

# **Otago Regional Council**

## **Lake Hayes Neighbourhood**

### **Rabbit Management**

**Second Workshop**

**6:00pm Wednesday 14 July, 2021L**



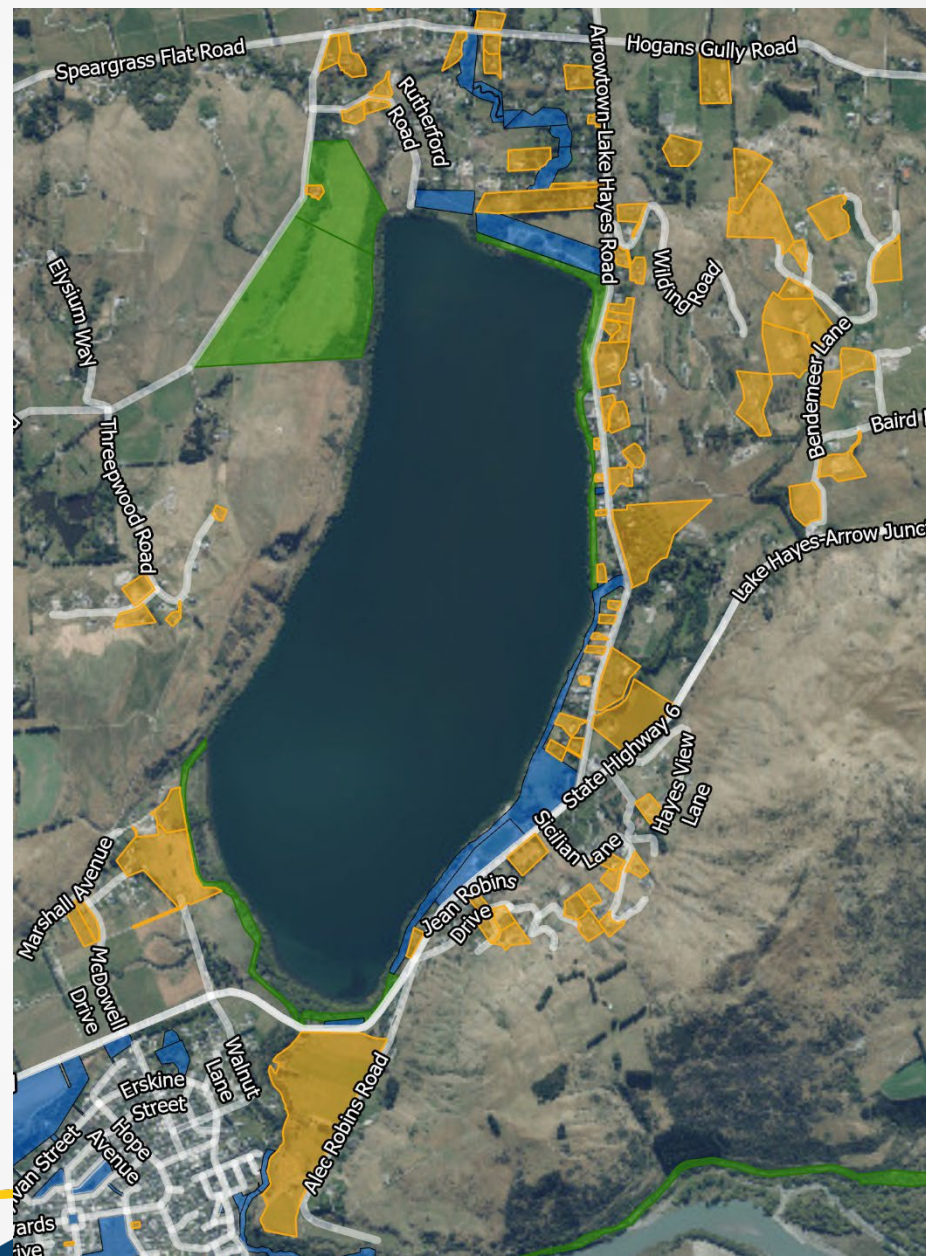
# Workshop Programme

- Introductions
- Part 1: Long term rabbit management
- Part 2: Community-led action
- Part 3: Short term rabbit management

# Part 1: Long term, sustainable rabbit management

## Rabbit Management Survey

- 100 respondents (one third)
- 98% agreed there is a problem
- 73% have some fencing
- 56% have tried baiting/fumigation
- 90% interested in contributing to control operations in the area



**Previous Pindone operation (2013) had limited success due to:**

- Limited project area
- Not all properties were treated
- Heavy reliance on one method (toxin)
- Availability of alternative food
- Lack of follow-up secondary control
- Rapid reinvasion
- Reactive approach, not strategic.

