# Stockwater Transition Working Group

## Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Stockwater Transition Working Group will be held on:

*Date*: **Wednesday 4 March 2026**

*Time*: **1.30pm**

*Venue*: **Council Chamber** (First floor, Te Whare Whakatere), 2 Baring Sq East

## Core Group Membership

| | |
|---|---|
| Ashburton District Council | - Cr Richard Wilson (Chair)<br>- Cr Carolyn Cameron<br>- Mayor Liz McMillan (ex officio) |
| Aoraki Environmental Consultancy | - Sally Reihana and Treena Davidson |
| Federated Farmers | - David Acland |
| Environment Canterbury | - Marcelo Wibmer |
| Consultant | - John Wright |

## Meeting Timetable

| Time | Item |
|---|---|
| **1.30pm** | **Working Group meeting commences** |
| **1.35pm** | **Deputation (Irrigation Companies Collective)**<br>- Andrew Mockford, MHV Water Ltd |


**1 Welcome**

**2 Apologies**

**3 Correspondence**
- Irrigation Companies Collective **3**

**Matters for decision**

**4** Limestone Creek Intake – Proposed Closure **5**

**5** Alford Forest Intake – Proposed Closure **25**

**Activity updates**

**6** Intake Work Update **47**


26 February 2026

16 February 2026

Ashburton District Council
Attn: Mayor, Elected Members and Chief Executive

**Collective intent regarding future management of stockwater and water-race services in the Ashburton District**

Ashburton District Council has signalled its intention to withdraw from the direct delivery of stockwater services by June 2027. In response, the undersigned organisations write jointly to advise Council of our shared intent to work collaboratively with ADC to develop a coordinated and durable transition pathway.

The five organisations, Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Ltd, Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd, Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust, MHV Water Ltd, and Rangitata Diversion Race Management Ltd, collectively operate and govern much of the water infrastructure that already underpins stockwater delivery and related public-good outcomes across the district. We consider this collective well placed to help design and implement a sustainable, community-endorsed replacement framework.

We note that Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd is already engaged in discussions with Council regarding aspects of the transition. This joint letter is not intended to replace or subordinate that work, but rather to signal a broader collective willingness to work with Council on coordinated, district-wide solutions.

**Our shared intent**

Our collective intent is to work with Council to:

- Ensure continuity and reliability of stockwater supply for users following Council's withdrawal;
- Retain and appropriately provide for the multiple benefits historically delivered by the water-race network, including aquifer recharge, biodiversity, amenity, firefighting, surface water drainage, and recreation; and
- Develop a clear, transparent governance and funding model that distinguishes between user-pays services and publicly funded public-good outcomes.

We recognise that this transition is not solely about stockwater delivery. It also involves the future of a multi-use water-race system that provides important environmental, community, and resilience benefits across the district.

**Engagement and next steps**

Given the long lead times associated with consents, infrastructure, and governance arrangements, early engagement and clear sequencing will be critical to achieving a successful outcome by June 2027.

In particular, the collective considers the securement and consolidation of future intakes and associated water consents to be a key early workstream that will underpin all subsequent decisions.

We therefore seek the opportunity to meet with Council officers and the Stockwater Transition Working Group to discuss how we can work together on a coordinated, district-wide transition programme. There are several aspects where greater detail is required for any of the collective members to commit to a mutually acceptable resolution. The group seeks this initial meeting to occur as soon as is practicable as we are acutely aware of the volume of work that must be undertaken within the noted timeframe.

This letter is intended to signal our collective willingness to engage constructively and proactively with Council to achieve a practical, enduring outcome for users, the community, and the environment.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Mockford**
MHV Water Ltd

**Rebecca Whillans**
Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Ltd

**Nick Daniels**
Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd

**Jeremy Adamson**
Rangitata Diversion Race Management Limited

**Brett Painter**
Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust

# 4. Limestone Creek Intake & Race Network – Proposed Closure

| | |
|---|---|
| Author | *Andrew Guthrie, Assets Manager* |
| Activity Manager | *Crissie Drummond; Infrastructure Services Support Lead* |
| Executive Team Member | *Neil McCann, Group Manager Infrastructure* |

## Summary


- The purpose of this report is to seek working group approval of a recommendation to Council for closure of the Limestone Creek intake and associated race network.
- The scope of the proposed closure involves 9.2km of open race network, comprising 3.2km of main race and 6km of local race. This network discharges into a another stockwater main (outside the scope of this closure). Refer to plan in Appendix 1.
- There are five rateable properties supplied by the Limestone Creek.


**Recommendation to Council**

**That** Council approves:

1. The closure of the Limestone Creek intake and race network from the intake on Limestone Creek, to its terminal discharge points into the Montalto Hinds stockwater main.
2. The date of the closure to be affected on 30 June 2026.

## Attachments

**Appendix 1** Plan 3029 - Proposed Limestone Creek Intake & Race Closure
**Appendix 2** Manawhenua Assessment of the Limestone Creek Intake Stockwater Race

## Background

### The current situation

1. Stockwater for this system is sourced from the Limestone Creek, via an intake weir situated within the waterway where it passes through Gawler Downs Station located on Hinds Gorge Road. No records exist of the current intake, but an intake has operated on Limestone Creek for over 125 years, as there are references to maintenance being undertaken on headworks as early as the 1900s. A newspaper report mentioning the intake can be found here[1].

2. The Limestone Creek intake normally abstracts ~50 litres/second.

3. Key statistics of the race network supplied by the Limestone Creek intake are as follows:

    - Total race network supplied 9.2 km comprising:
        - 3.2 km main race
        - 6.0 km local race
    - 5 rateable properties
    - 1 flume[2] (~50m long, over the South Branch Hekeao / Hinds River)
    - 1 siphon under the Rangitata Diversion Race
    - 1 supplementary offtake from RDR (emergency)
    - 2 road culverts

Figure 1 - Limestone Creek Intake (and Weir)

Figure 2 – Flume over Sth Br. Hekeao / Hinds River

### Previous Council Decisions

4. Councils' withdrawal from the provision of stockwater became a key decision as part of its consultation on the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. Ultimately, following strong support for Council's proposal to exit the stockwater activity by 30 June 2027, Council resolved to proceed with the exit and form a working group to monitor progress.

[1] Ashburton Guardian, Volume XXI, Issue 5202, 7 September 1900, Page 2

[2] Very poor condition.

5. The Stockwater Transition Working Group (STWG) was duly formed.

6. The STWG reviewed the draft Stockwater Exit Transition Plan at its 31 October meeting with a final plan considered at the 5 December meeting. The SETP was subsequently adopted by Council on 18 December 2024. The SETP is available here.

## Māori and tangata whenua participation – Cultural and Ecological

7. Te Rūnaka O Arowhenua is part of the core membership of the STWG and has maintained a representative present at all meetings of the group.

8. Arowhenua's consultancy, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Ltd, have been providing support for the SETP through the preparation of Cultural Assessments for each intake investigation.

9. Given the short length of this race and low number of affected properties, AEC undertook both ecological and cultural assessments for the Limestone Creek investigations during a site visit to the network. This visit was undertaken on 29 January 2026. The assessment report is provided in **Appendix 2**.

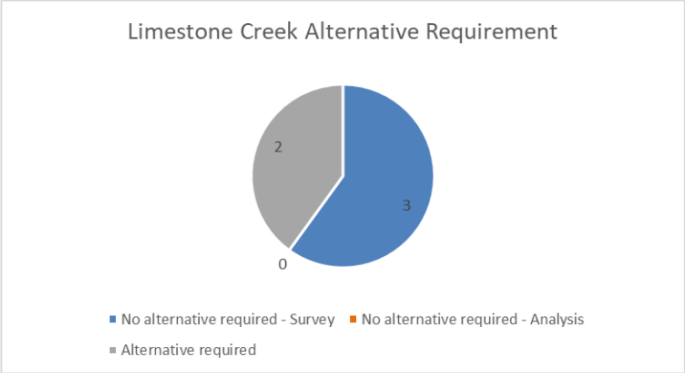
10. A general summary is provided below:

    - It was noted the overall fish habitat score, for the diversion at the intake, indicated good quality habitat for tuna (eel) and other fish.
    - Arowhenua recommends fish salvage and relocation is carried out immediately following the intake gate being closed off.
    - They recommend an eDNA sample to be taken at two specified sites along the race one month prior to closure to assist with the salvage strategy development.
    - Arowhenua seeks to have the race termination points into the Montalto Hinds main closed in a way that there is not risk of fish getting into the closed raceway.
    - Arowhenua's preference is that where races are no longer required, that these are filled in.

## Affected Parties

11. The investigations for the Limestone Creek system commenced in June 2025 and were completed in July 2025 with all five affected property owners being surveyed.

12. The results from the survey showed there was more support for closure than retaining the network.




13. Melius Ltd (John Wright) undertook follow-up discussions with the two landowners who had indicated a need for an alternative stockwater supply.

### Alternate Providers

14. The work completed by Melius Ltd, showed that Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd (BCIL) has existing piped infrastructure in relatively close proximity to both properties that require a stockwater alternative.

15. One property is already a BCIL irrigation customer and is in the process of installing a stockwater piped network on the property which they planned to have completed by 30 June 2026.

16. The other property was adjacent to BCI infrastructure and could connect with minimal additional infrastructure. Via Melius, they were introduced to BCI to make their own arrangements and is likely to be able to do so by 30 June 2026.

### Stormwater Assessment

17. Due to the nature of the network involved, no specific modelling has been undertaken on the race closure, however, district-wide modelling completed circa 2023 has been used to inform this assessment.

18. The stormwater / drainage in this vicinity is dominated by the influence of the RDR and the South Branch of the Hekeao / Hinds River. For this reason, it is anticipated the closure of this network will not have any detrimental impact on local drainage function.

## Options analysis

19. The following options have been identified.

### Option one – Proceed with proposed race closure.

20. Under this option, Council will close the Limestone Creek stockwater race on **30 June 2026**.

21. The two landowners that require a stockwater service, will need to ensure they have access to a water supply from an alternate provider. The alternate provider identified for this area is Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd.

22. The cost and management of providing the alternative will be the sole responsibility of the landowners requiring the service and the alternate provider.

23. A fish salvage and relocation plan will be developed, and the necessary permits sought for this work. The salvage plan will then be implemented as close as practicable to the operational date of closure, focusing on the intake diversion flume initially and then working downstream.

