

Now's your chance to have your say about

# Otago's future



*Mo tatou, a mo ka uri I muri ake nei*

*For us and for the generations  
that come after us*

May 2014

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# An invitation...



## Become part of the conversation on how Otago's resources are managed.

Every ten years, when we review the Regional Policy Statement for Otago, we have an opportunity to talk about regional issues. Soon we'll be holding a series of evening public meetings and daytime drop-in workshops near you. Please come and join us.

We'd like to share some ideas on what is 'regionally significant' and on how we can care for the environment, while still allowing people and communities to use resources and thrive.

There are some big topics we're thinking about such as:

- ensuring our resources are fit for the future
- managing fast growth in some areas and slow growth in others

- achieving the least necessary regulation to enable people to get on with their lives without cost to the wider community

Over the past few months, we have been working with our fellow councils and iwi representatives on these matters.

Please take the chance to participate in this important discussion about managing Otago's resources. I look forward to meeting you.

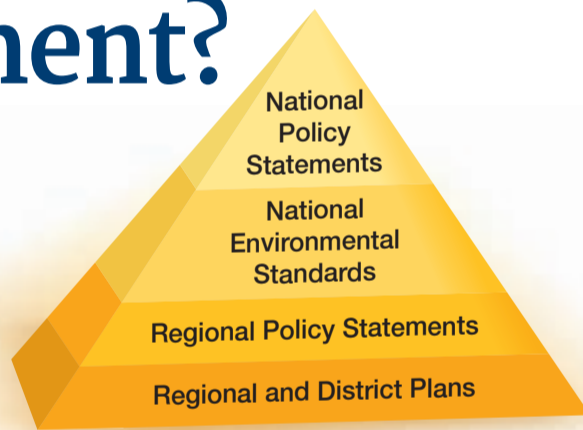
**Stephen Woodhead**

**Chairperson, Otago Regional Council**

## What is the Regional Policy Statement?

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) sets out how Otago's regional, city and district councils manage our resources to ensure a good environment, create thriving communities and be resilient to the challenges ahead.

The RPS provides direction for changes to district and regional plans and the processing of resource consents.



RMA hierarchy of plans

## What does the RPS mean to you?

The RPS affects what people and communities can and cannot do when using natural resources, subdividing or developing land, or undertaking a land use activity.

We need your views to ensure that the RPS reflects what Otago's communities want.

***Please consider the issues and options discussed in this document and give us your feedback.***

## Share your thoughts and help shape Otago's future

You are invited to attend public meetings or drop-in sessions at the following locations

For evening meetings light refreshments will be available from 5.00 - 5.30pm

## District plan reviews

The city and district councils are also reviewing their district plans and consulting on similar topics to the RPS. If you're interested you should engage in both processes.

Location	Date	Time	Activity	Venue
Queenstown	Mon 19 May	5.30 – 7.30 pm	RPS Launch and public meeting	St John Ambulance Hall, 10 Douglas St, Frankton
	Tues 20 May	9.00 am – 12 noon	Drop-in session	
Alexandra	Tues 20 May	5.30 – 7.30 pm	Public meeting	Stadium Tavern, The Cellar Room, 143 Centennial Ave
	Wed 21 May	9.00 am – 12 noon	Drop-in session	
Dunedin	Thurs 22 May	5.30 – 7.30 pm	Public meeting	Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 30 the Octagon
	Fri 23 May	9.00 am – 12 noon	Drop-in session	
Oamaru	Mon 26 May	5.30 – 7.30 pm	Public meeting	Brydone Kingsgate Hotel, 115 Thames St
	Tues 27 May	9.00 am – 12 noon	Drop-in session	
Balclutha	Wed 28 May	5.30 – 7.30 pm	Public meeting	Town and Country Club, 1 Yarmouth St
	Thurs 29 May	9.00 am – 12 noon	Drop-in session	



# Setting the Scene



## Our indigenous species form part of our identity

Otago has many species found nowhere else in the world. Our indigenous biodiversity has been significantly reduced and is vulnerable to future changes. Ecosystems are important as they provide us with services such as food, clean water, pollination, natural flood control, and spiritual and recreational experiences.



## We need to make the best of our finite resources

Minerals found in Otago include aggregate, coal and gold. Aggregate is used in roading, farming and construction, and coal is used for industry, fuel and heating.

High class or versatile soils support primary production and are particularly effective for agricultural production. These soils are the result of slow natural processes, making them all the more valuable.



## Our coastal environment holds many opportunities

Many of us live near the sea, enjoy food from the sea or derive our livelihoods from it. Access to coastal resources is important for recreation, tourism and trade. The coastal environment has particular spiritual, historical and cultural importance for Kai Tahu.



