir

Paul Weir
Chairperson, Saddle Hill Community Board



SOUTHERN
LAKES
SANCTUARY

Otago Regional Council 2023-24 Annual Plan Submission On behalf of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary

Contact: Paul Kavanagh, Project Director
paul.kavanagh@southernlakessanctuary.co.nz
021 026 09995

We wish to speak at the hearings



ROCK WREN | PIWAUWAU © Oscar Thomas

We write in support of the central tenets of the Otago Regional Council Annual Plan and write:

- 1. To provide background on the role of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary and its relationship with helping New Zealand to meet its international obligations of to uphold the tenets that undergird our World Heritage Status, and the obligations of COP15 with regard to Biodiversity.**
- 2. To situate the work of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary within the context of the Otago Regional Council's Long Term Plan 2021-2031 Goals**
- 3. To thank Otago Regional Council for its support in 2022-23 for being a partner in supporting the Conservation Standards Workshop and for our successful ecofund application.**
- 4. To encourage further collaboration with Otago Regional Council to achieve our shared goals of a flourishing natural environment.**
- 5. To request \$300,000 in funding in 2023-4 to serve as a continuity bridge for the Southern Lakes Sanctuary to continue to deliver its workplan during the period when Jobs for Nature/Kaimahi Te Taiao finishes and new funding streams begin.**
- 6. To encourage Otago Regional Council to find funding of approx. 500k in years 4-6 of the Ten Year Plan for the Southern Lakes Sanctuary so that the SLS can continue to work at landscape scale to support the implementation of our work in integrated environmental management, pest management, and community engagement in the Queenstown Lakes District region of Otago.**

Background:

Biodiversity is critical for maintaining healthy, functioning ecosystems. Biodiversity loss has five key drivers, all related to human activities; climate change, changes in land and sea use, exploitation, pollution and the introduced invasive species.

Nowhere in the world is biodiversity loss more pronounced, mainly as a result of introduced mammalian species. Eighty percent of bats, 84 percent of reptiles, 74 percent of terrestrial birds, and 75 percent of frogs in NZ are currently threatened with or at risk of extinction. (Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ, 2019). Amplifying the challenge, New Zealand has many endemic species, with approximately 40 percent of plants, 90 percent of fungi, 70 percent of animals and 80 percent of freshwater fish found nowhere else. If they are lost here, they are lost entirely (McLean, 2019).

As a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), New Zealand is obligated to reduce biodiversity loss. In response to COP15, then Conservation Minister Poto Williams said:

“Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the richest and most threatened reservoirs of life on earth, with an estimated 80,000 native species of animals, plants, and fungi. These species evolved over 80 million years in isolation from other land masses resulting, in many native species that are endemic. The downside is we have experienced one of the highest extinction rates in the world and have the highest proportion of threatened indigenous species. Aotearoa New Zealand is firmly committed to contributing to the new global targets in line with the national biodiversity strategy, Te Mana o te Taiao.”

Introduced mammals, such as stoats, rats, ferrets, weasels, cats and possums have decimated our native fauna and are responsible for a wave of extinctions. Central Government has pledged to eradicate the three main threats (stoats, rats and possums) by 2050 in possibly the most ambitious conservation project in the world. This has led to a dramatic increase in community groups, and also in technology and innovation groups.

Predator Free activities in the form of trapping having been taking place in pockets of the Queenstown Lakes District during the last 20 years with a significant upswing of activity in the last 10 years with the development of larger scale projects (Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust, Matukituki Animal Pest Control Project, NZ Forest & Bird Protection Society Inc - Central Otago Lakes Branch Makarora work) community focused umbrella groups (Whakatipu Wildlife Trust, Wanaka Backyard Trapping) and private high country stations and property owners investing significantly in biodiversity gain (Soho Properties). In 2019 a consortium of these 6 partners, led by the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust and funded by DOC, QLDC, ORC, and private investors, funded a study to look at the possibility of Landscape Scale approaches to predator suppression and eradication in the whole of the Queenstown Lakes District and to explore the viability of a Predator Free 2050 bid. The findings of that report noted that there were 30 at risk species within the boundary of the district and to bring together the mahi of those groups would be an unprecedented largescale predator trapping effort that **“has no equal in any other region in New Zealand.” Wildlands, 2020**

(CONTINUED)

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Following on that report and stimulated by Central Government’s Conservation Funding in 2020, the Southern Lakes Sanctuary concept was solidified in April 2020 with the idea of turning the entirety of the Queenstown Lakes District into a predator-free sanctuary thus achieving one of QLDC’s Vision Beyond 2050 goals of Waraki: Deafening Dawn Chorus. A successful application was made to Predator Free 2050 where in July 2020, we were offered 8 million dollars for the project, however, we were not able to accept that funding because we could not find non-crown funding to match their 1:1 funding criteria within the short time frame they required us to meet. Had QLDC and ORC been able to be our match partners, as the local and regional councils are in other PF2050 projects, we could have created jobs and fulfilled our climate change biodiversity responsibilities while fast-tracking towards both our district’s and nation’s ambitious 2050 goal.

Southern Lakes Sanctuary and Kaimahi for Nature

Though the PF2050 funding became unavailable, the Southern Lakes Sanctuary Trust was officially formed in 2021 and in July 2021 received notification of being recipients of DOC’s Kaimahi for Nature funding of approximately \$3 million over 3 years. This has allowed us to begin a joint job creation and conservation project designed specifically to protect 155,960 ha of the Queenstown Lakes District from the invasive species of rats, possums, and mustelids, striving to preserve the over 30 at-risk species that are core to our biosphere. The overall project area for the Southern Lakes Sanctuary is the 660,000 ha of the district, however our Kaimahi for Nature funding covers the initial 155,960 ha project area.

We currently have 22 staff working across the district focusing on amplifying the work of our original consortium partners and building strong landscape-scale connections between and among their projects.

