



# OTAGO CATCHMENT COMMUNITY INC

## Annual Report 2024 - 2025

July 2025

CRAIG SIMPSON PREPARED FOR OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL AND  
MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

# Executive Summary

The Otago Catchment Community Inc (OCC) has marked the 2024-2025 year as a period of significant achievement and progress in its ongoing mission of supporting Catchment Groups (CGs) that address environmental challenges throughout the Otago region.

This Annual Report highlights some of the many achievements of the OCC in the delivery of its 2024-2025 work plan, which closely follows the OCC's objectives. Highlights of the successful year include:

- 7 workshops delivered to help groups develop their vision or work plans.
- 17 groups were supported with funding to support their coordination or administration roles.
- 7 catchment group projects were supported.
- 12 catchment group events delivered where OCC had a significant role, through either leading or co-delivery.
- 14 training opportunities were delivered to allow groups or coordinators to upskill and increase capability in the region.
- 2 catchment forums were co-delivered with NZ Landcare Trust.
- OCC supported groups providing an increase in the opportunities for groups to connect with each and providing opportunities to connect with mana whenua.

We continued our strong connections with key stakeholders throughout the year, and of note this year was the increased connection with MPI's On-farm support team, the key role at the Otago Extension Network and growing connection with ORC's environmental implementation team. These relationships allow us to make and expand connections between catchment groups (CG) and stakeholders, and this included the dissemination of CG events, workshops and stories.

The report presents an outline of the OCC budget and expenditure for the 2024 -2025 year, including a separate report relating to the Wai Connection programme. Section 3 provides a discussion on funding offered to groups which included 17 groups that were granted \$220,650 for coordination and administration support. In addition, seven projects were supported with \$41,082.72.

Section 4 provides an assessment of the work of catchment groups to address environmental issues, providing some examples of positive work going on in the region, included in this section were the projects that targeted environmental improvements funded through OCC's 'Project Fund' which included:

- supporting a freshwater monitoring collection project;
- a drone vs helicopter trial to assess the effectiveness of each for willow control;
- measuring the effectiveness of sediment traps;
- water testing to establish the health of the catchment;
- supporting a community riparian planting project to improve water quality and biodiversity;
- and

- supporting a plan to engage local businesses in an urban community to undertake freshwater monitoring and improve biodiversity.

Section 5 provided the Project Data Report, where we outlined the number of groups, memberships, and their locations throughout the region, highlighting one new catchment group this year, and another three groups' memberships to OCC.

In the final section, we address the future opportunities and direction of OCC. Highlights include the growing closer connections with the ORC catchment team, including the development of a shared spreadsheet which will highlight opportunities to collaborate between the organisations. The introduction of a 'Kick start' fund which is viewed as gap in the funding currently on offer to catchment groups. Continued funding through the national Wai Connection programme into the 2025-2026 year. And finally, a review of opportunities as presented in our Annual Survey.

We would like to thank our generous funders, the Otago Regional Council and the Ministry for Primary Industries, for their continued support as we work together to encourage Otago's Catchment Groups to achieve their water quality and environmental improvement goals. We look forward to working in partnership alongside both organisations in the year ahead.

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. 2024 -2025 Work Plan Outputs .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Support the establishment and direction of Catchment Groups.....	7
1.2 Enabling sustainable funding to support changing needs of groups .....	8
1.3. Catchment groups effectively communicate their stories.....	8
1.4 Facilitate collaboration between catchment groups, government, iwi, regional authorities and stakeholders .....	9
1.5 Facilitating access to experts, information, technology and education .....	9
1.6 Governance .....	10
<b>2. OCC Expenditure 2024 – 2025 Budget and Actuals .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2024 – 2025 OCC Budget Highlights .....	11
2.1 OCC Budget vs Actuals ORC & MPI Funding .....	12
2.2 Budget vs Actuals Wai Connection funding.....	13
<b>3. OCC Funding and Operational Issues .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Catchment Group Funding .....	14
3.2 OCC Operational Issues.....	14
<b>4. Assessment of contribution to improving water quality and improvement in     environmental domains.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Project Data Report .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6. OCC future opportunities or directions .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 1: OCC Map and locations of Otago Catchment Groups .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Appendix 1.1 Continued: (Locations of Catchment Groups by GPS coordinate) .....	25
<b>Appendix 2. OCC ANNUAL SURVEY .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix 3: 2024 -2025 OCC Financial Performance Report .....</b>	<b>32</b>

# Introduction

The year 2024-2025 has been a successful year for the Otago Catchment Community Inc (OCC) as it continues its efforts to support catchment groups working to address environmental issues throughout the region. This annual report reflects on the work OCC has undertaken throughout the year, where we have worked closely with stakeholders, and industry leaders to build momentum and support Otago's Catchment Groups in helping them achieve their water quality and environmental goals.

Through this report we highlight outputs from the OCC annual work plan and how these outputs work to address our objectives. The report presents targets and outputs from the year for our five objectives, showing that we have managed to meet our targets and exceed these in most cases. We discuss how these objectives have been reviewed throughout the year and will form the basis of reporting in the future. This section also provides comment on the governance of the organisation.

Section 2 provides financial reporting, highlighting the income and the expenditure of the organisation. In Section 3, we provide a discussion on funding and operational issues and provide a breakdown of funding support given to the groups. In Section 4 we provide an assessment of CGs' work to address environmental issues, which provides some examples of positive work going on in the region. Section 5 provides the Project Data Report where we outline the number of groups, memberships, and their locations throughout the region. Finally, in Section 6, we address the future opportunities and direction of OCC, with highlights discussing:

- Closer connections with the ORC catchment team.
- Reviewing our funding on offer to group through the introduction of our 'Kick start' fund.
- A discussion of further funding secured through the national Wai Connection programme.
- And a review of opportunities as presented in our Annual Survey.

Otago Catchment Community would like to acknowledge the funding given by the Otago Regional Council (ORC) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), without which we would not be able to achieve this effective mahi we are undertaking throughout the region.

# 1. 2024 -2025 Work Plan Outputs

In this first section we have compiled the outputs from OCC's workplan into the tables below, which relate to our objectives.

## OCC Vision and Objectives

**"To create and support an Otago wide network of Catchment Groups that are addressing environmental issues now and for generations to come".**

The Otago Catchment Community vision is backed by its objectives; these are:

1. Support the establishment and direction of Catchment Groups.
2. Ensure sustainable funding to meet groups' evolving needs.
3. Enhance media presence for Otago Catchment Groups.
4. Expand connections between groups, agencies, stakeholders, and iwi.
5. Provide learning opportunities and facilitate knowledge transfer among groups.

