

Community & Environment Committee

12 March 2026

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [6]

Department: Strategy & Policy

Title | Taitara: Endorsement of the Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) Strategy

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Community & Environment Committee of the Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) Strategy 2025 and to note Council's commitment to developing an implementation action plan in partnership with the Waiwhakaata Strategy Group to support the delivery of the strategy.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Community & Environment Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Endorse** the Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) Strategy 2025 as a collaborative, non-statutory framework guiding integrated catchment restoration and water quality improvement for the lake; and
3. **Note** that officers are developing a draft set of implementation actions to underpin Council's contribution to delivery of Strategy.

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18 February 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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19 February 2026

Context | Horopaki

1. Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) is a culturally significant and ecologically valued lake within the Queenstown Lakes District. The lake is recognised as a taonga for mana whenua and is deeply valued by the wider community for its environmental, recreational and landscape significance.
2. Over several decades the health of Waiwhakaata has declined due to catchment modification, intensified land use, nutrient enrichment (particularly phosphorus), sediment accumulation, loss of wetlands and riparian margins, and altered hydrological flows. These cumulative pressures have contributed to algal blooms, reduced water clarity, oxygen depletion at depth, and a decline in overall ecological resilience.
3. In 2021, the Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group was established to refresh the original 1995 strategy and provide a collaborative framework for improving lake health. The Strategy Group operates under a partnership model with representatives from:
 - Kāi Tahu
 - Otago Regional Council (ORC)
 - Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC)
 - Te Papa Atawhai / Department of Conservation
 - Friends of Lake Hayes (FOLH)
4. The new 'Waiwhakaata Rautaki – Lake Hayes Strategy 2025' (Attachment A) was commissioned by ORC on behalf of the Strategy Group. It has been developed for the benefit of Strategy partners and the broader community to provide a shared long-term direction for the restoration of Waiwhakaata and its catchment.
5. The strategy outlines a shared cultural, environmental and community-focussed strategic vision for Waiwhakaata and its surrounding catchment:
 - Te pupuri i te mana o tō mātou ikoa, o Waiwhakaata, e whakaatatia ai ā mātou mahi i kā wai
 - To uphold the mana of the name, Waiwhakaata, so our actions are reflected in the waters.
6. The Strategy integrates cultural, scientific and community perspectives and provides a long-term direction rather than a prescriptive operational programme. The Strategy establishes ten interrelated objectives to restore the mauri of Waiwhakaata and its catchment, including:
 - 1 Utu / Reciprocity
 - 2 Wai / Water quality and lake health
 - 3 Ki Uta Ki Tai – catchment-to-lake integration

- 4 Mahinga Kai and indigenous biodiversity
 - 5 Matching land use with environmental capability
 - 6 Kaupapa Māori and science monitoring (braided knowledge)
 - 7 Informed, data-driven restoration
 - 8 Whakawhanaungatanga – collaborative action
 - 9 Te Ōhanga – aligning economic activity with ecological health
 - 10 Capability and knowledge systems development
7. The Strategy was endorsed by the Otago Regional Council Environmental Delivery Committee in June 2025 ([Report GOV2540](#)). Endorsement by QLDC represents the next step in formalising governance commitment and aligning Council work programmes with the Strategy direction.
 8. Restoration of Waiwhakaata is identified as a priority initiative under [Action 1.2 of the Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 \(CBP\)](#), which commits Council to supporting partnership-based catchment restoration to protect and regenerate the mauri of our natural environment.
 9. Waiwhakaata represents one of the district’s most visible and strategically significant freshwater restoration initiatives and exemplifies braided knowledge, Treaty partnership, and community-led environmental action. A number of collaborative initiatives are already underway that will support delivery of the Strategy objectives, including:
 - Arrow River augmentation project.
 - Sediment removal and stormwater management works.
 - Catchment mapping and hydrological modelling.
 - Biodiversity and monitoring initiatives.
 - Community engagement and education programmes.
 10. Following endorsement, officers will work with Strategy partners to prepare a coordinated Waiwhakaata Implementation Action Plan. This plan will translate the Strategy objectives into clearly defined priority actions, timeframes, responsibilities, and reporting mechanisms. The Action Plan will articulate how QLDC will operationalise the Strategy within existing and future work programmes
 11. The QLDC Action Plan will concentrate on practical delivery areas that sit within Council’s core responsibilities and operational programmes, including:
 - Stormwater and sediment management planning.
 - District Plan and consenting integration.
 - Infrastructure and asset management alignment.

