

Submission on Christchurch City Council (CCC) Draft Long Term Plan

April 2018



Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network

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The Ōpāwaho Heathcote Catchment

- The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River and many of its tributaries 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 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 cumulative effects of activities and water management within its catchment over the last 150 years.

The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network (OHRN)

- The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network (OHRN) is a unique community group whose focus is the whole of the Ōpāwaho- Heathcote Catchment and the River from its 'source to the sea'.
- The OHRN's overarching Vision is to develop; *'an ecologically healthy river that people take pride in, enjoy and care for.'*
- The OHRN's Purpose is to; *'facilitate a collaborative Network which promotes and advocates for the regeneration of the whole of the Ōpāwaho/Heathcote River.'*
- The OHRN is working in collaboration with ECan, CCC and local community groups to ensure a better balance of values is achieved, the ecological health of the Ōpāwaho- Heathcote River is improved and the community connects with its 'local river'.
- There are nine groups under the umbrella of the OHRN. These include; Cashmere Stream Care Group, Friends of Ashgrove Reserve, Friends of Ernle Clark Reserve, Lower Cashmere Residents Association, Beckhenham Neighbourhood Association, King George V Reserve, Laura Clark Reserve, Roimata Food Commons Trust and Calder's Green- Forest and Bird.
- The OHRN has been involved in a range of projects including the annual Mother of All Clean Ups, World Fish Migration Day, the Whaka Inaka Project with EOS Ecology, Avon Ihutai Estuary Fest and Citizen Science Water Clarity Testing with Cashmere Stream Care Group.
- The OHRN became an Incorporated Society in January 2018 and has just applied for Charity Status under the Charities Commission.

CCC Focus

- The Mayor describes Christchurch City into the future with an environmental focus:
'We are proud of our status as New Zealand's "garden city" and we don't ever want to lose that. We all need to play our part. We also need to consider what a "garden city" means in the 21st century. It's about sustainability, environmental protection, ecological values, clean rivers, clean air and food resilience.'
- The plan does not prioritise environmental issues well and instead focuses on the balance between earthquake recovery, maintaining services and planning for growth and the affordability of rates.'

OHRN Collaborative Approach

- The OHRN acknowledges the breadth of the task the CCC has in the planning and delivery of goals for the next 10 years and the scale at which these problems have been heightened by the earthquake.
- Just as the CCC wish to focus on a collaborative approach the OHRN seeks to work with the CCC, ECan, Ngai Tahu, community groups and other agencies to develop an integrated approach to the management of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. This partnership would instigate a series of workshops to develop a Recovery Plan for the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- OHRN emphasizes that community engagement should include the involvement of OHRN from the beginning to the end of the process. They should be involved from the planning stages to the implementation. This will provide greater ownership of projects on the ground.

Community Water Partnership

- The OHRN advocates for the proposed Community Water Partnership in the CCC LTP (Service Plan for Parks & Foreshore, p37). We strongly recommend the Council fund this for at least ten years, but preferably beyond this into the future. It should be funded for at least \$1 million.
- This partnership between CCC, community groups, such as the OHRN, ECan, DOC and Ngai Tahu is essential for improving the ecological health of our waterways in the city and enabling people to form linkages with their 'local river.'
- The Community Water Partnership is an opportunity for the CCC to give effect to its strategic direction of: 'Enabling active citizenship and connected communities.' It will enable the CCC to foster community engagement and partnership in the management of the city's waterways.
- The community expectation is for rivers to be healthy and possibly swimmable again. If the Council want to make a difference to the health of our urban waterways then there needs to be continued support and funding for education, awareness and behaviour change in partnership with the community.
- Fifty percent of water quality can be improved by upgrading infrastructure while the remaining fifty percent will come from education, awareness and improved behaviours in relation to storm water.
- The Community Water Partnership is a means for community groups such as the OHRN to work in partnership with the CCC and other agencies to raise people's

awareness, understanding and the behaviours of individuals on their properties. These behaviours will have a huge influence on the quality of our waterways.

- It is everyone's responsibility to improve waterways. The Community Water Partnership would also deliver a stormwater and waterways education programme to schools. This would enable the pupils of schools along the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River to develop an awareness of the behaviours that lead to improved waterway quality and initiate a foundation for the future guardianship of our waterways.