Throughout the year we have reviewed our objectives, to help clarify our role and to inform our work programme going forward. This review will help us establish clear success measures associated with each objective. Our revised objectives reflect our commitment to support Otago's catchment groups in their efforts to make environmental improvements. Our new objectives are:

1. Assisting with the formation and direction setting of all Catchment Groups enabling them to run independently.
2. Enabling sustainable funding to support changing needs of groups.
3. Facilitate connections between CG's and linking with Govt, Iwi, Regional Authorities and Stakeholders.
4. Facilitating access to experts, information, technology and education

### Wai Connection funding

In addition to our core work programme, OCC was awarded funding this year through the Wai Connection programme. This programme is led by the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust and funded through the Ministry for the Environment's Essential Freshwater Fund. This funding has allowed us to build capability in Otago's catchment groups, by providing funding particularly for training workshops. Some stand features of the use of the funding were:

- Held a 'Facilitating Effective Catchment Groups' three-day workshop, along with follow-up sessions.
- Have run engagement workshops with three groups.
- Ran a community based freshwater monitoring workshop.
- Ran two predator trapping workshops.
- Developed a GIS tool with East Otago catchment group, helping the group identify catchment hotspots, and potential mitigation opportunities.

## 1.1 Support the establishment and direction of Catchment Groups.

Supporting catchment groups is a fundamental aspect of OCC's role. The table below presents the targets and outputs from our 2024-2025 work plan and illustrates the significant support and opportunities that OCC presents to Otago's catchment group network.

Of note in the delivery through this objective were the seven facilitation workshops OCC facilitators delivered to help groups reach consensus on their vision and/or work plan, these were:

- Facilitated Lowburn Catchment Group action plan review (Oct)
- Direction setting workshop with Healthy Taiari Governance group (Nov)
- Vision setting workshop with Lowburn (partnership with NZ Landcare Trust) (Mar)
- Work plan workshop with Thomsons CG (partnership with NZ Landcare Trust) (Mar)
- Facilitated succession planning session #1 for Toitū te Hākapupu (Apr)
- Facilitated succession planning session #2 for Toitū te Hākapupu (May)
- Vision review and action plan setting OSRC (June)

#	Result	Measure	Target	Output	Comments
1.1	Otago's community led catchment groups are well supported by OCC	All groups are contacted quarterly	26/qtr	26/qtr	All groups contacted and support offered as required per quarter
1.2	Otago's potential new catchment groups are liaised with by OCC	# of potential new CGs	As required	One new group	One new group has been formed this year – the Lauder Water Users Group
1.3	Groups have objectives that help inform their plan of work.	Number Of CG's that have a current vision underpinned with values and or operational plan	14	15 as per annual survey	7 facilitation workshops delivered for groups to develop vision and/or work plans
1.4	Groups are utilising support mechanisms to help their group (e.g. OCC facilitation, Landcare support etc)	#of groups reporting support # of groups connecting to appropriate support	N/A	12 groups	12 groups reported receiving support in annual survey. Comments of appreciation for knowledge building events (e.g. communication plan workshops), DGF, vision and work plan development, project funding

Additional events and workshops OCC led, helped to deliver or played a major role included:

- Regional needs assessment with catchment groups (July)
- Facilitated a workshop for MPI & MfE discussing how catchment groups can be involved in the Freshwater Farm Plan process (Aug)
- Spoke at Otago South River AGM (Oct)
- Spoke at Aroha Kaikorai Valley event (Nov)

- Delivered an overview of succession planning process to the Toitū te Hākapupu governance group (Nov & March)
- Delivered an overview of succession planning process to the KKT Puketeraki (Feb & March)
- Holding the stall for Thomson's Creek at the Oamaku A&P show (Feb)
- Stand at FOBC World Wetland Day (Feb)
- Pomahaka CG community meeting (May)
- Facilitation session with Lowburn & Fish +Game Otago (May)

## 1.2 Enabling sustainable funding to support changing needs of groups

The breakdown of funding given to groups through both the direct group fund (DGF) and the project fund is shown in Section 3. Outputs are shown in the table below.

#	Result	Measure	Target	Output	Comments
2.1	OCC is well funded and resourced to support Catchment Groups needs	Amount of OCC financial support being allocated to CG's	\$253,924(23 /24 DGF and CGF)	\$261,732.72 distributed	\$220,650 through DGF \$41,082.72 for CG projects
2.2	Catchment Groups have support from OCC to understand possible funding for projects	# Groups reported with funding and fund support from OCC	33 funded groups/grou p activities	17 groups funded through DGF 7 CG projects supported	Governance decision throughout the year to halt the project fund, meant that our original target of 33 groups/group activities was not met

## 1.3. Catchment groups effectively communicate their stories

The breakdown of the stories that were shared from catchment groups, can be found in the monthly reports which have been provided to funders, the outputs are shown in the table below.

#	Result	Measure	Target	Output	Comments
3.1	Increased media presence for Otago CGs	# of Media presence that include CGs	4 in Print, 10 social media related articles/stories	Numerous for all forms of media, see monthly report	Numerous stories were reported throughout the year in our monthly reports



## 1.4 Facilitate collaboration between catchment groups, government, iwi, regional authorities and stakeholders

Through our work programme we continued to provide opportunities for catchment group members to connect with stakeholders and mana whenua, which are outline in the table below. Two stand out opportunities for groups to connect with mana whenua were through running the facilitation course at Ōtakou Marae, and the running the community based freshwater monitoring training at Arai Te Uru Marae.

#	Results	Measure	Target	Output	Comment
4.1	Opportunities created and expanded between agencies and groups	# of connections / collaborations between groups and agencies/ stakeholders/iwi	3 new connections between CG's and agencies per quarter	10 opportunities	10 opportunities were created
4.2	Mana Whenua provided opportunity to connect with OCC (and Otago's groups)	Mana Whenua connection to OCC / groups	1 opportunity Mana Whenua	7 opportunities	7 opportunities were created for groups to connect with Mana Whenua through the OCC work programme

## 1.5 Facilitating access to experts, information, technology and education

Through this part of our work programme, we delivered 14 opportunities for CG leaders or coordinators to upskill. Part of these trainings were enabled through the Wai Connection programme. Training sessions delivered were:

- Facilitation Essentials course (July)
- Facilitation Essentials follow-up (August)
- Facilitation Essentials follow-up (August)
- Strategic Doing training (November)
- Engagement workshop – Pomahaka (Feb)
- Facilitation training (Mar)
- Engagement workshop – Upper Taieri Wai (Apr)
- Engagement workshop – Lowburn (May)
- Predator Trapping Workshop – Lowburn (June)
- Predator Trapping workshop – EOCG (June)
- Community based freshwater monitoring (June)
- Engagement workshop – Thomsons (June)
- Facilitation training online – follow-up (Apr)
- Facilitation training online – follow-up (Apr)

Opportunities for groups to connect with each other were primarily presented through the two catchment group forums, and training events that enabled members from different groups to gather together.

#	Results	Measure	Target	Output	Comment
5.1	Groups are provided the opportunity to learn new skills and information	# Learning Opportunities delivered and feedback	2 Regional Learning opportunities per year	14 opportunities	14 learning opportunities were delivered this year
5.1.1		# of opportunities for groups to connect with each other	4 annually	8 opportunities	8 opportunities for groups to connect with each other were created this year

## 1.6 Governance

OCC is provided with a strong governance, which has representation from landowners throughout the region. We would like to acknowledge the support given on the governance group, through Councillor Bryan Scott who attended OCC meetings throughout the year. Bryan resigned from the governance group towards the end of 2024, and Councillor Kate Wilson has joined the group since. ORC General Manager Environmental Delivery, Joanna Gilroy has attended the monthly meetings of the group, and her input has been extremely valuable. We would also like to acknowledge the support and direction provided by MPI Staff Representative Janet Gregory (Regional Advisor) who similarly attended online and in-person meetings throughout the year.

