

## Plan Change Development: Arrow catchment and Wakatipu Basin aquifers

# Summary of Community Consultation June 2017: What's important to you?

### Introduction

This report summarises feedback received from the first stage of public consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to identify important values to inform the development of a Plan Change for the Arrow catchment and Wakatipu Basin aquifers (the Plan Change). This was the first of three stages of public consultation during the development of the Plan Change prior to notification.

This first stage of consultation consisted of informal drop-in sessions. At these sessions, 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. A presentation was given at the start of the sessions, which provided an overview of the Plan Change and the process.

The feedback received will be considered when developing options for integrated water management of the Arrow catchment.

### Summary of consultation process:

Three drop-in sessions were held at:

- Arrowtown: 26 June 2017 (Arrowtown Bowling Club) 1.00 pm - 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm
- Frankton: 27 June 2017 (Queenstown Events Centre) 12.30 pm – 2.30 pm

A key stakeholder session was also held at ORC offices in Dunedin Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 10am – 11.30am.

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 Arrow catchment and the Wakatipu Basin Aquifers. The information available included:

- A presentation providing an overview of the Plan Change and process.
- Posters illustrating the plan change process.

- Catchment maps showing the location of fish species, hydrology, water takes and other data.
- Feedback forms for people to provide written feedback on their values.
- An interactive survey using coloured dots to identify:
  - how people use the river; and
  - agreement/disagreement with 10 values statements.
- ORC staff from Policy, Resource Science and Communications were available to discuss any feedback or issues with attendees.

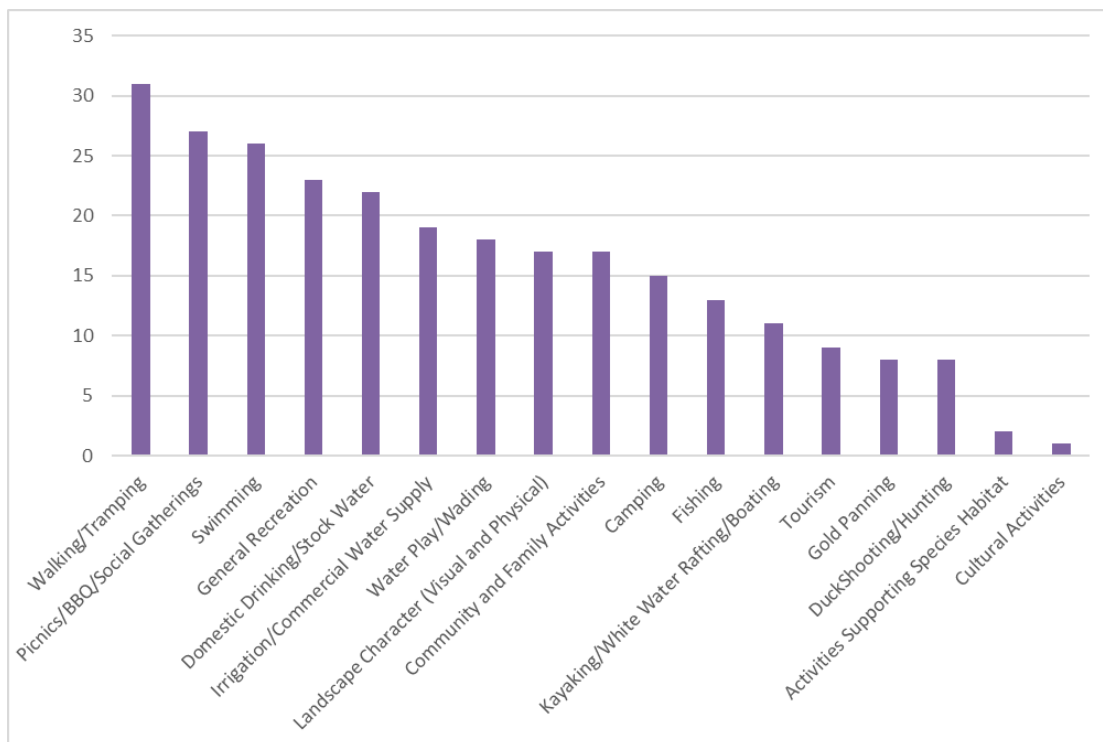
Approximately 90 people attended the drop-in sessions over the two days. Five people attended the key stakeholder session.

The information was also available on council's website. The feedback period closed on 12 July 2017. Feedback was received via the feedback forms at the drop-in sessions, online, via email, by letter and verbally at the consultation sessions.

