



Otago  
Regional  
Council

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## Environmental Science and Policy Committee MINUTES

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Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Environmental Policy and Science Committee held in the Council Chamber, Level 2 Philip Laing House, 144 Rattray Street, Dunedin on Thursday 29 June 2023, commencing at 2:02 PM.

### PRESENT

Cr Lloyd McCall

*(Co-Chairperson)*

Edward Ellison

*(Co-Chairperson)*

Cr Alexa Forbes

Cr Gary Kelliher (online)

Cr Michael Laws (online)

Cr Kevin Malcolm

Cr Tim Mephram

Cr Andrew Noone

Cr Gretchen Robertson

Cr Alan Somerville

Cr Elliot Weir

Cr Kate Wilson

## 1. WELCOME

Chairperson Cr Lloyd McCall welcomed Councillors, members of the public and staff to the meeting at 2.02pm Staff present included Richard Saunders (Chief Executive), Nick Donnelly (GM Corporate Services), Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), Tom Dyer (Manager, Science) Gavin Palmer (GM Operations), Amanda Vercoe (GM Governance, Culture and Customer), Fleur Matthews - online (Manager, Policy and Planning), Sam Thomas (Coastal Scientist) Jason Augspurger (Senior Scientist Fresh Water Ecology), Amir Levy (Senior Scientist Ground Water) Hugo Borges (Senior Scientists, Lakes), Markus Dengg (Scientist Water Quality) Scott Jarvie (Science Biodiversity) Sarah Harrison (Scientist Air Quality), Kylie Darragh (Governance Support)

Edward Ellison said an opening karakia for the Committee which he described as aspiring to unite, combine and work together to seek a common purpose.

## 2. APOLOGIES

**Resolution: Cr Forbes Moved, Cr Robertson Seconded:**

***That** the apologies for Cr Bryan Scott and Karen Coutts be accepted.*

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 3. PUBLIC FORUM

No requests to speak were received for this Committee.

## 4. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

**Resolution: Cr McCall Moved, Cr Robertson Seconded:**

***That** the order of the agenda be changed.*

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

*Members were reminded of the need to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arises between their role as an elected representative and any private or other external interest they might have. Councillor Declarations of Interests are published on the [ORC website](#).*

## 6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**Resolution: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Mephram Seconded**

*That the minutes of the Environmental Science and Policy Meeting of 26 April 2023 be received and confirmed as a true and accurate record.*

**MOTION CARRIED**

## 7. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

### 7.2 Estuary SOE Programme Update 2023

The report updated the Committee on the progress of the State of the Environment (SoE) Monitoring Programme over the last two years and outlined the next steps of monitoring and prioritising of restoration. Tom Dyer (Manager, Science), Anita Dawe (General Manager Policy and Science) and Sam Thomas (Coastal Scientist) were present to respond to questions.

**Resolution ESP23-107: Cr Malcolm Moved, Cr Mephram Seconded**

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that the estuary monitoring programme is being implemented according to the estuary monitoring programme plan that was updated in 2020.
- 3) **Notes** that next steps include an estuary monitoring programme review to ensure the programme is delivering maximum value and to start prioritising areas for investigations and targeted management/restoration where needed.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### 7.5. Vulnerable Ecosystems in Otago

Tom Dyer (Manager Science), Scott Jarvie (Science Biodiversity), and Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science) presented the report with an opportunity for questions. The report described Otago's diverse range of ecosystems including those identified as naturally uncommon, it detailed the rationale for developing a monitoring programmes and the programmes developed for the coastal saline and the coastal turf ecosystems in order to work towards the ORC statutory obligations under the RMA.

**Resolution ESP23-108: Cr Noone Moved, Cr Forbes Seconded**

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that the monitoring programmes have been developed for two naturally uncommon ecosystems: inland saline and coastal turf.
- 3) **Notes** that this work is part of a broader programme to inform management of naturally uncommon ecosystems in the Otago region.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### 7.7. Water Quality State and Trends - Lakes, Rivers, and Groundwater

Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science), and senior scientists Jason Augspurger, Amir Levy, Hugo Borges presented the paper which reports on the state and trends of lake, river and ground water quality in the Otago region including a full technical report and graphical summary. There was an opportunity for the Committee to ask questions.