Key governance achievements include:

- Review of constitution, rules and policies.
- Review of OCC objectives.
- 11 monthly meetings (excluding January) and including one in-person meeting.
- Members feed into various committees with which they are associated.

## 2. OCC Expenditure 2024 – 2025 Budget and Actuals

### 2024 – 2025 OCC Budget Highlights

In this section the financials for OCC for the 2024 -2025 financial year are presented.

*The report's credibility will be affirmed by the Independent Auditor's Report, validating the accuracy and transparency of financial statements. This Independent auditor report is scheduled for completion Sep 2025, with a draft report in Appendix 3.*

**Opening Balance:** \$205,847.54

**Total Revenue:** \$1,072,500

- Primary sources: ORC (\$664,000) MPI (\$150,000) and Wai Connection (\$258,500)
  - OCC's funding was distributed as follows:
    - MPI Funding of \$150,000 went directly to OCC Coordinators.
    - ORC had paid for regional coordinator role of \$78,000 including \$156,000 in advance for the 2025-2026, and 2026-2027 financial years.
    - ORC Funding covers the remaining budget.
    - Wai Connection funding has its own work programme and has been kept separate from our core funding. The budget is presented separately below in Section 2.2.

#### ORC & MPI Funding

**Total Operating Expenditure:** \$627,510.31

**Operating Surplus:** \$186,489.69

**2024-2025 Closing Balance:** \$577,816.05

#### Notes:

- Income received in advance was from ORC to support increased coordination throughout the region (\$156,000).
- Legal expenses relate to fees charged for groups to update constitution to comply with changes to the Incorporated Societies Act.
- For some projects in the CG project fund, there has been an extension which has been approved through the committee.
- The final bank balance includes an MPI payment received in advance for upcoming Milestone (\$75,000).

## 2.1 OCC Budget vs Actuals ORC & MPI Funding

		Reforecast Budget	Variance
Total's Reflecting	Actuals 12 Months	12 Months	12 Months
<b>Opening Bank Balance 1/07/24</b>		<b>\$205,847.54</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>			
ORC	508,000.00	508,000.00	
MPI	150,000.00	150,000.00	
Income received in advance	156,000.00	156,000.00	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$814,000.00</b>	<b>\$814,000.00</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Accountancy Fees	2,933.00	3,000.00	-67.00
Advertising	5,221.21	5,000.00	221.21
Audit Fees	2,700.00	2,900.00	-200.00
Bank Charges	88.45	200.00	-111.55
Insurance	2,144.00	2,144.00	
Legal Expenses	16,355.00	26,423.00	-10,068.00
Subscriptions	2,054.20	1,000.00	1,054.20
General Expenses (inc Printing & Stationery)	7,151.80	9,000.00	-1,848.20
Committee Mileage Reimbursement	1,925.92	4,000.00	-2,074.08
Governance - honorariums	9,578.00	9,578.00	
Governance Training		1,200.00	-1,200.00
Iwi Consultation	100.00	2,000.00	-1,900.00
Catchment Group Events	21,158.46	28,078.00	-6,919.54
Conference Expenses		1,200.00	-1,200.00
Training	9,709.30	10,000.00	-290.70
Contractors	274,744.15	307,541.31	-32,797.16
Mileage Reimbursement	22,068.57	30,156.00	-8,087.43
CG Funding Committed from previous period	62,963.75	102,091.00	-39,127.25
CG Funding approved this period	13,964.50	41,080.72	-27,116.22
DGF Committed from previous period	32,000.00	20,000.00	12,000.00
DGF approved this period	140,650.00	133,330.00	7,320.00
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$627,510.31</b>	<b>\$739,922.03</b>	
<b>Operating Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$186,489.69</b>	<b>\$74,077.97</b>	
<b>Actual Closing balance 30/06/25</b>		<b>\$577,816.05</b>	

## 2.2 Budget vs Actuals Wai Connection funding

	YTD Actual 2025	2024-2025 Budget	Variance
Total's Reflecting	12 Months	12 Months	12 Months
<b>Revenue</b>			
MTSCT/MfE	258,500.00	258,500.00	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$258,500.00</b>	<b>\$258,500.00</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Project coordination (0.5 FTE)	29,866.92	37,573.96	-7,707.04
Regional needs assessment (Whirikia Consulting)	18,000.00	18,000.00	
OCC DGF for up to 3.7 FTE from Jan-June 2025	80,000.00	80,000.00	
RNA programme delivery			
<i>GIS Mapping - East Otago</i>	14,880.65	16,874.00	-1,993.35
<i>Engagement Workshops</i>	6,354.25	8,750.00	-2,395.75
<i>Predator Workshops</i>	3,310.97		3,310.97
eDNA - 52 kits @ \$205.90	10,721.10	10,721.10	
Communication support (website development)	4,085.00	20,118.00	-16,033
Engagement Expenses	6,257.05	1,608.96	4,648.09
Professional Development	57,915.75	62,500.00	-4,584.25
Contingency	1,432.00	2,353.98	-921.98
General expenses	601.48		601.48
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$230,988.09</b>	<b>\$258,500.00</b>	
<b>Operating Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$27,511.91</b>	<b>-</b>	

## 3. OCC Funding and Operational Issues

In the 2024-2025 financial year, Otago Catchment Community Inc (OCC) encountered no significant funding issues. This stability allowed OCC to continue to effectively support Catchment Groups across Otago.

### 3.1 Catchment Group Funding

To ensure transparency and showcase the groups that have received funding from OCC the following tables 'OCC Direct Group Fund break down' and 'OCC Catchment Group Project Fund break down' have been included below. Seven projects were funded through the Project Fund, for a total of \$41,080.72. Seventeen groups were funded through the Direct Group Fund, for a total of \$220,650.

### 3.2 OCC Operational Issues

On the operational front, we secured a new full-time Central Otago Coordinator Nicole Sutton, who began with OCC in September. Through ORC's approval to increase coordination throughout the region, our new regional manager, Craig Simpson began with OCC in August. In addition, Judy Miller came on in a part-time capacity to deliver the Wai Connection work programme. This has allowed an increase in coordination support, ensuring that OCC can offer targeted support to catchment groups throughout the Region.