The benefit of working at landscape scale allows us to address the true movement of predators in the landscape and apply strategies that can maximise efforts in a wide range of geographic areas more efficiently. Over the 3-year life of the Kaimahi Te Taiao funding cycle we will create a total of 39 FTEs, boosting their standard of living by providing a stable income for these local residents.

The consortium of 6 groups who make up the Southern Lakes Sanctuary Trust represent the mahi of over 90 community groups/projects, landowners, and businesses who have been working for many years to restore the declining biodiversity in our region. The volunteer work of these groups is valued at over \$1.8 million per annum.



STAFF RE-LURING AT 220

(CONTINUED)

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Our work aligns with the following aspects of the Otago Regional Council’s current priorities as stated in the 2023-24 Annual Plan consultation documents:

- Deliver integrated environmental management
- Effectively engage with communities and focus on customer needs
- Collaborate to deliver, including our partnership with mana whenua
- Capacity to implement the Pest Management Plan
- Improve the community’s understanding of climate change-related risk in Otago for informed decisions and action
- Improved partnerships and community engagement
- Biodiversity and Biosecurity [increases]
 - Extending knowledge and monitoring of biodiversity
 - On-the-ground initiatives
 - Implementing the regional pest plan and operations plan

In many ways, we are key deliverers of the Otago Regional Council’s stated goals for the rate payers of this district, and as such, we need Otago Regional Council to become a far stronger partner now and in the future.

Though we have begun our project under the auspices of Kaimahi Te Taiao, this is only the beginning, and it is time for the Otago Regional Council to come in and support us as we deliver the mahi that is truly protecting the biodiversity in our region.

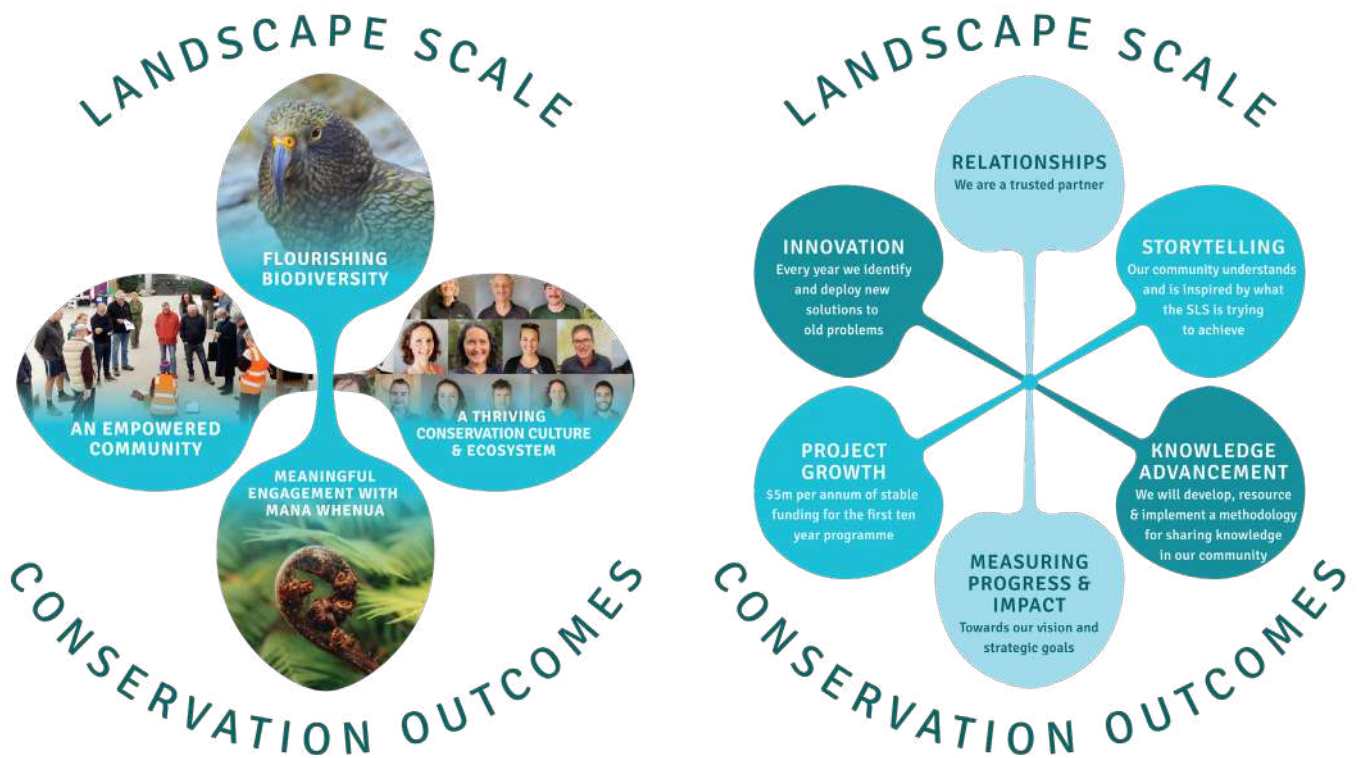
From our initial Kaimahi Te Taiao platform we are now working towards funding our larger 10-20 year \$50 million dollar project. During the three years of the Kaimahi Te Taiao funding we have been building the larger project and collaborating with local, national, and international partners. This requires us to be focused on strategic, long-term innovation and capability building in conservation; activities which are not funded under the Kaimahi for Nature arrangement.

We align strongly to the Otago Regional Council’s Kaupapa of “Enriching life in a way that ensures positive relationships between environment, people and place, now and for our future.”



Our strategic long-term mission

Like the Otago Regional Council’s action plan of “Protect, connect, enhance, enable,” we have 6 strategic focus areas, all of which are situated in the uniqueness of our Landscape Scale and openness approach. Across all of our work we have a philosophy of openness and collaboration which allows us to work together with other large partners such as Mana Tahuna, Wai Wanaka, Predator Free 2050 trust, many Predator Free LTD funded groups, Boffa Miskell, Envico, NZ Autotraps and FTP solutions to be a site for opportunities in innovation, and shared problem solving.