24. Officers will liaise with Environment Canterbury in regard to the weir structure and the flume and their possible future removal. It is anticipated that the flume will have to be removed, but due to the flood control benefits accruing from the weir, it is likely to remain in place.

25. The supplementary offtake from the RDR will be scheduled for decommissioning as part of the next RDR shutdown (scheduled for May 2028).

| ***Advantages:*** | ***Disadvantages:*** |
|---|---|
| • Consistent with Council stated intention to exit the stockwater activity.<br>• Provides clarity to affected landowners.<br>• Confirms Council's commitment to exit the service. | • None identified. |
| ***Risks:*** | |
| • Water from the alternate provider may not be available at time of closure. | |

**Option two – Do not proceed with race closure at this time.**

26. Under this option, the race closure will not proceed at this time.

| ***Advantages:*** | ***Disadvantages:*** |
|---|---|
| • Provides more time for alternate providers to progress alternatives. | • Opportunity to demonstrate progress towards the exit is lost.<br>• Affected landowners may continue to ignore implications.<br>• Programme tasks will start to overlap and overload internal resources. |
| ***Risks:*** | |

- Landowners may doubt Council's commitment and delay considering and committing to alternatives.

## Legal/policy implications

### Legislation

*Resource Management Act 1991*

27. The stockwater activity has consents issued under the RMA. These consents cover the various activities required to operate the network including water abstraction consents.

28. The Limestone Creek Intake abstraction consent is CRC169499 Condition 8 states: "*The use of water shall be only for stock drinking water, treated domestic and community drinking water, and essential domestic and community use*".

### Plans / Policies

*Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan*

29. The purpose of the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (CLWRP) is to "identify the resource management outcomes or goals (objectives in this Plan) for managing land and water resources in Canterbury to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA"). It identifies the policies and rules needed to achieve the objectives and provides direction in terms of the processing of resource consent applications."

30. The CLWRP contains a policy directly targeted at the ADC stockwater activity. Policy 13.4.1. reads as follows: *"In order to increase the amount of water in the river that is available to meet the proposed increased minimum flows, the taking of water for community stock water supplies from the Ashburton River/Hakatere will progressively decrease so that as soon as possible, but by no later than 1 July 2023, that taking will not exceed 2,900 L/s in total."*

31. Council has already achieved the reduction required by this policy.

*Stockwater Exit Transition Plan*

32. The Stockwater Exit Transition Plan was adopted by Council on the 18 December 2024. The Limestone Creek intake was envisaged to be the fifth intake to be progressed in the SETP, with this closure being implemented by February 2026.

33. The original timeframes for the individual project phases have proven to be quite ambitious and some of the complexities with the investigation work is adding unforeseen delays to the programme.

### Agreements

34. Council has confirmed a Heads of Agreement (HOA) between Ashburton District Council and Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Limited.

### Climate change

35. The proposed closure of this portion of the stockwater network must be considered in the context of climate change and the council's Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy.

36. Climate projections indicate increasing variability in rainfall and more frequent extreme weather events, which will influence water availability and management practices.

37. The stockwater system relies on water availability in key river resources, which come under pressure during prolonged droughts. While it offers some seasonal flexibility, its ability to support resilience under future climate extremes is limited.

38. Although closing the stockwater network could create challenges, such as farmers being required to transition to new reticulated supplies, it also presents opportunities. Closure aligns with Goal 1: Sustainable Water Management, which seeks to ensure resilient water systems, promote efficient use, and improve water quality.

39. It is also noted, the decommissioning of open races may reduce contamination risks and nutrient runoff, contributing to improved water quality outcomes.

## Strategic alignment

40. The recommendation relates to Council's community outcome of **a balanced & sustainable environment** because the progressive closure of open race networks and replacement with individual onsite supply or reticulated supplies (where needed) reduces the overall usage of water for stock purposes.

| Wellbeing | | Reasons why the recommended outcome has an effect on this wellbeing |
|---|---|---|
| Economic | ✓ | Management of the open race network is labour intensive. Stockwater can be delivered much more efficiently within reticulated networks. |
| Environmental | ✓ | Open race systems are very inefficient with in excess of 90% of the water conveyed being lost as leakage to groundwater and evaporation. |
| Cultural | ✓ | Due to the significant reduction in water required to provide stockwater, the unused water is not taken and remains in the source rivers. It is noted that Arowhenua support water remaining in the rivers. |
| Social | × | |

## Financial implications

| Requirement | Explanation |
|---|---|
| What is the cost? | $10,000 plus GST. |
| Is there budget available in LTP / AP? | Yes. |
| Where is the funding coming from? | Provided for under District Water Management Investigations.<br>275 30534 |
| Are there any future budget implications? | Yes, costs associated with asset decommissioning. This is estimated to be in the range of $2,500 - $5,000 (assuming no consents are required).<br>The removal of the flume will be programmed as soon as possible following closure.<br>Decommissioning of the supplementary intake on the RDR will need to be undertaken during the next RDR shutdown (May 2028) |

41. The costs associated with the stockwater exit programme is being met from budgets in the District Water Management and Stockwater areas.

42. The cost of preparing and implementing a fish salvage and relocation plan is expected to be in the range of $5,000 to $10,000. There is also future cost associated with asset decommissioning of ~$5,000.

43. From a rating standpoint, it is desirable to cease rating at the end of the rating year as it is not possible to remove rates (in part) during the year.

## Significance and engagement assessment

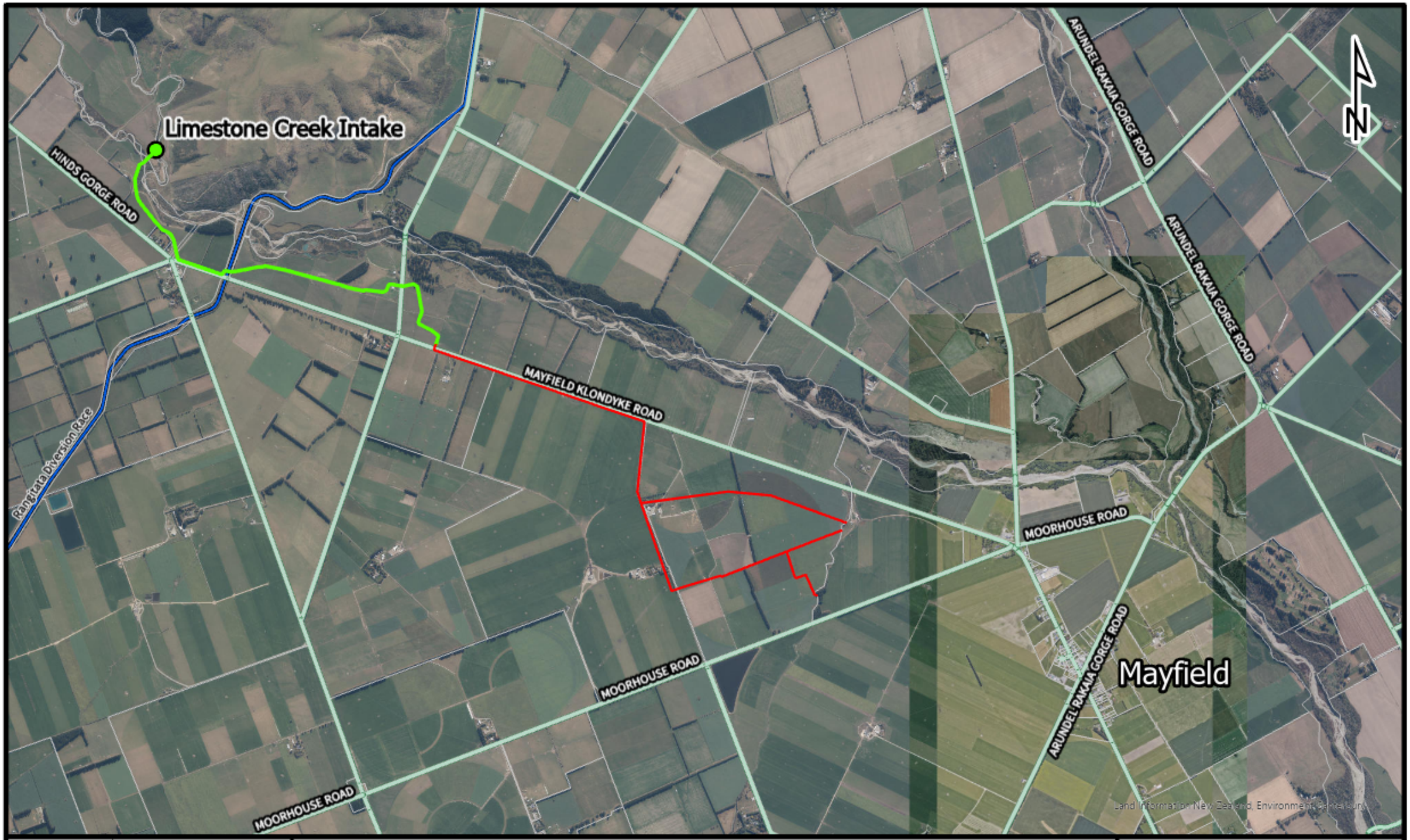
| Requirement | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Is the matter considered significant? | Yes |
| Level of significance | Medium. |
| Rationale for selecting level of significance | N/A |
| Level of engagement selected | Inform – One-way communication |

| | |
|---|---|
| Rationale for selecting level of engagement | The investigation into closure of this system has been the subject of extensive consultation. Including one to one communication with Council's project consultant with directly affected landowners. |

## Next steps

44. This report will be refreshed and reoriented as a report to Council for the 18 March 2026 meeting agenda.

| Date | Action / milestone | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 18 March 2026 | Report to Council | To support STWG Recommendation. |
| | | |
| | | |




| | |
|---|---|
| *PROJECT NAME:* | Stockwater_Transition_2025 |
| *PREPARED BY:* | A R Guthrie |
| *SCALE:* | 1:25,000 (at A3) |

*Disclaimer Note:*
*Cadastral data is sourced from Land Information New Zealand's CRS Cadastral Database. Crown Copyright Reserved Digital Licence No. 133563-01. Any color aerial photography is sourced from Air Logistics New Zealand Ltd.*

*Due to differences in data registration techniques any aerial photography in the map relative to cadastral boundaries should be considered as indicative only and MUST NOT be used for legal purposes.*

*The information supplied in this image is sourced from information held by the Ashburton District Council - It is supplied in good faith but its accuracy or completeness is not guaranteed.*

# Proposed Limestone Creek Intake & Race Closure

## Extent of Race Closures [Total Length ~9.2km]

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Ashburton DISTRICT COUNCIL

Plan No: 3029

Sheet **1** of **1** sheets

# MANAWHENUA ASSESSMENT OF THE LIMESTONE CREEK INTAKE STOCKWATER RACE

| | |
|---|---|
| Prepared by | Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited |
| Authorised by | Ally Crane<br>General Manager<br>Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua) |
| Date | 5 February 2026 |
| Reference | Limestone Creek Intake Stockwater Race Investigation<br>Version: **Final** |
| Address for service | Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited<br>1/8A Washdyke Flat Road<br>PO Box 885<br>Washdyke<br>Timaru 7940 |
| Prepared for | Ashburton District Council<br>2 Baring Square East<br>Ashburton 770 |

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# 1. Who is Arowhenua

Kāi Tahu are Takata[1] Whenua of the Canterbury Region. Kāi Tahu means “people of Tahu”. Kāi Tahu is the iwi comprised of Kāi Tahu Whānui; that is the collective of the individuals who descend from the five primary hapū; Ngāti Kurī, Ngāti Irakehu, Kāti Huirapa, Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki. The Charter of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 (TRoNT Act) constitutes Kāi Tahu as kaitiaki of the tribal interests.

