

Stockwater Transition Working Group

Terms of Reference

1.1. Background

Council have decided to cease delivering the stockwater service by 30 June 2027. Funding has been included for a managed and inclusive exit from the Council delivery of the stockwater service.

The key reasons for Council ceasing to deliver stockwater by 30 June 2027 are:

- The stockwater network is an ageing and inefficient method of delivering water for livestock to farms.
- Maintaining the system is getting costlier because the infrastructure is aging and needs replacement. Many components, related to the channels (e.g. gates, pipes, pumps) will need replacing over the next few decades.
- The service relies on having sufficient water in the system to keep the water flowing. During summer, water sources often dry up, meaning we can't always guarantee the service.
- There are other, more modern ways for properties to get water. A lot of people who pay for this service don't use it because they've found more efficient ways to get water, such as through irrigation schemes.
- Stockwater is currently funded by all properties that have a race, aqueducts or water channels that pass through, along, or adjacent to, or abuts the property. This means that it is being paid for by many that don't use, need and/or want the service.
- Meeting new environmental requirements will add extra cost to ensure the system is viable in the future. For example, this includes the installation of fish screens on some intakes to meet these new standards.

Council has a stockwater race closure process in place for property owners that no longer need their race and want to close it. This process will remain in place alongside the stockwater transition work.

1.2. Purpose of the Stockwater Transition Working Group

The purpose of the Stockwater Transition Working Group (STWG) is to give effect to Council's policy position to exit the delivery of stockwater by 30 June 2027.

1.3. Definitions of Key Terms

Intake: A structure or location where water is formally “taken” into the water race network.

Exit: Council will no longer be the provider of stockwater.

Stockwater delivery alternative: An alternative proposal or proposals to deliver water to the property boundary that can be used for stockwater, or other purposes (where consented).

Stockwater solution: A solution funded by the stockwater user/s to replace the stockwater service. This may represent one of the stockwater delivery alternative proposals or a separate solution determined by the stockwater user.

Stockwater Transition Plan (SWTG): Plan adopted by Council that outlines the approach and programme for Council’s exit from the stockwater service

1.4. Underlying Principles

The underlying principles for the STWG are as follows:

- The Transition Plan will establish the order of the exit programme which will be followed unless there are exceptional circumstances leading to a Council decision to alter the exit programme
- The exit programme will follow an intake-by-intake approach¹
- Council is committed to clearly communicating with stakeholders the progress of the exit programme
- A proposal(s) for stockwater delivery alternatives will be only to the property boundary.
- Council will not fund any stockwater solutions, either to the property boundary or on-farm.
- Council is the final decision-maker

1.5. Key Deliverables

The STWG will be responsible for delivering a Stockwater Transition Plan to Council for adoption by December 2024.

Once the Transition Plan is in place, the STWG will be responsible for monitoring progress towards achieving the exit programme.

1.6. Stockwater Transition Working Group Membership

The STWG membership will consist of two-tiers of members, with differing functions.

Core Group Membership

- Council appointees (Cr Wilson, Cr Cameron and Mayor ex-officio)
- 1 x Federated Farmers representative
- 1 x Environment Canterbury representative
- 1 x Te Runaka o Arowhenua representative
- 1 x Consultant resource

Each Core Group member will be welcome to bring organisation advisors to meetings as required to provide advice.

¹ Some intakes may be progressed in conjunction with others where expedient to do so.

Council officers will attend the Core Group meetings as required to provide advice.

Key Stakeholders

The Transition Plan adopted by Council, will assign stakeholders from the list below to the respective intake by intake exit approach. This means that key stakeholders will be invited to contribute and/or attend working group meetings on an 'as required' basis, when the exit programme will be focused on the intake they have expertise or involvement with.

- 1 Acton Scheme representative
- 1 Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Limited (ALIL) representative
- 1 Barhill Chertsey Irrigation Limited (BCIL) representative
- 1 Eiffleton Scheme representative
- 1 Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust (HHWET) representative
- 1 Mayfield Hinds Valetta Irrigation (MHV) representative
- 1 Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective (MCCC) representative
- 1 Rangitata Diversion Race (RDR) representative
- 1 Spaxton Scheme representative
- 1 Ashburton Zone Committee representative

1.7. Functions of the Core Group

As well as the deliverables identified in 1.5, the Core Working Group will make recommendations to Council based on the specialist and technical expertise they receive from the consultant advice and through the key stakeholders input.

The Core Working Group is expected to take a 'consensus approach' where possible when developing the recommendations to Council. If consensus isn't reached then the range of views should be presented to Council for their final decision.

The Chair will be appointed by Council following the adoption of these Terms of Reference.

The Core Group will consist of 7 members (excluding organisational advisors and Council officers). Should a member withdraw from the Core Group, Council or the respective organisation may appoint a new member to replace them.

The Core Group has no delegated authority to spend budget or allocate resources.

1.8. Functions of the Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders will be invited to contribute to and/or attend the working group meetings to provide their knowledge and expertise on each respective intake based on the exit programme.

Key stakeholders do not have the authority to make recommendations to Council.

1.9. Reporting

The Stockwater Transition Working Group minutes will be reported to the next available Council meeting following each meeting. Member organisations may also report back to their respective organisation outcomes of the working group.

1.10. Meetings & Quorum

The Core Working Group will meet monthly until the Stockwater Transition Plan is adopted by Council in December 2024.

From January 2025, the Core Working Group will meet on a quarterly until 30 June 2027 (or sooner if work is complete).

The Core Working Group will be required to have a quorum of 5 members (including 2 Council elected representatives) to make recommendations to Council.

1.11. Term of appointment

The term of the Working Group will commence on appointment, and end on the 30 June 2027.

1.12. Remuneration

The members of the Stockwater Transition Working Group will not receive remuneration.

1.13. Final Determinations

The recommendations of the Core Group, and the decisions of Council to give effect to Council's exit from the delivery of stockwater, including Council's adoption and implementation of the Stockwater Transition Plan, shall be treated as final decisions, unless revoked or amended by Council in accordance with its Standing Orders.

Individual members of the STWG, stakeholders, or the general public shall have no right to appeal or right to challenge these decisions.

1.14. Standards of Conduct

The STWG members may be privy to confidential and market sensitive information. Discussions and analysis from STWG meetings should also be treated as sensitive and confidential.

In order for the group to operate effectively, members must maintain the confidence of the group, including maintaining confidentiality of matters discussed at meetings, and any information or documents provided to the group. Only with the agreement of Council officials can members share information about the business of the group.

Where information is already in the public domain the confidentiality requirements do not apply to that information.

Members must not represent the group, or comment on the business of the group, to the media. Council's Communication Policy will apply when media statements are made or enquiries are answered.

A conflict of interest will occur when a member's private interest interferes, or could appear to interfere, with an issue that faces the group. A conflict of interest will also occur when there is a possibility that a benefit may apply to a sector, industry, or organisation that they represent. A conflict of interest may be real or perceived.

Members must at all times comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 2020 and keep information about identifiable individuals confidential.

All information provided to the group will be treated as official information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and, subject to the requirements of that Act, may be released to the public if there are no grounds for withholding it.

Members will treat each other, and the opinions of others, with respect at all times. Members will not take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts or any other unfair dealing practices.

Members will generously share practice and learnings and actively participate in constructive discussion and debate. Members will show respect for other participants and alternative ideas.

Adopted by Council 4 September 2024