Above: Our Strategic Pillars (left) and Focus Areas (right)

Kaimahi Te Taiao funding runs out in June 2024. While we have been working hard to secure enduring funding, the “cliff” is real for the Southern Lakes Sanctuary, and we require 1.5 million for FY 2024-5 to allow us to continue at our current staffing levels and to maintain the current workplan. DOC has signalled that there will be no more money in that fund, and with the uncertainties created by a 2023 election and potential change of government, we must look to a more secure mosaic of funding for the future made up of local and regional government, as well as the philanthropic sources and the potential of being a site for investors in biodiversity credits and other forms of environmentally focused international funding. In the small window of time ahead, should we not secure the likelihood of funding beyond June 2024 we will be forced to disband our program and staff and all of the gains of this extraordinary period will be lost, thus also destabilising the local economy as high-quality jobs are lost and people will leave the district.

Needless to say, we need to work together to ensure that this doesn’t happen as the last thing we need is for all of this mahi to have been for nothing. Our work is far too important to lose this momentum now.

Request

We seek \$300,000 in this year’s Annual Plan to serve as a funding bridge to allow us to continue our work in the post June 2024 period. We remain confident that we will secure enduring funding however, to ensure we can maintain operations and retain our staff, we require bridging funding for a transition between our existing Kaimahi Te Taiao funding and future funding. With Long Term Plan decisions for funding not likely until August 2024 from both QLDC and ORC, two of our key partners, bridging funding would enable a smooth transition period and would be a significant contribution to our capacity to deliver on our work plan and to move forward into the future.

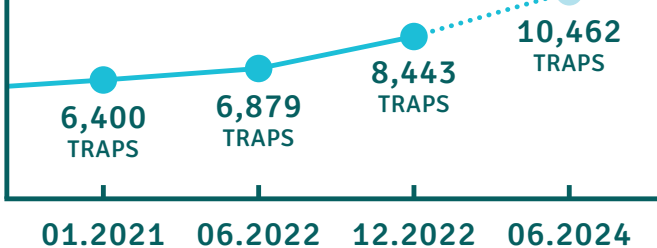
Impact Statement

TRAP CALIBRATION:

20% REPAIRED / 30% CALIBRATED / 86% AUDITED



TRAP TOTALS:



Our number of traps in the field continue to increase and an extensive trap audit and calibration programme has resulted in improved performance.



We have increased monitoring across the district including the use of novel methods such as eDNA monitoring, with a proof-of-concept trial underway for using terrestrial eDNA for monitoring cryptic reptile species.



We have implemented a more adaptive, scientific, decision-making framework including the roll out of a site scoring index for conservation work, and the adoption of the Conservation Standards. We are striving for more efficient and measurable mahi.

We are involved in translocations of some rare taonga species such as mohua and takahē.



Aligned Working Areas

Integrated Environmental Management

Since our inception, we have taken a leadership role in the Queenstown Lakes District to work collaboratively and at landscape scale to develop plans that will have the best possible outcomes for biodiversity and community. In 2023-4 we have received funding from QLDC to have Wildlands Consultants create a GIS layer that captures what fauna was here before human contact. Combining that layer with the layer commissioned by ORC in 2019 of the flora level 1000 years ago will now allow us to begin to create an Optimal Biodiversity Strategy that will give the whole of our district a clear direction to work towards that will integrate the work of the different community groups towards more targeted and strategic outcomes.

We have also co-submitted to the Lotteries Fund with Mana Tahuna and Wai Wanaka an application for funding for \$245,000. This community-facing project allows us to share in real time the changes in the biodiversity health and will encourage a greater level of community engagement in monitoring and mitigation.

This work all builds on the capacity building we began with the Conservation Standards Workshop last May (which was attended by Anna Molloy, Brooke Clarke, Richard Ewans and Simon Park from ORC staff). We meet bi-monthly with the leadership of Wai Wanaka, Mana Tahuna, and the Whakatipu Conservation Alliance to create smooth flows of information about our projects, look for opportunities for synergies, and share our collective goals. We have built a strong, trusting collaboration that continue to strengthen and grow.

Pest Control

For ambitious landscape scale conservation projects like ours, efficient resource use is key, especially with trapping regimes. In addition to our openness to collaborate, we also have an openness to innovate, and are working with many innovation and technology companies to improve our productivity. With vast tracts of our rohe/operational area being remote and difficult to access, technology is the solution for biodiversity gains in these areas. We are currently facilitating a field trial of new “Spitfire” technology, developed by Envico with support from Boffa Miskell Ltd, as well as the AT220, a self-resetting and self-rebaiting possum and rodent trap. We have been working with FTP solutions to develop an Integrated Management System so we can remotely monitor AT220 traps so we can assess bait levels, battery levels and catch data from our office, greatly reducing labour requirements and greatly improving the productivity of trapping operations.

Spatial Plan

As we look to the future of the region, the work of the Whaihora Grow Well Partnership is essential towards a measured approach. We ask to be a partner to be consulted, most especially with the development of the Blue-Green network on both the Whakatipu and Upper Clutha catchments. As we are the only project working at Landscape Scale across all of our district’s catchments, we hold the biggest picture with regard to an understanding of the interconnectedness of all, and as such would be important members of the discussions at the spatial plan level. We can also ‘ground truth’ assumptions that might arise and give a clear understanding of what is already happening at the community level in conservation in the district.

Community Engagement

Finally, through its integrated partnership SLS has a high level of community support and buy in (over 90 community groups which comprise a mosaic of individuals, communities, commercial businesses, high country farms) and believe we provide an ideal platform for research into how to scale community engagement in conservation. Beyond this, there are opportunities to look at nature and well-being, studies of changes in perceptions of personal agency in making change which could be applicable to other fields such as climate change.

Given the Otago Regional Councils agency in climate change, biodiversity protection, and community development, we seek a closer partnership. We want this partnership to facilitate change in a strategic way, ensuring goals are complementary and aligned in a way that sees the highest impact across all facets of society. We want to partner in a way that maximises the chance our work has national and global impact. We want to partner in attracting resource and talent into our district and region that grows a community based on a shared love of this place.

