

Environment Canterbury Long Term Plan March 2018



Opawaho Heathcote River Network
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Environment Canterbury (ECan) is responsible for;
'facilitating sustainable development in the region. This means we work to enable economic growth in a way that enhances our quality of life and does not compromise environmental sustainability.'

The Ōpāwaho Heathcote Catchment

- The Ōpāwaho-Heathcote River and many of its tributaries in the catchment have the poorest water quality in the Christchurch West Melton Zone.
- The balancing of values to date have been at the expense of the ecological health and sustainability of the river.
- The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River lies within a complex catchment which contains the Port Hills, a large Industrial area, concentrated urban and residential zones and the Avon Ihutai Estuary.
- Its ecological health is under a huge amount of pressure from stormwater contamination, CCC wastewater contamination, groundwater contamination and sediments. These sediments are largely from the loess of the Port Hills.
- As a lowland river, it suffers from 'urban stream syndrome.' This is an indicator of the of the cumulative effects of activities and water management within its catchment over the last 150 years.

- Since the 2011 earthquake and the Port Hills fires of 2017 these issues have been magnified.

The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network

".. the community's input is key to getting the balance right." (ECan 2018)

- The Ōpāwaho- Heathcote River Network (OHRN) is a unique community group whose focus is on the Ōpāwaho- Heathcote Catchment and the River from its 'source to the sea'.
- The Networks overarching Vision is to develop 'an ecologically healthy river that people take pride in, enjoy and care for'
- Its Purpose is to 'facilitate a collaborative Network which promotes and advocates for the regeneration of the whole of the Ōpāwaho/Heathcote River.'
- It is working in collaboration with ECan, Christchurch City Council (CCC) and the local community to ensure the right balance is achieved, the ecological health of the Ōpāwaho- Heathcote River is improved as the community connects with its 'Local River'.
- The OHRN became an Incorporated Society in January 2018 and has just applied for charity status under the Charities Commission.

Freshwater Management

'Freshwater management Implementing innovative solutions to manage our freshwater resource to support community use (mahinga kai, drinking water and recreation), achieve ecosystem health and sustainable economic development'

- The OHRN supports Freshwater Management being given top priority in the Long-Term Plan (LTP) and generally agrees with the activities proposed for Freshwater Management.
- The OHRN supports ECan working in partnership with others from the planning to the implementation stage of projects.

a) Programme 1- CWMS Facilitation

'Facilitating opportunities for community engagement to progress delivery towards the ten target areas in all Catchment Zones'

- OHRN supports 1.1.1 Facilitating opportunities for community engagement to progress delivery towards the ten target areas in all Catchment Zones.

- OHRN emphasises that community engagement should include the involvement of community groups at the beginning of the process, in the planning stages, to enable improved implementation and ownership of projects on the ground. Community engagement in a catchment should not just be consulting with community groups at the implementation stage of a project but enabling their involvement from the beginning to the end of the process.

b) Programme 2 - Environmental Monitoring and Progress Reporting

- OHRN recognises the extensive monitoring and reporting carried out by ECan and supports continued work in this area.
- OHRN would like to see data organized into catchments. This reinforces the 'source to the sea' concept and enables communities to relate this information to their local river.
- OHRN would also like to have this information simplified and integrated. This would make engagement with communities and community groups within the catchment easier.
- Will the periphyton programme be implemented in the Opawaho Heathcote River Catchment?

c) Programme 3. Zone and Regional Delivery

'Implementation of significant zone based projects- strong partnership support and shared funding approach.'

- The OHRN supports the implementation of Zone activities in a partnership.
- The OHRN propose that the Christchurch West Melton Zone Committee (CWMZC), CCC, University of Canterbury OHRN and other community water groups work in collaboration to develop an "Our Water" series, like the Selwyn Waihora Zone Committee series in 2017. This series of information and panels would explore the issues and information within the catchments throughout the CWM Zone. One of the focus areas would be the Opawaho Heathcote Catchment.

d) Programme 4. Resource Management Act Water Framework

'Work with the zone committees to lead a community process to collaboratively establish environmental limits for water quality and water quantity in Canterbury'

- The OHRN supports the proposal to develop a community process to establish environmental limits for water quality and water quantity in Canterbury.
- OHRN would like to work collaboratively with ECan, CCC and the community to develop objectives and environmental limits for the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River

Biodiversity

“Creating a step-change in effort in the regeneration of freshwater, marine biodiversity and terrestrial”

- The OHRN supports the activities proposed for Biodiversity especially creating a step change in effort for the regeneration of freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity.
- The OHRN supports the concept of restoring the ‘natural character of degraded of indigenous habitats and ecosystem’. This is especially important in the river catchment of urban rivers such as the Ōpāwaho Heathcote which have over time be subjected to change and are struggling to retain their intrinsic value.
- Community groups along the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River, that are a part of the OHRN, have been developing areas of significance and revegetation. These areas are important to create a corridor for native birds and insects. This also recognises the important link between restoration and water quality.
- The OHRN would like the development of an Eco-sourcing policy in conjunction with CCC, ECan and environmental groups. All plants used for revegetation and restoration to be eco-sourced natives. Eco-sourcing means the plants are propagated from plants within the local area.

Biosecurity

- The OHRN supports the extension of the Community Initiative Programme for pest management to include the Port Hills. The Port Hills are an integral part of the Opawaho Heathcote River Catchment and any improvement in pest management in the hill suburbs and land will impact on the wider catchment.
- OHRN would like to see a bigger budget and more research around emerging weeds and pathways. A special focus needs to be placed on wetland weeds.

Regional Leadership

- The OHRN acknowledges and supports ECan's partnership with Ngai Tahu. It supports the development of a process for reporting mātauranga Māori in conjunction with state of the environment reporting.
- The OHRN encourages ECan to continue its role in engaging with and supporting community groups and NGOs such as the OHRN.
- OHRN emphasises that community engagement should include the involvement of community groups at the beginning of the process, in the planning stages, to enable improved implementation and ownership of projects on the ground. Community engagement in a catchment should not just be consulting with community groups at the implementation stage of a project but enabling their involvement from the beginning to the end of the process.
- The OHRN would like to see the continuation of the Networking for the Environment Group developed by ECan. This is a great source of information sharing and collaboration between environmental groups.
- The OHRN would also support the continuation of the Enviro Schools Programme. It is a wonderful source of contact and sharing of information which influences family behaviours and attitudes to water, the way we live with it, use it and interact with it.

Summary

The OHRN generally supports ECan's Long-Term Plan but would like to see the inclusion of;

- **The engagement of community groups at the early concept and planning stage of projects, not just for the implementation.**
- **Monitoring data organized into catchments.**
- **Monitoring information simplified and integrated to enable ease of engagement and communication with the community.**
- **An "Our Water" lecture/ seminar series focusing on the CWM Zone. One of the focus areas would be the Ōpāwaho Heathcote Catchment.**
- **Collaborative development of objectives and environmental limits for the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.**

- **Restoration of the 'natural character' of urban waterways especially the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.**
- **Development of an Eco-sourcing policy in conjunction with CCC, ECan and environmental groups. All plants used for revegetation and restoration to be eco-sourced natives.**
- **A bigger budget and more research into emerging weeds and their pathways.**
- **The continuation of the Networking for Environment Group.**
- **The continuation of the Enviro Schools Programme.**

Meeting with Councillors

- The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network would like their submission to be heard in Christchurch.

Citizens Panel

- The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network is willing to be contacted for the citizens Panel
Email: opawahoheathcote@gmail.com

Annabelle Hasselman
Chairperson Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network