## Freshwater is a Taonga

Otago's lakes, rivers, wetlands and aquifers have many values and their beauty, cultural and recreational values shape our lives. Water is essential for food production, electricity generation and attracts tourists. Freshwater plays a significant role in Kai Tahu's spiritual beliefs and is important in many cultural traditions.



## Landscapes are among our most valuable assets

Otago's diverse landscapes are of cultural and economic significance. The Catlins, alpine lakes and Otago Peninsula are recognised nationally and internationally for their natural features. Human activities have modified these landscapes, adding elements that reflect our past practices and evolving culture.



## Infrastructure & transport connects our communities

Roads, water supply, waste services, electricity transmission and telecommunication networks support our communities, economy and health and safety. The quality of our infrastructure affects our ability to respond to emergencies or natural disasters. It costs a lot and we must develop and maintain it in a cost efficient and environmentally friendly way.



## We all depend on a secure energy supply

Every aspect of our lives depends on access to energy and our economy depends on affordable energy for primary production, transport, education and tourism. Our dependency on fossil fuels has the potential to threaten our future quality of life, particularly as fuel prices may become more volatile. We need a secure energy supply while reducing our dependence on non renewable fuels and minimising environmental impacts of energy production activities.



## Our health depends on the quality of the air we breathe

Some towns in Otago have poor air quality during winter: odour, smoke, dust or decreased visibility can be a nuisance. Air pollution has been consistently linked to health issues such as lung problems, asthma and other respiratory ailments. Clean air contributes significantly to our quality of life and its life supporting capacity must be preserved.



## Heritage is a window into our past and a glimpse into our future

Otago has a diverse range of heritage features reflecting the cultures of the people who have lived and worked in Otago. These help us decide what is of lasting importance when looking to the future.



# Looking after our resources

## Protecting our natural environment and unique ecosystems

Our environment has been heavily modified with urban and rural development, the introduction of new species, and the drainage of wetlands. However, there are still uncompromised examples of indigenous ecosystems, catchments with pristine water quality and landscapes of significance to our communities.

### The RPS could:

- adopt a consistent approach to identifying significant landscapes or areas of indigenous biodiversity
- require protection of uncompromised indigenous ecosystems, landscapes of significance and areas of pristine water quality
- promote the enhancement and rehabilitation of damaged indigenous ecosystems

## Making more efficient use of our natural resources

Inefficient use of our natural resources creates economic opportunity costs for us all. For example, inefficient water use may limit the availability of water for irrigation of other areas. Efficient use of water allows for greater production, which, in turn, improves our economic well being.

### The RPS could promote efficiency of use and ensure the best allocation of resources, through:

- encouraging community management of any shared resources
- making sure that resource allocation reflects users' needs

## Minimising our impact on the environment

Activities which individually would have little impact can sometimes cumulatively damage our environment. For example, the cumulative emissions from household fires are a major cause of air pollution in towns. However, widespread conversion to low or no-emission heating systems and retrofitting insulation places financial burden on households.

With regard to water quality, the benefits of practices such as planting margins of rivers and lakes, or the development of wetlands, are widely recognised.

### The RPS could:

- promote good practices such as riparian planting, wetland construction, or insulating houses
- encourage the development and uptake of new technologies that reduce our activities impacts on the environment
- ensure those who are polluting pay the costs, rather than the wider community

## Managing unavoidable effects

Some developments can only occur in specific places, and their adverse effects, for example on biodiversity or landscape, may be unavoidable.