Papatipu Rūnaka are defined in Section 9 of the TRoNT Act. This includes Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (Arowhenua). Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AECL) is a legal entity that has been given the mandate by Arowhenua to represent their interests in all environmental matters.

Arowhenua is the representative body of the takata whenua and who hold manawhenua in the traditional takiwā that includes the area between the Rakaia River and the Waitaki River which includes the Ashburton District Council.

Arowhenua also share the area with Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Te Taumutu Rūnanga who have a common interest in the area to the Hakatere (Ashburton River). The Rūnaka have agreed Arowhenua will respond on behalf of all three Rūnaka on Ashburton District Council (the Council) transitioning away from stockwater delivery.

# 2. Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a manawhenua assessment of the Limestone Creek Intake stockwater race. This report further provides considerations for the Stockwater Transition Working Group in making recommendations to Ashburton District Council as they seek to exit a system that provides stockwater through a stockwater network.

This report has been informed by the following information sources:

- Knowledge and information from Arowhenua Rūnaka.
- A site visit by AECL along with the Ashburton District Council Infrastructure Services Support Lead on 29 January 2026;
- Information provided by Ashburton District Council including photos and annotated maps; and
- Stockwater Exit Transition Plan – Exit of stockwater service 2024-2027; adopted by Ashburton District Council 18 December 2024.

# 3. Background

On 26 June 2024, the Council adopted its 2024-2034 Long Term Plan (LTP) which included the decision to divest itself from the delivery of the stockwater services by 30 June 2027. To inform the effects of the closures the Council established a working group and prepared a plan on how to investigate each of the closures. The Council further determined that alongside seeking feedback from the community of the assessments that would be initiated to look at ecological, archaeological, stormwater and cultural reports. With a formal assessment being prepared by AECL on behalf of Te Rūnaka o Arowhenua being a part of this.

This report relates to the Limestone Creek Intake stockwater race – refer to Figure 1.

[1] Note on dialect: In Ngai Tahu/Kai Tahu dialect, 'k' is used interchangeably with 'ng'.

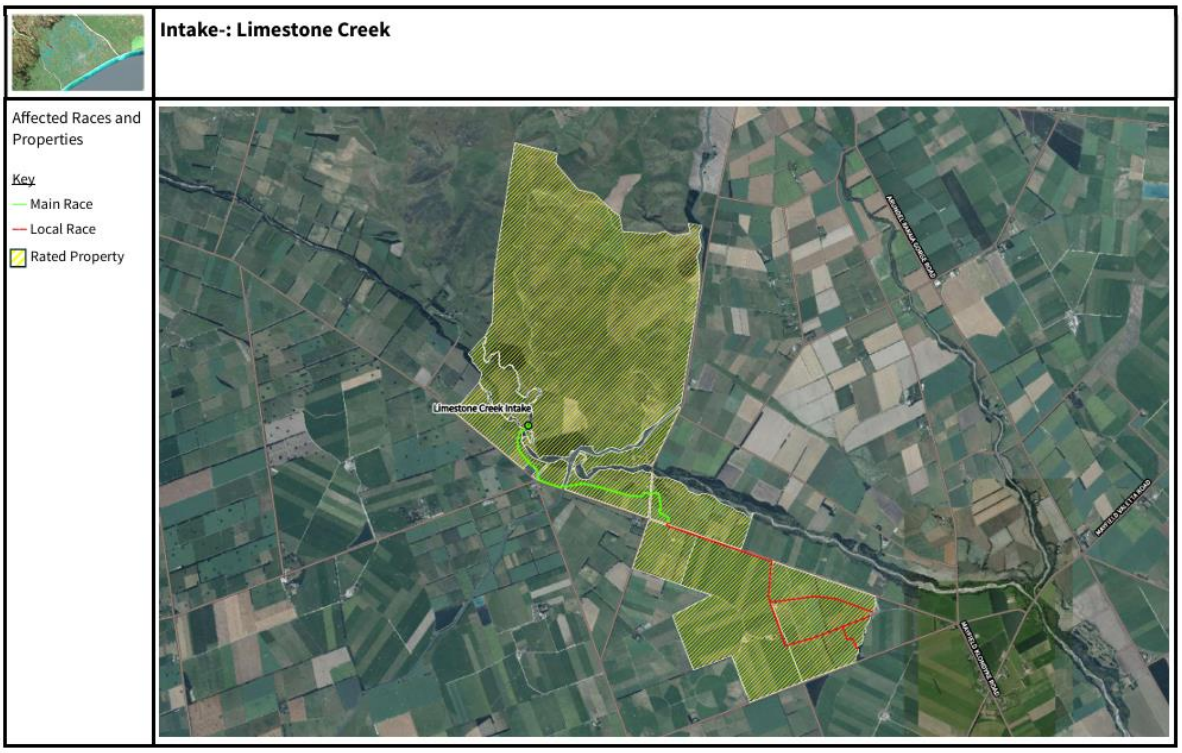



*Figure 1: Limestone Creek Intake area – taken from ADC Stockwater Exit Transition Plan*

# 4. Manawhenua description of Area

For Kāti Huirapa there has been considerable loss of the environment that their ancestors knew and alongside that the species of plants and animals that used to live in the habitat. The following describes the landscape as it was to the tupuna (ancestors) of Arowhenua.

The Limestone Creek intake is taken from a tributary that flows into the Hekeao (Hinds) River. Like other rivers in the area the Hekeao, its tributaries and wetlands have long been an important landscape and mahika kai. The Hekeao being known for its tuna. Mahika kai was harvested from the area supported by the Limestone Creek Intake stockwater race including kiore (Polynesian rat), and plant species including ti-kōuka (cabbage tree), āruhe (fernroot), tutu, and pūrau.

Part of the Limestone Creek Intake stockwater race terminates at Brothers Creek which is also a small tributary of the Hekeao.

# 5. Assessment of Effects on Values of Arowhenua

## 5.1 Site Descriptions

*Figure 2. Locations of sites visited on 29 January 2026.*

### Site 1

Water is diverted from Limestone Creek via an artificial weir that diverts a small proportion of the flow from a backwater, created at the true right of the creek just before it falls over an artificial dam (Figures 3 - 6). During low flow periods, this backwater reduces and the diversion cease.

Lowering the weir plate (Figure 6) would cease the diversion and water would return to Limestone Creek. Limestone Creek then joins the Hekeao South Branch (Figure 7). The lowering of the plate should be made permanent to prevent future diversions from the creek in the future.

At the diversion, the flume is bank-to-bank with cress (Figure 8). The overall fish habitat score was 59, indicating a 'good' quality habitat for tuna and other fish. Fish cover, shading, and bank stability all scored high for suitable habitat. Habitat survey of Limestone Creek was not able to be assessed due to lack of access.

### Site 2

Site 2 consisted of a narrow channel of shallow water flowing through pasture. Habitat quality decreased slightly compared to Site 1, due to decreased riparian protection (width) but did improve in terms of both flow and macroinvertebrate habitat heterogenicity. Duckweed, and periphyton were present on the margins, while grasses dominated much of the wetted habitat (Figure 9).

### Site 3

Site 3 crosses under the RDR cannel. Flow at Site 3 is augmented by a small take from the cannel, controlled by a valve (Figure 10). At the time of the site visit, the valve was open. As with the previous site, Site 3 is an open channel flowing through pasture. Duckweed and periphyton are present on the margins and grasses in the main channel (Figure 11). Habitat quality is 'fair'.

### Sites 4 - 7

The channel narrows as it moves downslope through the catchment. High sedimentation and pastural ingress into the channel further degrades the aquatic habitat, with a resulting habitat quality score of 'fair' to 'poor' (Figure 11 - 12). At Site 6, the stock water channel terminates into the Brothers Stream.

Site 7 was not visited on the day.

