

***The Future of Lake Camp (Ōtautari) & Lake
Clearwater (Te Puna a Taka)***

DRAFT 30 Year Plan

2022 - 2052

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“Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū te whenua

As man disappears from sight, the land remains.”

From the Mayor

Our vision – to work together to regenerate the health of Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area for the benefit of nature, place and people

Our place is a great place to live. For many people who call the Ashburton District home, the waterways of our district often play an integral part of our identity.

Ōtuwharekai (Ashburton Lakes), which includes the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area is incredibly important to many of us and holds a special place in our hearts. This is especially true for our treaty partners. Ōtuwharekai is of immense cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu Whānui, as it is both an important seasonal mahinga kai (traditional food source) area and a major travelling route between the settlements on the East Coast of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) and those on Te Tai Poutini (the West Coast).

With recent reports showing the declining water quality in the area, specifically Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater), it is up to all of us to do our best to ensure the lakes do not reach a point of degradation that will be difficult to come back from. For this reason, we have developed this plan with the objective of ensuring Ashburton District Council does all we can do to reduce the negative environmental impacts on our lakes and settlement area.

The goals in this plan focus on:

- avoiding further degradation and restoring the mauri of the natural environment,
- recognising and protecting the special character of the area,
- recognising and valuing the social importance of the area, and
- ensuring collaboration with mana whenua, and between key stakeholders to meet a collective vision.

This plan is a first step to ensuring the future of the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area meets the aspirations of the community.

We look forward to working with our partners, stakeholders and community in bringing this plan and its vision to life.



NEIL BROWN
MAYOR

About the Plan

About the area

Lake Camp (Ōtautari) and Lake Clearwater (Te Puna a Taka) are located next to each other in the Hakatere Conservation Park, off Hakatere Potts Road. Lake Camp is at a higher elevation than the huts and sits to the south; Lake Clearwater is lower and to the north. Water travels underground from Camp to Clearwater.

The area is popular for recreational activities such as fishing, wind-surfing, boating (on Lake Camp), kayaking, walking, biking and four-wheel driving. The area is designated as an area of significant conservation value in the District Plan, due to it being an important habitat for wading birds and waterfowl, as well as significant plant species in the area and the important moraine sequence.

Cultural significance

Ōtūwharekai refers to both the complex known as Maōri Lakes as well as the wider Ashburton Lakes, of which Lake Camp and Lake Clearwater are a part of. Ōtūwharekai is an area of immense cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu Whānui, being both an important seasonal mahinga kai area and a major travelling route between the settlements on the eastern coast of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) and those on Te Tai Poutini (the West Coast). Due to its importance, Ōtūwharekai / The Ashburton Lakes area was recognised as a Statutory Acknowledgement through the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

Archaeological evidence exists that supports Ngāi Tahu traditions relating to Ōtūwharekai as well as showing Māori occupation and use of Ōtūwharekai and the three “pounamu trails” intersecting the area.

A number of sites within the area were also recorded as significant sites by Ngāi Tahu elders in the information gathered by H.K Taiaroa during the time of the 1879 Smith-Nairn Commission, including Ōtautari (Lake Camp), Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater). Both lakes were used as permanent settlements, and mahinga kai collected at these lakes included tuna, aruhe and weka.¹

¹ Cultural Health Assessment of Ōtūwharekai, Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua (https://www.takiwa.org.nz/docs/2010_AshburtonLakes.pdf)

The mauri of Ō Tū Wharekai represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force, and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Ngāi Tahu Whānui with the area.²

Statutory Acknowledgement

Council acknowledges schedule 46 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act, 1998 in relation to Ōtūwharekai.

The creation of the Ōtūwharekai wetlands is associated with Tu Te Rakiwhanoa and his shaping of Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island) to make it habitable for humans. The Ōtūwharekai complex was created as Tu Te Rakiwhanoa arranged the debris in the Waka o Aoraki while forming the harbours and plains and heaping up mountains of the interior.

For Ngai Tahu, traditions such as this represent the links between the cosmological world of the gods and present generations, these histories reinforce tribal identity and solidarity, and continuity between generations and document the events which shaped the environment of Te Wai Pounamu and Ngāi Tahu as an iwi.

Important nohoanga (settlements) associated with seasonal mahinga kai gathering and travel to and through this area included: Tutaewera, Hatere, Uhi, Matakou, Kirihonuhonu, Otautari, Punataka, Te Kiakia, Tamatakou.