### The RPS could:

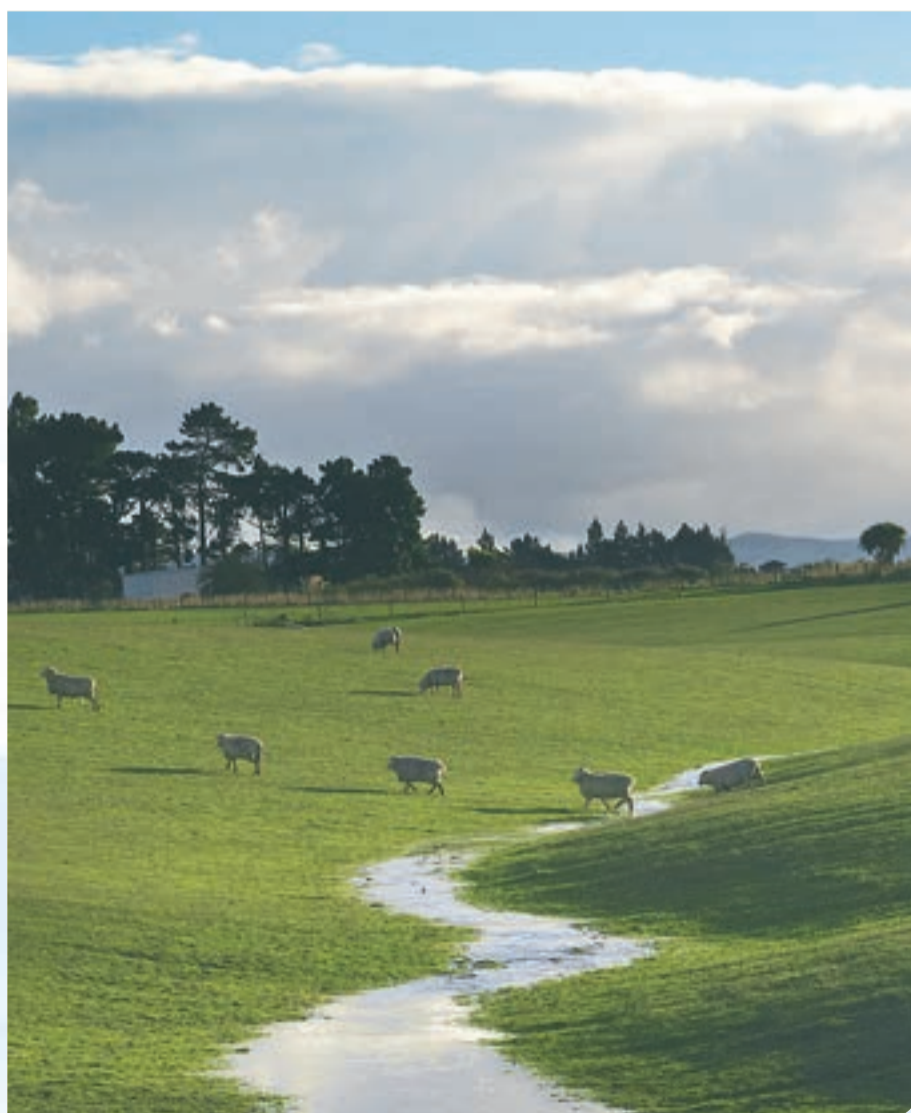
- require offsetting of adverse effects on ecosystems when those effects cannot be avoided
- help avoid such activities in the most pristine and uncompromised areas of Otago
- require rehabilitation of any affected area

## Recognising interconnections

Our organisations and processes do not always recognise the complexity of the environment and the interconnections between its parts. For example, freshwater resources affect estuary values and coastal ecosystems, and vegetation of a catchment affects its hydrology.

### The RPS should ensure linkages are taken into account by:

- setting objectives that reflect the complexity of the environment and ensure decision makers consider these connections



# Maximising use and enjoyment of our natural and built environment

## Having quality and choice

The quality of our built environment can affect our quality of life. Poorly planned settlements do not serve the interests of the community in the long term.

### The RPS could:

- ensure new urban areas provide a range of housing choice, recreation and community facilities
- promote the development of urban areas that offer a variety of transportation options including walking and cycling
- encourage high quality urban design to reflect our local cultural, heritage and environmental context and respond to the social, economic and physical needs of the community

## Otago's rich heritage

In order to effectively protect the features we value as a community, we must be aware of how and why they have contributed to our heritage. Whenua tupuna, the sites of cultural significance for Kai Tahu, are defined not only by their location and any archaeological remains, but also by their purpose and relationship with natural features.

### The RPS could:

- adopt a consistent approach to identify heritage features
- enable adaptive reuse of heritage features
- seek more explicit recognition of, and access to, landscapes and sites of cultural significance to Kai Tahu

## Making better urban areas

Urban development has tended to neglect the natural environment. However the integration of ecosystems into urban areas can achieve multiple benefits, such as reducing stormwater problems, enhancing indigenous biodiversity and improving urban amenity. These can improve the quality of our urban areas as well as enhance property values.

### The RPS could:

- promote greater retention of natural features in new areas of urban development
- encourage development of blue and green corridors to link streams and reserves
- encourage more use of native species

## Getting to enjoy our surroundings

Access to our natural and built resources influences our ability to enjoy them. Subdivision and development can limit access to our places of enjoyment, yet can provide opportunities for better access.

### The RPS could:

- promote the provision of public access to the natural environment and to lakes, rivers, wetlands and the coast in particular
- encourage the development of recreational opportunities such as walking and cycling trails





# Preparing for future challenges



## Adapting to climate change

Climate change will bring higher sea levels and increase the frequency and severity of natural hazards. Flood protection and stormwater systems may not be able to cope with heavier rain and we may not have enough water stored to cope with droughts. Uncertainty about the scale of these effects makes decision making costly.

### The RPS could help integrate climate change into long term planning by:

- providing direction, such as specific standards for sea level rise
- promoting development of water storage
- ensuring that infrastructure is designed to adapt to future changes, including through future upgrades

## Dealing with natural hazards

Natural hazards, such as flooding, landslides and coastal erosion can injure people and damage property, infrastructure, the environment and the economy. This is of particular concern where there is existing development or continued pressure for development in hazard-prone areas.