- Catchment monitoring and reporting;
 - Community engagement and communications alignment.
12. The QLDC Action plan will serve as a pilot framework for how Council embeds catchment restoration into core business practice. Lessons learned through its implementation including cross-department coordination, monitoring integration, infrastructure alignment and partnership governance will be evaluated and applied across other freshwater catchments in the district. This approach will help build organisational capability, improve decision-making consistency and strengthen freshwater outcomes beyond Waiwhakaata over time.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

13. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

14. Option 1 Endorse the Waiwhakaata Strategy 2025.

Advantages:

- Confirms QLDC's commitment as a Strategy partner.
- Aligns with Action 1.2 of the Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028.
- Strengthens cross-agency collaboration.
- Provides governance clarity to community stakeholders and mana whenua.
- Supports integrated catchment management across Council activities.

Disadvantages:

- May create expectations of accelerated delivery or funding beyond current allocations.

15. Option 2 Do not endorse the Strategy.

Advantages:

- Avoids any perceived future funding or delivery expectations.

Disadvantages:

- Undermines cross-agency alignment.
- Weakens Council's visible commitment to Te Taiao restoration.
- Creates inconsistency with the Climate & Biodiversity Plan.
- Risks reputational impact with partners and community groups.

16. This report recommends **Option 1** because it strengthens Council’s strategic alignment, supports existing commitments under the CBP, and provides governance clarity without creating new unbudgeted obligations.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

17. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because endorsement of the Strategy:

- Does not alter levels of service.
- Does not commit to unbudgeted expenditure.
- Does not amend statutory plans.
- Does not involve the transfer of assets or decision-making authority.

18. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter include:

- Mana whenua (Kāi Tahu rūnaka representatives).
- Strategy partner agencies.
- Friends of Lake Hayes and associated community groups.
- Residents and landowners within the Waiwhakaata catchment.

19. The Council has supported the development of this strategy collaboratively with partners and community representatives over several years. No additional public consultation is required for endorsement of this non-statutory framework.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

20. Mana whenua representatives have been active members of the Waiwhakaata Strategy Group throughout development of the Strategy. The Strategy vision and objectives are grounded in Kāi Tahu values and mātauraka Māori.

21. Endorsement by QLDC reflects ongoing partnership rather than initiation of a new consultation process. Kāi Tahu representatives are supportive of formal endorsement by Council.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

22. This matter relates to the Environmental risk category. It is associated with RISK10012 Ineffective mitigation response to the declared climate and ecological emergency within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.

23. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to implement additional controls for this risk. This will be achieved through strengthened Strategy Group governance, development of

a coordinated implementation action plan and integration of Strategy objectives into operational work programmes.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

24. There are no direct financial implications arising from endorsement. Implementation actions will be delivered:

- Within existing approved budgets where possible; and/or
- Through future Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes where additional investment is required.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

25. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Our Strategic Framework | Queenstown Lakes District Council.
- Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 (specifically Action 1.2).
- 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy- stormwater and catchment resilience.
- Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan.
- District Plan- specifically Policy 24.2.4.2 and related provisions.
- Economic Diversification Plan- specifically Project 3.3 growth of environmental services.
- Regenerative Tourism Plan: Travel to a Thriving Future.

