



ASHBURTON WATER MANAGEMENT ZONE COMMITTEE AGENDA

A **Meeting** of the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee will be held as follows:

DATE:	Tuesday 25 February 2025
TIME:	1.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Te Whare Whakatare 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton
MEETING CALLED BY:	Hamish Riach, Chief Executive, Ashburton District Council Stefanie Rixecker, Chief Executive, Environment Canterbury
ATTENDEES:	Adi Avnit Clare Buchanan Angela Cushnie Bill Thomas Sidinei Teixeira TBC (Te Runanga o Arowhenua) Arapata Reuben (Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga) Jess Hobbs (Te Taumutu Runanga) TBC (Tangata Whenua Facilitator) Councillor Richard Wilson (Ashburton District Council) Councillor Ian Mackenzie (Environment Canterbury) Mayor Neil Brown (Ashburton District Council)

Zone Facilitator

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Tangata Whenua Facilitator

TBC

Environment Canterbury

Ashburton Zone Committee Meeting

Tuesday 25 February 2025

Meeting Commences: 1.00pm

Order of Business

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4 Register of Interests

Adi Avnit	Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust - Treasurer
Clare Buchanan	Head of Environment & Innovation at Align Farm Align Farms holds an irrigation resource consent to take water from shallow wells hydraulically linked to the Ashburton river Align Farms holds MHV water and Fonterra Shares Align Farms suffered significant flood damage on their support block
Neil Brown	Mayor Acton Irrigation Limited - Director Irrigo Centre Limited - Director Acton Farmers Irrigation Co-operative Limited - Director Browns Farm Limited – Director and Shareholder
Angela Cushnie	Kanuka Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust - Trustee Hinds Reserve Board Committee member Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective – Coordinator Secretary for Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group
Jess Hobbs	
Ian MacKenzie	Environment Canterbury Councillor
Arapata Reuben	Trustee – Tuhono Trust Trustee – Mana Waitaha Charitable Trust Member - National Kiwi Recovery Group Rūnanga Rep – Christchurch – West Melton Water Zone Committee
Bill Thomas	Farm owner of Longbeach Estate Ltd (sheep, beef, lambs, arable, dairy) Member of Eiffelton Irrigation Scheme Hekeao/Hinds Water Enhancement Trust – Settler Director of Longbeach Estate & Longbeach Dairies
Sidinei Teixeira	Masters student at Lincoln University studying a Master’s in Water Resource Management Former Head of Science at Mt Hutt College and Chemistry teacher at Christ’s College Recipient of the Callaghan Innovation fund to conduct research on the impacts of the May/June 2021 rainfall event through MHV Water Passionate about the sustainable use of natural resources
Richard Wilson	Ashburton District Councillor Dairy Farmer at Hinds Shareholder in MHV Irrigation

5 Confirmation of Minutes

Unconfirmed Minutes

Minutes of a meeting of the **Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee** held on Tuesday 26 November 2024, commencing at 1.00pm in the Council Chamber, Te Whare Whakaterere, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.

Present

Councillor Richard Wilson, Adi Avnit, Chris Allen, Angela Cushnie, Jess Hobbs, Sidinei Teixeira (via MS Teams) and Bill Thomas (Chair)

Non attendance

Arapata Reuben

In attendance

Environment Canterbury: Dave Moore (Facilitator), Jaimee Grant (via MS Teams) and Ashburton District Council: Carol McAtamney (minutes)

Department of Conservation: John Benn

2 members of the public in attendance.

1 Welcome

Dave Moore opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 Apologies

That apologies for absence be received on behalf of Mayor Neil Brown, Councillor Ian Mackenzie and Clare Buchanan

Thomas/Allen

Carried

3 Extraordinary Business

Nil.

4 Register of Interests

Nil.

5 Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee meeting held on 22 October 2024, be taken as read and confirmed.

Thomas/Wilson

Carried

Matters Arising

Nil.

6 Correspondence

Inward:

Nil.

Outward:

Nil.

7 Public Contributions

Nil.

8 Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective update

Angela Cushnie gave an update on each of the 10 catchment groups and their objectives:

Hekeao Hinds Hill Country

- Water monitoring, bio control, riparian planting, focusing on the past, the present and the future.