Stormwater and Flood Protection

- The OHRN supports the proposed \$262 million through the Land Drainage Recovery Programme in the upper Ōpāwaho Heathcote Catchment and the \$416 million on Stormwater and Flood Protection Infrastructure. This work will improve water quality, biodiversity and provide some flood mitigation in the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- These projects include the Curtletts Flood Storage Basin, Mid Heathcote Bank Stabilisation, Bells Creek, Sparks Road Development Drainage Works, Sutherlands Basin Stormwater Treatment, Upper Heathcote Storage Facility, Wigram East Retention Basin and the Eastman Wetland.
- The OHRN strongly supports the Wigram Basin Extension. It supports the identification of Haytons Stream as an important sub catchment and tributary of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. This largely industrial catchment suffers from very poor water quality. Work in this tributary will make a huge difference to the overall health of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- The OHRN would also like to see the development of robust options for point source control of pollution within Haytons Stream Catchment.
- The OHRN supports the Land Drainage Recovery Work for the Cashmere Stream Catchment in the Flood Protection, Control Works and Stormwater Drainage Service Plans. These include the Sutherlands/Eastman Wetlands and Cashmere Worsley Valley.
- The OHRN supports the identification of the Cashmere Stream as a priority Catchment and recognises that the proposed works in this catchment will help to treat the huge sediment load into the Opawaho Heathcote River. It will also help in the treatment of stormwater and provide flood mitigation for the lower catchment.
- The OHRN supports the proposed work to develop the Curtletts Stream Detention Basin. It would also like Curtletts Stream to be included as a priority catchment due to its poor water quality and the impact this has on the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River as one of its main tributaries.

- The OHRN would like to see the planting of the proposed wetlands and retention basins brought forward in the LTP.
- To improve stormwater quality there needs to be education to change people's behaviours. Funding of The Community Water Partnership through the LTP is vital to achieve this change in behaviour and improved stormwater quality.
- OHRN emphasises that community engagement should include the involvement of OHRN from the beginning to the end of the process. They should be involved from the planning and design stages to the implementation. This will provide a greater chance of minimizing environmental effects and ownership of projects on the ground.

Flood Protection and Dredging

- The OHRN recognises that dredging of sediment above the Radley St Bridge is proposed as a flood management option in the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River together with the increased storage options in the upper catchment, as described above.
- The OHRN would also like to see monitoring of the ecological effects of the proposed dredging.
- The OHRN would like to see modelling to predict how the river will respond to sea level rise, how the river may respond to future changes in estuary levels and help to inform the decisions of future dredging as a flood management tool.
- The OHRN would like to see the continued support in the budget for the ecological monitoring of species and sites, and the mitigation of effects associated with these works. This includes bank stabilisation and the opportunities for native riparian planting.

Wastewater

- One of the key benefits to the community of wastewater services is to provide healthy waterways. The OHRN sees the proposed reduction in LTP funding for Wastewater as a threat to the health of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- The OHRN does not support the reduction in spending in waste water infrastructure over the improvement of roads in the proposed LTP.
- The OHRN does not support the WW Heathcote Wet Weather Overflow Reduction Project being deferred until beyond 2021.

- The OHRN supports upgrading the capacity of the Wastewater Network in the area at the corner of Sandwich Road and Eastern Terrace at P Station 20 to help reduce overflows.
- The OHRN supports the proposals for upgrades in the LTP in a bid to improve the system to reduce overflows but does not support the reduction in funding for renewals which will mean the overall decline in the system and lead to problems down the track. It will result in a decline of the infrastructure to a level that may not be serviceable.
- Wastewater overflows are one of the key potential negative effects on the environmental quality of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River. This waste water includes waste from kitchens, bathrooms and trade waste from industrial and commercial operations
- *The Service Delivery Plan for Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal* identifies that the waste water pipes are in very poor condition which allows groundwater and stormwater to leak into the waste water system. When these flows are above the capacity of the pumping stations an overflow into waterways occurs. This same report identifies that the proposed spending for waste water infrastructure in the LTP would; *'be insufficient to maintain the current network condition and so the network would deteriorate.'*
This would result in increased wet and dry weather overflows in the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- The OHRN does not support the increased wet and dry weather overflows. This decline in waste water overflow performance targets overtime will negatively affect the ecological, cultural and social health of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- Waste water can only be discharged into the environment in compliance with the ECan resource consent. Adequate and reliable treatment processes must be maintained to comply with the conditions of this Resource Consent.
- The OHRN supports the continuation of the frequency and location of wet weather and dry weather overflows being reported and monitored by CCC.
- A key Community Outcome for the Waste Water Service plan is healthy waterways. The CCC has a target of 0 convictions regarding Council Resource Consents for discharges from the waste water system. How is this going to be achieved when the system is not going to be upgraded and the number of dry weather events is going to be increased?
- The OHRN supports the continued sampling, testing and monitoring of water quality relating to waste water overflows and the effects on the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.

- In the consent conditions CRC092692:
'the discharges shall only occur as a result of wet weather events overloading the wastewater network.'
How is CCC proposing to allow for the increase in dry weather discharges?
- The OHRN would like to be part of the Compliance and Monitoring Liaison Group regarding wastewater overflows in the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.