## Feedback from the Consultation Sessions

### How do you use the Arrow River and water within the Wakatipu Basin aquifers?

At the consultation sessions, everyone was given 10 sticky dots and asked to put one against each of the activities that they undertake on or around the river and how they use the water from the aquifers. The results are shown on the graph below.



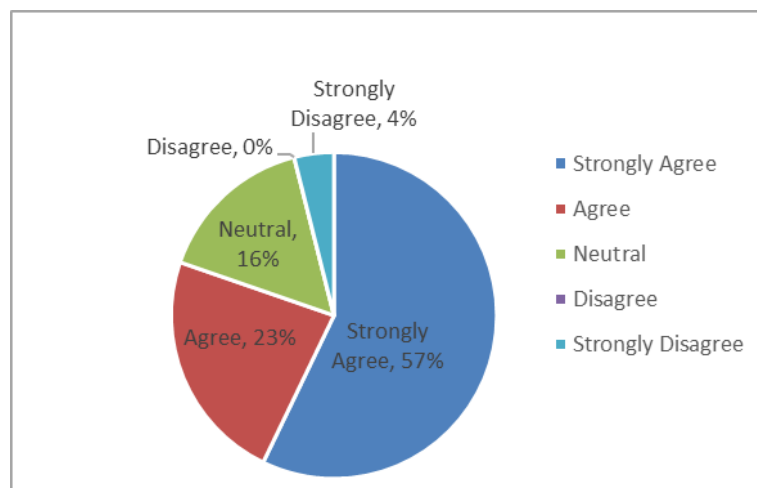
**Figure One: How do you or your family interact with or use water from the river catchments and aquifers?**

Four of the top five responses reflected a recreation value, these being 1) walking / tramping; 2) picnics / BBQ / social gatherings; 3) swimming; 4) general recreation. Water use for domestic drinking or stock water was identified as the fifth response.

### “Dotmocracy” statements – Values (agree – disagree statements)

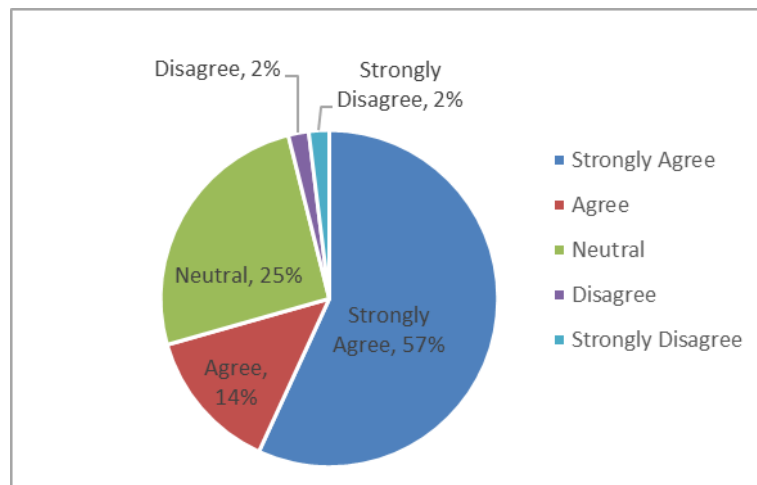
The community were also encouraged to participate in a Dotmocracy activity where each person was given eight sticky dots and asked to place them on a poster to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the value statement. There were eight value statements in total. The value statements and results are shown below.

***A healthy ecosystem supporting a diversity of indigenous flora and fauna is a very important aspect of setting minimum flows and allocation limits.***



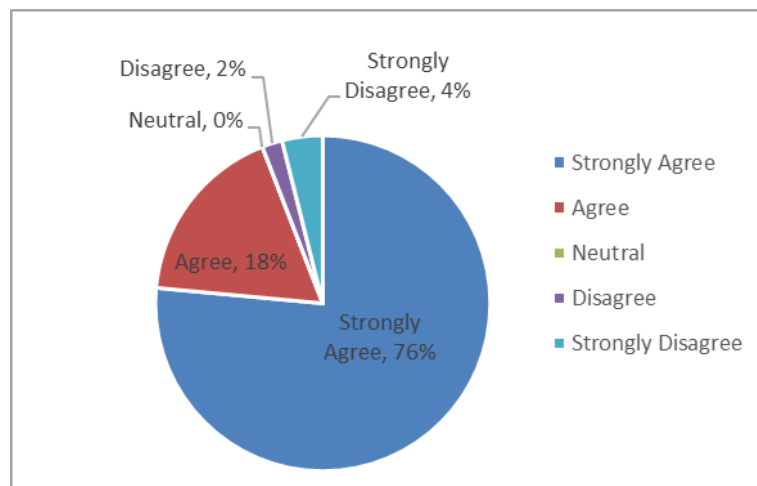
80% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that a healthy ecosystem supporting a diversity of indigenous flora and fauna is a very important aspect of setting minimum flows and allocation limits. 16% were neutral and 4% strongly disagreed.