*Figure 3 - Limestone Creek, just upstream of the dam and weir*

*Figure 4 (left). Dam on Limestone Creek*

*Figure 5 (Right). Dam on Limestone Creek (left) and weir (right). Flow diversion can be altered by raising and lowering the weir.*

*Figure 6 (Right). Weir plate that allows flow diversion to be adjusted. Permanantly lowering the plate would stop the diversion but would need to be made permanent to prevent future unauthorised takes from Limestone Creek.*

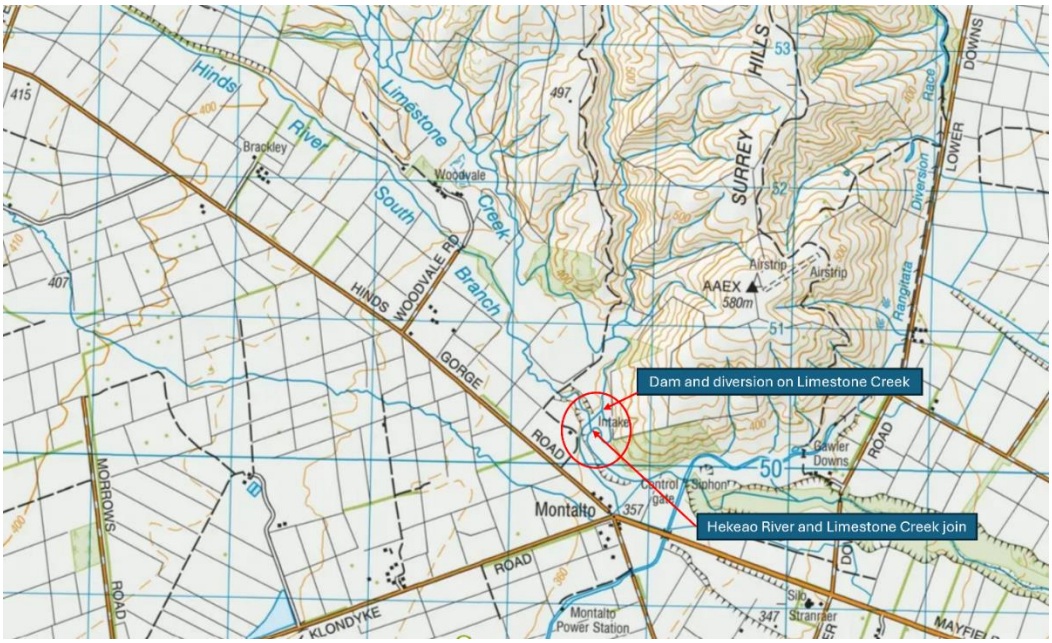



*Figure 7. Topomap showing location of dam and water diversion on Limestone Creek and junction of Limestone and Hekeao.*

*Figure 8 (left). Bypass flume covered with puha (watercress)*

*Figure 9 (right). Site 2 of the Limestone Creek stockwater race.*

*Figure 10 (Left). Site 3, just downstream of the RDR cannel. Flow is augmented with a small flow from the RDR, via a value (wooden grey box)*

*Figure 11 (Right). Stockwater race channel reduced in width due to riparian ingress.*

*Figure 12. High sedimentation in the stockwater race, representing poor aquatic habitat quality.*

## 5.2 Fish Salvage and survey work needed

Fish salvage must be carried out immediately after the weir has been closed. Due to the high plant biomass, high sediment and low water volume, there is a risk of deoxygenation of the water column during fish salvage, which could stress and / or kill the fish. The following protocols can minimise risk to fish:

- Where practical, fish salvage should be carried out when daytime air temperatures are moderate and overnight temperatures are low. Springtime is ideal
- Hīnaki and gee-minnow nets should be set in areas away from the cress. Nets should be checked and cleared before dusk and again early morning.
- The use of a scoop bucket on a digger can assist with fish salvage. The scoop should be slowly removed from the flume onto the bank where spotters can quickly salvage any tuna, or other fish, as they move out of the scoop. Scooping of the flume should be carried out no earlier than late morning, when dissolved oxygen levels in the flume have increased from the overnight low.

An eDNA sample is required from Site 2 and Site 6 within a month prior to the planned closure. This will assist with designing the fish salvage strategy for this stretch of the channel.

## 5.3 Water Returned to the Rivers

Arowhenua has consistently raised concerns about the irrigation network mixing water with water in the system coming from as far away as the Rakitata River. Arowhenua considers that water has its own mauri (lifeforce). Water is known for what it supports with each waterway supporting different species within it as water flows through different habitats. The tūpuna of Arowhenua also put water to different uses depending on where it come from and what was needed of that waterbody, or what that waterbody provided. Arowhenua respected the waterbody for the uses and resources that waterbody provided to Arowhenua – whether for food, drinking water or spiritual uses. For Arowhenua there are also the unknowns and the effects that can be had, for example to tuna who can track to a specific river across the ocean.

Arowhenua seeks that the water that was taken from Limestone Creek at the Limestone Creek Intake is closed off at the dam and weir area and the water is retained in the river.

Closing the intake would result in the raceways being permanently closed.

The augmentation from RDR Canal at Site 3 also needs to be permanently stopped / capped.

## 5.4 Stopping Raceways

Where raceways are closed, there is a preference by Arowhenua that these are filled in. Where this is not practical, for example because of land drainage functions, then they are closed so there is no flow of water into the closed portion from a river or drain.

The closed raceway at Site 6 terminates at Brothers Creek. This portion of the stockwater race should be closed or managed in such a way that there is no risk of fish getting into the closed raceway, for example when land drainage water drains through the raceway. Where this section remains open to convey drainage / stormwater then it is managed to ensure sediments and contaminants cannot directly enter the river. Stormwater detention ponds, or stormwater filtration devises should be implemented.

# 5. Alford Forest Intake & Race Network – Proposed Closure

| | |
|---|---|
| Author | *Andrew Guthrie, Assets Manager* |
| Activity Manager | *Crissie Drummond; Infrastructure Services Support Lead* |
| Executive Team Member | *Neil McCann, Group Manager Infrastructure* |

## Summary


- The purpose of this report is to seek working group approval of a recommendation to Council for closure of the Alford Forest intake and associated race network.
- The scope of the proposed closure comprises 16.7km of local race supplied by the Alford Forest intake and passing through (or adjacent to) 14 properties to a discharge point located on PN: 26512, 2535 Ashburton Staveley Road. Refer to plan in Appendix 1.
- No properties on this system pay stockwater rates.


**Recommendation to Council**

**That** Council approves:

1. The closure of the Alford Forest intake and race network from the intake on Alford Forest Settlement Road, to its terminal discharge points on PN: 26512 - 2535 Ashburton Staveley Road.
2. The date of the closure to be affected on 30 June 2026.

## Attachments

| | |
|---|---|
| **Appendix 1** | Plan 3028 - Proposed Alford Forest Intake & Race Closure |
| **Appendix 2** | Manawhenua Assessment of the Alford Forest Intake Stockwater Race |
| **Appendix 3** | Submission from Daniel Symons |

## Background

### The current situation

1. Stockwater for this system is sourced from a hill fed unnamed forest stream, via an intake weir situated on Mt Alford Road, Alford Forest.

2. The Alford Forest intake normally abstracts ~10 litres/second.

3. Key statistics of the race network supplied by the Alford Forest intake are as follows:

    - Total race network supplied 16.7 km comprising:
        - 16.7 km local race
    - The race network passes through 14 properties, but no properties on this system pay stockwater rates. It is unclear how long this has been in place.
    - There are eight road culverts

4. A map of the proposed closure is provided in **Appendix 1**.

### Previous Council Decisions

5. Councils' withdrawal from the provision of stockwater became a key decision as part of its consultation on the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. Ultimately, following strong support for Council's proposal to exit the stockwater activity by 30 June 2027, Council resolved to proceed with the exit and form a working group to monitor progress.

6. The Stockwater Transition Working Group (STWG) was duly formed.

7. The STWG reviewed the draft Stockwater Exit Transition Plan at its 31 October meeting with a final plan considered at the 5 December meeting. The SETP was subsequently adopted by Council on 18 December 2024. The SETP is available here.

### Māori and tangata whenua participation – Cultural and Ecological

8. Te Rūnaka O Arowhenua is part of the core membership of the STWG and has maintained a representative present at all meetings of the group.

9. Arowhenua's consultancy, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Ltd, have been providing support for the SETP through the preparation of Cultural Assessments for each intake investigation.

10. Given the short length of this race and a lower number of affected properties, AEC undertook both ecological and cultural assessments for the Alford Forest investigations during a site visit to the network. This visit was undertaken on 29 January 2026. The assessment report is provided in **Appendix 2**.

11. A general summary is provided below:

- It was noted in the upper reaches that the overall fish habitat quality score indicated a good quality habitat with diverse hydrological features, riffles and runs, and silt-free gravel.
- In the mid reaches of the race there is little flow with the water terminating in a small pool in a paddock. The water generally does not flow to the end of the race.
- Arowhenua recommends fish salvage and relocation is carried out as soon as possible once the water has been shut off.
- It is recommended an eDNA sample to be taken at two specified sites along the race one month prior to closure to assist with the salvage strategy development.
- Arowhenua seek to have no flow of water getting into the closed portion of the race from the stream.
- Arowhenua's preference is that where races are no longer required, that these are filled in.

## Affected Parties

12. The investigations for the Alford Forest system commenced in August 2025 when a letter was sent all properties that the race runs through or adjacent to advising that Council was seeking feedback from property owners and the wider public on the future of the intake.

13. No properties pay stockwater rates for this race system.

14. The water has only been travelling on average 7-8kms downstream, unless there is a major rain event.

15. Five submissions were received from landowners of four properties. Four have been reproduced (in part below).

| Question | Response |
|---|---|
| "What is your interest in the Alford Forest Intake? | *Stockwater* |
| If you indicated above you have an interest in stockwater from this intake, please provide feedback on your stockwater requirements going forward. | *I am on the understanding that the waterway running adjacent to my property is NOT a stockwater race but an OVERflow waterway, and as such I have no requirement to take water from it.* |
| Please outline any thoughts, concerns or feedback you may have on the Alford Forest Intake and its associated race network | *I purchased this property for the Rural outlook, the friendly farming Community and the peaceful tranquility...the gentle, asthetically flowing waterway was an added bonus, as was the view, and this has also added to my staying here.*<br>*Since I've been here, I have kept the waterway generally clear of weed and obstruction.* |

| Question | Response |
|---|---|
| | *I fail to understand the reasons why now the Ashburton DC is contemplating closing the waterway down when the cost ( if any) would have been minimal, compared to the cost of closing it down or diverting the water elsewhere.*<br>*Yes, I've had flooding across my property from the waterway, but the opening up of the previous channel along the continuation of Alford Forest Settlement Rd above me has alleviated the bulk of it.*<br>*To finish, I see no reason for you to continue your plans, thereby reducing any further unnecessary costing."* |
| | |
| "What is your interest in the Alford Forest Intake? | *Stockwater*<br>*Environmental*<br>*Amenity value* |
| If you indicated above you have an interest in stockwater from this intake, please provide feedback on your stockwater requirements going forward. | *Good to have a back up if the main supplied cut us off*<br>*As stated in an article from the North Wester this water races host many nativ animals. In my case they support a couple hearons that live in my trees*<br>*Running water is always a good and southing to have near you."* |
| | |
| "What is your interest in the Alford Forest Intake? | *Stockwater*<br>*Amenity value* |
| If you indicated above you have an interest in stockwater from this intake, please provide feedback on your stockwater requirements going forward. | *Currently we get water from the Alford Forest Station, however if they choose to cut us off then the Alford Forest intake is the only water we have available for stock garden and household water* |
| Please outline any thoughts, concerns or feedback you may have on the Alford Forest Intake and its associated race network | *Outside of supplied water at the generosity of the Alford forest Station we have no other water"* |
| | |
| "What is your interest in the Alford Forest Intake? | *Amenity value* |
| Please outline any thoughts, concerns or feedback you may have on the Alford Forest Intake and its associated race network | *Currently, supply of water to our home in the Alford Forest Settlement is from a spring on Alford Forest Station. This is purely a goodwill arrangement, and should this change in the future for whatever reason, the Alford Forest intake and associated race network would be our sole immediate domestic water supply."* |

16. One property wished to retain the water race/water way for the development of a wetland. This submission/proposal is provided in **Appendix 3**.