26. The recommended option is consistent with with these strategies and reinforces cross-plan coherence

27. This matter is not included in the Long Term Plan/Annual Plan.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

28. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. Endorsement of the Waiwhakaata Strategy enables democratic local decision-making by formally recognising a collaborative framework developed with mana whenua, regional partners and community stakeholders. It promotes environmental, cultural, social and long-term economic wellbeing through integrated catchment restoration and water quality improvement. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

29. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and

- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) Strategy 2025
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WAIWHAKAATA

RAUTAKI

LAKE HAYES
STRATEGY

MARCH
2025

MIHI MIHI ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nāia te mihi ki ngā tangata mātau kua manaaki mai ki te kaupapa nei, Kate Timms-Dean, Stevie Blair, Jana Davis, Libby Caldwell, Bill Nicol, Mike Hanff and David Butt for their recent efforts contributing to this Strategy. And Gill Hopkins/Lyn Carter for their early involvement in the Strategy Rōpū and ongoing support. Ko koutou te puna mātauranga, te mea whakahirahira o tēnei rautaki.

Brand of client

This report was written by Kauati for the Otago Regional Council and the benefit of the Strategy Partners, Kāi Tahu, represented by Te Ao Mārama Inc. and Aukaha, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Te Papa Atawhai/Department of Conservation and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Graphic design and report layout - Britt Davies.

Report Reference



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Report Date: 5 March 2025

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Image Credit Eugenio Filice

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WAIWHAKAATA PŪRĀKAU

The name Waiwhakaata relays its shimmering reflection from the surface of the lake of the landscape and maunga that surround it. The following karakia has been used to express these natural and intangible characteristics of the lake, its waters and the surrounding catchment. At the time of writing this Strategy there was no Ngāi Tahu pūrākau publicly available for Waiwhakaata.

Ko te tohu o tō tatou Waiwhakaata

Ko takata au, ko au te takata.
Puritia ahau kia mā, kia ora, kia pakari hoki.
Kua kawea koe e ahau i roto i kā
whakatipuraka, e tārai ana i te whenua, e
whakatipu ana i te ora, e pupuri ana hoki i
kā mahara o rātou kua hīkoi i mua i a koe.
E noho ana ahau i raro i te mana o kā
mauka, e rere ana ki te moana.
Ka neke ahau pēnei tonu, ka herea te tuakiri
ki te wāhi, mai i mua ki muri.

Kua haeretia tōku ingoa mai i Hawaiki puta
noa i Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.
Kua kōrerohia mai i kā whakatipuraka katoa.
He wāhi hokohoko, he wāhi whakaaroaro
hoki tēnei mō kā tīpuna.
Ki te rere noa aku wai, ka ora te whenua.

Ki te kaha ahau, ka ora hoki te iwi e
whakawhirinaki ana ki ahau.

Engari kāore au e āhei ki te manaaki i a koe
mēnā kāore koe e manaaki mai i ahau.

Tukuna ahau kia hā, kia rere, kia whakaora.
Puritia te mana o tōku ingoa, kia mōhio ai ō
mokopuna ki ahau pēnei i tō mōhio - e rere
ana, e ora ana, e whakatipu ana i kā mea
katoa e pā ana ki ahau.

Ki Uta Ki Tai - Tiakina ahau, māku koe e
kawē whakamua.

Waiwhakaata – Waiwhakaata Speaks

Ko tangata au, ko au te tangata.
I am the people, and the people are me.
Keep me clean, healthy, and resilient.
I have carried you through generations,
shaping the whenua, sustaining life, and
holding the memories of those who walked
before you.

Nestled beneath the mana of the
mountains, flowing towards the sea,
I have moved as I always have, binding
identity to place, past to future.

My name has journeyed across time and
space,
from Hawaiki across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.
Spoken from generation to generation,
When I flow freely, I bring life.

When my waters are clear, the whenua
thrives.

When I am strong, so too are the people
who depend on me.

But I cannot care for you if you do not care
for me.

Let me breathe, let me move, let me heal.
Uphold the mana of my name.

Ensure that your mokopuna will know me
as you do - flowing, thriving, sustaining all
that I touch.

Ki Uta Ki Tai - Protect me, and I will carry
you forward.

GRAPHIC DESIGN INTERPRETATION

The karakia has also been used to inform the development of the graphics within this Strategy. The following information about the concepts used in the graphics aims to assist in the interpretation of this Strategy and guide its implementation.