Gratitude for our Collaboration 2022-23

We thank the Otago Regional Council for the positive relationship we have been growing during the last year in particular. ORC's financial support for the Conservation Standards, but moreover its investment in staff to attend, was a critical turning point for us. We have appreciated the efforts made by Pim Borren, Gretchen Robertson, Lloyd McCall, Richard Saunders, and above all our local councillor Alexa Forbes, to engage with us and to work together with us towards finding solutions for the future.

We received an Ecofund grant in 2022 to facilitate a mohua translocation, which will hopefully go ahead this Spring. Thank you for your support in returning this taonga species to the Matukituki valley.



MOHUA © Oscar Thomas

A Role for the Otago Regional Council Going Forward

In these changing times we know that our local and regional governments can't be all things to all people. Organisations like ours can and should be trusted to be able to deliver on many of the outcomes of the regional plan. In the coming year we would like to engage far more significantly in understanding how we can develop a mutually beneficial relationship that ends up with the best possible outcomes for community and the natural world. We see the following as key to that pathway:

- Conversations early in this new fiscal year to work collaboratively to help to solve the Kaimahi Te Taiao funding change to a model that is sustainable in the district to keep work going now and in the future. This is urgent and can't wait.
- A conversation about what is the best financial strategy to achieve this and to begin a conversation about targeted rates. We needn't be afraid of this. We have 90 community groups under our umbrella which represent a significant portion of the community. We may all discover the community would be happy to contribute far more to conservation. Let's find that out together and soon!
- Consult with us. We have expertise on our team and a very strong understanding of what's happening across our area. Openness and collaboration are in the DNA of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary and we extend that to the Otago Regional Council and want to work in much greater partnership in the years ahead.
- Be a leader with Central Government. Our region has been historically underrepresented in Wellington. Help us be the strong voice speaking to Central Government that we need. We'll get in behind you and support you, but we need you to be strong, bold, and willing to advocate for our region. Our biodiversity is too precious and the people who work in this space too precious, too, to allow for us to be anything less than the very best.
- Be ready for us to have a big financial ask in the Long-Term Plan. We do the work of ORC's plans. Let's resource that appropriately and find a way to do that now. We would expect to see at least half of our budget going forward to come from the Otago Regional Council as we are doing the ORC's mandated work. Let's solve this together, but know that in the Long Term Plan we will be asking for a minimum of \$500,000 p/a and that should feel like a relief instead of something frightening because you'll be assured that the work is getting done and getting done well.

Our project areas are the headwaters for the major waterways of this region. They are where the problems are, but also where the solutions lie. We are delighted to be a big part of the solution. Please enable us to be able to make that happen.

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When asked whose responsibility is conservation in the district, we believe the answer should be all of us.

We ask Otago Regional Council to lead by example here and commit to supporting the Southern Lakes Sanctuary in both the short and long term.

We thank you for the support you have given us this year and we look forward to building and growing this as we go forward.

Nga mihi,



Paul Kavanagh, Project Director

Leslie Van Gelder, Greg Lind, Stephen Batstone,
Co-Chairs on behalf of the Trustees of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary Trust

17 April 2023

The Chief Executive Officer
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

Strath Taieri Community Board - Community Plan Submission to Otago Regional Council April 2023

Priorities for our Community:

1. Security and integrity of infrastructure from flooding.

There is an absolute need to resolve – as a matter of urgency – ongoing issues within and adjacent to the Middlemarch township with regard to flooding.

Specifically it is imperative that there is an overarching management approach adopted to encompass the whole catchment area from the summit and upper slopes of the Rock and Pillar Range through to where the flood waters enter the Taieri River. Coordinated planning and implementation across land of all tenure is essential. The Board strongly urge the DCC and ORC to take a joint lead role in this coordination.

It has now been nearly 2 ½ years since the last major flooding event. Some adhoc actions have been undertaken by ORC, DCC and some landowners but importantly and most significantly no overview strategy has yet been released clearly defining work required to mitigate impacts of the next event. Random adhoc efforts in parts of the flood zone is potentially more damaging as it simply more quickly passes the issue to someone else in the community. It is essential that work be coordinated and structured - and that simply hasn't happened here.

Active engagement at the most senior level in ORC is urged to address and resolve this issue.

2. Carbon Zero.

The Strath Taieri is largely a rural farming hub and contains the largest area of rural land of any Board area in the Dunedin City rohe.

With 46% of the city's emissions being assessed as agriculturally based there is potentially significant impacts on our community in reaching published reduction levels by 2030 especially given the current lack of viable "clean energy" farm vehicle alternatives. That along with proposed biogenic emission reduction targets sets a very high hurdle for our community.

While we support some farm forestry mitigation approaches we caution against wholesale farm conversion to achieve those reductions. Impacts from that approach not only hit food production potential but also have huge social and environmental consequences with loss of families and infrastructure from our communities. Conversion of good productive agricultural land for forest is not in itself an acceptable answer in our view to the Carbon issue.

The Board would also encourage further work being done in the area of carbon sequestration through acceptance that both large scale riparian and other planting of long-lived native plant species as is being undertaken locally by the likes of the Mid Taieri Wai group and various private landowners is a viable and effective tool to reduce carbon.

3. Public Transport.

There are currently no public transport options available to residents of the Strath Taieri.

Any local resident who for a wide variety of reasons is no longer able to drive is totally dependant on others for transport to/from town for health or other business. This has the effect of isolating many from services readily available to others in Otago or force those people to leave their homes, family and friends to move into the city where public transport is provided as a matter of course.

We totally accept that a full public transport service is unrealistic given our small rural population. However we are firmly of the view that as a minimum service to ratepayers, a twice weekly return service should be available on a prescribed timetable so as they can make firm commitments to attend appointments and be assured that transport will be available to achieve that.

It is further recommended that service be contracted locally in the Strath Taieri to minimise unnecessary travel and costs. An appropriate sized vehicle could leave Middlemarch at a specified time, collect residents enroute and return later that day.