## Those left behind...

- Does can breed from 5 months of age
- 28 day gestation period
- 1 – 12 kittens per litter
- Ready to breed again a few days after giving birth
- Result = populations can increase eight- to tenfold in one season

## Otago Regional Pest Management Plan

Different management approaches for different pests:

- Exclusion
- Eradication
- Progressive Containment
- **Sustained Control**

## Reactive -v- Strategic Rabbit Management

REACTIVE	STRATEGIC
Based on immediate reduction in rabbit numbers (short term)	Based on clear objectives to permanently reduce rabbit numbers (long term)
Initiated following high level of infestation (AKA crisis intervention)	Initiated when monitoring identifies numbers are on the rise
Relies heavily on primary control treatments that may need to be repeated every few years	May require an initial primary control treatment, but none thereafter if implemented well
Often not followed up with secondary control	Secondary control continues indefinitely
Any reduction in rabbit numbers may be seen as a success, regardless of how many are left	Focus is on how to control rabbits left behind after the primary treatment
Can be expensive if frequent primary control treatments are required	Can lead to reduced costs over time as rabbit numbers are constantly reduced



## **Key technical & social factors for success**

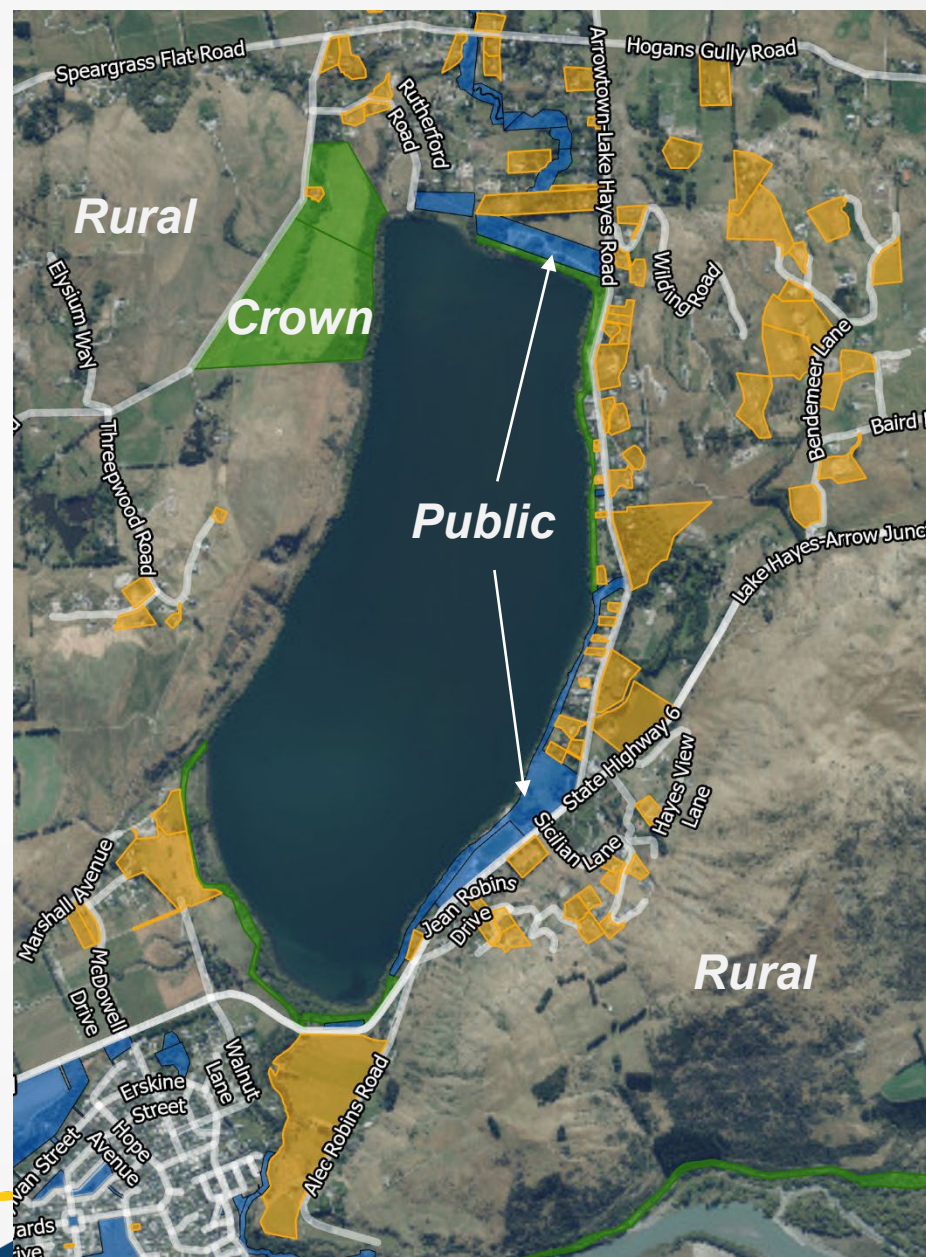
- Agreed Goals and Objectives
- Strategic approach - Management Plan – priority areas
- Fencing (incl. gates) is a key part of the strategy
- Widespread agreement and collaboration amongst landowners
- How do we reach the other landowners?
- Effective communication amongst landowners & contractors
- Various control methods undertaken in different areas are complimentary and not counter-productive
- Long term monitoring & secondary control work to keep numbers low