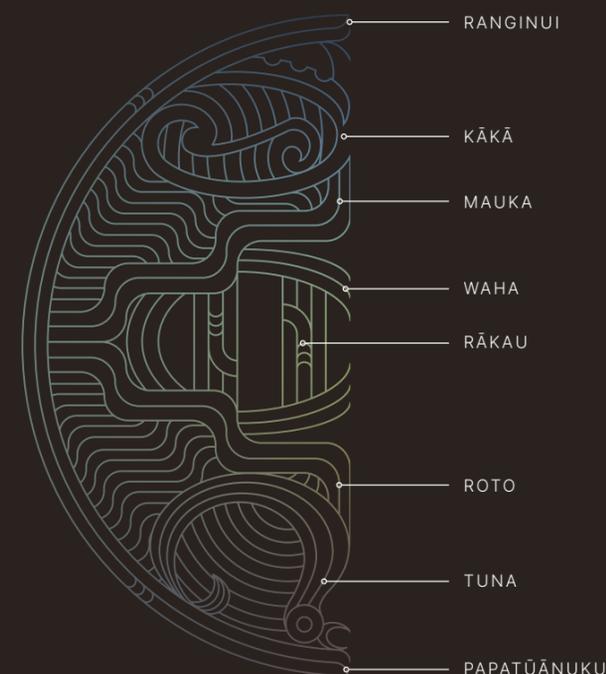
The tohu crafted for this Waiwhakaata Rautaki embodies the interconnectedness of people, land, and water, inspired by the whakapapa of Waiwhakaata. It reflects the symbiotic relationship between the natural world and our identity, honouring the past while shaping the future.

Inspired by the principle of reflection, this tohu mirrors the relationship between Papatūānuku and Ranginui—intention and contribution, mauka and roto. The creation story of Rangi and Papa reminds us of the potential to restore balance, reinforcing the idea that everything is connected. Cycles, whether in water, life, or reciprocity, flow through the design, just as internal landscapes are reflected outward—the same mauri felt in the mauka can be felt in the flow beneath the waters as well.

Drawing from toi whakairo, kōwhaiwhai, and tukutuku, this design weaves together visual languages to create a contemporary representation of our collective journey and responsibility. Each element captures the essence of layered meanings: the kākā calls forth new beginnings at dawn, the tuna symbolises resilience and movement through waterways—both of which are symbols of success. Tāne's waha represents where the spiritual and physical realms meet, and the rākau rise up to separate earth and sky, these are the project partners. The mauka are our project vision, while the roto hold the project purpose. Papatūānuku grounds us while Ranginui reminds us of a future state. The tohu itself marks identity, partnership, and shared guardianship.

Patterns evoke the movement of water, while structured forms ground the design in the whenua, creating a balance of fluidity and stability. The colour palette, drawn from Waiwhakaata's natural hues, reflects the lake's shimmering surface, its depths, and the surrounding landscape.

This design is more than an aesthetic composition; it is a living narrative, a visual expression of whakapapa and kaitiakitanga. It invites reflection, conversation, and action—acknowledging the past, responding to the present, and shaping the future. It stands as a tohu, a marker of truth and change, where land meets sky and where we honour and protect what is dear.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Waiwhakaata Strategy establishes a new environmental management paradigm by positioning the mauri (life force) and mana (prestige) of Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) and the catchment as the central priority. The whakatauki below sets the philosophical approach for all catchment activities.

Toitū te marae o Tāne, Toitū te marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te Iwi
Care for the land, care for the water, and the people will be sustained

This whakatauki is the first of ten objectives designed to direct actions and outcomes across four pou (pillars): environmental, cultural, social, and economic, as depicted in Figure 1.