Foothills

- Water monitoring programme, Hills Labs and Hydro Metrics portable nitrate sensor – data analysed by Dr Brett Painter
- Riparian planting and other biodiversity enhancement projects

Hekeoa Hinds Lowlands

- Monitored and collaborative stream enhancement on the Windermere drain including weirs and bank planting
- Wairuna runoff on Montgomery's drain
- Proof of concept with e-Clean science and technology alongside the Northern drain

Lagmhor Westerfield

- Riverbridge conservation park visit and QEII covenant
- Plant and food research 'validation of catch cropping' trial

Carters Creek

- Water quality monitoring
- Initial collaborations with Lake Hood taskforce
- Flooding and drainage issues both in Tinwald and in the lower reaches

Ashburton Forks

- Community water monitoring, wetland enhancement and a significant predator control focus

Mt Harding

- Recently formed and initially focusing on the overall health of Mt Harding creek
- Focusing on the changes to the delivery of stockwater in their district

Whitcombe Landcare

- Ongoing partnerships with DoC, LINZ and Fish and Game
- Development a long-term vision for their catchment

Ashburton Lakes

- Water monitoring and habitat enhancement

Greenstreet

- Newly formed group, no update available at this time

9 Ashburton Hakatere Hāpua

Adrian Meredith, Principal Scientist – Water Ecology Science from Environment Canterbury provided a presentation on the Ashburton/Hakatere hāpua and its state 'degrading or deteriorating?'

Conclusions

- Maintain scrutiny of condition of hāpua
- Continue level of monitoring of Ashburton/Hakatere River

- Continue level of monitor of Ashburton groundwater quality.
- Update water quality knowledge of spring-fed water ways (ie: Riverside, Wakanui, Mt Harding, creeks etc)

Reports circulated with agenda:

- Perceptions of change: Recording observations for Canterbury Hāpua
- Fish community surveys of Canterbury Hāpua 2020/21
- Potential drivers of the decline of Hāpua

10 Zone Committee Updates

Methven Lions Club Garden of Harmony

Requesting a variation to the end date of the agreement to allow for the concept plans to be completed which will, in turn, push the planting timeframe out.

Angela Cushnie departed the meeting at 2.49pm

Field Trip

A field trip is to be scheduled for Tuesday 25 February - visit to Lake Camp, Greenstreet and sites of works that have received funding.

11 Other Business

Nil.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Ashburton Water Zone Committee will be held in the Ashburton District Council Chamber Hine Paaka at 1:00pm on Tuesday 25 March 2025.

The meeting closed at 2.52pm with a Karakia by Dave Moore.

Dated this 25th day of February 2025 _____ (Chair)

From Dr Tim Davie, Environment Canterbury Director of Science

Email to Chair Bill Thomas dated 10 December 2024.

Prioritisation of science information requests

In recent months the ECan Science Group has received requests for updated environmental data from several Zone Committees. While the requests are important and appear routine, fulfilling each requires over a week of Science staff time for data extraction, scientific interpretation, and report preparation and presentation. For the past six months all water quality science staff in the Science Group have been fully engaged in work to clear the consenting backlog. This has now been cleared but there is still a large amount of consenting and other catch up work required.

Consequently, I have made the call to deprioritise Zone Committee information requests until March/April 2024. I do not make this call lightly and I appreciate that this will affect plans you may have for meetings in 2025. If you would like to discuss this further, please do get in touch.

With increasing demands for science information there are two important steps in place that have been designed to provide a better advice service.

- *As part of the Future Sustainable Consents Delivery Plan for Environment Canterbury, the Science Group is developing a revised system to support consents with science advice. This in turn will generate capacity for the Science Group to provide environmental data and advice to zone committees as we have done in previous years.*
- *The recent realignment of the Science Group has created a new team called “Data insights”. A focus of this team is to provide readily available environmental data in a meaningful way for community. I believe this will help with the needs of zone committees and catchment groups.*

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 8	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Committee Appointments 2025
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Jaimee Grant, Zone Facilitator	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 25 February 2025

Purpose

Confirm the appointment of the:

- Committee Chair
- Deputy Chair

Report

1. Chair and Deputy Chair Appointments

Each year, the Committee will appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair from its members. There is no limit on how long a person can be in this position. The Committee's last Chair and Deputy Chair appointments were made on 26 September 2023.