### Alternate Providers

17. No alternative supply work has been undertaken by Melius given there are no paying customers on this race.

### Stormwater Assessment

18. Due to the nature of the network involved, no specific modelling has been undertaken on the race closure, however, district-wide modelling completed circa 2023 has been used to inform this assessment.

19. On review of district modelling, there appears to be very limited coincidence between the existing race alignment and anticipated overland flowpaths. For this reason, there is unlikely to be any significant issues arising from the closure of the race system.

20. Water that previously entered the system would be directed into existing informal (and unnamed) drainage channels and ultimately discharge to Taylors Stream.

## Options analysis

21. The following options have been identified.

### Option one – Proceed with proposed race closure.

22. Under this option, Council will close the Alford Forest stockwater race on **30 June 2026**.

23. A fish salvage and relocation plan will be developed, and the necessary permits sought for this work. The salvage plan will then be implemented as close as practicable to the operational date of closure, focusing on the intake diversion flume initially and then working downstream.

| ***Advantages:*** | ***Disadvantages:*** |
|---|---|
| • Consistent with Council stated intention to exit the stockwater activity.<br>• Provides clarity to affected landowners.<br>• Confirms Council's commitment to exit the service. | • None identified. |
| ***Risks:***<br>• Adverse publicity arising from decision to close intake and race network. | |

**Option two – Do not proceed with race closure at this time.**

24. Under this option, the race closure will not proceed at this time.

| ***Advantages:*** | ***Disadvantages:*** |
|---|---|
| • None identified. | • Opportunity to demonstrate ongoing progress towards the exit is lost.<br>• Affected landowners may continue to ignore implications.<br>• Programme tasks will start to overlap and overload internal resources. |
| ***Risks:***<br>• Council's commitment to the stockwater activity withdrawal may be questioned. | |

**Option three – Facilitate transfer of race system to D. Symons.**

25. Under this option, officers will explore the feasibility of transferring the intake and race network Mr D Symons southern corner of Arundel Rakaia Gorge Road & Forks Road.

26. The network below Mr Symons property would still be closed.

27. No work has been done on the feasibility of this option, but it is unlikely to be straight-forward.

| ***Advantages:*** | ***Disadvantages:*** |
|---|---|
| • Addresses concerns raised by D. Symons. | • Complex ownership / liability arrangement especially for the medium to long term.<br>• Facilitation is likely to be a distraction for officers trying to advance the wider SETP.<br>• Programme tasks will start to overlap and overload internal resources. |
| ***Risks:***<br>• May set precedent for future closures.<br>• Even if a "transfer" can be accomplished, Council will continue to be implicated if the new owner / operator does not meet their obligations. | |

## Legal/policy implications

### Legislation

*Resource Management Act 1991*

28. The stockwater activity has consents issued under the RMA. These consents cover the various activities required to operate the network including water abstraction consents.

29. The Alford Forest Intake abstraction consent is CRC213528 Condition 9 states: "*The use of water shall be only for stock drinking water, treated domestic and community drinking water, and essential domestic and community use*".

### Plans / Policies

*Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan*

30. The purpose of the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (CLWRP) is to "identify the resource management outcomes or goals (objectives in this Plan) for managing land and water resources in Canterbury to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA"). It identifies the policies and rules needed to achieve the objectives and provides direction in terms of the processing of resource consent applications."

31. The CLWRP contains a policy directly targeted at the ADC stockwater activity. Policy 13.4.1. reads as follows: "In order to increase the amount of water in the river that is available to meet the proposed increased minimum flows, the taking of water for community stock water supplies from the Ashburton River/Hakatere will progressively decrease so that as soon as possible, but by no later than 1 July 2023, that taking will not exceed 2,900 L/s in total."

32. Council has already achieved the reduction required by this policy.

*Stockwater Exit Transition Plan*

33. The Stockwater Exit Transition Plan was adopted by Council on the 18 December 2024. The Alford Forest intake was envisaged to be the sixth intake to be progressed in the SETP, with this closure being implemented by September 2025.

34. The original timeframes for the individual project phases have proven to be quite ambitious and some of the complexities with the investigation work is adding unforeseen delays to the programme.

### Climate change

35. The proposed closure of this portion of the stockwater network must be considered in the context of climate change and the council's Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy.

36. Climate projections indicate increasing variability in rainfall and more frequent extreme weather events, which will influence water availability and management practices.

37. The stockwater system relies on water availability in key river resources, which come under pressure during prolonged droughts. While it offers some seasonal flexibility, its ability to support resilience under future climate extremes is limited.

38. Although closing the stockwater network could create challenges, such as farmers being required to transition to new reticulated supplies, it also presents opportunities. Closure aligns with Goal 1: Sustainable Water Management, which seeks to ensure resilient water systems, promote efficient use, and improve water quality.

39. It is also noted, the decommissioning of open races may reduce contamination risks and nutrient runoff, contributing to improved water quality outcomes.

## Strategic alignment

40. The recommendation relates to Council's community outcome of **a balanced & sustainable environment** because the progressive closure of open race networks and replacement with individual onsite supply or reticulated supplies (where needed) reduces the overall usage of water for stock purposes.

| Wellbeing | | Reasons why the recommended outcome has an effect on this wellbeing |
|---|---|---|
| Economic | ✓ | Management of the open race network is labour intensive. Stockwater can be delivered much more efficiently within reticulated networks. |
| Environmental | ✓ | Open race systems are very inefficient with in excess of 90% of the water conveyed being lost as leakage to groundwater and evaporation. |
| Cultural | ✓ | Due to the significant reduction in water required to provide stockwater, the unused water is not taken and remains in the source rivers. It is noted that Arowhenua support water remaining in the rivers. |
| Social | × | |

## Financial implications

| Requirement | Explanation |
|---|---|
| What is the cost? | $10,000 plus GST. |
| Is there budget available in LTP / AP? | Yes. |
| Where is the funding coming from? | Provided for under District Water Management Investigations.<br>275 30534 |
| Are there any future budget implications? | No.<br>This network is not rated for stockwater. |

41. The costs associated with the stockwater exit programme is being met from budgets in the District Water Management and Stockwater areas. The cost of preparing and implementing a fish salvage and relocation plan is expected to be in the range of $5,000 to $10,000.

42. From a rating standpoint, it is desirable to cease rating at the end of the rating year as it is not possible to remove rates (in part) during the year.

## Significance and engagement assessment

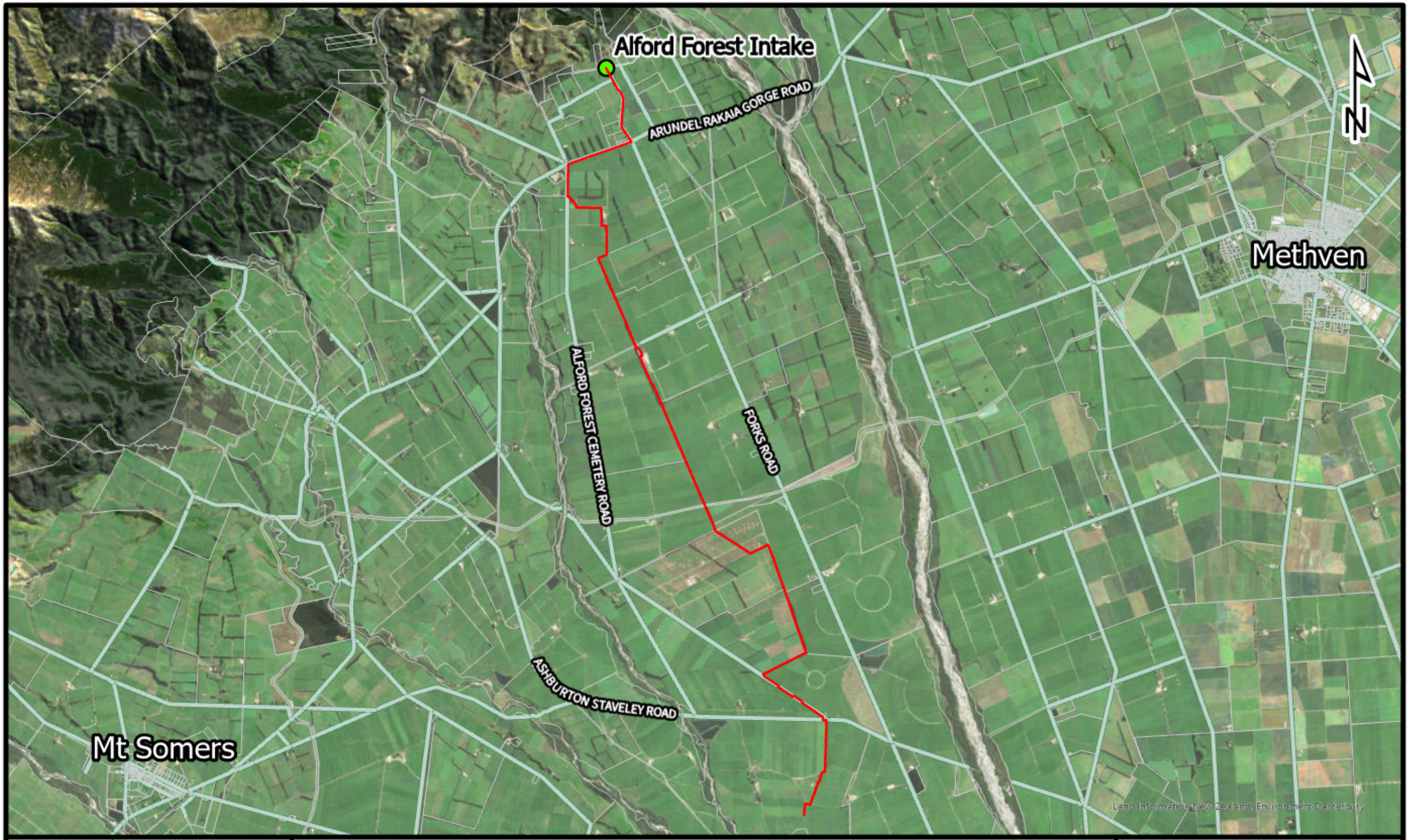
| Requirement | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Is the matter considered significant? | Yes |
| Level of significance | Medium. |
| Rationale for selecting level of significance | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| Level of engagement selected | Inform – One-way communication |
| Rationale for selecting level of engagement | The investigation into closure of this system has been the subject of extensive consultation. |

