

Proposed Plan Change 5C: Integrated Water Management for the Manuherikia Catchment

Summary of Community Consultation on Values

Introduction

This report summarises the feedback received from the first stage of public consultation on the identification of important values for Proposed Plan Change 5C: Integrated Water Management for the Manuherikia Catchment (the Plan Change).

This was the first of three stages of public consultation prior to notifying the plan change. This first stage consisted of informal drop in sessions where the public could interact with a number of resources designed to facilitate thoughtful discussion and to provide background information to help people identify what they value about water in the catchment. Feedback was provided verbally, on feedback forms, via email and by post.

The feedback will be considered when developing options for integrated water management of the Manuherikia Catchment.

Summary of consultation process:

Six public drop-in sessions were held at:

- Omakau 23 August 2016 - Community Centre from 1.00 pm - 3.00 pm and 6.30 pm - 8.00 pm
- Otarehua 24 August 2016 - Otarehua Hall from 1.00 pm - 3.00 pm and 6.30 pm - 8.00 pm
- Alexandra 25 August 2016 - The Cellar Door from 1.00 pm -3.00 pm and 6.30pm – 8.00 pm

The sessions provided a point of contact for people to discuss what they value about the catchment with ORC staff, to provide feedback and to learn more about the Manuherikia catchment. The material available included:

- Posters illustrating the plan change process.
- Catchment maps showing the location of fish species, hydrology, water takes and other data.
- PowerPoint slideshow showing photographs of the Manuherikia River and tributaries at different times of the year with varying flows.
- Feedback forms for people to provide written feedback on their values.
- An interactive survey using river stones to “vote” in jars on what values were important to individuals.
- ORC staff from policy, resource science and communications were available to discuss any feedback or issues with attendees.

Approximately 200 people attended the drop-in sessions over these days.

The information was also available on council's website and the feedback period closed at the end of August.

Feedback was received via the feedback forms at the drop-in sessions, online, via email, by letter, verbally at the consultation sessions and at other times, on maps and through other resources and the voting jars at the drop in sessions.



Students from St Gerard's School present their views *photo courtesy Central Otago News*

Feedback Received on the Feedback Forms

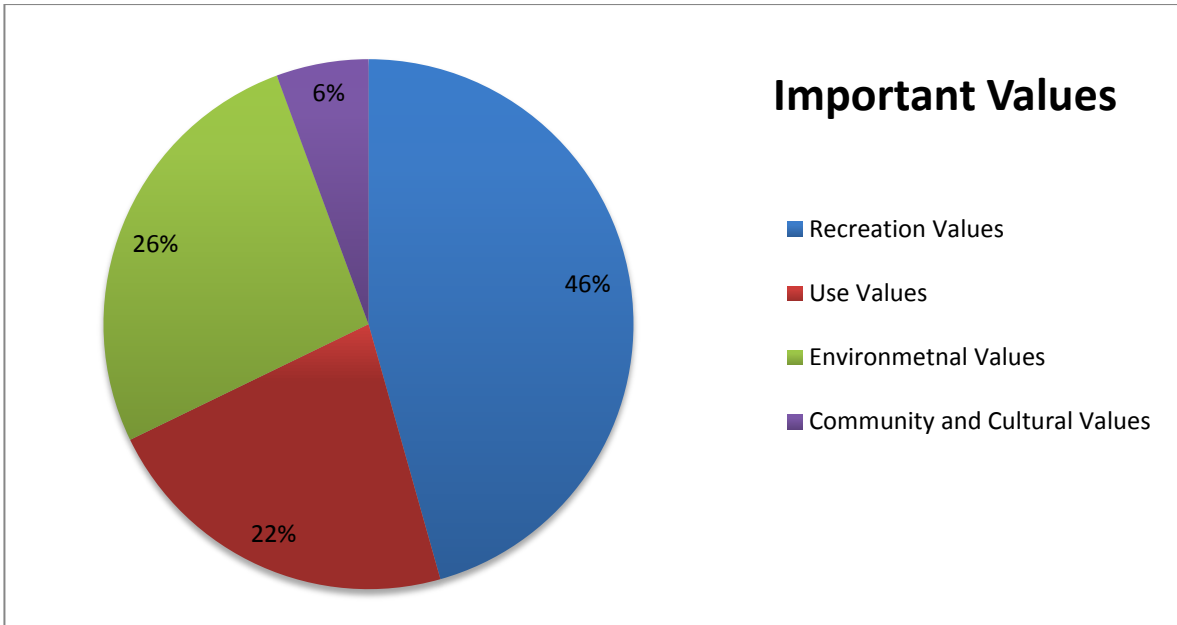
The feedback forms asked three key questions and a fourth catch-all question.