These appointments typically align with the annual CWMS Zone Committee refresh process. However, the last refresh occurred in 2022 as no refresh was required in 2023 and the process was paused in 2024 due to the CWMS Zone Committee Review.

As a Committee member the Chair shares the same responsibility as other Committee members. In addition to this the Chair has the following roles:

- Chair Zone Committee meetings with all the commonly recognised authority of that position. The Chair may have the Zone Facilitator facilitate meetings and workshops of the Committee.
- Speak on behalf of the Committee and act as an advocate for it, including taking primary responsibility for interaction with the media and representing the Committee at meetings with external parties.

The Deputy Chair exercises the same roles as other members, and if the Chair is absent or incapacitated, the Deputy Chair must perform all the responsibilities and duties of the Chair (as above).

2. Chair

Currently, Bill Thomas holds the position of Chair. Bill Thomas has expressed willingness to continue in the role until June 2025 and has been nominated by Clare Buchanan. Further nominations for the role are welcome at this meeting.

3. Deputy Chair

Chris Allen held the position of Deputy Chair until his passing in December 2024. Clare Buchanan has expressed an interest in the role and has been nominated by Bill Thomas. Further nominations for the role are welcome at this meeting.

Process for Chair and Deputy Chair Appointments

(ref. Schedule 7 clause 25, Local Government Act 2002)

For the election or appointment of the chairperson and deputy chairperson, a local authority or a committee (if the local authority has so directed) must **determine by resolution that a person be elected or appointed by using one of the following systems of voting:**

System A:

- (a) *requires that a person is elected or appointed if he or she receives the votes of a majority of the members of the local authority or committee present and voting; and*
- (b) *has the following characteristics:*
 - (i) *there is a first round of voting for all candidates; and*
 - (ii) *if no candidate is successful in that round there is a second round of voting from which the candidate with the fewest votes in the first round is excluded; and*
 - (iii) *if no candidate is successful in the second round there is a third, and if necessary subsequent, round of voting from which, each time, the candidate with the fewest votes in the previous round is excluded; and*
 - (iv) *in any round of voting, if 2 or more candidates tie for the lowest number of votes, the person excluded from the next round is resolved by lot.*

System B:

- (a) *requires that a person is elected or appointed if he or she receives more votes than any other candidate; and*
- (b) *has the following characteristics:*
 - (i) *there is only 1 round of voting; and*
 - (ii) *if 2 or more candidates tie for the most votes, the tie is resolved by lot.*

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 9	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: CWMS Zone Committee Review and Next Steps
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Jaimee Grant, Zone Facilitator	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 25 February 2025

Purpose

To update the Committee on actions from the previous meeting, relevant information, and upcoming engagement opportunities.

Recommendation

The Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee:

1. Receives the update on the CWMS Zone Committee Review and Next Steps.

Report

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum launched a review of Zone Committees in 2023 to consider how best to include local leadership in freshwater decision making.

Following this review, a report was presented to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (CMF) on 29 November 2024. After considering these findings, the CMF acknowledged the significant contribution Zone Committee members have made to freshwater outcomes throughout Canterbury, and collectively agreed that:

- In principle, zone committees, as a consistent structure across Waitaha Canterbury, are in some places no longer the preferred option to support effective local freshwater leadership.
- Further work is needed to refine what an improved model might look like, with another report planned to go to the Mayoral Forum in May 2025 seeking agreement to a proposed model.
- In the first half of 2025, Environment Canterbury will lead this work with Councils and Papatipu Rūnanga, and to assist with how to transition from zone committee to any new model.

A copy of the CMF paper is included as **Agenda Item 9.1**.

Discussion

Cameron Smith, Environment Canterbury Senior Strategy Manager will attend to discuss the CWMS Zone Committee Review and receive feedback from the Committee.

Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Date: 29 November 2024

Presented by: Craig Pauling, Environment Canterbury

CWMS Zone Committee Review 2024 – Reporting and Next Steps

Purpose

1. To report on the outcome of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy Zone Committee Review 2024 (the 'Review') and seek endorsement from the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on proposed next steps.