4. Water Quality.

As a Community Board our long term aspirational objective is to ensure that the quality of water leaving our area is of a higher standard than when it enters.

Accordingly we urge Council to instigate regular water quality measurements at key points along the length of the Taieri River with an initial minimum of four sampling points spaced at strategic sites within the Strath Taieri area.

As a Board we hear anecdotal reports of various negative influences on water quality but it is often impossible to track that to a source or even a general location. We believe to enable us all to be accountable for our impacts it is essential to have a clear picture on the quality of water at key points along its length. That would enable possible sources of contamination to be identified and appropriate mitigation measures be undertaken as required.

Additionally we seek opportunities to be better briefed by Council staff on the wider range of issues associated with the Taieri river and catchment within the Strath Taieri area so as a Board we can be better informed on matters that are of local interest and concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the 2023/24 annual plan.

Kind regards



Barry Williams
Chairperson
Strath Taieri Community Board
Email address: Barry.williams@powerfarming.co.nz



The Chief Executive
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

14th April 2023

Otago Regional Council 2023 - 2024 Annual Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on your 2023-24 Annual Plan. We recognise that this is a continuation of your 2021-31 Long Term Plan and that there are not many 'new' items in your published plan, but we wish to make comment as follows:-

Public Transport

After many years of asking, it was pleasing to finally have a weekend bus service for our north coast region (Route 1 : Palmerston-Dunedin). It is proving to be popular, but some minor tweaks to the timetable would be appropriate. We will discuss this with your ORC Transport Team.

There is one pick-up / drop-off location along Route 1 that does not appear on your timetable, namely Evansdale. We have asked for this to be included in the published timetable, a task that should not be too arduous.

It is pleasing to see that there is a plan in place to relieve some of the overcrowding on our buses at certain times of the day. During a recent meeting I had with ORC staff and senior staff from the bus contractor, it was proposed to supply a second bus for Warrington and Waitati at these busy times. At the time of writing this we do not have any details about pick-up/drop-off location/s in Warrington, nor do we have actual times. We look forward to receiving this information in the very near future.

Emergency Management

It is pleasing to see, on page 6 of your plan, that you make mention of Emergency Management Response. In our area we have a number of distinct townships, and a good deal of work has gone into forming community response groups with a view to improving local resilience in the event of any natural adverse events. However, we are disappointed that there appears to be a bit of a disconnect between ORC and Dunedin City Council in this regard. We are keen to see that this is resolved so that there can be clarity within our communities about who will do what when nature throws its periodic tantrums.

Karitane Harbour/Waikouaiti River Estuary

One of the functions of a Community Board is to respond to concerns within our communities. During the past year we have been having a close look at various issues in the Karitane Harbour wider area. One of the issues is the sand bar that has formed at the entrance to the harbour, something that is potentially dangerous. In the coming weeks we wish to discuss this in detail with ORC staff and elected members. We believe that it is important for ORC to work

closely with Dunedin City Council in examining the coastal hazards that exist along Otago's East Coast, and to ensure that our north coast area is not forgotten in among the well-publicised issues with the Dunedin City beaches.

Blueskin Bay

There have been concerns about the water quality in Blueskin Bay between Waitati and Warrington, mostly related to possible leachate from the Warrington sewerage treatment facility.

We understand that ORC is now actively looking into this, and we wish to add that many local residents have a view that the recent, and current, housing development around Warrington may have detrimental consequences as the local population increases. We would like to be involved in discussions on this topic.

Various Other Issues

As you put this Annual Plan to bed, no doubt you will soon be starting work on the next issue of your Long Term Plan. We look forward to receiving information on that in due course, and it is likely that we will have comment on many issues of interest to our wider community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make our comments above on this Annual Plan. I wish to be heard at any public hearing you may have in the near future.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alasdair Morrison', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alasdair Morrison
Chairman
Waikouaiti Coast Community Board
Email: info@calmarine.co.nz
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SOUTHERN LAKES SANCTUARY



Building on the success of Jobs for Nature in the Queenstown Lakes district

March 2023

85

PEOPLE IN PAID ROLES

6,600

SQUARE KMS PROJECT AREA

30+

AT RISK TAONGA SPECIES

100+

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Investing in the future of our district and the future of the planet

The Queenstown Lakes district is surrounded by the stunning Southern Alps, crystal clear lakes and rivers, and an abundance of natural resources. We also face complex environmental and land management challenges due to the combined effects of climate change, escalating pest problems, tourism, land use change and urban development.

Covid delivered a once-in-a-generation upsurge in funding to accelerate environmental initiatives across Aotearoa New Zealand. Jobs for Nature is a \$1.219 billion programme delivered across five government agencies to benefit the environment, people and the regions. Community groups which have benefited from this funding now face the task of determining how the positive outcomes which have only just started to be realised can be maintained into the future. Without further funding, environmental gains will be eroded, and significant knowledge and capability will be lost as programmes are wound down and discontinued.

Jobs for Nature has been particularly successful in the Queenstown Lakes district, where every sector of our district is economically dependent on a healthy environment. Jobs for Nature funding enabled Southern Lakes Sanctuary, Mana Tāhuna and WAI Wānaka to scale, powering up community-led action and providing meaningful work for people affected by the loss of tourism.

With the strong foundations established through Jobs for Nature funding, there is now an urgent need to secure ongoing investment to support people on the ground and also enable the connection, collaboration and coordination of effort needed to preserve the natural beauty, biodiversity and resources of our district for the benefit of future generations.

Jobs for Nature was a covid response It needs to continue as a climate response

On 27 June 2019 the Queenstown Lakes District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. The government of Aotearoa New Zealand declared a climate emergency in 2020. The recent disasters in the North Island demonstrate that we are facing an unprecedented future and need to act now to decarbonise our farming, business and visitor economies.

The Queenstown Lakes district has set an ambitious goal of making its visitor economy carbon zero by 2030. Collaboration will be a key factor in transitioning to a low-carbon economy and Southern Lakes Sanctuary, Mana Tāhuna and WAI Wānaka have the skills and capabilities needed to mobilise our community and drive the delivery of effective climate action.