OCC Catchment Group Project Fund Break Down						
Group	Financial year	Date Granted	Amount applying	Total granted	Key Contact	Details on grant request
Mid Taiari Wai	2024-2025	21-Aug-24	\$750.00	\$ 750.00	Amy Maw	Logo design and development
AKV	2024-2025	5-Jul-24	\$4,053.32	\$ 4,053.32	Paul Southworth	AKV at the Marae, a freshwater training project to build upon AKV and Ari Te Uru's relationship
Teviot Valley	2024-2025	6-Dec-25	\$3,922.40	\$ 3,922.40	Deidre Perkins	Sediment trap effectiveness study
Lindis	2024-2025	24-Feb-25	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	Paula MacFie	Drone and helicopter spray trials for willow control
Ida Valley	2024-2025	3-Mar-25	\$2,500	\$ 2,500.00	Sam Stevens	Water testing in collaboration with irrigation companies to get robust data across the catchment
Lowburn	2024-2025	25-Mar-25	\$4,561	\$ 4,561.00	Jean Gibson	Community riparian planting project to improve water quality and biodiversity
AKV	2024-2025	31-Mar-25	\$10,294	\$ 10,294.00	Simon McMillan	A pioneering project designed to engage local businesses, train employees in freshwater monitoring and increase awareness of the Kaikorai water quality and biodiversity
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$41,080.72</b>	<b>\$41,080.72</b>		

OCC Direct Group Fund Break Down						
Group	Financial year	Date Granted	Amount applying	Total granted	key Contact	Details on grant request
Friends of Bullock Creek	24-25	16/12/24	\$11,544.00	\$11,544.00	Charlotte Gardiner	Funding for the retention of the FOBC Administration Assistant Role for 24/25. Main purpose is coordination of group and volunteers.
Ida Valley	24-25	16/12/24	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Vicki O'Neill	Administration and coordination of the group, with key tasks including admin of water testing programme and pulling together documents of potential projects. Please note this application was received 2 days late. It did not hold up the process and was due to our original advertising not being clear, therefore has been accepted by the contractors.
Lowburn CG	24-25	16/12/24	\$7,280.00	\$7,280.00	Jean Gibson	Administration and coordination of group.
Manuherekia CG	24-25	16/12/24	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	Clare Hadley	Administration and coordination of group and database management.
Open Valley Urban Ecosanctuary	24-25	16/12/24	\$14,076.00	\$14,076.00	Jennie Wagner-Gorton	Administration and Coordination of group, volunteers and community projects.
Otago Peninsula CG	24-25	16/12/24	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Paula Cross	Establishing an administration and coordination position dedicated to the CG arm of the Biodiversity Group.
Otago South RC	24-25	16/12/24	\$14,500.00	\$14,500.00	Anna Benny	Administration and coordination of group, basic accounting, social media and coordination of work programmes.
Upper Taiari Wai	24-25	16/12/24	\$10,000.00	\$9,250.00	Renee Weir	Re-establishment of UTW with administration and coordination to build an annual plan and reinvigorate the group. Please note this application was received 2 days late. It did not hold up the process and



						was due to our original advertising not being clear, therefore has been accepted by the contractors.
WAI Wānaka	24-25	16/12/24	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Kelly Humphries	CG Facilitator role with 4 urban catchment groups with an aim of creating another 1-3 groups to add into the programme.
Lindis Catchment Group	24-25	19-May-25	\$12,000.00	\$10,000.00	Paula Macfie	Administrator to organise meetings, engagement, project management, water allocation plan support, and field day support
Teviot Valley Water Care	24-25	19-May-25	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Deidre Perkins	Coordinator for admin, project management, storytelling, engagement, event organisation, grant applications
Lauder Water Users Group	24-25	19-May-25	\$10,000.00	\$8,000.00	Kelly Heckler	Admin and coordination for engagement, OCC facilitated Catchment Plan, and upskilling workshops
Glenorchy Catchment Group	24-25	19-May-25	\$10,000.00	\$8,000.00	Pip Hasselman	Coordination of group, including a minimum of 4 sessions, including facilitated vision/values session(s) with OCC
Aroha Kaikorai Valley	24-25	19-May-25	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	Paul Southworth	Coordination of baseline activities including community. evenings, education sessions and pest control admin.
East Otago Catchment Group	24-25	19-May-25	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	Steph Scott	Admin and coordination of group, to promote sustainable practices and to engage with the local community and stakeholders.
NOSLaM	24-25	19-May-25	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Mel Tavendale	Admin, coordination and financial coordination of group. Facilitation of workshops/field days and engaging the community and stakeholder network
Mid Taiari Wai	24-25	19-May-25	\$10,000.00	\$8,000.00	Steven Nichol	To establish an admin and coordination role following The Whole Story facilitated IFP project.
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$229,400.00</b>	<b>\$220,650.00</b>		

## 4. Assessment of contribution to improving water quality and improvement in environmental domains

The Otago Catchment Community (OCC) plays a pivotal role in supporting 27 Catchment Groups and 28 Pod/tributary Groups, all of which are dedicated to improving Otago's water quality and environment. These groups work independently, each with their unique vision and objectives to address the specific environmental pressures they face. Through strategic support and facilitation, OCC enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of these groups to help them achieve their goals.

One of the primary ways OCC supports these groups is through group consensus method facilitation. These facilitated workshops help groups set action plans, visions, values, and conduct strategic reviews, ensuring a collective and cohesive aim among members. This approach reduces volunteer time in the planning stages, allowing more time for environmental action. Additionally, OCC connects these groups to the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) Catchment Advisor and Science teams. This collaboration ensures that water quality data and council advice are integrated into the groups' plans, further enhancing their effectiveness.

Financially, OCC has provided financial support in providing administration, coordination and facilitation support amounting to \$220,650 to 17 groups. While it may be challenging to directly link this funding to immediate improvements in water quality and the environment, it is crucial for formalising processes and ensuring that action plans are executed effectively. Having a paid coordinator ensures that tasks are completed, and goals are met, which indirectly supports environmental improvements.

Seven catchment group projects were supported with \$41,081 of funding allocated through the Catchment Group Project Fund. Projects supported through this fund included:

- supporting a freshwater monitoring collection project.
- a drone vs helicopter trial to assess the effectiveness of each for willow control.
- measuring the effectiveness of sediment traps.
- water testing to establish the health of the catchment.
- supporting a community riparian planting project to improve water quality and biodiversity; and
- supporting a plan to engage local businesses in an urban community to undertake freshwater monitoring and improving biodiversity.

In addition, OCC provided funding support for catchment group coordinators and leaders to attend NZ Landcare Trust's Aotearoa Catchment Extension programme, where they learnt new skills relating to catchment group work and collaborated with groups from throughout the country working through this upskilling programme.

Finally, the training events we offered throughout the year included running two predator trapping workshops, and a community based freshwater monitoring workshop.

## 5. Project Data Report

Project Data	Data	Comments/additional information
Number of OCC members	22	Increase of one
Number of new OCC members during 24/25	3	Glenorchy, Otago Peninsula and Lauder Water Users Group
Total number of existing groups	27 with 28 sub-groups	Sub-groups are tributary or pod groups with an umbrella group (Umbrella groups counted in total).
Number of new groups since last report	1	Lauder Water Users Group
Number of Groups by FMU with corresponding groups	Dunedin and Coast FMU - 6	Aroha Kaikorai Valley, Open Vue, Otago South, Otago Peninsula Group, Ōwhiro, Tomahawk
	Catlins FMU - 1	Catlins (Otago South)
	Taiari FMU - 3	Lower Taiari, Mid Taiari Wai, Upper Taiari Wai
	North Otago FMU - 2	East Otago, NOSLaM
	Clutha Mata Au FMU - 16	Pomahaka, Teviot Valley, Cardrona, Glenorchy, Friends of Bullock Creek, Lake Hawea, Lake Hayes, Lake Wānaka, Lauder Water Users Group, Lindis, Wai Wānaka, Lowburn, Otago South, Ida Valley, Manuharekia CG, Thomson's Creek, Lake Wakatipu
Locations of Group Operations	Appendix 1 'OCC Map and CG location List'	

## 6. OCC future opportunities or directions

### Aligning work programmes

With the creation of the regional manager role, it has allowed OCC to work more closely with the ORC's Catchments team to ensure work programmes complement each other's and to prevent unnecessary duplication. Monthly meetings continue to be held, and we are working on a shared document outlining opportunities to work with catchment groups throughout Otago.