Recommendations

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. **acknowledges that the Review has been completed, with the full technical report provided to territorial authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, and zone committees**
2. **agrees that zone committees as a consistent structure across Canterbury are no longer fit for purpose**
3. **agrees that a proposed model of local freshwater leadership groups with core membership of territorial authorities, mana whenua, and regional council be investigated in early 2025**
4. **endorses work to be undertaken to refine the operation of this core model and to report back to the Mayoral Forum in May 2025, seeking agreement to the proposed model**
5. **agrees that this work should be undertaken collaboratively by staff from territorial authorities, Environment Canterbury, and Rūnanga**
6. **agrees that this work continues to be supported by a working group of Mayors, Rūnanga representatives, and the Environment Canterbury Chair.**

Key points

2. A working group of nominated Canterbury Mayors and mana whenua representatives workshopped (i) principles, functions, and bottom lines for local freshwater leadership and engagement, and (ii) models to achieve these principles and functions.
3. It was agreed that while the underlying vision and principles of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) remain sound, zone committees as a consistent regional structure are no longer fit for purpose and should be replaced.

4. A replacement model was identified that centres on connecting territorial authorities, mana whenua and regional council at a leadership level, with connections to local communities critical but best tailored at the local level.
5. Further work is required to refine the operation of this replacement model. This work should be undertaken collaboratively by staff from territorial authorities, Environment Canterbury, and Rūnanga.

Background

6. On 30 August 2024, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (CMF) nominated four mayors to work with Environment Canterbury's Chair to workshop what local freshwater leadership the CMF will support into the future. The four nominees were Mayors Mackle, Bowen, Black, and Mauger. Mayor Munro later joined the working group.
7. Also on 30 August, Te Rōpū Tuia agreed to nominate mana whenua representatives to participate. The two representatives were Rik Tainui (Chairperson, Ōnuku) and Dardanelle McLean-Smith (Chairperson, Te Rūnanga o Waihao). Environment Canterbury's Ngāi Tahu Councillors, Crs Cranwell and Korako, joined the working group.
8. This working group met for two-hour workshops on 21 October and 4 November 2024 in hybrid in-person and online settings.
9. This report concludes the Review, with recommendations for next steps presented below for endorsement by the CMF. A full technical report will be shared with territorial authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, and zone committees once finalised.

Workshop outcomes

10. Workshop content was based on the Review's empirical findings (see Attachment 1) and aimed at testing (i) principles, functions, and bottom lines for local freshwater leadership and engagement, and (ii) models to achieve these principles and functions.
11. There was a shared view that while the CWMS vision and principles remain sound, and provide a good basis for future work, the zone committees as a consistent structure across Canterbury are no longer fit for purpose.
12. While some committees work well and opportunities should be created to keep the momentum and membership of these committees, the majority of committees have not been well placed or supported to move from planning-centric work to an implementation work programme.
13. Through the workshops a preferred base model was identified as well as questions that require further investigation before this new model can be operationalised.

Key features of proposed local leadership model

14. A base model was identified that centres on connecting territorial authorities, mana whenua and regional council at a leadership level and at place, with connections to local communities critical along with the need to reflect a maturing partnership with

mana whenua. Connections to Central Government and industry alongside, and as part of, local communities may also be important for future success.

15. The working group recognised that the relationship of these three partners should be meaningful and have clear purpose – it ought to extend beyond loose connections and involve direction setting, and possibly support funding decisions to achieve outcomes. Members of the working group framed this well – it is about these local leadership groups confirming a master plan of local priorities and then utilise their resources, mana, and networks to support delivery towards these priorities.
16. The scope of the leadership groups was also discussed by the working group, and it was agreed that the fundamentals of the CWMS and guiding plans (e.g. Zone Implementation Programmes) remain crucial for identifying freshwater management priorities and focus efforts. Leadership groups may, however, wish to extend the scope of local priorities to other overlapping cross-boundary issues, such as land use, biosecurity, biodiversity and natural hazards.
17. The working group acknowledged that an approach is needed that achieves a degree of regional consistency from a membership and function perspective, with enough flexibility to enable locally suitable solutions, which will include determining at place the mechanisms for local community engagement, setting of priorities, and degree of investment support.
18. The group also noted that future options should be effective and efficient without duplicating existing structures or recreating known challenges to achieving outcomes. Successful examples of partnership approaches across Canterbury may serve as points of reference (e.g. Waitarakao Washdyke Lagoon Catchment Strategy and Whakaraupō Whaka-Ora Healthy Harbour).
19. The success of future options will depend on clear responsibilities and accountability, with the support of councils and Rūnanga being critical.