## Next steps

43. This report will be refreshed and reoriented as a report to Council for the 18 March 2026 meeting agenda.

| Date | Action / milestone | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 18/03/2026 | Report to Council | To support STWG Recommendation. |
| | | |
| | | |




| | |
|---|---|
| *PROJECT NAME:* | Stockwater_Transition_2025 |
| *PREPARED BY:* | A R Guthrie |
| *SCALE:* | 1:60,000 (at A3) |

*Disclaimer Note:*
*Cadastral data is sourced from Land Information New Zealand's CRS Cadastral Database. Crown Copyright Reserved Digital Licence No. 133563-01. Any color aerial photography is sourced from Air Logistics New Zealand Ltd.*

*Due to differences in data registration techniques any aerial photography in the map relative to cadastral boundaries should be considered as indicative only and MUST NOT be used for legal purposes.*

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# Proposed Alford Forest Intake & Race Closure

## Extent of Race Closures [Total Length ~16.7km]

Path: O:\Projects\Andy\Stockwater\Stockwater_Transition_2025.aprx

Ashburton DISTRICT COUNCIL

Plan No: 3028

Sheet **1** of **1** sheets

# MANAWHENUA ASSESSMENT OF THE ALFORD FOREST INTAKE STOCKWATER RACE

| | |
|---|---|
| Prepared by | Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited |
| Authorised by | Ally Crane<br>General Manager<br>Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (on behalf of Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua) |
| Date | 5 February 2026 |
| Reference | Alford Forest Intake Stockwater Race Investigation<br>Version: **Final** |
| Address for service | Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited<br>1/8A Washdyke Flat Road<br>PO Box 885<br>Washdyke<br>Timaru 7940 |
| Prepared for | Ashburton District Council<br>2 Baring Square East<br>Ashburton 770 |

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*This report provides input and feedback on the cultural impacts of the Limestone Creek Intake stockwater race transition. Aoraki Consultancy Limited does not accept any liability or responsibility in relation to the use of this report contrary to the above, or to any person other than the Client. Any use or reliance by a third party is at that party's own risk. Where information has been supplied by the Client or obtained from other external sources, it has been assumed that it is accurate, without independent verification, unless otherwise indicated. No liability or responsibility is accepted by Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited for any errors or omissions to the extent that they arise from inaccurate information provided by the Client or any external source.*

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# 1. Who is Arowhenua

Kāi Tahu are Takata[1] Whenua of the Canterbury Region. Kāi Tahu means “people of Tahu”. Kāi Tahu is the iwi comprised of Kāi Tahu Whānui; that is the collective of the individuals who descend from the five primary hapū; Ngāti Kurī, Ngāti Irakehu, Kāti Huirapa, Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki. The Charter of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 (TRoNT Act) constitutes Kāi Tahu as kaitiaki of the tribal interests.

Papatipu Rūnaka are defined in Section 9 of the TRoNT Act. This includes Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (Arowhenua). Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited (AECL) is a legal entity that has been given the mandate by Arowhenua to represent their interests in all environmental matters.

Arowhenua is the representative body of the takata whenua and who hold manawhenua in the traditional takiwā that includes the area between the Rakaia River and the Waitaki River which includes the Ashburton District Council.

Arowhenua also share the area with Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Te Taumutu Rūnanga who have a common interest in the area to the Hakatere (Ashburton River). The Rūnaka have agreed Arowhenua will respond on behalf of all three Rūnaka on Ashburton District Council (the Council) transitioning away from stockwater delivery.

# 2. Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a manawhenua assessment of the Alford Forest Intake stockwater race. This report further provides considerations for the Stockwater Transition Working Group in making recommendations to Ashburton District Council as they seek to exit a system that provides stockwater through a stockwater network.

This report has been informed by the following information sources:

- Knowledge and information from Arowhenua Rūnaka.
- A site visit by AECL along with the Ashburton District Council Infrastructure Services Support Lead on 29 January 2026;
- Information provided by Ashburton District Council including photos and annotated maps; and
- Stockwater Exit Transition Plan – Exit of stockwater service 2024-2027; adopted by Ashburton District Council 18 December 2024.

# 3. Background

On 26 June 2024, the Council adopted its 2024-2034 Long Term Plan (LTP) which included the decision to divest itself from the delivery of the stockwater services by 30 June 2027. To inform the effects of the closures the Council established a working group and prepared a plan on how to investigate each of the closures. The Council further determined that alongside seeking feedback from the community of the assessments that would be initiated to look at ecological, archaeological, stormwater and cultural reports. With a formal assessment being prepared by AECL on behalf of Te Rūnaka o Arowhenua being a part of this.

This report relates to the Alford Forest Intake stockwater race – refer to Figure 1.

[1] Note on dialect: In Ngai Tahu/Kai Tahu dialect, 'k' is used interchangeably with 'ng'.

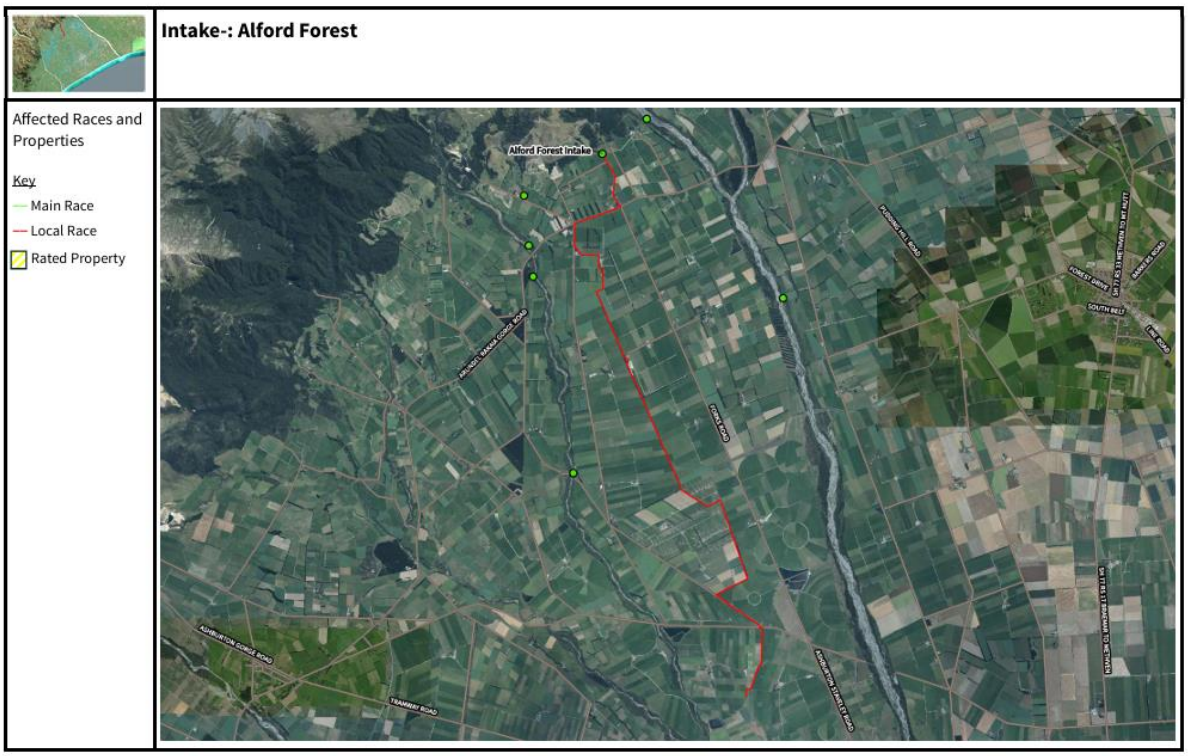



*Figure 1: Alford Forest Intake area – taken from ADC Stockwater Exit Transition Plan*

# 4. Manawhenua Description of Area

For Kāti Huirapa there has been considerable loss of the environment that their ancestors knew and alongside that the species of plants and animals that used to live in the habitat. The following describes the landscape as it was to the tupuna (ancestors) of Arowhenua.

The Alford Forest Intake flows from Te Maka Kaha (Mount Alford). Te Mata Kaha along with the other mountain areas, forests, rivers and wetlands provided an abundance of food to manawhenua. Te Mata Kaha was noted as being a mahika kai site where kiore (Polynesian rat), weka, kākā, kererū, tūī, and the berries of mātai and hīnau/pōkakā trees were gathered.

The intake area of Alford Forest appears to be from a small hill-fed, unnamed forest stream, near to the Hakatere (Ashburton River).

# 5. Assessment of Effects on Values of Arowhenua

## 5.1 Site Descriptions

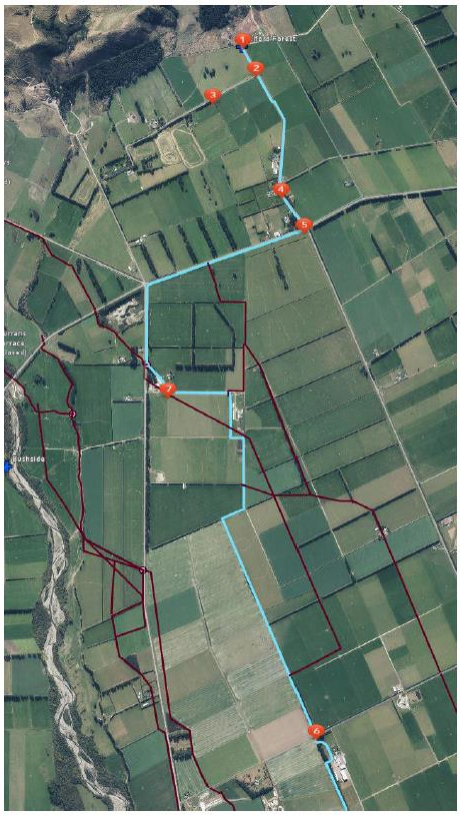


*Figure 2. Location of sites visited on 29 January 2026*

### Intake

Access to the intake was not possible. However, it appears that the source water is a small hill-fed unnamed stream (Figure 3).