***The recreational use of the Arrow River is a priority and flows should ensure a healthy river for human use.***



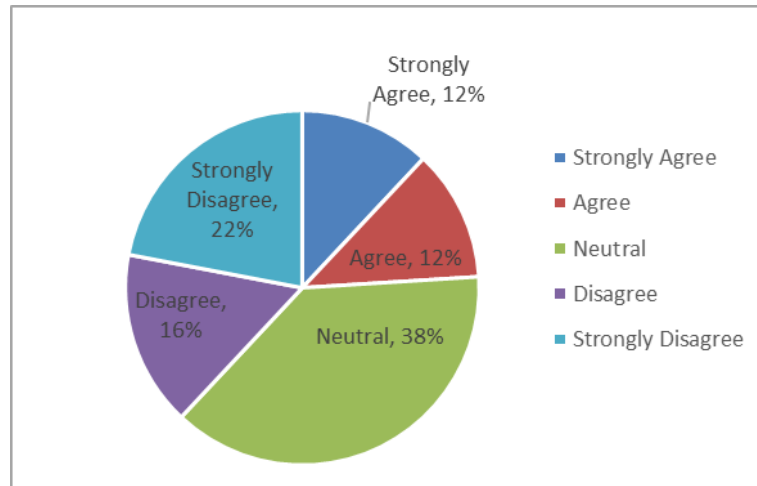
71% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the recreational use of the Arrow River is a priority and flows should ensure a healthy river for human use. 25% were neutral and 4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

***The water needs of the community, in particular drinking water, is the most important use of water for the catchment.***



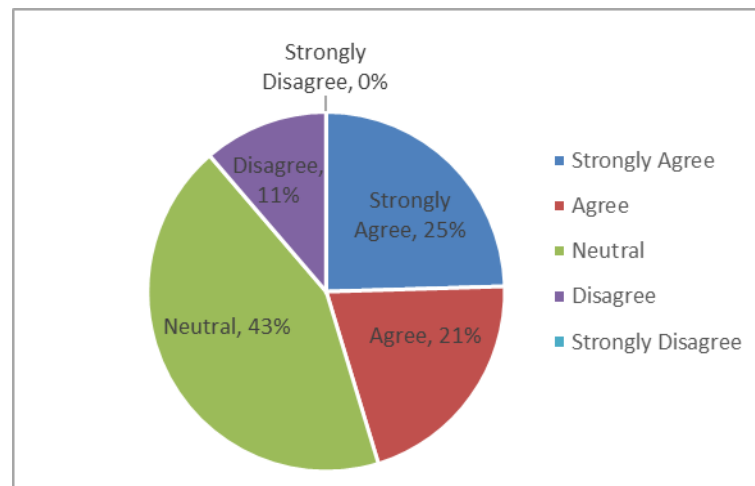
94% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the water needs of the community, in particular drinking water, is the most important use of water for the catchment. 6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

***The water needs for irrigation is the most important use of water for the catchment.***



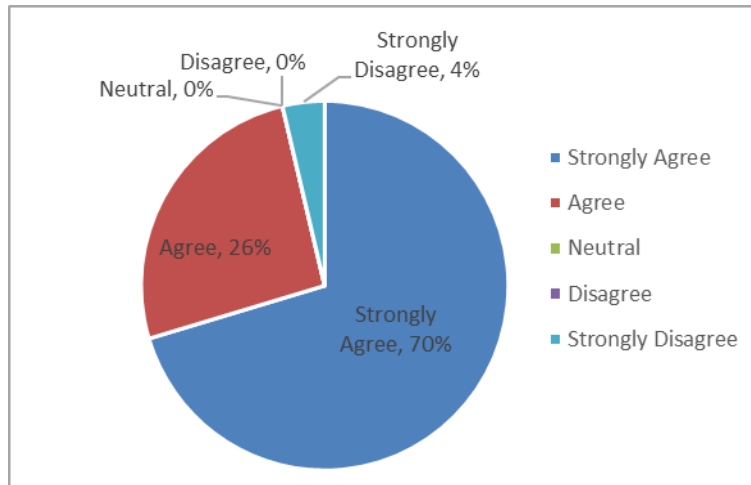
24% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the water needs for irrigation is the most important use of water for the catchment. 38% were neutral and 38% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

***The mauri (life force) of the water and the ability to harvest and eat Mahinga Kai are important values that a minimum flow needs to protect.***