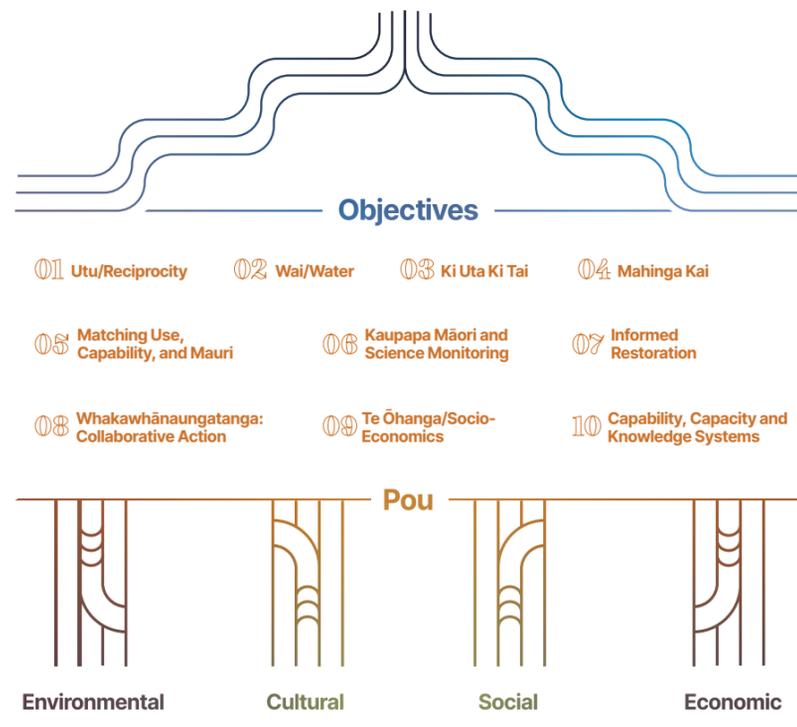


Figure 1.

This Strategy aims to move beyond regulatory frameworks by providing operational guidance across the 10 interconnected objectives that together provide:

- 01** A framework that prioritises te taiao while incorporating human connections and relationships in decision making.
- 02** Multi-objective options for work program alignment across agencies, community groups and stakeholders
- 03** Objective-based evaluation measures for project assessment and development
- 04** An expectation for aligning restoration activities with sustainable economic opportunities
- 05** Pathways for community participation and contribution that require coordinated engagement between all parties.

The Strategy prioritises practical outcomes over aspirational targets, requiring sustained commitment and collaboration. The ten objectives below set out the guiding expectations that should be considered by the Strategy Partners, stakeholders and communities active in the Waiwhakaata catchment.

OBJECTIVES

-
- 01

Utu/Reciprocity

Toitū te marae o Tāne, Toitū te marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te Iwi Toitū
Care for the land, care for the water, and the people will be sustained.
 - 02

Wai/Water

The mauri of wai³ is restored, with the natural function and water quality of Waiwhakaata reflecting the name of the lake.
 - 03

Ki Uta Ki Tai⁴

The mauri of Waiwhakaata is enhanced allowing the wairua to thrive with minimal intervention or management.
 - 04

Mahinga Kai

Waiwhakaata supports thriving indigenous biodiversity that enables the practice of mahinga kai.
 - 05

Matching Use, Capability, and Mauri

The mauri of Waiwhakaata is sustained through land-use activities that reflect land capability and environmental limits.
 - 06

Kaupapa Māori and Science Monitoring

Indicators and measures of success using multiple knowledge systems are co-designed, monitored and reported on annually.
 - 07

Informed Restoration

Contaminant monitoring is informing decision-making to restore Waiwhakaata ecological systems back to natural nutrient levels and hauora.
 - 08

Whakawhānaungatanga: Collaborative Action

Partners, stakeholders, and the community of Waiwhakaata are actively engaged and take ownership of the lake's restoration, expressing the principle of kotahitanga.
 - 09

Te Ōhanga/Socio- Economics

Economic activity in the Waiwhakaata catchment is expected to restore natural balance, ensuring tangible benefits for te taiao and the wider community.
 - 10

Capability, Capacity and Knowledge Systems

Diverse knowledge systems enhance capability and capacity amongst the Strategy Partners.

The application of these objectives as a primary framework ensures activities contribute effectively to the strategic vision:

To uphold the mana of the name, Waiwhakaata, so our actions are reflected in the waters.