### Catchment group funding review

Part way through the 2024-2025 year it was agreed by the governance group to halt OCC's project funding. The rationale was that the fund needed to be re-looked at, and if the uptake continued, the fund would provide a financial constraint on OCC in the long-term. A new 'Kick-start' fund will be introduced in the 2025-2026 year, which will provide an opportunity for groups to apply for funding up to \$3,000 per project. This funding amount is intended to complement ORC's Eco-Fund and was seen as a gap in the current offerings throughout Otago.

### Wai Connection funding

In the 2024-2025 year, OCC successfully delivered the Wai Connection programme, which is a project led by Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust, funded through the Ministry for the Environment's Essential Freshwater Fund, aiming to build capability and capacity in New Zealand's freshwater management. The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust has been successful in gaining additional funding for the 2025-2026 year and has presented Otago Catchment Community another year long contract to continue with the work begun. OCC plans to continue this work, which will aid in further supporting catchment groups, particularly in building capabilities in freshwater management. OCC plans to continue to deliver aspects that are applicable to Otago catchment groups, as identified in the regional needs assessment that was conducted in July 2024. There have also been other opportunities identified, throughout the year, and this continuity of funding will allow these opportunities to be actioned, including continued delivery of engagement workshops, sediment control work, and predator control upskilling and workshops.

### Annual survey

The annual catchment group survey highlighted some areas where OCC can support catchment groups across Otago. This year, 15 groups participated in the survey, a full report of the results is provided in Appendix 2. Some highlights coming out of the survey for the year were:

**Group successes.** Successes commented on by groups included obtaining funding, event attendance, leadership, storytelling and collaboration across the catchment.

**Group challenges.** A continued challenge throughout many of the groups was landowner engagement.

**Support desired from OCC.** There were several key areas groups noted they would like ongoing support from OCC for the upcoming year. These included:

- Administration and operations
- Funding
- Event planning
- Facilitation
- Strategic planning
- Governance support and training

## Summary

This report has highlighted some of the many achievements of the Otago Catchment Community in the delivery of its 2024-2025 work plan. We continue to strive to find ways and opportunities to support Otago's Catchment Groups to achieve their water quality and environmental improvement goals.

Some of the highlights from the year include:

- 7 workshops delivered to help groups develop their vision or work plans.
- 17 groups were supported with funding to support their coordination or administration roles.
- 7 catchment group projects were supported.
- 12 catchment group events delivered where OCC had a significant role, through either leading or co-delivery.
- 14 training opportunities were delivered to allow groups or coordinators to upskill and increase capability in the region.
- 2 catchment forums were co-delivered with NZ Landcare Trust.
- OCC supported groups providing an increase in the opportunities for groups to connect with each and providing opportunities to connect with mana whenua.

We continued our strong connections with key stakeholders throughout the year, and of note this year was the increased connection with MPI's On-farm support team, key role at the Otago Extension Network and growing connection with ORC's environmental implementation team. These relationships allow us to make and expand connections between CGs and stakeholders, and this included the dissemination of CG events, workshops and stories.

In our income and expenditure report we reported our budget vs actuals for the year, including the Wai Connection programme income and expenditure. In Section 3, we provided a discussion on funding, and how this was distributed throughout Otago; we also outlined operational issues. In Section 4, we provided an assessment of the work of catchment groups to address environmental issues, providing some examples of positive work going on in the region.

Section 5 provided the Project Data Report, where we outlined the number of groups, memberships, and their locations throughout the region, highlighting one new catchment group this year, and another three groups' memberships to OCC. Finally, in Section 6, we addressed the future opportunities and direction of OCC, with highlights discussing:

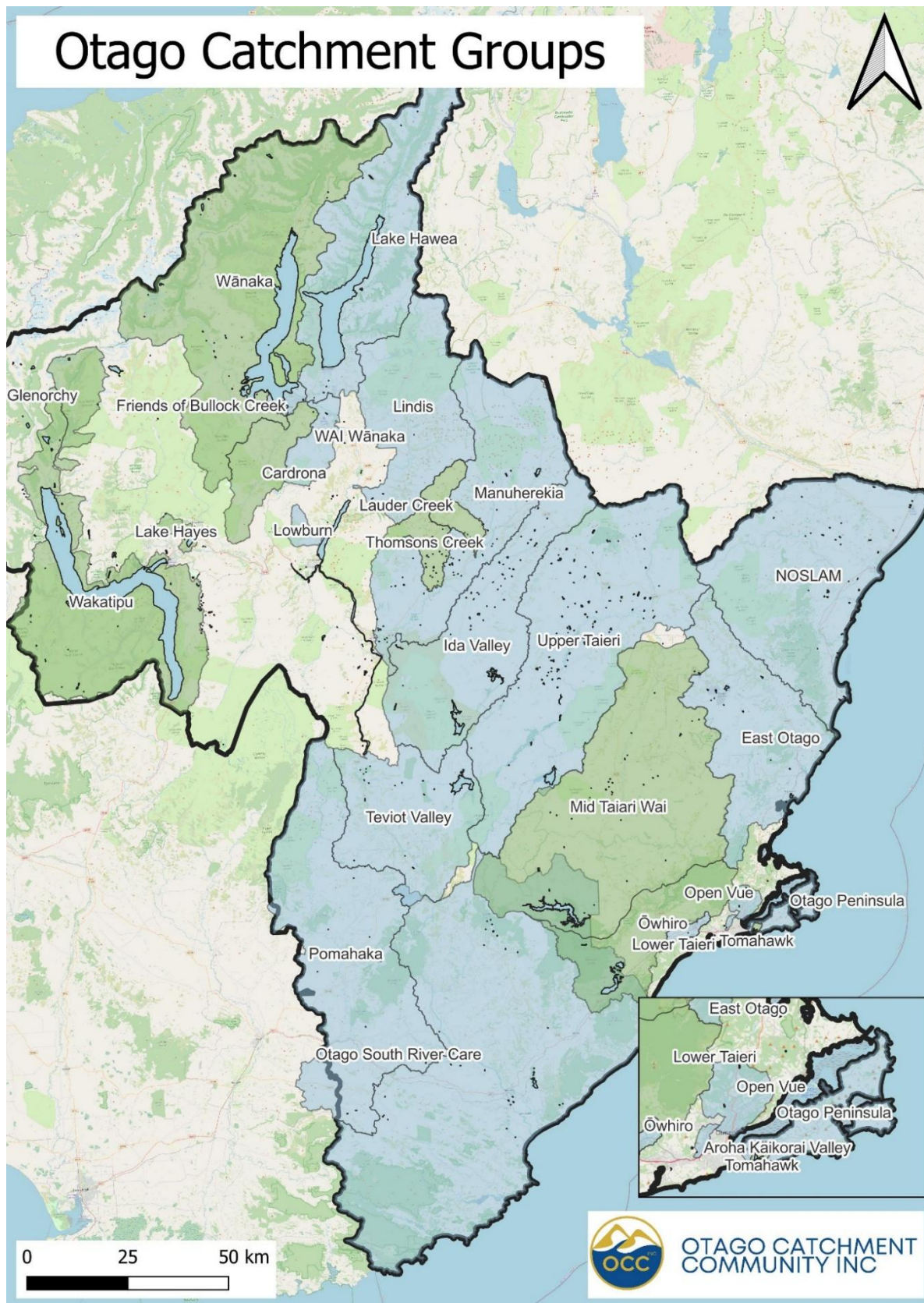
- Closer connections with the ORC catchment team.
- Reviewing our funding on offer to group through the introduction of our 'Kick start' fund.
- A discussion of further funding secured through the national Wai Connection programme.
- And a review of opportunities as presented in our Annual Survey.