The complex was a part of the seasonal trail of mahinga kai and resource gathering, and hapu and whanau bonding. Knowledge of these trails continues to be held by whanau and hapu and is regarded as a taonga. The traditional mobile lifestyle of the people led to their dependence on the resources of the wetlands. Mahinga kai resources taken from the area included: tuna (eels), weka, kaka, kereru, tui, pukeko and other waterfowl, aruhe, kiore, kauru, matai and pokaka.

The tupuna had considerable knowledge of whakapapa, traditional trails and tauranga waka, places for gathering kai and other taonga, ways in which to use the resources of the wetlands, the relationship of people with the area and their dependence on it, and tikanga for the proper and sustainable utilisation of resources. All of these values remain important to Ngāi Tahu today.

The mauri of Ōtūwharekai represents the essence that binds the physical and spiritual elements of all things together, generating and upholding all life. All elements of the natural environment possess a life force, and all forms of life are related. Mauri is a critical element of the spiritual relationship of Ngāi Tahu Whānui with the area.”

² Ashburton District Plan, Section 2, Takata Whenua Values ([Ashburton District Plan \(ashburtondc.govt.nz\)](http://ashburtondc.govt.nz))

Hut Settlement

The Lake Clearwater hut settlement sits between Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater).

The land on which the hut sites are located is part of an endowment gift to the Citizens of the Ashburton District from the holders of the Mount Possession Run (W. Glassey and I. Gallagher in 1926; S. Chaffey 1949; R. Chaffey 1964). Two acres was to “be set apart for use as a camping ground for visitors and similar uses for the benefit of the county of Ashburton”. There was a letter with the original deed which states Council would build an ‘accommodation house’.

The land is held in trust for the purposes of providing fishing baches and picnicking. Historically, dwellings in the settlement were small with limited features, however recent developments have generally been of higher value and quality. The land is freehold leased to dwelling owners on a perpetually renewable lease with some ability to increase rents.

One hundred and eighty individual dwellings now sit in the village along with approximately 12 vacant sections, as well as a basic reserve area where overnight camping is permitted. Additional sets of toilets and a further area used for camping sits alongside Ōtautari (Lake Camp).

There is a fully funded FENZ rural fire station that is manned by FENZ trained volunteer firefighters, drawn mostly from the hutholder community.

Why do we need a plan?

Reports show that Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) is currently in a fragile state, and that its water quality is declining. The lake is at risk of ‘flipping’ meaning it could reach a point of degradation that is very difficult to reverse. If the lake flips, it will have severe impacts on biodiversity, and the overall environmental health and recreational values of the area. We want to do all that we can to ensure that this doesn’t happen.

Other issues that have been identified include:

- Fire stresses in the area
- Recreational activity such as four-wheel driving impacting on the lake edges and conservation areas
- Wilding conifers and other weed species
- Freedom camping in areas far away from toilet facilities
- Dwellings no longer meeting the original purpose of the settlement
- Increased popularity of the area leading to increased density and environmental impacts
- The need to review our district plan rules/zoning.

We all want to see this area protected for the enjoyment of current and future generations, and this will require everyone to play their part, including Council. Looking after this special area is everyone’s responsibility. Agencies can, and need to lead, but community input and stewardship is vital too.

The over-arching purpose of this plan is to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. It is also intended to guide funding decisions for annual budgeting processes.

What does this plan include / not include?

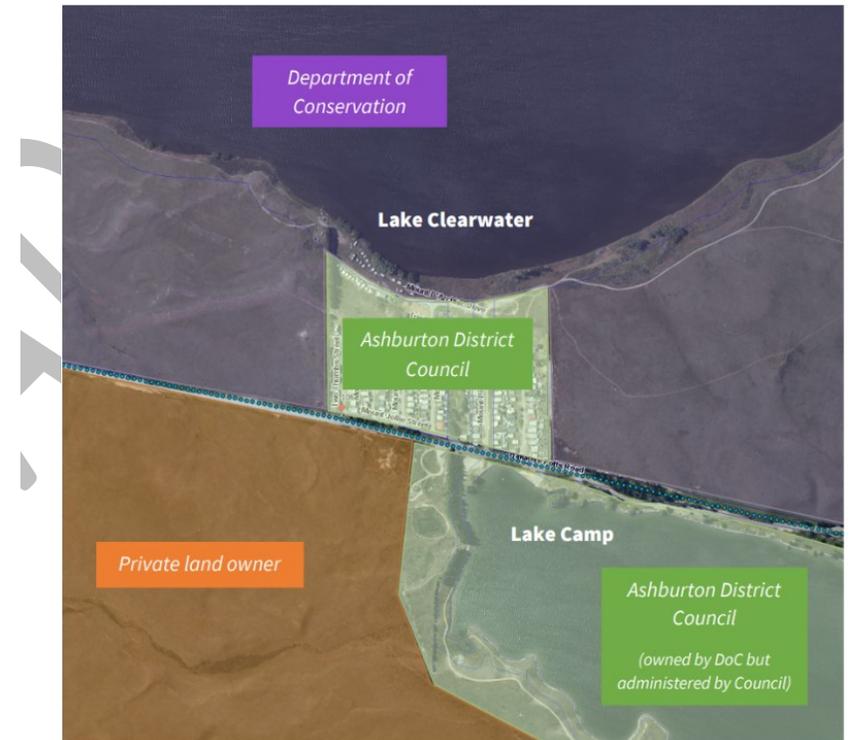
Council has limited authority over the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area. Therefore, this plan includes the things that we can control, and aims for Council to have a collaborative and advocative role in the other aspects of the plan.