- Native planting
- Plant maintenance
- Pest animal control
- Pest weed management
- Wilding tree control
- Biodiversity
- Fresh water
- Carbon mitigation
- Native species conservation
- Research
- Catchment Groups
- Urban Action Groups
- Education & Schools
- Story telling
- Community outreach
- Citizen science
- Internships
- Communities of Practice
- Data
- Mapping
- Catchment wide monitoring



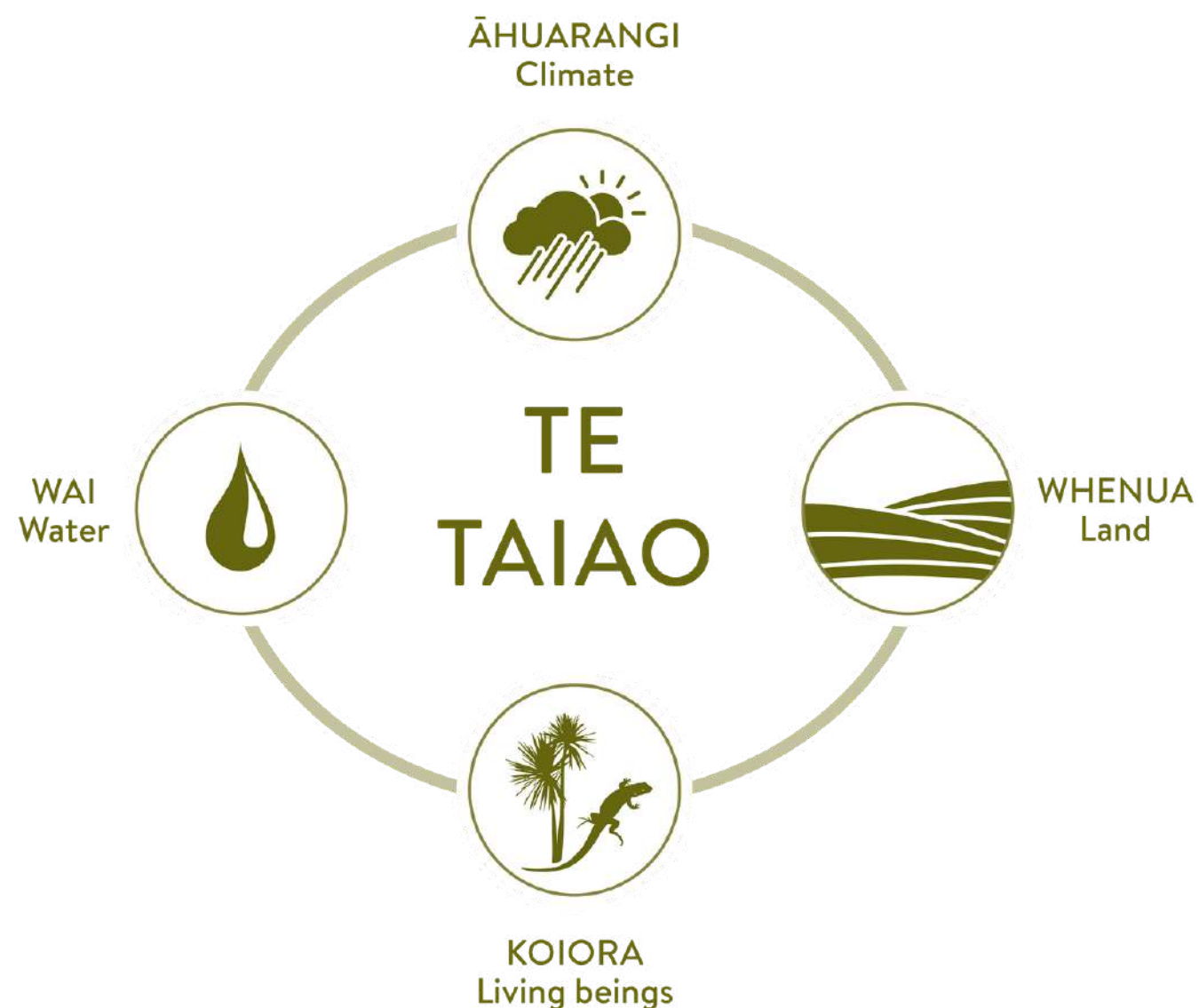
SOUTHERN
LAKES
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Environmental programs sustain the life systems that sustain us

The crucial link between the health of our environment and the ultimate wellbeing of people is well understood.

The people who live here and those who visit tend to be passionate about the Queenstown Lakes district, placing a high value on our unique natural assets and connection to the outdoors. The downside of our district's perceived 'pristine state' is that government and philanthropic resources are largely focussed in places where degradation is apparent. Our local communities are committed to taking a proactive approach when it comes to protecting te Taiao, and we need help to make this happen.



Enduring funding streams are needed to retain the skills developed through Jobs for Nature and continue our important work to build ecological and environmental resilience in the face of the climate crisis.

WAI Wānaka, Southern Lakes Sanctuary and Mana Tāhuna collectively employ more than 85 people through Jobs for Nature.

We have been able to provide meaningful employment and training opportunities for our people, working in partnership with landowners, community groups and government agencies to deliver environmental gains for our district. The multifaceted skills, experience, knowledge and passion already in place within our teams provide a pathway to support our community to achieve our collective aspirations for te Taiao.

The environmental sector is historically under resourced and undervalued. JB Were estimated in 2020 that environmental initiatives receive only around 1.5% of philanthropic support in Aotearoa New Zealand. With an economic downturn on the horizon and considerable resources being redirected as a result of the urgency of recent flooding and disaster responses, the next two years are going to be extremely difficult for environmental groups across the motu.

Although our people could easily take up other employment at the end of Jobs for Nature, the loss to our environment over time would be huge.



Jobs for Nature provided more value than just creating jobs

The interdependence of our tourism, business and farming sectors is a unique characteristic of the Queenstown Lakes district. Jobs for Nature funding has enabled us to build a cross-sector, collaborative model for community stewardship, by connecting community members, iwi, landowners, regulators, businesses and visitors. The full benefits of all that has been achieved through Jobs for Nature will take time to manifest.