Looking forward to the 2025-2026 year, we anticipate many exciting opportunities to continue our work. Our work plan will be directed through the findings of the Annual Survey, and other opportunities that have presented themselves throughout the year.

Once again, we would like to thank your generous funders, the Otago Regional Council and the Ministry for Primary Industries, for their continued support as we work together to encourage Otago's Catchment Groups to achieve their water quality and environmental improvement goals. We look forward to working in partnership alongside both organisations in the year ahead.



## Appendix 1: OCC Map and locations of Otago Catchment Groups





## Appendix 1.1 Continued: (Locations of Catchment Groups by GPS coordinate)

GPS Locations of CG Activity		
#	Catchment group name	GPS Location of Activities
1	Friends of Bullock Creek	-44.704561, 169.130170
2	East Otago	-45.595788, 170.668667
3	NOSLAM	-45.093084, 170.973477
4	Lake Hayes	-44.967872, 168.814270
5	Wanaka	-44.606337, 168.985549
6	Lindis	-44.749113, 169.511333
7	Otago South	-46.238053, 169.748882
8	Pomahaka	-45.943581, 169.259180
9	Thomsons Creek	-45.110942, 169.557458
10	Upper Taieri	-45.114727, 170.090215
11	Cardrona	-44.871716, 169.013672
12	WAI Wanaka	-44.700414, 169.147059
13	Otago Peninsula	-45.854092, 170.630832
14	Lake Wakatipu	-45.118485, 168.463931
15	Teviot Valley	-45.570555, 169.395217
16	Lower Taieri	-45.871026, 170.276999
17	Glenorchy	-44.843206, 168.394416
18	Manuherekia	-45.210390, 169.441550
19	Ida Valley	-45.045760, 169.860269
20	Tomahawk	-45.898001, 170.544704
21	Mid Taieri Wai	-45.5333375, 170.1163243
22	Ōwhiro	-45.896427, 170.315623
23	Open Vue	-45.844797, 170.539577
24	Lowburn	-45.006525, 169.211822
25	Aroha Kaikorai Valley	-45.867117, 170.480887
26	Lake Hawea	-44.612262, 169.285429
27	Lauder Creek	-44.986574, 169.681718

## Appendix 2. OCC ANNUAL SURVEY

# Otago Catchment Community (OCC) 2024 Survey Report

*Note: This survey was for the 2024/2025 financial year. Report prepared June 2025.*

### Survey Purpose

This survey captures successes Otago Catchment Groups have had over the past year and gives Otago Catchment Community (OCC) insights into challenges facing the groups. It also provides an indication of how groups are interacting with each other, stakeholders and OCC.

As OCC, we can use the survey results to direct our workplan, give feedback to stakeholders, and to gauge how groups' successes and challenges change over time.

The survey responses included in this report are in four categories: Catchment Group successes, challenges, stakeholder engagement, and OCC support.

### Who did the 2024 survey?

Fifteen of 27 Otago Catchment Groups completed the survey. All groups granted OCC Direct Group Funding in November 2024 completed the survey, as this is now a condition of the funding. Ten groups completed the survey in 2023, and seven groups completed it in 2022.

The survey was mainly filled in by the Catchment Group coordinators who have OCC Direct Group Funding.

Seventy percent of responding Catchment Groups are formatted as Incorporated Societies, 23% are Trusts and the rest are informal groups.

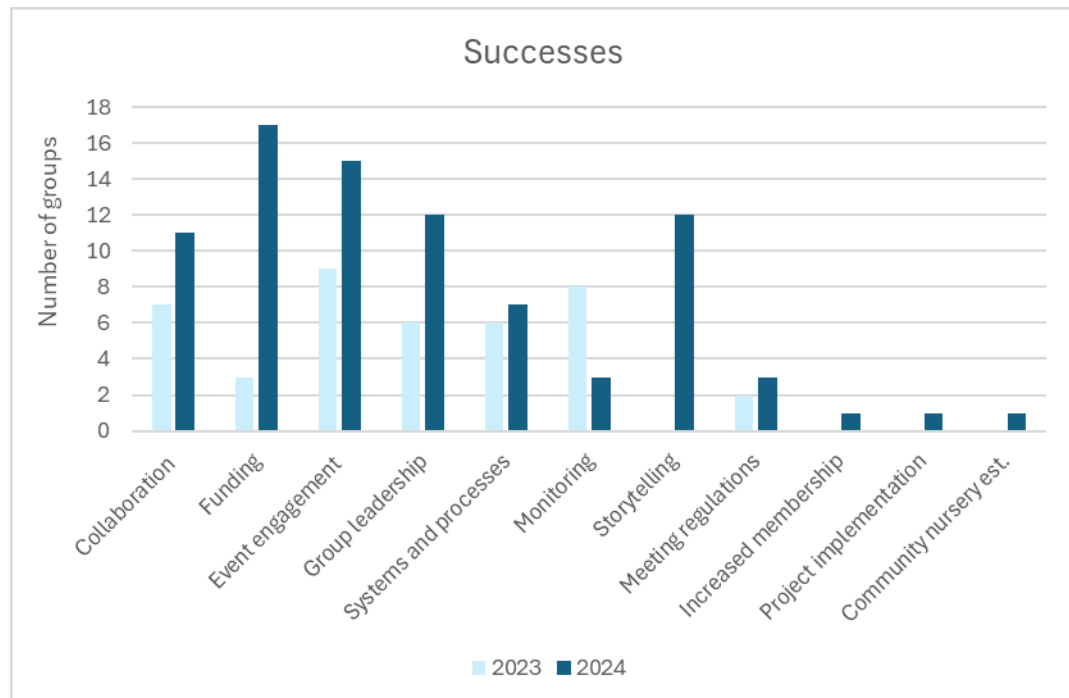
Membership numbers for Catchment Groups range from five (Friends of Bullock Creek) to 700 (Manuherekia Catchment Group). This reflects the diverse configuration of Otago Catchment Groups. Friends of Bullock Creek have five Trustees, but they have a subscriber database of 397 people. The group is focused on restoring Bullock Creek Wetland, while also supporting environmental initiatives in the Bullock Creek catchment. Manuherekia Catchment Group are "a thriving valley community which uses its water resources in a sustainable and co-operative way."