Ashburton District Council is also a Territorial Authority with duties under the Resource Management Act, Local Government Act and other legislation. This plan is complimentary to its statutory responsibilities and does not seek to defer or depart from them. There may be further processes required to give effect to this plan. Council also acknowledges its responsibilities to mana whenua as treaty partners.

Council shares regulatory oversight in the Ōtūwharekai with other agencies such as Ngāi Tahu, Ministry for the Environment, Environment Canterbury, Department of Conservation and LINZ and will work with its partners as appropriate to achieve best practice outcomes for the area, including where statutory responsibility rests with other agencies.

Funding

Council will be looking into options for funding of the actions included in this plan. Some of the actions will be funded by current budgets as part of our business as usual, however some will need to be funded through different revenue opportunities. This may involve applying to central government for funding, increasing camping ground fees, rating implications, or the sale of lease for some vacant sections in the Te Puna aTaka (Lake Clearwater) settlement. This is something Council will investigate as or when needed.



How has this plan been prepared?

From February to March in 2022 we asked the community for their feedback on the future of the the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area. We also held an open day at Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) on Saturday 5 February, which attracted approximately 44 attendees. Overall we received a total of 153 submissions, and of those, 53% were bach owners.

The following topics were noted as the key things that people valued most about the area:

- Peace and quiet, isolation, off the grid, simple living
- The natural environment – specifically the scenery and water quality
- The original character of the settlement
- Sense of community
- The ‘no dog’ rule
- Recreational values.

When asked what people saw as a ‘thriving future’ a key theme that came through was to retain the things that the area is currently valued for – e.g. simplicity, character of the settlement, protected natural environment.

Other suggestions that came through in the consultation process included:

- More plantings in the area
- No further development in the area
- Regulating freedom camping, four wheel driving, and motor biking
- Protecting biodiversity and control of weeds and pests
- More toilet and rubbish facilities
- Working collaboratively with other stakeholders who are responsible for the area
- Effective management of fire danger



- Controlling light pollution
- Maintenance of the roads
- Ensuring bach owners adhere to holding tank requirement
- Provide more education on how important it is to protect the area.

Following the feedback period, hearing and workshop, we developed a draft plan in consultation with our treaty partners and key stakeholders. The final plan was then presented to Council and adopted, and became effective in August 2022.

What do we have to think about?

Culture and heritage

It is important to keep in mind the cultural significance of the area, as well as the original purpose of the gifting of the land. The settlement has a quirky nature with huts that are of all different shapes and colours. Submitters told us that they wanted to see this character of the settlement protected.

“You can’t really know where you are going until you know where you have been” – Maya Angelou.

Climate Change

Climate Change needs to be seriously considered in the development and implementation of this plan. Impacts of climate change within Canterbury are expected to include increased temperatures, increased intensity and frequency of weather events including storms, rainfall and droughts.

With the water quality of our lakes already at risk of flipping, the impacts of climate change could have a further impact on the water quality and in turn on the area’s biodiversity.

The area is known to have fire hazards and with the expected increase in temperatures, wind and drought conditions, this is a greater risk for the area.

Environmental and biodiversity values

The Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area is incredibly significant in terms of its environmental and biodiversity values. This is referenced in our District Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan, and Landscape Management Plan. It’s important that we ensure this plan protects the biodiversity in the area.

The key priorities for the area have been identified as:

1. Preventing the lakes from flipping
2. Reducing further development of the area
3. Introducing or encouraging the use of recycling facilities
4. Retaining the natural environment that currently exists in the area.