## Key factors (cont.)

Undertake work concurrently on:

- Crown land
- Public land
- Residential properties
- Rural properties

Beyond your back yard



## Opportunities for Community-led Action – Lake Hayes

- High level of awareness of the problem
- At least 1/3 of landowners keen to contribute to control operations\*
- Work is already occurring - we already know what does/doesn't work
- Contractors already operating in the area understand local issues

\*Sharing fencing costs, engaging a contractor with neighbours, delivering fliers/information

## How ORC can help

- Compliance inspections on crown, public and privately-owned land
- Requiring action on non-compliant properties
- Education and awareness
- Technical advice on control methods
- Facilitating the establishment of a community-led initiative
- High level monitoring
- Help with development of a management plan

## Part 1: Long term, sustainable rabbit management

# Ideas, questions, feedback?

## Part 2: Community-led action

## Whakatipu Wildlife Trust

- Vision - to create and maintain a predator free environment throughout the greater Lake Wakatipu area to enable our birds and other native wildlife to flourish
- Board of Trustees (voluntary) plus Executive Officer (paid)
- 57 voluntary groups from Glenorchy to Cardona
- Funded through the business community's efforts
- Rabbits can attract predators to an area, presenting a risk to birds
- Community-led initiatives can sometimes be more agile and responsive than Council-led initiatives
- Bottom-up approach = greater community ownership and buy-in
- Resources expended on securing more funding

## **Maniototo Pest Management Incorporated**

- Established 1997 - depot & gear from disestablished pest destruction board
- 2FTE plus Board of Directors (resolve issues)
- 250,000 ha, 90 members - all pay a levy
- Need 95% involvement to make it work
- Having an agreed strategy is paramount
- Levy deposited into individual farm account, used for work on that farm
- More work needed = higher levy for that farm
- Haven't needed poison for 10 years
- Continuous monitoring
- Structure could be used for other environmental projects
- Pests are not a property problem, they are an area problem



## Bendemeer

- 110 ha, 42 landowners
- Fencing plus gates (plus maintenance of both) is paramount
- Control within fenced area, and disrupt movement
- Suite of control methods – fumigating, shooting, habitat modification, avoid creating new habitat
- Keeping numbers down to an acceptable level
- Landowners helping with control efforts through monitoring
- White pole system for warrens and fence breaches
- Funds collected through body corporate

## How to get started

- A plan for the community, by the community
- What might a community-led initiative look like?
- Does it need a leader? Who can lead this?
- Is an entity required? Is there an existing group?
- Informal group / Charitable Trust / Incorporated Society?
- Governance structure?
- Coordinator? ORC Assistance?
- Will the control work involve volunteers, and/or one or several contractors?

## Part 2: Community-led action

# Ideas, questions, feedback?

## Part 3: Short term rabbit management

### Engaging a Contractor

- See website for tips
- What is their experience? Have they undertaken operations locally?
- Site inspection beforehand to discuss options and cost
- Ask neighbours for recommendations, and if they want work done too?

### Control Options

- Fencing – best value for money long-term
- Pindone
- Fumigation
- Shooting (limited opportunity)
- Warren/habitat modification
- Dogging/ferreting/long netting/trapping

# Part 3: Short term rabbit management

<https://yoursay.orc.govt.nz/hayes-rabbits>

**Plus our staff are here to advise**