³ Water

⁴ Emphasises holistic management of the interrelated elements within and between catchments, from the air and atmosphere to the land and the coastal environment, implementation will require a collaborative approach – Kai Tahu Ki Otago Natural Resource Management Plan (2005). An indigenous resource management framework assisting Kāi Tahu to achieve more meaningful rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga. It reflects the knowledge that resources are connected, from the mountains to the sea, and must be managed as such and that we belong to the environment and are only borrowing the resources from our generations that are yet to come – Te Tangi a Tauira (2008)

Working in this way will assist the understanding of those seeking to enhance the mauri of Waiwhakaata whether through statutory responsibilities, commercial activities, or community initiatives. The Strategy Partners' priority commitment is to confirm action plans that will direct on the ground projects while creating space for community-led initiatives. The objectives will be used as success metrics for monitoring and reporting against, to ensure actions align with this Strategy.

The Strategy functions as both an implementation framework and a transferable model for other catchments, demonstrating the efficacy of integrated management approaches that unite mana whenua, statutory authorities, stakeholders and communities.

Mapping The Road Ahead

As a framework for informing future collaborative actions of the Partners, this strategy will also be used to shape how the partners can work with the community to achieve the vision. The following steps have been identified by the Partners to progress this strategy:

1. Undertake a stocktake of all activities in the catchment contributing to the enhancement of the mauri of Waiwhakaata.
2. Engage with the Waiwhakaata community to begin dialogue about priority actions that align with this strategy.
3. Develop a work programme informed by the stocktake and community feedback on priorities to optimise collective resources to deliver action on the ground.