### Sites 2 and 4

Site 2 scored 'good' on the fish habitat quality, with diverse hydrological features, silt-free cobbles and gravel substrate, diverse and abundant macroinvertebrate habitats.

Site 4 had similar habitat quality, with gravel sediment, with occasional cobles, riffles and runs, no macrophyte biomass instream. Periphyton cover was low with a thin film of diatoms, consistent with high water quality in the upper catchment and low impact from land-use intensification (Figure 4). Some slumping along the roadside reflects unprotected riparian zone (Figure 5).

### Site 6

By the time the water reaches Site 6, little flow remains and it terminates in a small pool in the paddock (Figure 6). During the site visit, no water was flowing out of the culvert pipe. The pooled water at Site 6 will either evaporate, or soak into the ground, over time. With source water originating from a hill-fed stream, flows would be highly responsive to rainfall events. Under drier summer conditions that this year, flow would most likely have terminated before reaching Site 6.

## 5.2 Water diversion

Manawhenua have been advised by Ashburton District Council (ADC) are still considering where to divert the water, once the channel is closed. One proposed route is to divert into existing channels along Alford Forest Settlement Road, down to Rakaia Gorge Road then push up Carneys Road to then drop into an unnamed creek (Figure 1, red lines).

At the time of the site visit, water was flowing in the channel along Rakaia Gorge Road but had ceased flowing by the time it reached Carneys Road. The channel at Carneys Road was infilled with terrestrial grasses and sediment. This would need cleaning out and re-grading, to ensure water could be pushed up-catchment to join the creek (Figure 5). Based on the topomap, the unnamed creek where the diversion is proposed to terminate, appears to be a branch of the original source water creek (Figure 7). This appears to divert around the base of Alford Hill, with channel diversions marked at two sites (Figure 3). This may provide an alternative route for the water diversion, allowing the source water to remain in its original creek. This was not investigated during the site visit.

The farmer at property Site 7 has proposed retaining the diversion and creating wetlands at the top of his property and continuing on the channel through his property. The proposed wetlands would be along the line of pine trees. No information on the design of the wetland, proposed planting, or hydraulic regime has been provided and this proposal has not been formally put to the council in writing by the farmer.

Manawhenua request continued involvement in determining how best to manage the intake.

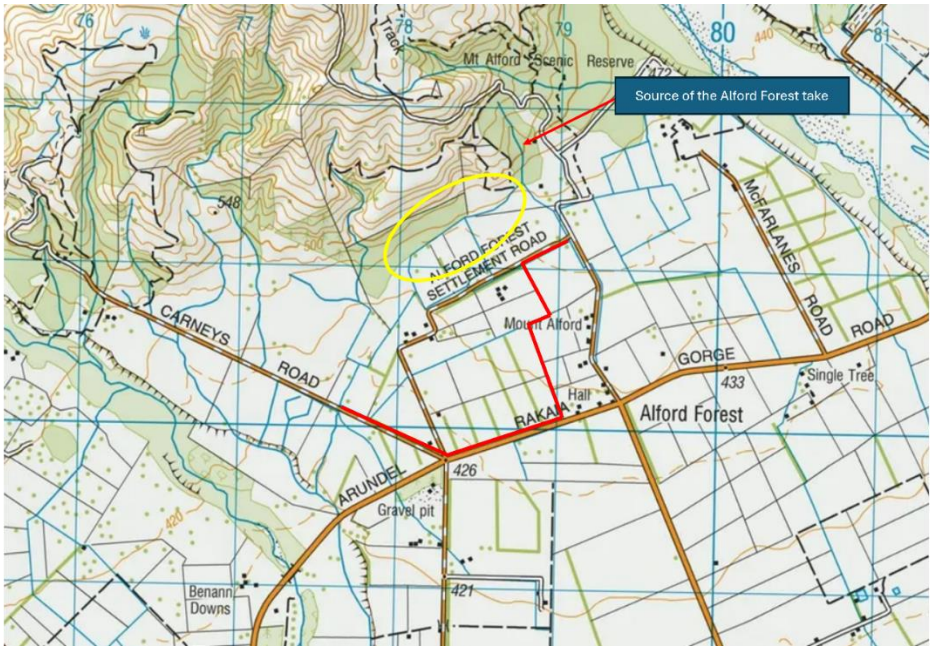



*Figure 3. Red arrow indicates the unnamed stream where water is diverted into the Alford Forest stock water race. Red lines indicates the alternate diversion route for the stream water once the channel is closed. Yellow circle indicates area to invest*

*Figure 4. Alford Forest stockwater race at Site 4.*

*Figure 5. Alford Forest stock water channel entering culvert as it crosses the road at Site 4. Exposed banks indicate damage from unprotected riparian margins.*

*Figure 6. Termination of stock race water flow at Site 6. Water was not flowing from the pipe on the day of the visit and pooled water will either evaporate or soak into the ground.*


*Figure 7. A) Unnamed creek which appears to be a partial diversion of the creek for the source water of the Alford Forest stock water. B) Downstream of the proposed diversion. The unnamed creek appears to be the confluence of two creeks.*

## 5.3 Survey work and if fish salvage needed

If termination of the channel was to occur, eDNA samples should be collected from sites 2 and 7, to determine best course of action for the fish salvage strategy. These samples should be undertaken one month prior to the closure.

If fish salvage is necessary, the following protocols can minimise risk to fish:

- Where practical, fish salvage should be carried out when daytime air temperatures are moderate and overnight temperatures are low. Springtime is ideal
- Hīnaki and gee-minnow nets should be set in areas away from macrophyte beds. Nets should be checked and cleared before dusk and again early morning.
- The use of a scoop bucket on a digger can assist with fish salvage. The scoop should be slowly removed from the flume onto the bank where spotters can quickly salvage any tuna, or other fish, as they move out of the scoop. Scooping of the flume should be carried out no earlier than late morning, when dissolved oxygen levels in the flume have increased from the overnight low.

## 5.4 Stopping Raceways

Where raceways are closed, there is a preference by Arowhenua that these are filled in. Where this is not practical, for example because of land drainage functions, then they are closed so there is no flow of water into the closed portion from a river, or drain.

**SUBMISSIONS ON PROPOSED CLOSURE OF**

**ALFORD FOREST STOCKRACE**

**("Race")**

**From:** Daniel Symons, 171 McFarlanes Road, R D 1, Ashburton

**Date:** 19 February 2026

## 1. Background

1.1. I have lived in Alford Forest all my life and have a very good knowledge of the Race, it's uses, flows, and effects.

1.2. The race has been adapted over the years to suit farm layouts for stock and domestic use. In 1946 water in the race was augmented with water from Carneys Creek (since closed).

1.3. I own farms both above and below SH72 one of wich has benefited from the race over the years (Bunya).

1.4. The Race has been an important back-up water source. As stock farmers we need to be concerned about the wellbeing of our animals, including in exceptional situations.

1.5. The race is also from my experience a superb habitat for native fish, with trout being apparently absent from the race.

## 2. My Interest in Alford Forest Environment

2.1. My farm at Alford Forest, Glenarne, has high environmental values, including native forest, creeks, and wetlands.

2.2. I have covenanted portions of Glenarne to preserve these unique and important environmental features of my property.

## 3. Objective for Race

3.1. I would like the race to remain flowing according to my suggest route – (see below) - for the following reasons:

(a) It will continue to provide a back-up source of emergency stock water in critical situations.

(b) I understand that the households on Alford Settlement Road would like retain the race on their boundary as it is a point of pleasure to them.

(c) I have set aside about 1.9ha of land on my farm below SH72 (Bunya) for the creation of a fenced off pond / wetland, through which the race / stream would flow, further enhancing the environment value of this waterway.

## 4. Specific proposal

4.1. I'd like the Council to agree for the race to flow:

(a) down Alford Forest Settlement Road;

(b) under SH72;

(c) into the 1.9ha wetland on Bunya;

(d) then on down SH72;

(e) left down Alford Forest Cemetery Road;

(f) then right and into a natural creek below the terrace, from where the water will flow into Taylors Stream.

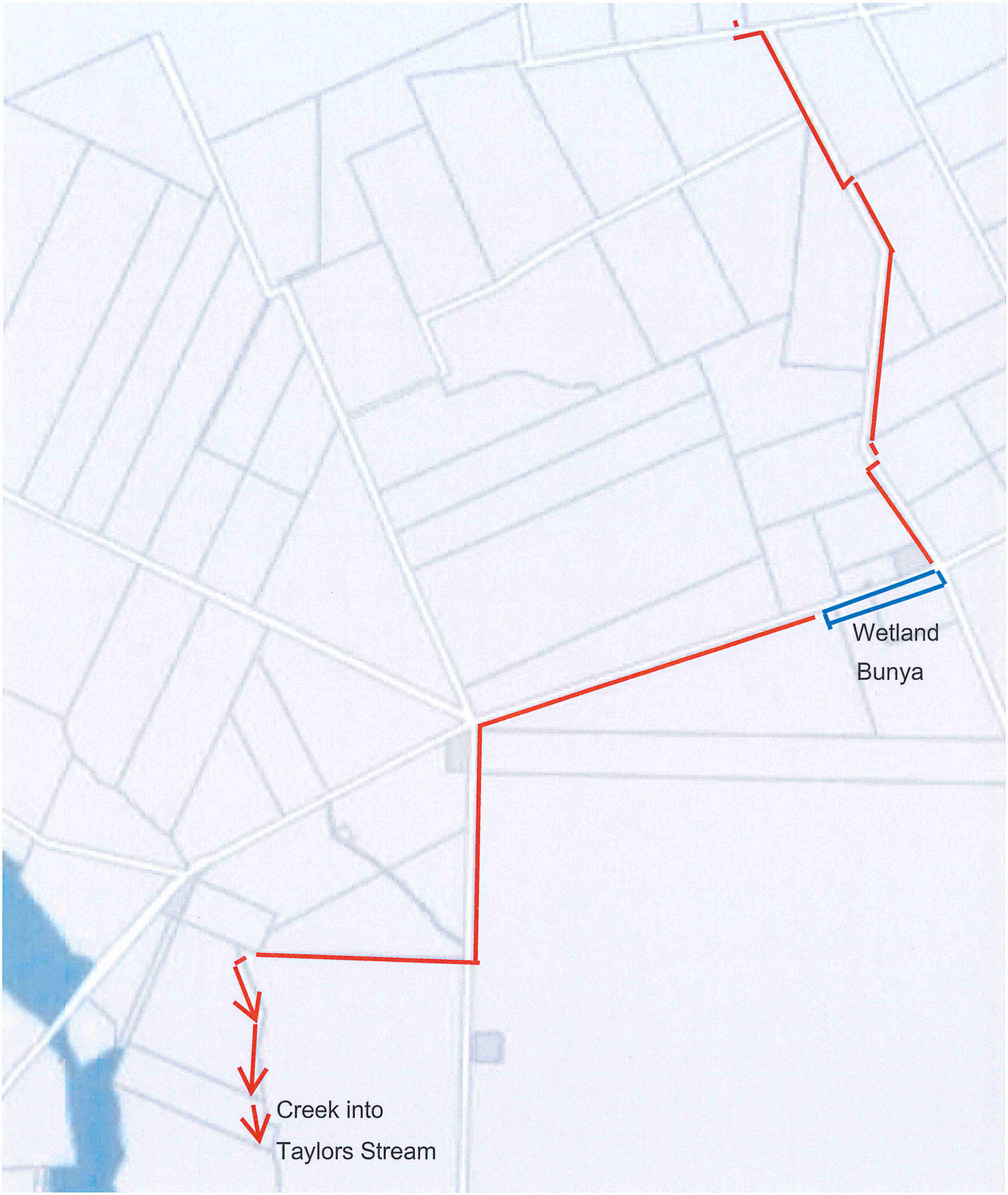
4.2. **Attached** is a plan of my proposed route.