Key questions to be considered

20. Some key design questions need to be worked through in early 2025 before final advice can be provided to the CMF. For example, should these groups operate according to existing CWMS zone boundaries, district boundaries, or be based on proposed freshwater management units?
21. Options for how these groups are mandated also need to be determined. Zone committees are joint committees of territorial authorities and Environment Canterbury, whereas other mechanisms, such as Whaka-Ora, are underpinned by a voluntary partnership reflected with a Collaborative Agreement.
22. These questions, along with operational details (e.g., options for wider membership, meeting formats and frequency, and administrative support), need to be investigated further.

Proposed next steps

23. Further work is required to resolve the questions outlined above and refine the proposed model. Under the auspices of the CMF, this work should be undertaken collaboratively by staff from territorial authorities, Environment Canterbury, and Rūnanga.
24. It is proposed that this work continues to be supported by a working group of Mayors, Rūnanga representatives, and Environment Canterbury Chair. The working group that met on 21 October and 4 November has been highly effective, and there will be ongoing value to support refinement of the proposed model.
25. Final endorsement from the CMF will be sought at its May 2025 meeting, in order to have new groups operational in the 2025/26 financial year.
26. This timing would enable further discussions in individual councils (noting changes to the zone committee approach will require decisions by each council given these are joint committees) and for the new structures to commence in the 2025/26 financial year. It is intended that new groups would operate within existing CWMS Zone Committee funding envelopes.
27. It is intended that the CWMS zone committees continue their work in their current form until new groups are established.
28. A progress update will be provided at the CMF's February 2025 meeting, with a finalised model presented at the May 2025 meeting.

Cost, compliance and communication

Financial implications

29. In refining the proposed model, staff are working towards new groups being funded within existing CWMS Zone Committee budgets.

Risk assessment and legal compliance

30. Given the collaborative approach taken for this Review, key parties have received regular updates and participated in determining the outcomes of the Review. Therefore, no major risks or legal implications are foreseen.

Significance and engagement

31. This work affects the relationship and future collaboration between key CWMS parties, including territorial authorities, Environment Canterbury, Ngāi Tahu, the Canterbury community, and organisations with interests in water.
32. Further collaborative engagements between territorial authorities, mana whenua, and regional council are required at a leadership and staff level to refine the operation of the proposed leadership group model. Zone committee members will be engaged throughout early to mid-2025 as part of the transition to a new model by July 2025.

Communication

33. Progress updates on proposed next steps will be communicated through upcoming quarterly meetings of the CMF and Chief Executive Forum, as well as other avenues on an as-needed basis (e.g. Canterbury Policy Forum). Zone committee members will continue to receive regular updates.

Next steps

34. A progress update will be provided to the CMF in February 2025, with a final model to be presented in May.

Attachments

- Summary of the CWMS Zone Committee Review 2024

Attachment 1: Summary CWMS Zone Committee Review 2024

Background

The CWMS Zone Committee Review 2024 (the 'Review') aimed to address key questions about the future of local freshwater leadership to determine necessary functions, structures, and resources needed to support local leadership into the future. Led by Environment Canterbury under the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, the Review engaged a range of stakeholders between March – June 2024, including zone committee members, Canterbury Mayors, Rūnanga representatives, and Environment Canterbury Councillors. Several qualitative methods were employed to gather feedback, such as workshops, interviews, and surveys. Key insights from these engagements are summarised below.

Views on the current function of Zone Committees

Participants stressed that **Zone Committees have been an integral part of collaborative freshwater management** in Canterbury over the last decade, including substantial involvement in several plan changes, the development of zone implementation programmes and addendums, as well as by enabling a range of local community-led initiatives (e.g. catchment groups).

Additionally, many participants reflected on the less tangible, or associated, **benefits of zone committees**, including:

- being a **unique shared forum** for diverse community voices, local and regional councils, and mana whenua
- providing a **formalised structure for constructive discussion, functional disagreement, and effective collaboration** to establish shared targets, with the **support from facilitators and local and regional council staff**
- offering opportunities for **shared learning** about local freshwater issues, **capability building** (including for emerging community leaders), and in some cases **inter-cultural learning**
- **influencing local environmental efforts** through setting priorities, allocating and coordinating funding, connecting community members, and liaising with local and regional councils.