## Successes

Participants were asked whether they had strategic plans, visions and work plans. All 15 groups that completed the survey have a strategic plan. Four of the groups have a leadership succession plan. Nine have an engagement or communication plan. Fourteen of the 15 groups have an action plan and a current vision, along with goals and/or values.

Participants were asked about their successes over the past year. Obtaining funding was the most selected success measure (Figure 1). Followed by attendance at events, leadership of the group, storytelling, and collaboration across the catchment. Some groups recorded success with monitoring, systems and processes, and meeting regulations.

The number of groups who selected success obtaining funding has significantly increased from 2023.



*Figure 1. Success measures selected by survey respondents in 2023 and 2024. Note: 2023 survey had 10 groups completing, compared to 15 groups in the 2024 survey.*

## Challenges

When asked what their biggest challenges were, participants indicated that landowner engagement was the biggest challenge, followed by engagement with stakeholders, promoting good environmental practices, and group governance (Figure 2). Understanding regulations rated as less of a challenge in 2024 than in 2023. Other challenges were similar in the 2023 and 2024 survey. Engagement remains a challenge for most groups.

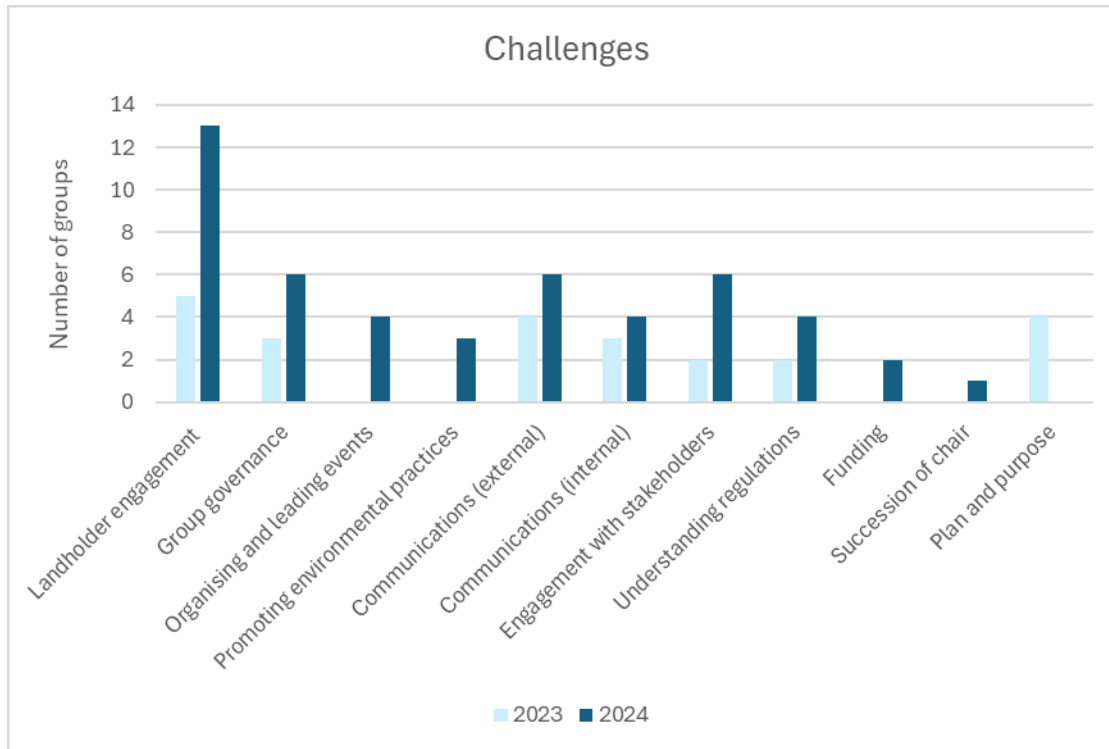


Figure 2. Challenges for Otago Catchment Groups 2023 and 2024. Note: 2023 survey had 10 groups completing, compared to 15 groups in the 2024 survey.

“Hard to get people to respond as to whether they are attending events etc, so hard to plan. However, they do turn up.” - Lowburn Catchment Group.

“Farmer engagement is challenging at this time under a heavily consented regime now and more stringent quality assurance programs from meat and milk companies. Farmer focus has moved into these areas.” - North Otago Sustainable Land Management (NOSLaM)

## Stakeholder engagement

Otago Catchment Groups have engaged with a range of stakeholders (Figure 3). Otago Regional Council received a lot of positive feedback for their funding, support, technical guidance, and staff. Appreciation for support from NZ Landcare Trust was also recorded by many groups, along with support from Fish and Game, MPI – On Farm Support Team, and Beef and Lamb NZ. Aroha Kaikorai Valley noted they have received great support from ORC and Dunedin City Council.

The main challenges for stakeholder engagement were recorded as a lack of communication and difficulty gaining formal approvals.

Most survey respondents had also engaged with other Otago Catchment Groups over the past year. They have found this to be beneficial for shared learnings, support, and event collaboration.

