

Otago Regional Council Long Term Plan, (2021-2031): Submission from Guardians of Lake Hāwea,

15 May 2021

The Guardians of Lake Hāwea is a sub-committee of the Hāwea Community Association Incorporated.

The aim of the Guardians is:

To ensure that Lake Hāwea, its surrounds, its water quality and its biodiversity and ecosystems are maintained, and managed sustainably and safely for the benefit of all.

We have made a joint submission with the Guardians of Lake Wanaka on Otago Upper Lakes Rohe: Lakes Wānaka, Hāwea and Whakatipu water quality and ecosystem function .

This submission deals with other matters in the Long Term Plan

Proposal 1: Helping you manage pests

Otago's Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) identifies 51 species to be managed and a further list of organisms to be monitored. Proposal 1 suggests increased effort in this area.

We agree that the status quo is not an option. We support increased investment and increasing ORC resourcing capacity and capability to undertake new areas of work and expand services.

We support Option 1: An immediate and significant increase in capacity and capability to manage pests.

In particular we support

- Dedicated biosecurity advisers for wilding conifer control
- Risk assessment for non-established pests and pest pathways into Otago
- Development of a Regional Wilding Conifer Management Strategy and Freshwater Lake Management Plan

We further request that Council develop and publicise an easy way to add pest species or control requirements to the Regional Pest Management Plan 2019. For example, this year we have discovered a large population of the pest plant Chilean Rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*) on the shore of Lake Hāwea, and since then anecdotal reports of another occurrence at Dublin Bay, Lake Wanaka. We make two points about this. Firstly, these new infestations of a declared pest plant should be able to be recorded somewhere at ORC but we can see no clear pathway for this to occur. Secondly the RPMP does not require landowners to do anything about this plant except around Otago Harbour. In our opinion this needs modification and we would prefer this to happen within the term of the existing RPMP, rather than in 2029.

Our Must-do Projects

We support the focus on climate change and the focus on environment.

In particular we note the intention to “invest more in our monitoring networks and environmental studies”.

In our role as Guardians of Lake Hāwea, we have long believed that there is not enough understanding and monitoring of this lake, and that there is insufficient knowledge to enable us to detect changes in water quality and biota (including pest organisms). We support increased research and regular monitoring of lake indices. We also support the preparation of integrated catchment management plans.

In regard to climate change, we note the Climate Commission’s advice that we can’t plant our way out of climate change, but afforestation can play a part and should focus on indigenous species. We expect ORC to encourage this approach.

We support the focus on biodiversity.

In particular we note the intention to “Increase our commitment to and expenditure for pest management such as possums, and completion of a freshwater lakes management plan, and regional wilding pine management strategy”.

We are also pleased to see increased ORC support for local community biodiversity projects, as there are several ongoing projects of this type in the Lake Hāwea area.

John Langley

Chairperson Guardians of Lake Hāwea