### The RPS could reduce our vulnerability to natural hazards by:

- avoiding development in hazard prone areas
- promoting a precautionary approach that focuses on reducing the effects of natural hazards
- adopting mitigation measures
- relying on market forces by recognising the role of valuation and insurance

## Preventing natural hazards from getting worse

Natural hazards can be exacerbated by inappropriate land use or development. Hard surfaces increase stormwater runoff, which can cause flooding and erosion. Development in hazard-prone areas increases the chance of loss of life and injury and can reduce the effectiveness of hazard mitigation measures.

Even with mitigation there will always be residual risk, (for example flood bank failure) and we need to be prepared to respond in case of a disaster. Our infrastructure needs to be in good working order for such emergencies.

### The RPS could reduce natural hazard effects by:

- ensuring that planning decisions minimise the effects of development on natural hazard risk
- avoiding development that reduces the effectiveness of existing hazard mitigation measures
- enabling development and upgrade of essential infrastructure that addresses natural hazard effects

## Responding to fuel and energy pressures

Otago is an importer of fossil fuels and constraints on energy and fuel supply affects the way we live. For example, more volatile fuel prices may result in higher food prices, increase transport costs and reduce mobility.

### The RPS could help us reduce dependence on fossil fuels by:

- promoting compact settlements and transport infrastructure that caters for different modes of transport, (including public transport, walking and cycling)
- enabling efficient use of fuel and energy resources, including new technologies
- relying on market forces to determine the response

# Location is everything

## Managing our infrastructure

We depend on reliable energy and water supplies, good quality roading, wastewater services and telecommunications. Such infrastructure requires significant investment and usually has a long lifespan (e.g. roads and dams). Development of these structures can be affected by sensitive development such as housing.

### The RPS could:

- help avoid any development that would impact negatively on the use of essential infrastructure
- enable the development of essential infrastructure where it provides better services even if it creates environmental impacts

## Encouraging compact development

Poorly planned or scattered development leads to costly and less efficient urban services such as roads and water supply or health and education services, and can increase environmental effects.

### The RPS could:

- prioritise development in locations where services and infrastructure already exist over those that require new or extended services and infrastructure
- let market forces regulate land use

## Using our resources wisely

Inappropriate development can restrict access to finite resources. For example, the availability of high class soils for food production can be lost to urban growth. Similarly, access to local supplies of aggregate and gravel keeps roading and construction costs reasonable. New residential developments nearby may inhibit future access to these resources.

### The RPS could protect finite resources from inappropriate development, by:

- identifying and requiring protection of existing sources of aggregate
- recognising the importance of high class soils for food production

## Separating incompatible land uses

Hazardous substances and materials are dangerous but are essential to some businesses. They must be carefully managed for human health and safety and for the environment. Local air quality issues could also be reduced by segregating incompatible activities. For example, day care centres could be separated from heavy industries, and housing could be separated from sources of dust and noise.

### The RPS could protect community health and safety by:

- minimising risks generated by the use and storage of hazardous substances
- minimising risks associated with contaminated land
- separating more sensitive populations from activities that adversely affect health

## Feedback form

Feedback must be received at ORC by 5pm Friday 20 June 2014

Name:	
Organisation (if applicable):	
Postal address:	
Email:	
Postcode:	
Telephone:	

Note that all feedback may be available for public inspection.

### Questions:

What in Otago is important to you?

What do you think the major issues facing Otago are?

How do you think these issues should be addressed?





# Providing feedback

**All comments should be received at ORC by 5pm Friday 20 June 2014**

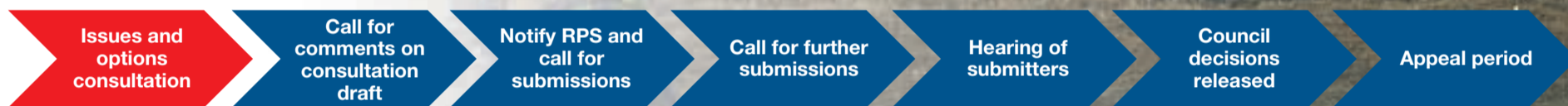
**Feedback can be provided via the following means:**

- Online: [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz)
- Email: [rps@orc.govt.nz](mailto:rps@orc.govt.nz)
- Post: Freepost 497, RPS Review, Otago Regional Council, Private Bag 1954, Dunedin 9054
- Deliver: Otago Regional Council offices  
70 Stafford Street, Dunedin  
Dunorling Street, Alexandra  
Cnr Camp and Shotover Streets, Queenstown

## For more information

- Website: [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz)
- Email: [rps@orc.govt.nz](mailto:rps@orc.govt.nz)
- Phone: 0800 474 082

## What happens next?



Further comments:

Please add additional pages as required.

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497

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