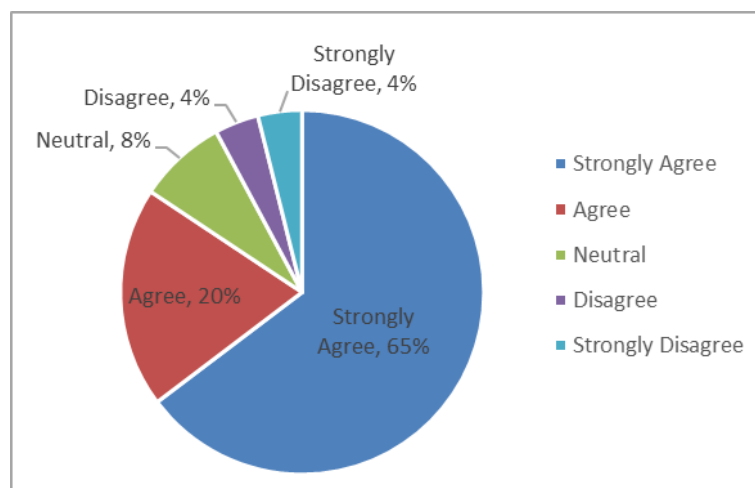
46% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the mauri (life force) of the water and the ability to harvest and eat Mahinga kai are important values that a minimum flow needs to protect. 43% were neutral and 11% disagreed.

***The character of the river, both physical (form and flow) and visual (aesthetics, clean) are important to the local community and Otago Region.***



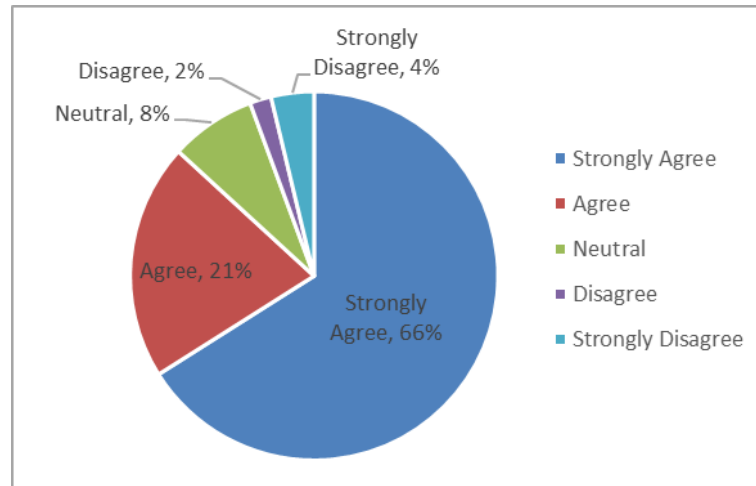
96% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the character of the river, both physical (form and flow) and visual (aesthetics, clean) are important to the local community and Otago Region. 4% disagreed.

***The use of water is critically important to the region and local community for economic and commercial development and growth.***



85% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that the use of water is critically important to the region and local community for economic and commercial development and growth. 8% were neutral and 8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

***Ensuring that enough water is left in aquifers so they can replenish naturally is very important.***



87% of those who participated either agreed or strongly agreed that ensuring that enough water is left in aquifers so they can replenish naturally is very important. 8% were neutral and 6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

## Written Feedback Received during the consultation period

The feedback forms asked the following six questions and included a seventh catch-all question.

1. What do you use the Arrow River, its tributaries, and the Wakatipu Basin aquifers for?
2. Is the Arrow River, its tributaries, and the Wakatipu Basin aquifers important to you? Why?
3. Do you have any concerns about the current state of the river and its tributaries, and the aquifers? If so, what are they?
4. The ORC needs to set minimum flows in the catchment. What do you think ORC should consider when setting these limits?
5. What features of the community are important to you?
6. What economic activities / sources of income in the catchment are important to you?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add? Have we missed anything important?

Feedback in response to these key questions is summarised below.

## **1. What do you use the Arrow River, its tributaries, and the Wakatipu Basin aquifers for?**

The Arrow River, its tributaries and the Wakatipu Basin Aquifers are used for three main purposes:

- Household use – either through community water supply or bores.
- Irrigation – through an irrigation scheme, and for small orchards/gardens.
- Recreation – a wide range of recreational activities were identified, including fishing, swimming, walking, cycling, enjoying the natural environment and for snow making.

