

**Minutes of the Makarewa Catchment Liaison
Committee Annual General Meeting, held at
Hedgehope Hall, Hedgehope on
Monday, 25 March 2024, at 1.30 pm.**



Present:	Ms P Hudson	(Makarewa) <i>(Co-Chair)</i>
	Ms J Freeborn	(Makarewa) <i>(Co-Chair)</i>
	Mrs D MacPherson	(Makarewa)
	Mr R MacPherson	(Makarewa)
	Mr D Frew	(Makarewa)
	Mr B Allen	(Makarewa)
	Mr J McKenzie	(Makarewa)
	Mr W MacPherson	(Makarewa)
	Mr M Thomson	(Makarewa)
	Mr G Stevenson	(Makarewa)
	Ms B Stevenson	(Makarewa)
In Attendance:	Chairman Horrell	(Environment Southland)
	Ms S Thorne	(Thriving Southland)
	Cr J McPhail	(Environment Southland)
	Cr P McDonald	(Environment Southland)
	Mrs T Hawkins	(Chief Financial Officer)
	Mr P Pollard	(Team Leader, Catchment Operations)
	Ms Ali Meade	(Bio Operations Manager)
	Mrs F Young	(Catchment Integration Manager)
	Mr K Finlayson	(Senior Land Sustainability Officer)
	Ms E Lawton	(Catchment Operations)
	Jody Lloyd	(Finance)
	Mrs A Flynn	(Personal Assistant – Minutes)

1 Welcome (*Haere mai*)

Co-Chair Ms Hudson welcomed attendees, councillors and staff to the meeting and commented how great it was to see such a good turnout.

Attendees were invited to fill out their addresses to give to Ms Lloyd so rates estimate could be calculated based on the proposed rates review.

2 Apologies (*Nga Pa Pouri*)

Resolved:

Moved Mr M Thomson, seconded Mr W MacPherson, that apologies were recorded on behalf of Mr F Weatherburn, Ms C Van Sante, Mr J Shuurmans, Mr P Ruddenklau, Ms A Wadworth, Cr Ludlow.

Carried

3 Terms of Reference

It was noted that the Terms of Reference was last updated in 2019 in line with the adoption of the Long-Term Plan. There may be tweaks made to it in order to capture what is in this year's LTP. It was suggested that some suggested changes can be emailed out to committee members after July 2024.

4 Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of 20 February 2023

Resolved:

Moved Mr W MacPherson, seconded Ms P Hudson that the minutes of the Makarewa Catchment Liaison Committee Annual General Meeting held on 20 February be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

5 Chair/Co-Chair Report

Ms Hudson provided the following co-chair report:

- Focus is on the infrastructure strategy and rates review.
- Draft copies of the LTP will be emailed out to committee members –it is expected to be formally adopted at the Extraordinary Meeting of Council on 27 March 2024 with potentially a public meeting at the end of April 2024 to give time for public discussion before consultation.
- Closure on the dross enquiry which was raised four years ago (see letters attached with the agenda) will be addressed later in the meeting.
- Thank you to Sarah Thorne and Mark Thomson for the Thriving Southland update and reports from the individual Makarewa community catchment groups.
- The Integrated Catchment Management team will present an update on gravel.
- Questions will be addressed at the end of each item and any other questions can be discussed at the end.

6 Matters Arising – New Vale/Goodwin

Mrs Young spoke to the following:

- Acknowledged the time that has elapsed regarding this issue
- The catchment team has identified small amount of dross and has done some monitoring.
- There is no issue from a science point of view and ES may do more monitoring in the future.
- Mrs Young thanked the group for their patience on this matter.

Mr W MacPherson talked about the deposits of dross that come from the Fonterra plant at Edendale:

- He has been trying to get lignite ash from Fonterra for years as it is very high in organic sulphur and is a valuable fertiliser.
- He has started to see some movement with Fonterra supplying him ash to trial and put to good use.
- Instead of dumping it we can turn it into a valuable asset but we need to get rules the changed by MPI. After working with them for over two years this is now coming close to fruition and thinks the problem will be solved with very little cost.

7 Appointment of Committee and Membership

Cr McDonald assumed the Chair. Cr McDonald called for nominations for the position of Chair/Co-Chair of the Makarewa Catchment Liaison Committee.

Resolved:

Moved Mr Thomson, seconded Ms MacPherson that Ms Freeborn and Ms Hudson be elected to the position of Co-Chairs of the Makarewa Catchment Liaison Committee.

Carried

8 Financial Report – 2023/24 and proposed 2024/2025

Mrs Hawkins spoke to the Draft Budget for the 2024/25 year presentation slides, and the Draft Budget as circulated in the agenda, noting the following:

- Makarewa's budget is quite straight forward.
- The gaps are because of the proposed change in the ratings system.
- ES is working through the infrastructure strategy and rate changes.
- The best and most efficient use of the money is to keep it in the catchment budget not the regional budget.

- The numbers have increased due to inflation so change is to reflect that.

There was a discussion regarding the legalisation that needs to be done in terms of properties, for example, the main river on Channel Road. How can you spend money on something that isn't legalised? NZ Land Services has done work on this regarding people's boundaries. It's an opportunity to work with other agencies to change this. Maybe we could work with the working group to do some collective thinking on this.

Another discussion point was the possibility of using the Makarewa special fund towards a local project, It was noted that this was worthy of future discussion.

Resolved:

Moved Ms Freeborn and seconded Mr Thomson that the Financial Report 2023/24 be noted and proposed 2024/25 budget be adopted.