- What is important to you about the Manuherikia River, its tributaries and the aquifers within the catchment?
- Do you have any concerns about the current state of the river and its tributaries and aquifers? If so what are they?
- The ORC needs to set minimum limits and flow/s in the catchment. What should the ORC consider when setting these limits?
- Have we missed anything that is important to you that you would like to add?

Feedback in response to these key questions is summarised in the following pages.

Q1: What is important to you about the Manuherikia River, its tributaries and the aquifers within the catchment?

The Manuherikia Catchment has a range of values that are identified as being important to people. Many different kinds of recreation, use, environmental, community and cultural values were identified.



The pie chart above summarizes the important values identified. A detailed summary of the values included in each important values category follows.

Recreation

Recreation was one of the most important values identified during consultation. Both swimming and recreation were identified by many as important. The recreational activities identified by the community are set out in the table below:

Recreational Values	# of people
Swimming	45
Fishing	41
General recreation	19
Kayaking/white water/boating	12
Floating/playing/wading	9
Walking/tramping	6
Gathering food	6
Picnics/bbqs/camping	5
Duck shooting/hunting	3

Use values

Being able to use water for different activities was a value that was important to many. In particular, irrigation, domestic drinking and stock water were important values to people.

Use values	# of people
Irrigation	33
Domestic drinking/stock water	22
Prioritising some uses and values over other e.g. Dairying	7
Tourism	5
Other	4

Environmental values

A number of environmental values were identified as important. Natural character, form, flow and landscapes values were identified by a number of people as being important, as was water quality and healthy ecosystems.

Environmental Values	# of people
Character /flow/form/ landscape	38
Water quality	23
Ecosystem health	15
Aquifer replenishment	6
Freshwater species habitat	3

Community and cultural values

Community and cultural values were also identified as important. These included iwi values, lifeblood and spiritual values; and community and family values.

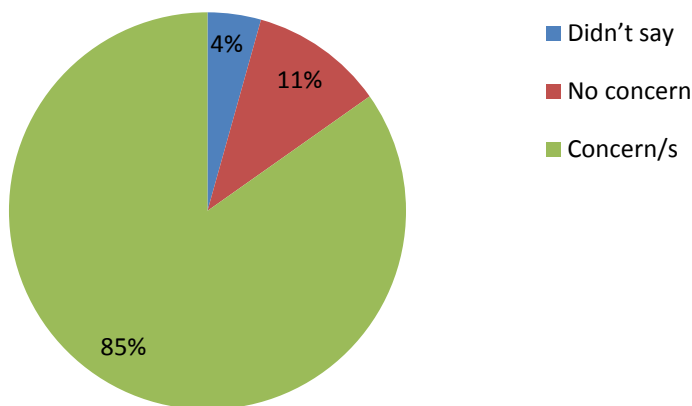
Community and Cultural Values	# of people
Iwi values/lifeblood/spiritual	9
Community/ family Values	9

Q2: Do you have any concerns about the current state of the river and its tributaries and aquifers? If so what are they?

Most people who responded raised concerns about the catchment. Some people stated they had no concerns and others didn't say whether they had concerns or not..

The following pie chart illustrates the proportion of people who responded that had concerns about the current state of the catchment.

Concerns About Current State



Concerns about the catchments current state were about:

- Overall river health – River health has deteriorated over the years and there are concerns about future deterioration of the river and tributaries.
- Water quantity – flows are low, especially in summer. Some areas run dry, this can affect aquifers. Lack of storage is an issue.
- Water quality – this has declined over the years and is worse in the summer months.
- Cleanliness of the river – some parts of the river, especially in summer can become dirty, change colour, slimy and smelly.
- Health effects on people and animals – contaminants and algae growth from discharges and low flows can make people and animals sick. Dangerous for drinking and swimming.
- Recreation and enjoyment – poor water quality and low flows makes water unsuitable for swimming, floating, fishing, canoeing and kayaking. No picnics.
- Ecosystems and habitats – low flows, high temperatures, contaminants, and lack of shading affects fish and macro-invertebrate habitats.
- Uses of water – some people had concerns about certain uses of water: dairy irrigation, intensive farming and commercial activities and the practices associated with these activities.
- Current standards and rules – Wadable water standards and guidelines for the margins are not good enough to protect values.