## **2. Is the Arrow River, its tributaries, and the Wakatipu Basin aquifers important to you? Why?**

The Arrow River, its tributaries and the Wakatipu Basin Aquifers have a range of values that are identified as being important to people. The main values that were identified are (in no particular order):

- Water supply – for domestic, irrigation and bore water use.
- Water quality and the link with flow to maintain this.
- Habitat for freshwater species – Longfin Eel, Koaro/Climbing Galaxias, Brown and Rainbow Trout. Consideration of the spawning habitat for Trout to be recognised as regionally significant.
- Biodiversity and ecosystems including periphytons and macrophytes, wetlands, and riparian vegetation.
- Recreation values – including fishing (mainly occurring either in the headwaters and below Arrowtown).
- Recreational tourism – including fishing, snow making and aesthetic value for visitors to Arrowtown.
- Landscape, natural environment, and aesthetic values.
- Health benefits to the community associated with providing a link to the natural environment.

## **3. Do you have any concerns about the current state of the river and its tributaries, and the aquifers? If so, what are they?**

Concerns about the current state of the river and its tributaries, and the aquifers were identified as:

- Water Quantity:
  - The amount of water being taken from aquifers for irrigation leading to low flows at critical times of the year.
  - Timing of the opening of fishery and tail end of Rainbow Trout spawning coincides with the beginning of irrigation season, which may create additional pressure on the water source.
  - Volume of water in Lake Hayes is down.
  - Low levels of water in the Arrow River limit recreational use.



- Most of the users are in lower parts of the catchment which could be placing additional strain and environmental issues through this stretch.
- Tourism that encourages driving through rivers.
- Fishing is being degraded.
- Invasion of destructive weeds and organisms in lake and rivers. Minimum flows should consider the environmental benefits of ensuring a flow is appropriate for flushing and habitat creation.
- Water quality:
  - Increase in use of fertilisers and pesticides and chemicals used in snow making.
  - Increase in new developments and associated stormwater runoff.
  - Wetlands are not healthy and unable to do their job of cleaning the water.
  - Wilding pines affecting water quality.
  - Vehicle access around community bores.

#### **4. The ORC needs to set minimum flows in the catchment. What do you think ORC should consider when setting these limits?**

- Fair Allocation:
  - Water allocation needs to be fair, efficient and takes into consideration non-consumptive uses.
  - Consider existing users first before allowing for expansion in the amount of water used.
  - Domestic water demand is priority, then recreation and then irrigation.
  - Balance between irrigation and recreation uses.
  - Flows should be high enough to support recreation and watersports.
  - Non- consumptive uses like snow making need to be considered.
- River Health:
  - Habitat quality and ecosystem function.
  - Natural flow should be maintained not flows reduced for commercial purposes.
  - Minimum river levels maintained for fish, fauna and flora to survive.
- A healthy river and ecosystem will support healthy aquifer replenishment.
- Minimum flows should be set by implementing an environmental bottom line, which may generate additional value by provided for water based tourism, recreation amenity etc.
- Water quality:
  - Water quality needs to be considered – pollutants are more concentrated if water levels are lower.
  - Clean, swimmable water – protecting public health and promoting recreation.
  - Potable water and food security must be protected through appropriate water quality.

Questions 5 and 6 addressed the broader relationship of social and economic aspirations. These questions were asked to increase understanding of wider community preferences and aspirations which will contribute to the social and economic assessments that will be undertaken as part of the development of the Plan Change. A summary of what we received is set out below:

## 5. What features of the community are important to you?

- Iconic/pristine landscapes:
  - Concern that over development of the region will negatively impact on this.
  - It is important to maintain a self-sustaining natural landscape in close proximity to the community
- Sustainable development:
  - The drinking water needs of the growing population must be maintained.
  - Developing and supporting communities that do not pose an excessive risk to the environment.
- Community Resilience:
  - A community that is resilient, supportive, and productive that people want to be a part of.
  - Access to nature is important for community cohesion.

## 6. What economic activities / sources of income in the catchment are important to you?

- Sustainable economic growth:
  - A diversity of economic activities and sources of income for the region, delivered in an environmental sustainable way.
  - Increased food resilience.
- Community Resilience:
  - Permanent jobs that pay at least a liveable wage in an increasingly expensive area.
- Economic Activities:
  - Farming
  - Horticulture – opportunity for further development in this area.
  - Viticulture
  - Tourism
  - Retail

## 7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

- Development needs to be managed across the region:
  - Too much development is changing the landscape in the Wakatipu Basin
  - More people, more cattle and more sheep are using more water, is there capacity?
  - Access to the water is being blocked by development.
- More work needs to be done to gather information about the aquifers and groundwater – use science based research to inform decisions.
- Leave the aquifers to function in their natural way and don't control their flows.