Who's involved?

While the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area is within the Ashburton District, it's important to note that Council does not have complete authority over the area.

This plan only covers aspects that we can control, however it aims to be complementary to the work and aspirations of other parties involved.

The development of this plan has been informed by work undertaken by Ōtūwharekai working group, which involves members from the following parties:

- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
- Te Taumutu Rūnganga
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Environment Canterbury
- Department of Conservation
- Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)
- Central South Island Fish and Game
- Ministry for the Environment
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Surrounding land owners.

At the time of finalising this plan, the Ōtūwharekai working group is embarking on developing an action plan for Ōtūwharekai. This is expected to be completed in 6-12 months (by June 2023 at the latest). If new actions are formed for Ashburton District Council not already covered by this plan, we will review this plan accordingly.

We have also ensured that the Lake Clearwater Hutholders were included in this process. The hut holders are an important stakeholder as they take responsibility for some of the management that occurs in the area, in a voluntary capacity, including the Lake Clearwater Camping Ground. They also make up the majority of FENZ trained volunteer firefighters, which is important due to the fire stresses within the area. The hutholders have an important ongoing role in the future of the settlement. There are a number of other key stakeholders that we recognise have significant interest in the area, these include: Fish and Game New Zealand, Forest & Bird, Civil Defence Emergency Management, FENZ, biodiversity working groups, and recreational groups.

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The Plan

What is our vision?

Our vision:

”To work together to regenerate the health of the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area for the benefit of nature, place and people”

What are our goals?

Goal 1: Avoid further degradation and restore the mauri of the natural environment in the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) area

This means (objectives):

- To stop and remove pollution into the lakes
- To protect and restore the indigenous biodiversity of the area

Goal 2: Recognise and protect the special character of the area

This means (objectives):

- To ensure the original purpose of the settlement is retained and protected
- To ensure our facilities are fit for purpose
- To recognise the importance of the area for Ngāi Tahu Whānui

Goal 3: Recognise and value the social importance of Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater)

This means (objectives):

- To recognise the community strength within the area
- To monitor recreational use of the area and undertake action as necessary to ensure use is sustainable and values are protected

Goal 4: Ensure collaboration with mana whenua and between key stakeholders to meet a collective vision

This means (objectives):

- To work with mana whenua to meet goals and vision of the plan
- To work with key stakeholders to meet goals and vision of the plan

How will we reach these goals?

Goal 1: Avoid further degradation and restore the mauri of the natural environment in the Ōtautari and Te Puna a Taka area

Objective	Action	By who	To be completed by	Funding sources
1.1 Stop and remove pollution into the lakes	1.1.1 Ensure all bach owners comply with the requirement to de-commission long drops and have a holding tank, undertake inspections of compliance	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets - WSP report on wastewater disposal options funded by ADC
	1.1.2 Investigate the ability to install greywater system at the Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) Campground, as well as funding options	Council	30 June 2024	Annual Plan 23/24
	1.1.3 Investigate the possibility of requiring bach owners to install greywater systems	Council	30 June 2024	Annual Plan 23/24
	1.1.4 Advocate to other bodies such as Environment Canterbury to ensure their environmental controls are appropriate in surrounding areas	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	1.1.5 Support further scientific research and water quality monitoring	DoC and ECan supported by Council	Ongoing	No financial implications for ADC
1.2 Protect and restore the indigenous biodiversity of the area	1.2.1 Review and implement Council's Landscape Management Plan	Council in partnership with mana whenua	30 June 2024	Annual Plan 23/24

	1.2.2 Prepare and implement an education campaign covering the impact of 4WDs, dogs and other animals	Council in partnership with other relevant agencies	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	1.2.3 Investigate an increase in animal control contractor visits to the area, particularly in peak periods	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	1.2.4 Investigate an increase in staff/contractor visits to the area to discourage inappropriate four wheel drive and motorcycle activity	Council in partnership with Department of Conservation and Environment Canterbury	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	1.2.5 Advocate to Environment Canterbury to include feral cats in the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan	Council	30 June 2025	Within existing budgets
	1.2.6 Review the District Plan rules in relation to biodiversity and the upcoming National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity	Council	30 June 2025	LTP 2024 - 34

Goal 2: Recognise and protect the special character of the area

Objective	Action	By who	To be completed by	Funding sources
2.1 Ensure the original purpose of the settlement is retained and protected	2.1.1 Review the zoning and development rules for the area in our District Plan to recognise the special character of the Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater) settlement	Council	30 June 2025	Within existing budgets
	2.1.2 Investigate establishing clear guidelines on permanent outdoor lights in order to reduce light pollution	Council in consultation with Lake Clearwater Hutholders Association	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets

	2.1.3 Complete work on boundary / property encroachment issues within the settlement	Council	30 June 2024	Within existing budgets
2.2 Ensure our facilities are fit for purpose	2.2.1 Ensure the settlement and surrounding roads are well maintained	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	2.2.2 Install additional set of toilets at West end of Ōtautari (Lake Camp) in 2022/23 (to replace old long-drops that were removed)	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	2.2.3 Monitor rubbish facilities and increase collection frequency during peak periods	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	2.2.4 Investigate the feasibility of recycling and pay to dump or other types of rubbish systems	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	2.2.5 Install signs near skips to encourage the use of recycling centre at Mount Somers	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	2.2.6 Restrict freedom camping to areas closer to amenities at Ōtautari (Lake Camp)	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	2.2.7 Investigate and review camping ground fees and charges	Council, in consultation with Lake Clearwater Hutholders Association	30 June 2024	Within existing budgets
2.3 Recognise the importance of the area for Ngāi Tahu Whānui	2.3.1 Work with mana whenua to enable and ensure access and use of sites for mahinga kai	Council in partnership with mana whenua	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets

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Goal 3: Recognise and value the social importance of Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Lake Clearwater)

Objective	Action	By who	To be completed by	Funding sources
3.1 Recognise the community strength within the area	3.1.1 Work alongside the Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Te Puna a Taka (Clearwater) community for the betterment of the area	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	3.1.2 Recognise and acknowledge the work that is done by community groups (e.g. Lake Clearwater Hutholders Association, Forest & Bird)	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
3.2 Monitor recreational use of the area and undertake action as necessary to ensure use is sustainable and values are protected	3.2.1 Provide an educative approach on sensible driving within the settlement area, and work with partners to ensure consistent messaging	Council in partnership with Police	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	3.2.2 Investigate restrictions on motorbike and four wheel drive access to key areas including education and signage	Council in partnership with Department of Conservation and Environment Canterbury and in consultation with Lake Clearwater hutholders and Aquatic Club	30 June 2024	Within existing budgets

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Goal 4: Ensure collaboration with mana whenua and between key stakeholders to meet a collective vision

Objective	Action	By who	To be completed by	Funding sources
4.1 Work with mana whenua to meet goals and vision of the plan	4.1.1 Work with mana whenua to determine ways that mana whenua can express rangatiratanga, undertake their kaitiakitanga responsibilities, and express their cultural heritage within the area	Council in partnership with mana whenua	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
4.2 Work with key stakeholders to meet goals and vision of the plan	4.2.1 Actively participate in and contribute to the Ōtūwharekai Working Group and Steering Groups	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	4.2.2 Advocate to other key stakeholders for areas that we do not control	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	4.2.3 Develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the Lake Clearwater Hutholders	Council	30 June 2023	Within existing budgets
	4.2.4 Advocate to Central and Regional Government for increased funding for area protection	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	4.2.5 Work alongside appropriate groups to reduce fire danger in the area	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets
	4.2.6 Circulate scientific research / monitoring results amongst partners and the public	Council	Ongoing	Within existing budgets

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Appendices:

Appendix A - Acknowledgements

The development of this plan has been informed by work undertaken by Ōtūwharekai working group, which involves members from the following parties:

- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Te Taumutu Rūnganga
- Environment Canterbury
- Department of Conservation
- Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)
- Central South Island Fish and Game
- Ministry for the Environment
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Surrounding land owners.

Appendix B - Monitoring and review

Monitoring and reporting

The progress of actions and projects outlined in the plan will be monitored. If any actions or projects become unfeasible, they may be removed. New actions and projects can be added and approved by Council as required. A report on progress on the plan's implementation will be prepared as part of Council's overall annual reporting.

Review

The plan should be reviewed every 5 years, or sooner if required. It may also be reviewed to coincide with Council's Long-Term Plan. This review cycle reflects the need to maintain alignment with national programmes, legislation and related projects regionally and locally.

Appendix C - Glossary of terms

Below is a glossary of terms in the context of this plan.

Mauri – the life force, it is the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity.

Flipping – when an ecosystem or water body reaches a point where it can no longer cope with environmental change and the ecosystem suddenly shifts from one state to another. Once a water body or ecosystem has flipped it is very difficult to reverse.

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