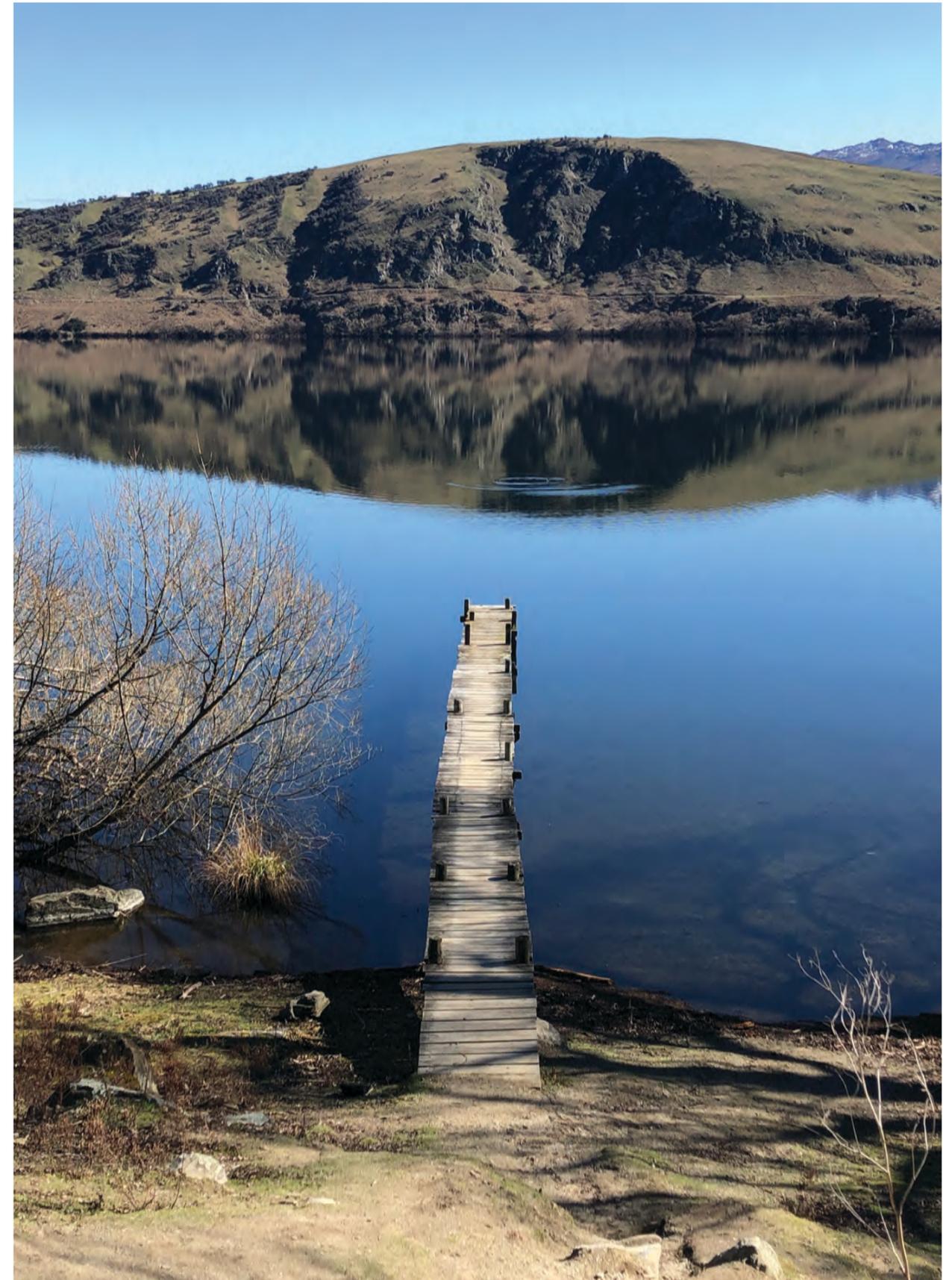


Image Credit Mike Harff

INTRODUCTION

The Waiwhakaata Strategy (the Strategy) represents a critical juncture in the ongoing efforts to restore and safeguard this environment. Waiwhakaata, also known as Lake Hayes, has long been part of important associations and practices for Kāi Tahu and more recently as an iconic feature of the Whakatipu Waimāori landscape, admired for its natural beauty and recreational opportunities. However, like many of New Zealand's waterways, Waiwhakaata has encountered significant environmental challenges in recent decades, primarily due to the cumulative impacts of land use activities within its catchment.

In response to these broader environmental effects generated beyond the lake, the Strategy encompasses the hydrological catchment and associated lands but importantly represents the interdependent connections beyond these geographic boundaries. This Strategy deliberately avoids the application of a catchment construct to ensure that it is not constrained by any one paradigm.

The Strategy embodies the Kāi Tahu philosophy of *ki uta ki tai* acknowledging that the health of Waiwhakaata is inextricably linked to the wellbeing of the entire Whakatipu Waimāori ecosystem and the communities it supports. This Strategy transcends a conventional environmental management plan; it presents a vision for the future of the lake and its surrounding catchment that recognises

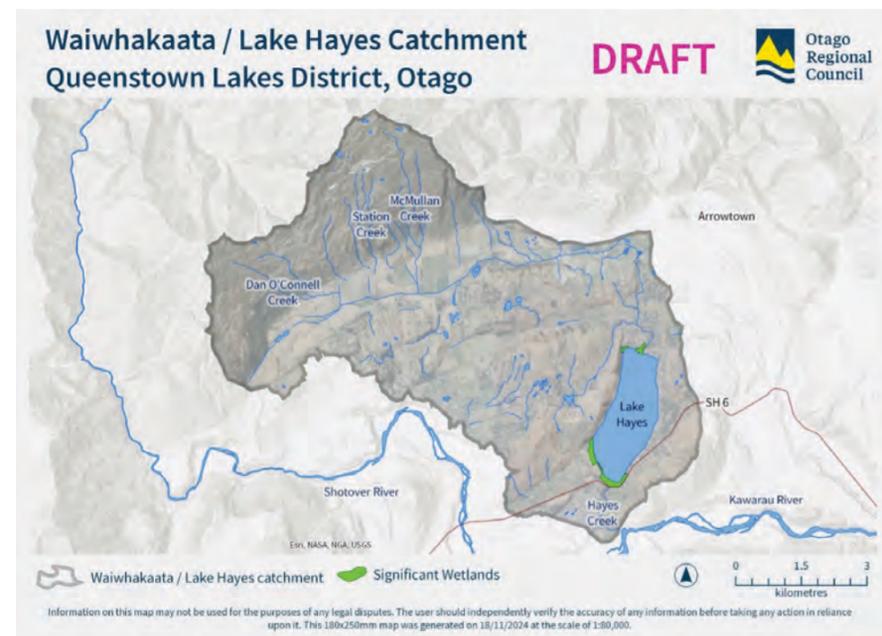
the interconnectedness of environmental, Kāi Tahu, social, and economic factors. This Strategy positions the Waiwhakaata environment in a broader biophysical and metaphysical context, in doing so this acknowledges that, nature and our relationships, should not be constrained by lines on maps.