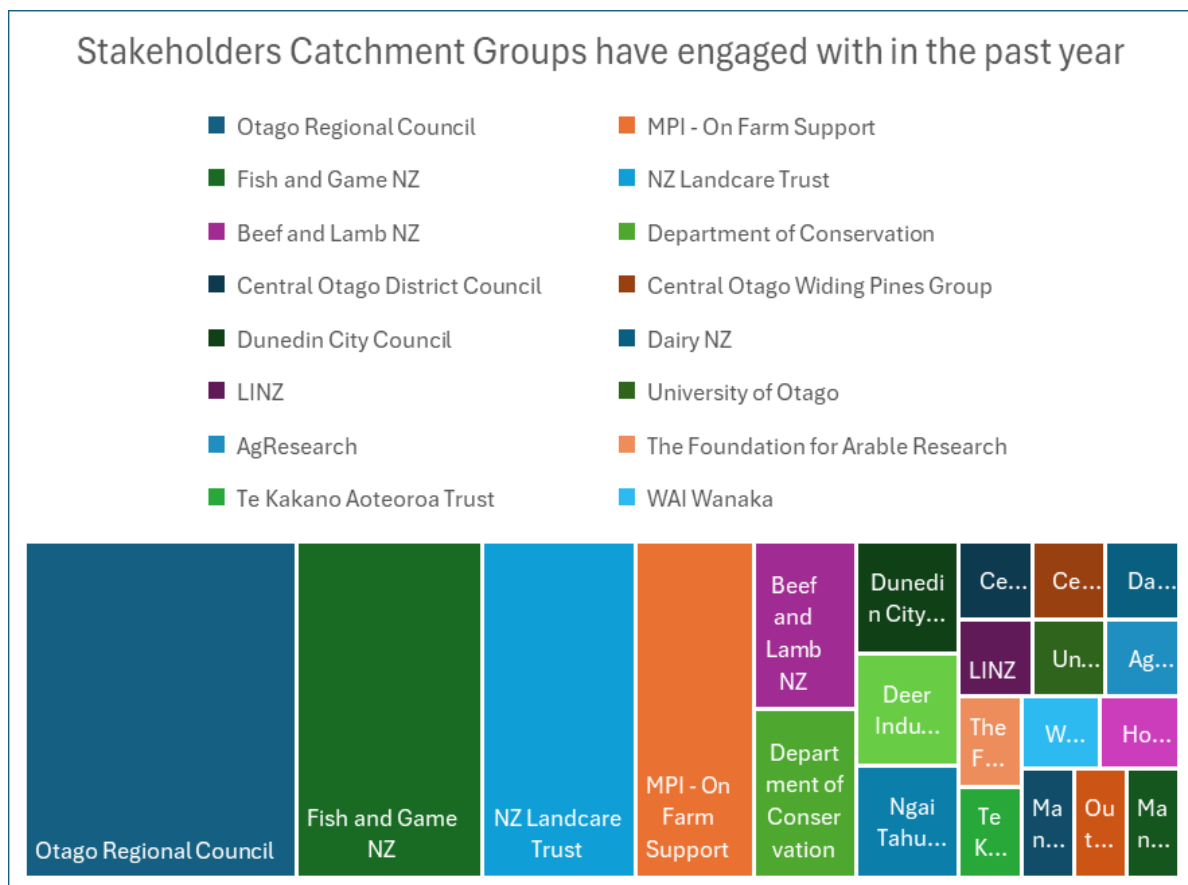


Figure 3. Stakeholders Otago Catchment Groups have engaged with in the past year.

## OCC support

In the survey we asked what changes or initiatives have been implemented over the past year based on support or information received from OCC. OCC facilitated sessions were appreciated. Survey responders noted the importance of Direct Group Funding for administration hours. OCC Catchment Project Funding has allowed projects to “get off the ground”. Wai Connection funding for communication planning and upskilling was referenced positively in the survey responses.

“Keep supporting the legal, funding and compliance side of running a group.” - NOSLaM

The groups were asked what support or information they would like to receive from OCC over the next year. Funding was the main thing identified. Groups would also like further support with strategic/action planning, administration and operations, event planning, facilitation, and governance support/training (Figure 4).

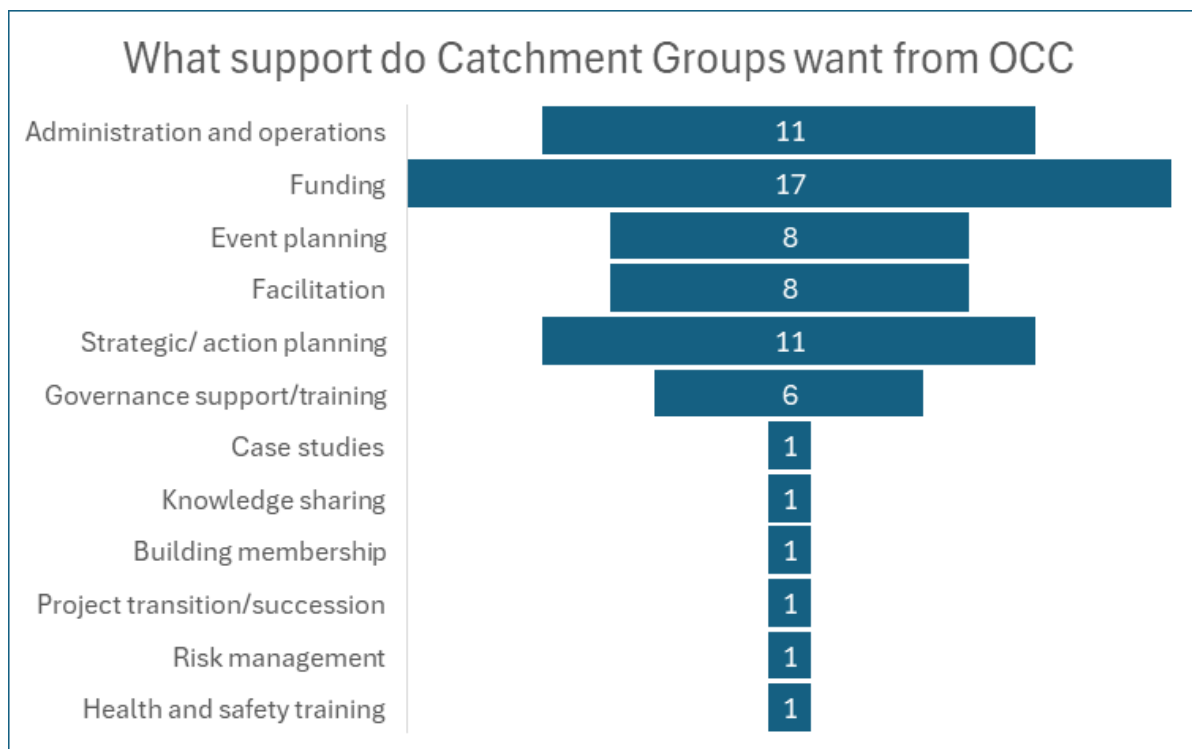


Figure 4. What support or information catchment groups want to receive from OCC in the coming year.

## In conclusion

We’ll incorporate the survey results into our workplan for the coming year. Facilitation for strategic planning, along with support with funding and engagement will be key.

We’ll give applicable feedback to stakeholders. And we’ll continue to support Otago Catchment Groups.

### Feedback for OCC from the 2024 survey

*We've been most grateful for the support provided by the OCC coordinator, who has helped keep us on target to achieve our actions.*

*Thank you for your support, it's really important to have funders support the catchment group model. We couldn't do what we do without this type of {Direct Group} funding.*

*Thanks so much to OCC for the funding which has allowed us to not only have paid admin assistance, but all the little extra funding along the way.*

*Keep up the great work. Having someone to ring when you have a query about the catchment group is always much appreciated.*

*Nicole, Sam, Camille & Craig are awesome!!*

*We have had outstanding support from Craig, and Judy with good back up from Sam.*

*We work well with OCC and find their input so valuable. Both in knowledge and in funding. In a group of mainly volunteers it is really great to have someone who is in a paid position to do some of the work to ensure that the rest of the committee do not get volunteer burnout.*

*OCC funding has enabled us to get our projects off the ground by providing direct funding for a planting project, as well as funding for coordinator role. OCC directly supported us in working on our action plan, our vision and goals, and our Catchment Plan.*

*The Direct Group Funding has been super helpful to ensure someone has the time to get the administration work completed and take some workload off the main committee members. It has also allowed for someone to spend time to get actual action especially around willow spraying.*

## Appendix 3: 2024 -2025 OCC Financial Performance Report

Attached separately titled: 'Draftv2 – Otago Catchment Community Incorporated –  
Performance Report 2025.pdf'