4.3. The water ultimately ends up in Taylors Stream, which I understand is the Council's proposal, although the entry point I propose would be a little further down Taylors Stream.

4.4. I would be happy to obtain any necessary Resource Consents for the creation of the pond / wetland on Bunya.

I would appreciate it if the Council could give serious consideration to the foregoing which I believe represents an opportunity for the Council to work collaboratively with farm owns in the interest of community and environment.

Daniel Symons


Wetland
Bunya
Creek into
Taylors Stream

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date** | 4 March 2026 |
| **Project Title** | Intake Investigations |
| **Report to** | Stockwater Transition Working Group |
| **From** | Assets Manager; and Group Manger, Infrastructure |

## 6. Intake Work Update

1. Since the last update at the STWG meeting held on 4 December 2025, the following work has been completed:

## *PUDDING HILL*

**Stockwater Closure**

2. On 17 December 2025 the Council approved the recommendation from the STWG to close most of the Pudding Hill Network.

3. The scope of the proposed closure comprises all network races supplied by the Pudding Hill intake from their divergence from Mt Harding Creek to their respective discharge points.

4. The Pudding Hill intake itself and main race from the intake to Mt Harding Creek and down to Draytons gate will continue to operate at this time pending further discussions with Environment Canterbury on future potential environmental augmentation of Mt Harding Creek

5. All affected properties were advised by a letter dated 22 December 2025 of the pending closure.

6. John Wright, (Melius) has been directly contacting those properties who require an alternative supply to work through what their options are. The options include connecting with BCI, Spaxton Stockwater or connection to the Methven Water Supply.

**Alternate Providers**

7. Council signed a Heads of Agreement with BCI on 18 December 2025.

**Fish Salvage Plan**

8. Officers are currently working with AECL and the Arowhenua Mātaitai Committee to develop a fish salvage plan to be implemented in the lead up to the closure.

**Archaeological investigations**

9. No work has commenced on the archaeological assessments at this point. Noting, there are no changes to the intake proposed at this time there is still ample time to progress this work.

## *METHVEN AUXILIARY*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

10. All needs analysis investigation work has been completed and reports provided to the STWG.

**Alternate Providers**

11. Council signed a Heads of Agreement with BCI on 18 December 2025.

**Ecological Assessment**

12. The ecological assessment was presented to the September meeting.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

13. The cultural assessment was presented to the September meeting.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

14. Stormwater/drainage investigations are progressing with the focus of work assessing the implications if the Methven Auxiliary network were to close and identifying if any parts of the existing network should be formally retained for drainage purposes.

15. A key focus is the main race that flows down Forest Drive in the Methven Township. If this network were to close, this race will become dry, but due to the interconnected nature of the system, it will receive stormwater in various places from township streets.

16. This highlights a need to provide a new formal stormwater outfall for the Methven Township. Investigations are continuing.

**Archaeological investigations**

17. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *BUSHSIDE*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

18. Melius has completed the investigation into the needs for the six properties (of 20) who will require an alternative stockwater supply should the intake close.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

19. The wider stakeholder engagement process received seven submissions with most respondents stating their interest was in environmental and amenity values.

**Alternate Providers**

20. Discussions continue with BCI as an alternate supplier for the Bushside Intake.

**Ecological Assessment**

21. The ecological assessment for the Bushside Intake network was undertaken on 16 October 2025. This work was carried out by Wildlands Ltd, and a draft report has been received. This report will be finalised and presented to the next mtg of the working group.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

22. The AECL Cultural Assessment was undertaken on 4 February 2026. This report will be presented to the next mtg of the working group.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

23. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

24. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *STONEY CREEK*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

25. Melius completed the investigation into the needs for the 23 properties (of 45) who will require an alternative stockwater supply should ADC cease the delivery of stockwater in some races.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

26. The wider stakeholder engagement process received five submissions with respondents stating their interest was in stormwater, environmental and amenity values.

**Alternate Providers**

27. The 23 properties can be served through new infrastructure from BCI. This is split between large volume farm and lifestyle properties.

28. The latter group may be better supplied from the Mount Somers public water supply; however this scheme carries a high development contribution cost for new connections ($21,510.00 inclusive GST) on top of the cost any connecting infrastructure.

**Ecological Assessment**

29. The ecological assessment for the Stoney Intake network was undertaken on 16 October 2025. This work was carried out by Wildlands Ltd, and a draft report has been received. This report will be finalised and presented to the next mtg of the working group.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

30. The AECL Cultural Assessment was undertaken on 4 February 2026. This report will be presented to the next mtg of the working group.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

31. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

32. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *LIMESTONE CREEK*

33. Please refer to standalone report in this agenda.

## *ALFORD FOREST*

34. Please refer to standalone report in this agenda.

## *BROTHERS*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

35. Melius has completed the investigation into the needs for all 153 properties who receive stockwater from this intake.

36. 75 properties did not require the supply. Survey non-responders were contacted and analysis established that a further 25 properties did not require the supply. Therefore 100 properties, or 65% of those properties affected by the potential closure, did not require the supply of stockwater.

37. The remaining 53 properties, or 35% of those properties affected by the potential closure, indicated that they currently relied on the supply.

38. Discussions are underway with commercial irrigation entities in relation to the potential transfer of the intake and network operation in its existing open race form.

39. Because of these discussions, it was determined that further analysis of alternative stockwater supplies was not required at this stage.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

40. A public drop-in session was held at the Mayfield Hall on 2 September attended by 40 people.

**Ecological Assessment**

41. No ecological assessment is programmed currently.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

42. No cultural assessment is programmed currently.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

43. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

44. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *LANGDONS CREEK NORTH & SOUTH*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

45. Melius has completed the investigation into the needs for the properties who will require an alternative stockwater supply should ADC cease the delivery of stockwater in some races.

46. There are 45 affected properties, of which 34 have no need for stockwater and 11 require an alternative.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

47. No public meeting has been held as yet; however, it is intended to hold a 'joint springs' meeting in the first quarter of the year.

**Alternate Providers**

48. Melius is investigating an alternative supply for those who require it.

**Ecological Assessment**

49. No ecological assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

50. No cultural assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

51. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

52. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *CLEARWELL SPRINGS*

53. Melius has completed the investigation into the needs for the properties who will require an alternative stockwater supply should ADC cease the delivery of stockwater in some races.

54. There are 10 affected properties, of which 9 have no need for stockwater and only 1 requires an alternative.

55. A possible alternative for that property is currently being investigated.

## *CRACROFT*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

56. The user survey was sent out in late October/early November 2025.

57. As of 17 February, 125 of the 164 properties had responded.

58. The remaining properties will be followed up with over the next few weeks so that the requirements for stockwater are fully understood.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

59. A joint Cracroft/Klondyke public meeting /drop-in session was held in the Ruapuna hall on 17 February which was attended by 32 members of the public.

60. A joint public survey is currently open.

**Alternate Providers**

61. Because of the ongoing discussions with commercial irrigation entities in relation to the potential transfer of the intake and network operation in its existing open race form, no further analysis of alternative stockwater supplies will be carried out at this stage.

**Ecological Assessment**

62. No ecological assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

63. No cultural assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

64. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

65. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

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## *KLONDYKE*

**Stockwater Needs Analysis**

66. The user survey was sent out in early December 2025.

67. As of 17 February, 45 of the 58 properties have responded.

68. The remaining properties will be followed up with over the next few weeks so that the requirements for stockwater are fully understood.

**Wider Stakeholder Engagement**

69. A joint Cracroft/Klondyke public meeting /drop-in session was held in the Ruapuna hall on 17 February which was attended by 32 members of the public.

70. A joint public survey is currently open.

**Alternate Providers**

71. Because of the ongoing discussions with commercial irrigation entities in relation to the potential transfer of the intake and network operation in its existing open race form, no further analysis of alternative stockwater supplies will be carried out at this stage.

**Ecological Assessment**

72. No ecological assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Cultural/Manawhenua Assessment**

73. No cultural assessment has been programmed at this point.

**Stormwater/drainage Investigations**

74. Stormwater/drainage investigations are yet to be progressed.

**Archaeological investigations**

75. Archaeological assessments are yet to be progressed.

## *OTHER*

76. 235 people have signed up to receive the regular stockwater exit project newsletter updates.

77. The Shepherds Brook intake survey has been sent out.

78. Five intakes remain to be surveyed.

Andrew Guthrie
**Assets Manager**

Neil McCann
**GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces**

# Stockwater Transition Working Group Terms of Reference

## Background

**1.** Council has 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.

**2.** 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.

**3.** 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.

## 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.

## 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

## 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 approach[1]
- 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

## 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.

## 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

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

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

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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Term of appointment

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

## Remuneration

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

## 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.

## 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