Key benefits of Jobs for Nature funding beyond the creation of jobs and direct environmental outcomes include:

- Strengthened community voice and capability resourcing to empower our collective rōpū, whānau and communities to get involved in environmental action
- The development of enduring, joined-up environmental strategies specific to our district
- Increased partnership and collaboration, enabling alignment of effort across agencies, organisations, groups and individuals to improve environmental outcomes - pest animals and weeds have no respect for property boundaries
- The ability to connect and share knowledge locally, regionally and nationally, incorporating learnings from past government funding
- The creation of pilot programmes and technology trials, enabling the 'how' with industry and research partners
- The provision of education, engagement and outreach activities
- Effective utilisation of volunteer efforts

"The work that these organisations do both individually and collaboratively is incredibly important in the wellbeing of te taiao (the natural world), biodiversity, climate change and the ecosystems which overlay all of these (including industry, communities and the economy)."

Tim Barke, CEO Lake Wānaka Tourism and Chair Otago Conservation Board

Further support for Jobs for Nature will:

TE TAIAO

- Build on the environmental gains achieved through Jobs for Nature funding
- Increase visibility and awareness of our region's environmental challenges
- Leverage the interconnections between our environmental programmes and district-wide initiatives such as the Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan, economic diversification efforts and the goal to be Carbon Zero by 2030
- Progress the changes required by government regulation (freshwater, climate, biodiversity)
- Provide resources to support our community's larger sustainability aspirations, amplifying community effort

TĀNGATA

- Improve the wellbeing of whānau across the Queenstown Lakes district
- Maintain organisational knowledge, capability, capacity
- Provide rewarding work that connects people to nature, providing credible career pathways
- Retain our readiness to scale in the future, particularly to take advantage of government priorities related to climate and biodiversity
- Support continued upskilling within teams and cross-skilling locally, regionally and nationally

MAHI TAHI

- Strengthen connections established with key stakeholders including ORC, QLDC, DOC, landowners, researchers, community groups, schools, industry groups, businesses and government agencies
- Allow us to continue to learn from others, and to share our knowledge with other groups across Aotearoa New Zealand



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WAI
WĀNAKA

Manaaki Tāngata, Manaaki Whenua, Haere Whakamua

Other than government, no single funding channel will support Jobs for Nature as currently structured. Mana Tāhuna, Southern Lakes Sanctuary and WAI Wānaka are actively exploring alternative revenue channels, particularly niches where our mahi complements that of existing businesses and agencies.

Options for continuing on

The options presented here do not immediately replace the funding provided through Jobs for Nature. These and other options will be progressively refined over the next 18 months - 2 years.

- An obvious source of revenue is for the landowners who have benefited from Jobs for Nature to contribute financially to future labour costs.
- Private landowners, including farmers, horticulturalists, viticulturalists and developers provide ongoing opportunities such as planting, plant maintenance and pest weed/tree management.
- Pathways could be made available for community groups to undertake work for DOC, local councils, LINZ and QEII. Our district provides endless scope for environmental mahi to be carried out on public conservation land. Opportunities with local councils include the creation and maintenance of biodiversity corridors aligned with climate action and spatial planning objectives.
- Wilding trees, an economic and environmental disaster for Aotearoa New Zealand, are an increasing problem across the district. While aerial spraying is used to control large areas of dense infestations, there are many pockets that need to be treated on the ground if we are to prevent further spread and restore the natural character of our landscapes.
- Expansion of pest animal trapping networks.
- Carrying out district-wide rabbit control in collaboration with DOC, ORC and landowners.
- Supporting a regenerative tourism framework for the Queenstown Lakes district.
- The Tourism Innovation Fund - collectively exploring initiatives that combine positive outcomes for both tourism and te Taiao.

Retaining our people also provides us with the capability and readiness to scale to support broader initiatives.

- The ambitious goal of Carbon Zero by 2030 for the Queenstown Lakes district will rely on environmental organisations to progress action towards the decarbonisation of our district. Nature-based solutions to support climate action and decarbonisation are now an urgent priority.
- Covid exposed our district's economic dependence on tourism and considerable effort is now being directed towards diversification. 'Environmental Services' has been identified as a diversification focus, to foster ongoing delivery of environmental mahi alongside the development of expertise and IP that can be sold outside the district.
- As environmental outcomes tend to be difficult to measure over the short term, a catchment wide monitoring system is currently being developed in the Upper Clutha, providing measures based on 6 indicators (greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, social wellbeing, land use change, climate variables and biodiversity). This will require long term collection and management of data.



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WEST HARBOUR COMMUNITY BOARD

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The Chief Executive
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
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14 April 2023

West Harbour Community Board (WHCB) Submission to the Otago Regional Council Annual Plan 2023/24

INTRODUCTION

West Harbour is a coastal Dunedin community where most residents live within easy walking distance of the Otago Harbour and the ocean. Proximity to healthy land and water is one of the most precious resources for our community, and the intrinsic, aesthetic, spiritual and mental health benefits value that comes with living adjacent to nature.

The West Harbour community value access to kai moana, the recreational and commercial opportunities afforded due to living adjacent to Otago Harbour, and the conservation and recreation value of Orokonui Ecosanctuary among others.

Our community feel deep affinity with the Otago Harbour and the marine area that surrounds us, however our community are conscious of and concerned that there is considerable and increasing pressures placed on the outlying coastal communities such as the precious environments of Osbourne, Pūrākaunui, Long Beach/Warauwerawera, and Aramoana. In addition, West Harbour is the gateway to Dunedin city, with almost 100 cruise ship visits bringing close to 150,000 passengers and 73,000 crew members into the area over the 2022/23 cruise ship season.

Along West Harbour we are proud to offer manaaki to our visitors, and we ask that the Otago Regional Council (ORC) help us to maintain our piece of paradise as the wonderful place it is to grow up, live, work, play, and visit, whilst maintaining West Harbour as the priceless piece of Otago's historic and wild environment that it is.