However, it was widely acknowledged that the **context for zone committees has changed in recent years**, partly due to:

- a **shift from the 'strategic phase' of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy** (e.g., planning) towards a stronger implementation focus
- more **directive national legislation** limiting (sub)regional flexibility (e.g., National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020)
- the **increased activity of catchment groups and collectives**, supported by national funding (e.g. Jobs For Nature), which leads to overlaps in function.

Many participants consequently expressed **a range of concerns about zone committees in their current form and function**, including:

- feeling a **loss of purpose and (political) mana** with councils, **frustration over limited progress with implementation** and their **inability to influence** this (e.g. insufficient

funding), their **role reduced to allocate funding**, and **significant uncertainty over their future**

- several participants acknowledging that, for various reasons, **some zone committees are disconnected** from councils, local community activities, and/or mana whenua (e.g., limited links to operational activities or lacking involvement in emerging issues)
- an acknowledgement that **support from territorial authorities and regional council has declined** in recent years
- some participants questioning zone committees' **efficacy and 'value for money'** in achieve desired environmental outcomes.

Considerations for the future of Zone Committees and local leadership

Participants outlined **broad considerations over the future of local freshwater leadership and the role of zone committees**. These considerations include:

- widely shared views that **collaborative approaches remain crucial**, including between councils, mana whenua and local communities
- a need to **maintain the holistic and systematic focus** of the CWMS and Zone Committees, with core principles (e.g. balance of views) and guiding plans (e.g. ZIPs) still relevant
- the importance of **maintaining strategic oversight** of on-the-ground activities, including but not limited to catchment groups, and of **addressing gaps** where applicable
- a need to **sustain lasting connection and coordination** among groups and individuals involved in local freshwater management, with a concern that **losing zone committees could disrupt relationships** formed over many years
- a need for mechanisms to **maintain diverse community influence on strategic direction and plans**, with a lot of current activities being led by rural communities (e.g. catchment groups) with **limited participation from urban, non-farming communities and mana whenua**
- having mechanisms to **achieve local community engagement**, including encouraging local participation and ownership to **achieve outcomes and create accountability** where required
- a need for **safe forums that bring together diverse local community voices, council staff and mana whenua** in a collaborative and inclusive manner
- a potential gap resulting from the **loss of Zone Committees' independent voice and their role as trusted mediators** between councils and local communities
- a need for **shared learning spaces** that help to **build capability and capacity**.

Following these requirements for, and benefits of, local freshwater leadership, views **diverged on whether Zone Committees (or similar groups) are required** in the future, ranging from participants advocating for their disestablishment while others prefer them to be refreshed and strengthened. There is, however, shared agreement that **certainty over their future role is required**, including adequate commitment from Environment Canterbury, territorial authorities, Rūnanga and other key parties.

Participants outlined **diverse recommendations for achieving effective future local freshwater leadership and engagement**, with or without Zone Committees. Relevant recommendations included:

- **Several principles that apply regardless of future options:**
 - diversity and balance of views should be supported, potentially beyond freshwater
 - clear purpose, adequate support, and targeted outcomes are required
 - acknowledgement that 'strategic' and 'implementation' functions may differ
- **A range of potential structures suggested, noting those should be effective and efficient:**
 - mechanisms for community connection and engagement, possibly formalised as sub-regional Water & Land Forums or Groups
 - umbrella groups that enable community and catchment groups, such as Catchment Leaders Forums, noting that those groups may perform different roles to zone committees
 - advisory groups or community boards to support Councils
 - a Governance and Planning Forum or Committees with strategic oversight and potentially a broader focus than freshwater, e.g. including climate change and biodiversity
- Strong sense that **flexible solutions are needed across the region** without one-size-fits-all solutions, while noting that support from **facilitation and liaison staff remains important**
- Acknowledgement of **membership as an important success factor**, with a need to maintain connections to local community and diverse views on suitable composition and size
- Range of suggestion for **more effective working and funding procedures** (e.g. fewer formal meetings and simplified funding allocation), but a desire to **keep existing CWMS funding**
- Widely shared view that for any successful future option **adequate support from territorial authorities and Environment Canterbury will be crucial**, including collaboration and coordination between them as well as effective support to enable local leadership.