**Resolution ESP23-109: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Weir Seconded**

*That the Committee:*

- 1) **Notes** this report.

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **7.4. Annual Water Quality and Biomonitoring results (SoE Report Cards)**

Anita Dawe (GM Science and Policy) and senior scientists Hugo Borges, Jason Augspurger and Markus Dengg responded to questions. The annual water quality report details the current state of water quality and ecology which is key information for the proposed Land and Water Regional Plan. The Chair thanked the scientists for the excellent and really interesting presentation of the data.

#### **Resolution ESP23-110: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr Weir Seconded**

*That the Committee:*

- 1) **Notes** the annual State of the Environment water quality and biomonitoring report cards.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **7.1. Contact recreation Report 2022/2023**

Markus Dengg and Anita Dawe were present to respond to questions. The report summarised the contact recreation programme between December and March and focuses on human health risks of faecal contamination and potentially toxic cyanobacteria. It was noted to the Committee that the 2022-2023 summer season had been a particularly dry period for Otago and contamination results were likely to be lower due to this factor.

#### **Resolution ESP23-111: Cr Mephram Moved, Cr Wilson Seconded**

*That the Committee:*

1. **Notes** this report.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **7.3. Air Plan Review: Proposed Process and Timeframes**

The report informed the Committee on the work beginning on the review of the Regional Plan and the proposed process and timeframe. Sarah Harrison (Scientist Air Quality), Vita Manning (Senior Policy Analyst), and Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science) Fleur Matthews, (Manager, Policy and Planning, online), were available to answer questions on the report.

#### **Resolution ESP23-112: Cr Somerville Moved, Cr Weir Seconded**

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** that an Air Plan Issues and Options paper will be brought to Committee for consideration on 11 October 2023 as part of the early review work.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

## 7.6. Otago Lakes Management Approach

Hilary Lennox (Consultant Strategy Team) and Andrea Howard (Acting Manager Strategy Activities) and Anita Dawe (GM Policy and Science) were present to respond to questions regarding the activities underway to better manage Otago lakes and updates on the recommendations of *Otago Lakes Management Review* (2022) from Landpro Limited were described in this report.

With an increase in sites, the amount of monitoring has increased massively over the last 3 years. Actions to address gaps were outlined. Some of the region's lakes are well understood, less so the 3 deep lakes. Considering the size of these lakes, any degradation is very hard to turn around.

### Resolution ESP23-113: Cr Robertson Moved, Cr Malcolm Seconded

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Notes** this report.
- 2) **Notes** the range of existing work programmes that have addressed / will address the majority of the recommendations contained in the *Otago Lakes Management Review* report.
- 3) **Notes** the four actions not currently under active consideration (through current or planned work programmes) that will be reviewed, prioritised, and costed by the relevant Council departments as part of the 2024- 2034 Long-Term Plan process. These actions center around gaining an improved understanding of the three deep lakes, undertaking a stock take of related work of other agencies, groups and other stakeholders within each FMU, further consideration of aquatic pest management programmes and enhanced land use mapping.
- 4) **Directs** staff to focus on the pRPS, pLWRP and ICM work programmes and continue rolling out the NOF for each FMU/rohe rather than developing a separate *Otago Lakes Strategic Plan*.
- 5) **Recommends** that the previously established Lakes Management Working Group focus their attention specifically on Lakes Hāwea, Wānaka, and Whakatipu-Wai-Māori/Wakatipu and that Council, through this group, seek to establish a joint work programme with the Ministry of the Environment (and other experts) to improve understanding of these inland deep lakes.
- 6) **Notes** that the Lakes Management Working Group will be kept informed of the broader initiatives underway that are planned to improve management of all lakes (and water bodies) across the region.

### MOTION CARRIED

### Resolution ESP23-114: Cr Wilson Moved, Cr Forbes Seconded

*That the Council:*

- 1) **Invites** Edward Ellison and one other mana whenua representative to be included in the *Otago Lakes Management working group*.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**8. CLOSURE**

There was no further business, Edward Ellison said a karakia and the meeting was closed at 4:42 pm.

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Chairperson

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Date