As the gateway to Dunedin for thousands of visitors every year, more concerted action from the ORC is required to improve public transport, environmental monitoring, and pest management across West Harbour.

The West Harbour Community Board (WHCB) are strongly supportive of the ORC's proposed 2023/24 Annual Plan to raise Otago's environmental standards, support communities (such as West Harbour) to be more resilient in the face of climate change, improve and restore land and water quality, and improve public transport.

he WHCB would like to elaborate specifically on improving public transport across West Harbour (1), raising environmental standards across West Harbour through environmental monitoring, protecting Aramoana Ecological Area from erosion, and improved pest species management (2) and supporting an Otago Harbour User Working Group (3).

SUBMISSION POINTS

1. Improving Public Transport across West Harbour

The WHCB share the ORC goals for improving uptake of public transport. Our community is eminently suited to switch to public transport with the largely linear nature of West Harbour and the existing train track from Port Chalmers to Dunedin City. School children, commuters, elderly, those with disabilities and non-driving residents of West Harbour all value and rely on public transport in their daily life.

At present, there are no commuter trains along West Harbour although this has not always been the case. Lines and a passenger train exist, and Dunedin Railways Ltd run an infrequent tourist train (the Seaside).

The post-covid return of cruise ships to Otago Harbour this season (2022/23) made the inadequacy of the public transport options along West Harbour strikingly obvious. For six months the daily life for our community was interrupted through cancelled and inadequate bus services, buses overloaded with cruise ship passengers, elderly and disabled standing for a 45-minute journey, students missing classes, hospital workers missing shifts, residents missing hospital appointments and buses leaving before the scheduled time meaning those who arrived in time for the bus had to wait in the elements for an hour. This has resulted in the West Harbour community now having a deep distrust of the public transport system. To restore trust the community desperately need a more fit for purpose public transport system which is more frequent, more dependable and more resilient, which will support Dunedin's Carbon Free goals. Specifically, WHCB suggest the following improvements:

- Increase peak hour capacity;
- Ensure reliability;
- Continue low/reduced fares;
- Ensure timetable adherence;
- Improve tracking and real-time updates;
- Provide options and forward planning to cater for the cruise ship passengers;
- Provide resilience through the addition of passenger train options.

2. Raising environmental standards across West Harbour

2.1. Environmental Monitoring

As kaitiaki/guardians of te taiao/the environment that surrounds us, we value and commend ORC for their current efforts to maintain and their stated intention to increase environmental monitoring throughout Otago.

- a. WHCB appreciate the continued monitoring of the environmental and health impacts of the existing industry along West Harbour (e.g., Ravensdown and Port Otago).
- b. WHCB request baseline monitoring of pāua and other shellfish populations in and around Otago Harbour be initiated. Kai moana off the Aramoana mole and surrounding beaches is highly prized. This is a popular spot for both locals and

visitors to harvest. Whilst we would not like to see this long-standing tradition prohibited, we strongly urge the ORC to assess the local shellfish population to ensure that harvesting is sustainable over the long term.

2.2 Protecting Aramoana Ecological Area from erosion

West Harbour is home to the magnificent Aramoana Ecological Area, an extensive protected wetland ecosystem with a strong ecological zonation. The existing board walk provides easy access for the public without risk to the integrity of the salt-meadow and the site is frequently visited by school groups from across Otago and Southland.

There is grave concern from the local community that long term lack of maintenance for the existing Long Mac Groyne structure is putting this nationally identified Ecological Area, and the historic pilot houses along the spit, at serious risk of inundation and erosion with each king tide and storm surge.

The Ecological Area has been the focus of many scientific research projects and is highly prized by the NZ ecological and the local community for both its aesthetic and conservation values. The area is host to special saltmarsh plants and shrubs, and is a vital feeding spot for a large number of birds, including godwits, banded dotterels, pied stilts, plovers, herons, kingfishers and oyster catchers.

2.3 Pest Management

West Harbour is home to many native and endangered birds, reptiles, invertebrates and plants, as well as being frequently visited by migratory marine mammals and sea/coastal birds.

West Harbour borders Orokonui Ecosanctuary in the West, and Otago Harbour in the East. The area is within easy pest swimming/dispersal distance of the Otago Peninsula and Otago Harbour islands. The geographical proximity to some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most precious biodiversity means that West Harbour is a vital link in Otago's efforts to protect native and endemic flora and fauna.

West Harbour Community Board are strongly in favour of the ORC's efforts through the implementation of the [Otago Pest Management Plan\(External link\)](#)(PMP) to better manage and eradicate the pest plants and animals doing the most damage in Otago. Site-Led Programmes for "West Harbour – Mt Cargill", and "Quarantine and Goat Islands / Kamau Taurua" areas (Page 59, ORC Pest Management Plan) are in place. WHCB encourage and request more active monitoring, management, and eradication across West Harbour for noxious weeds, especially those named in the ORC PMP (Banana Passionfruit, Darwin's Barberry, Sycamore, Gunnera, and Tradescantia) and pest animal species such as feral cats, feral rabbits, mustilids, rats, hedgehogs, and possums).

3. Otago Harbour User Working Group

Increasing recreational and commercial use of the Otago Harbour is placing strain on the natural environment and brings with it many Health and Safety considerations. With the return of cruise ships post-covid 19 and the completion of the Port Chalmers to Dunedin and Dunedin to Portobello Shared pathways, both recreational and commercial use across Otago Harbour and adjacent communities will increase. WHCB would like to remind ORC of their commitment to form an 'Otago Harbour User Working Group' and request that the West Harbour Community Board be included in this.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the 2023/24 annual plan.

We would appreciate the opportunity to speak to this submission.

Regards,

Dr Barbara Anderson

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Email: drBarbaraJAnderson1@gmail.com

Duncan Eddy

Wayne Sefton

Jarrold Hodgson

Kristina Goldsmith (Deputy Chair WHCB)

Angela McErlane (Chair)