Summary

The Review confirmed that Zone Committees in Canterbury have played a crucial role in collaborative freshwater management over the past decade, contributing to plan changes, zone implementation programmes, and community-led initiatives. They have fostered dialogue between diverse stakeholders, including local councils, mana whenua, and community members, while influencing local environmental efforts.

The Review confirmed that the evolving context of freshwater management, including national legislation and the rise of catchment groups, has led to concerns about the Committees' current effectiveness and relevance. The Review also highlighted that meaningful connection with community remains vital in shaping strong positive outcomes for water management.

In considering future leadership options, the Review has incorporated a wide range of views on the challenges faced by Zone Committees and outlines considerations for how to maintain effective local freshwater management and community engagement moving forward.

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 10	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Mt Harding Creek Catchment Group Update
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Janine Holland, Facilitator Mt Harding Creek Catchment Group	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 25 February 2025

Purpose

To update the Zone Committee on the impact of the Pudding Hill and Methven Auxiliary stockwater closures on our catchment community (SH72 to Winchmore). We ask the zone committee to support our advocacy for retention of these stockwater consents.

Recommendation

e.g. That the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee receives this presentation and provides feedback/endorses/. – JAIMEE CAN DO THIS

Report

Preservation of Pudding Hill stockwater

The Mt Harding Creek Catchment Group came together late 2023. More than 20 landowners across a 20 kilometre stretch have met to develop a vision for the creek, gathering information and data from Environment Canterbury, Ashburton District Council and Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation staff to inform thinking.

The group's strategic vision is focused on three outcomes;

The group is focused on retaining **reliable flow** through the creek for ecological, recreational and amenity reasons.

We want **autonomy** so that landowners can take care of the creek themselves (to mitigate drainage and flooding issues) and **community ownership** where everyone plays their part in improving the creek (bringing our rural and urban communities together).

While the group was initially committed to tackling flooding concerns, when ADC signalled that the stockwater network would close, we shifted focus to maintaining flows that preserve the creek's ecological, amenity and recreational values that are so important to our community. Currently council has a public consultation on the future of Pudding Hill stockwater and we are encouraging our catchment community to submit by *3 March 2025* to protect this source of water.

The group will ask ADC to continue to supplement Mt Harding Creek with Pudding Hill water previously used by stockwater customers, and recognises that this may require a targeted rate on catchment ratepayers. Next month the public consultation on Methven Auxiliary stockwater commences and we will make a similar request. Environment Canterbury scientists advise without stockwater supplementation, the creek will lose reliable flow and we

believe this will turn it into a dry, smelly and arid channel for much of the year. We await with interest a water balance model that ADC has commissioned that will confirm the creek's inflows and instream values. The group understands that Ashburton and Tinwald Domain ponds require stockwater supplementation, so there is precedent for what we are asking for. One of the fishhooks with the Pudding Hill intake has been the fish screen requirement. We believe this can be addressed with a compliance waiver from Environment Canterbury on the basis that this is a non-consumptive take for a creek that is a naturalised branch/tributary of the Ashburton/ Hakatere River. Landowners within the group who previously received Environment Canterbury funding and advice to develop riparian plantings and enhance the creek feel betrayed that their biodiversity projects may be at risk if water is turned off.

Additionally, for the 2000 people living in Methven and the throngs of tourists who walk the Methven Walkway, there is little appreciation that this beloved creek is under threat. Many people wander through Thyme Stream subdivision enjoying upstream native plantings established by Methven Lions and local school children. Good water quality allows both dogs and children to splash around in this stretch. In rural reaches, farmers have planted extensive sections and enjoy Koura (freshwater crayfish), Tuna (eel) and trout sightings. Group members believe drainage and flooding issues will be exacerbated if water races are filled in once stockwater is removed. For climate resilience, we consider keeping the creek open and flowing with regular maintenance is a responsible approach. Once stockwater races close, overland flow during high rainfall may be widespread and roads, personal properties and other infrastructure could be at risk.

As the only significant surface waterway on the northern side of the Ashburton River, Mt Harding Creek could provide access for Mahinga Kai gathering, particularly within and near Methven. We have not connected with Arowhenua, but want to understand the opportunities to enhance Mahinga Kai aspirations.