Those who were not concerned with the catchments current state considered:

- The river is well managed by water users.
- The current minimum flow and status quo does not need to be changed but some residual flows may be needed for smaller tributaries.

Q3: The ORC needs to set minimum flow/s in the catchment. What should ORC consider when setting these limits?

People identified a number of things that ORC will need to consider when setting minimum flow/s in the Manuherikia catchment. A summary of these considerations is provided below:

Water use and current management regime

- Recognise use history, current users, dependence on water use and economic implications.
- Different uses have different effects. The area is more suitable to less intensive uses.
- Recognise that different activities have different water needs.
- Some flexibility is needed in dry seasons.
- Water storage is needed, will reduce effects and should be encouraged.
- There should be no effects on permitted water takes.
- Some people wanted to keep the minimum flow as currently provided for in the Water Plan and others wanted higher minimum flow/s set.
- A balance of uses is needed in the catchment. Intensive dairy farming, tourism etc.
- Address historical over allocation.

Community values

- Use the community's feedback when setting the minimum flow/s; the minimum flow/s should reflect the communities' values.
- Recognise recreation use values – swimming, walking, and fishing.
- Consider people's health.

Environmental values

- Water should not be taken if this affects river health.
- Minimum flow/s are needed to dilute contaminants.
- Sufficient flows are needed to protect flora and fauna, biodiversity and life-supporting capacity.
- Flows affect contaminant levels and water temperature which can affect habitats.
- Recognise amenity and landscape values.
- Some rivers go dry naturally.
- Recognise natural variability.

Q4: Is there anything else you would like to add?

The 4th question on the feedback form asked if there was anything else that people would like to add. Additional feedback was also provided at the drop-in sessions and via email. Where this is not directly relevant to this plan change, it will be recorded for any relevant future plan changes or ORC projects.

This feedback includes:

- Suggestion of separate management areas within the catchment where appropriate.
- Government support for irrigation projects such as Falls Dam. The need for more storage.
- There was some concern about the plan change process, methodologies used and neutrality of the decision, overlap with deemed permit renewal and residual flows.
- The role of monitoring to ensure the plan change is adhered to and the public visibility of this.
- Concern about the impacts of changing to more efficient irrigation systems; the cost, the practicality, evaporation, effect on groundwater recharge that may currently be occurring from flood irrigation and reliability issues.
- Concerns about lack of flows, dry areas in tributaries, monitoring of these and recognition of underground flows in tributaries.
- Suggestion and concern about ownership of water, particularly in relation to Falls Dam and given much of the value of land is comprised of the right to take water.
- Questions as to how much the Falls Dam impacts on the natural river flow and how we calculate natural river flow. Call for flushing flows for health and kayaking values.
- Recognising the need to have social/cultural impact of a plan change analysed in a report.
- Concern about growth in some areas, related permitted takes causing groundwater reliability issues, and issues of climate change.
- Land use, traditional low water use farming suits the environment, minimisation of chemicals, risks of intensification for groundwater contamination.
- Access to rivers and tributaries and concern for river bed damage due to people driving on it.
- Take into account that low flows prevent predation of some native species.

Additional feedback received

Spatial Information on Maps

Some feedback was received at the drop in sessions via comments on or additions to maps of the catchment. This consisted of:

- Additional fish values added to areas of the catchment;
- Some descriptions of the location of water races;
- Specifying the locations of some recreational values within the catchment.

We also gathered information about specific locations from the feedback forms.

This information will be available as a map on our website in the near future.

Voting Jars

This exercise was designed to engage people and gather an estimate of the distribution and weighting of the different ways people value water in the Manuherikia catchment. Participants were asked to take 14 stones and use them to 'vote' for what they value. They could put all stones in one value jar or distribute them to a few or more. Some people felt their contribution of one or two votes were sufficient, many others used all 14 votes. Around 150 people took place in this exercise. The diagram that follows represents the relative importance of the identified values.