Carried

9 Catchment Report

Mr P Pollard presented the Catchment Report including an update on future river works and areas in need of attention:

- Willow clearance on the SH6 has made an immediate improvement – a question was raised regarding silt in the river remaining for considerable time after rainfall and whether this work is responsible for that. It was noted that this was unlikely.
- There are a lot more intense events happening resulting in increased bank erosion etc.

It was noted that excellent work had been done by Paul's team and that Environment Southland is getting a good handle on long term problems with the willows.

10 Thriving Southland Update/catchment reports from Mid and Lower Oreti, Hedgehope and Makarewa Headwaters

Mr Thomson presented a Thriving Southland update, which included the following:

- Activities such as Kowhai Reach - community connection to create planting events with schools.
- Lower gorge project – to extend planting facilitated by a grant from Westpac Landcare with the vision to reinstate the riverbank to make it look how it was before human intervention.
- A nursery was also established using this grant too.
- Another major undertaking is a revival project to reinstate the original ecosystem which is being threatened by deer which are reproducing in high numbers despite hunting efforts. The full report can be found on the Thriving Southland website.

A question was raised as to where Environment Southland stands regarding the population increase of feral deer. Chairman Horrell explained that this is currently not on our pest radar but will most likely be addressed in the future.

Ms Meade added that the reason we don't have deer in the plan is because it is managed by the Animal Control Act administered by the Department of Conservation. Ms Meade advised that Environment Southland will be reviewing this over the next few years. Mr Thomson stated that the Department of Conservation has been in the conversation from the beginning but that it currently does not have the funds to help.

Ms Thorne also provided an update for Thriving Southland which covered the following activities:

- Mini Forest Movement – a self-funded project to get native plants in the ground
- Winton stream catchment online platform for landowners to put in sediment traps – field day on 10 April.
- Understanding the land to drive change.
- Environment Southland award for improving water quality.

11 General Business

- a) Long-Term Plan 2024-34
 - i. Infrastructure Strategy 2024-54

Ms Lawton spoke to the infrastructure strategy and explained that it makes up a core piece of the LTP, it is a 30-year document to plan our assets and it's the only thing we are spending money on. The key points are:

- Flood protection scheme – undertake a thorough review and deliver on what we're saying we're going to deliver on. We are building Infrastructure for up to 100 years.
- Defects and maintenance programme – there are lots of defects on the books - 1459 in total. Condition scores slide. We rely on people letting us know these issues.
- We want to give people the same level of service within the Infrastructure Strategy
- Change of landowner is also an issue as they might not understand the importance of stopbanks.
- We need to improve our data and understand it better, for instance Makarewa has lost flow capacity due to increased vegetation.
- We need to identify key high-risk areas and improve flood carrying capacity.
- These are big projects of work and cost a considerable amount of money.
- Capital Works Programme – building new infrastructure and maintaining the existing infrastructure – we may get assistance from central government on this.
- We need data and science to back up what we should do – science-based decision making to help understand the effects, which includes better understanding of climate change.
- A major flood will no doubt increase to one in 50 years as opposed to one in 100 years and levels of service will reduce.

Mrs Hawkins spoke about the LTP and that this year we have three consultations:

1. Revenue and Finance Policy
2. LTP budget changes
3. Fees and charges

ii. Mrs Hawkins went on to discuss the proposed rates review and covered the following:

- The major proposal is the move to capital value rates across Southland and sharing costs across Southland both geographically and financially
- Instead of 140 rates, there will be one.
- By moving to capital value, it is spreading it out over the region, there are two parts to this, one is the budget is going up and the second is the rate change to share rates out differently.
- Capital value reflects the earning capacity of the property and the commercial value of the property too.
- It is recommended that people use the feedback form to provide a submission on this.

Other key points included:

- Changes will be to commercial properties – 31% increase.
- Rural properties will reduce by 8%.
- We have achieved the middle ground plus or minus \$20.
- Catchment chairs have been involved in this conversation from the start.
- Environment Southland is proposing one rate but seven budgets.
- Environment Southland wants the committee to approve the work programme at the beginning of the season, not at the end.

iii. Other matters

- The need to do more to maintain resilience in a changing climate.
- Infrastructure – the future of investment. Let's all get together for future benefit. It will give each community an opportunity to see what we can do.
- Current operating budget will stay the same but can access money for other things.
- We are coming back to a catchment focus.
- To increase operating expenditure in flood infrastructure by \$2.3m per year.
- Proposal to borrow funds to invest in flood infrastructure over next ten years, assuming that 75% will be government funded.

b) Showcasing the catchment presentation by Catchment Integration

Ms Young, Mr Finlayson and Ms Meade presented on what is going on across the catchment, and included the following:

- Goals for southland – healthy environment, safe and resilient communities, thriving region.

- Biodiversity – protecting native species and the environment – as part of Covid recovery projects we have \$400k that we can give out in grants.
- Biosecurity – lots of pests and issues. New pests to the region include wallabies
- Other species to watch out for are Old Man’s Beard, Reed Sweet Grass, Purple Loosestrife.
- Other considerations – RPMP, climate change.
- Southland riparian project.
- Waituna.
- Murihiku Slow the Flow.
- PCT.
- Gravel – moving toward a strategic gravel plan. There is a national focus on this but we need to understand it from a catchment perspective. Environment Southland is talking more broadly with stakeholders and there will be a community wide meeting coming up soon.

Other matters that were raised:

- Dumping of garden waste around rivers – this will become a problem if we don’t keep on top of it.
- Camoline white daisy is becoming a major problem in some areas.
- Intensive Winter Grazing – there is an opportunity to put some good news stories out about dairy farmers.
- Fish from the Winton Bridge to Queenstown – the quality of the trout are in the best condition than they have in years. Lots of whitebait in the rivers. More eels than ever.

12. Termination

As there was no further business, the meeting was closed at 4.40pm.