Catchment group members ask that Ashburton District Council and Environment Canterbury work with the catchment group and Methven Community Board to come up with a solution. We understand council staff meet Environment Canterbury staff in May to discuss the fish screen consent. We encourage you to take this option to them and see if ADC can hold the stockwater consent for ecological, amenity and recreational purposes. A compliance waiver for the fish screen may be granted given the primary goal of supplementation is to protect instream values.

We are prepared to work with the Methven Community Board and council to consult our community on a targeted rate, and look forward to the zone committee's interest and support for our goal.

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 11	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Zone Committee Workplan 2025
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Jaimee Grant, Zone Facilitator	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 25 February 2025

Purpose

To update the Zone Committee on progress with CWMS Zone Committee Review and agree a work plan through to June 2025.

Background

CWMS Zone Committee Review

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum launched a review of Zone Committees in 2023 to consider how best to include local leadership in freshwater decision making.

Mayoral Forum Consideration

Following this review, a report was presented to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum on 29 November 2024.

After considering these findings, the Forum acknowledge the significant contribution Zone Committee members have made to freshwater outcomes throughout Canterbury, both as individuals, and collectively agreed that:

- In principle, zone committees, as a consistent structure across Waitaha Canterbury, are in some places no longer the preferred option to support effective local freshwater leadership.
- Further work is needed to refine what an improved model might look like, with another report planned to go to the Mayoral Forum in May 2025 seeking agreement to a proposed model.
- In the first half of 2025, Environment Canterbury will lead this work with Councils and Papatipu Rūnanga, and to assist with how to transition from zone committee to any new model (see 'Next Steps' below).

Next Steps

In the interim period, through to June 2025 key areas where ongoing Zone Committee input will be valuable include:

- Completing 2024/25 Action Plan budget allocations and oversight of funded projects (funding agreements are almost complete for 2024/25);
- Supporting work to complete the 2025 CWMS Targets report; and
- Assisting in identifying local priorities for new leadership groups to consider based on ZIPs and plans that have guided our efforts to date.

If there is other work or actions that committees would like to do, including interim changes, then we welcome hearing about these.

Potential Zone Committee meeting/workshop dates to June 2025

The following dates are based on last year's previous cycle of holding meetings/workshops/briefings on the last Tuesday of each month starting at 1 pm, subject to change where required:

- 25 March – Fieldtrip (full day)
- 22 April
- 27 May

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 12	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: AAPCT Grant Variation Request
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Jaimee Grant	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 25 February 2025

Purpose

To provide the Committee with information on a proposed variation of a grant agreement for a project recommended for funding by the Committee.

Recommendation

The Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee:

1. Confirms its support for a recommendation to vary the Carters Creek Water Quality Improvement Grant Agreement (C24C/94105) between Environment Canterbury and Ashburton Aquatic Park Charitable Trust to put the funding towards LiDAR aerial surveys and remedial work instead of a Carters Creek trial

Report

Carters Creek Water Quality Improvement Project

During the financial year 2023/24, the Committee recommended, and Environment Canterbury approved, \$10,483 + GST of funding to go the Ashburton Aquatic Park Charitable Trust (AAPCT) for the Carters Creek Water Quality Improvement Project.

The Project was for a trial aimed at reducing phosphorus levels in Carters Creek to address cyanobacteria issues at Lake Hood. However, preliminary testing showed the original approach was unsuitable.

Grant variation request

Grant agreements between Environment Canterbury and grant recipients can be varied provided both parties agree to it. For substantial variations, the Committee's recommendation on the variation is sought prior to Environment Canterbury making any decision.

AAPCT have requested a variation to the grant agreement given the trial is likely to be unsuccessful and involves shifting the project focus from phosphorus reduction in Carters Creek to flood prevention through LiDAR aerial surveys and remedial bank work.

Proposed variation

AAPCT is now collaborating with the Carters Creek Catchment Group to explore alternative solutions to catchment issues, focusing on flood prevention. Heavy rainfall causes the creek to overflow, impacting farmland and nearby areas.

The proposed solution involves using LiDAR aerial surveys to identify flood-prone areas and guide remedial bank work. Surveyors Fox & Associates, with expertise in the area, estimate the cost at \$10,000–\$11,000 plus GST.

The original variation request was shared with the Zone Committee and Environment Canterbury. Both parties requested further information on the variation proposal and AAPCT were asked to complete an application form to ensure all relevant information was provided for their consideration. A copy of the completed application form will be provided to the Committee when it becomes available.