Waterway Ecology and Water Quality Improvement Fund

- The OHRN supports the Waterway Ecology and Water Quality Improvement capital programme as it supports projects for enhancing the ecological value of waterways within the Opawaho Heathcote Catchment. These projects in the past have included the Port Hills tributaries, Steam Wharf Stream, Cashmere Stream and the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- The OHRN would like to see the proposed funding in the LTP increased earlier as the initial budgets of \$279,000 and \$294,000 for the first two years are less than the \$326,000 that has been allocated over the last few years.
- The OHRN is keen to be involved in the continual riparian planting to help improve water quality. Effective riparian planting costs tens of thousands of dollars for a few hundred metres, so to be more effective this fund needs to be increased.
- The Waterway Ecology and Water Quality Improvement Fund is also linked to the Community Water Partnership. If waterways are planted in partnership with community groups, residents and businesses people will form an attachment to their urban waterways.

Parks and Heritage

- The OHRN supports the continued work in the LTP on the regeneration of the Port Hills with native planting following the fires. The Port Hills are an important part of the Opawaho Heathcote catchment and the loess from these hills forms a huge proportion of the sedimentation in the Opawaho Heathcote River. Planting on the Port Hills is vital to stabilise the soils and reduce this sediment load.
- The OHRN advocates for the development of an Eco-Sourcing Policy in conjunction with CCC, ECan and environmental groups. All native plants used for revegetation and restoration should be eco-sourced natives. Eco-sourcing means the plants are propagated from plants within the local area.

Summary

The OHRN is an advocate for the ecological health of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River and its tributaries within the catchment. It seeks to work with the CCC and other agencies to ensure that local communities are involved in the environmental effort to improve the health of our most polluted urban waterway in Christchurch City. The CCC must also face up to its responsibility to provide healthy waterways for its residents. The OHRN acknowledges the huge amount of work proposed by the CCC in the LTP for flood mitigation and stormwater treatment in the Upper Catchment. On the other hand, the OHRN finds it unacceptable that in the 'garden city' of the 21st Century, the CCC is proposing that wastewater services will be funded at a level which will *'be insufficient to maintain the current network condition and so the network would deteriorate.'* This will increase the waste water overflows into the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River degrading its ecological, social and cultural health.

The points below summarise the actions sought by the OHRN from the CCC in its LTP for the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Catchment over the next ten years.

Collaboration

- Develop a Recovery Plan for the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River with the CCC, ECan, Ngai Tahu, OHRN and other stakeholders.
- OHRN advocates for the involvement in CCC community projects from the planning to implementation stages.

Community Water Partnership

- The OHRN advocates for the Community Water Partnership to be funded in in the CCC LTP (Service Plan for Parks & Foreshore, p37) for at least \$1 million.

Stormwater and Flooding

- The OHRN strongly supports the extensive capital works proposed under the CCC LTP for the Land Drainage Recovery Programme and the Stormwater and Flood Protection Infrastructure in the upper Ōpāwaho Heathcote Catchment.
- The OHRN strongly supports the Wigram Basin Extension.
- The OHRN supports the identification of Haytons Stream as an important sub catchment.
- The OHRN advocates for the development of robust options for point source control of pollution within Haytons Stream Catchment.
- The OHRN supports the Land Drainage Recovery Work for the Cashmere Stream Catchment.

- The OHRN supports the proposed work to develop the Curtletts Stream Detention Basin.
- The OHRN advocates that the planting of the proposed wetlands and retention basins brought forward in the LTP.
- The OHRN advocates for the continued support in the budget for the ecological monitoring of species and sites, and the mitigation of effects associated stormwater and flood management projects.
- The OHRN advocates for modelling to inform the decisions of future dredging as a flood management tool.

Waste water

- The OHRN does not support the reduction in spending in waste water infrastructure over the improvement of roads in the proposed LTP.
- The OHRN supports upgrading the capacity of the Wastewater Network in the area at P Station 20 to help reduce overflows.
- The OHRN does not support the WW Heathcote Wet Weather Overflow Reduction Project being deferred until beyond 2021.
- The OHRN does not support the increased wet and dry weather overflows.
- The OHRN supports the continuation of the frequency and location of wet weather and dry weather overflows being reported and monitored by CCC.
- The OHRN supports the continued sampling, testing and monitoring of water quality relating to waste water overflows and the effects on the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.
- The OHRN would like to be part of the Compliance and Monitoring Liaison Group regarding wastewater overflows in the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.

Waterway Ecology and Water Quality Improvement Fund

- The OHRN supports the Waterway Ecology and Water Quality Improvement Capital Programme.
- The OHRN advocates for the proposed funding in the LTP to be increased earlier.

Parks and Heritage

- The OHRN supports the continued work in the LTP on the regeneration of the Port Hills with native planting following the fires.
- The OHRN advocates for the development of an Eco-Sourcing Policy in conjunction with CCC, ECan and environmental groups.

The OHRN wish to speak to this submission. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Hasselman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a stylized "H".

Annabelle Hasselman
Chairperson
Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network