This Strategy emerges from a collective recognition that a coordinated, comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges is imperative. It builds on previous initiatives, most notably the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy (the 1995 Management Strategy), while embracing a more holistic, partnership-driven approach that reflects contemporary understanding of environmental management in the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This latest Strategy combines previous management, recent science and Kāi Tahu assessments. And is underpinned by a multitude of supporting information, from the Ngāi Tahu Settlement to local government resource management plans, to improve the management of Waiwhakaata.

The strength of the Waiwhakaata Strategy is its partnership approach, convening key Partners in a collaborative effort to achieve shared objectives, in practice. The Waiwhakaata Strategy Partners (the Partners) include the relevant Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnanga⁵ (represented by two Kāi Tahu whānau, and kaimahi from Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama Inc.), Otago Regional Council (ORC), Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), Friends of Lake Hayes (FOLH) and Te Papa Atawhai/Department of Conservation (DOC). This partnership

represents a significant evolution from previous management approaches, recognising the need for a more inclusive, model that leverages the unique strengths and perspectives of each of the Partners and upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi. An updated vision for Waiwhakaata encapsulates a commitment to respecting the significance of Waiwhakaata to the Strategy Partners while emphasising the responsibility of all stakeholders to act in ways that positively impact the health of the lake and catchment. The vision seeks to challenge how behaviours and actions will be 'reflected' in the waterbodies, both literally in terms of water quality, and metaphorically in changes to the overall wellbeing.

This Strategy delineates a comprehensive and equitable framework for achieving the vision, addressing environmental management, Kāi Tahu reconnection, social and recreational values, economic sustainability, education and awareness, and governance and implementation. It establishes objectives to guide implementation and measure progress, recognising that the restoration of Waiwhakaata will be achieved over the long-term requiring a sustained effort and commitment from all Partners and the wider community. The Strategy Partners enter this commitment with an acute sense of responsibility to both past and future generations – *ka mua, ka muri*: we walk backwards into the future, drawing lessons from the past to inform our steps forward.



⁵ Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki, Ōtākou, Hokonui, Waihopai, Awarua, Ōraka-Aparima.

KA MUA, KA MURI

How did we get here?

The 1995 Management Strategy was a first joint attempt to address the degrading water quality of the lake. Based largely on the regulatory frameworks of the Otago Regional Council Water Plan and the Queenstown Lakes District Plan, the 1995 Management Strategy focused on water use, quality, quantity and the impacts of land use on water.

Since its release, parts of the 1995 Management Strategy have been implemented but there has been a lack of coordinated action across all responsible agencies and partners. The 1995 Management Strategy primarily responded to the key issues driving declining lake water quality with few references to the expectations and objectives of Kāi Tahu and the Waiwhakaata community to enable their contributions. Some aspects of the 1995 Management Strategy were ahead of its time, but this positive ambition also created barriers when policies became too difficult to accomplish, such as acquiring 100 hectares of land for wetlands and sediment traps. At times the prioritisation and implementation of the 1995 Management Strategy became difficult to achieve amongst competing environmental demands for resources.

Some elements of the 1995 Management Strategy have progressed but several of the issues, objectives and actions are yet to be achieved. Different approaches and technologies have developed over time impacting how these objectives and policies can be achieved including changes to regulatory frameworks and the social license to operate. Enhanced science and collaborative approaches have been developed including significant external funding for environmental projects and

growing recognition of the partnership with Kāi Tahu.

In the last 10 years several watershed events have refocused the Partners' efforts to action the 1995 Management Strategy. In 2017 Waiwhakaata was identified as an 'at risk' waterbody leading to the Friends of Lake Hayes (FOLH) reigniting interest in Waiwhakaata by emphasis on the importance of addressing the lakes poor water quality and dusting off the 1995 Management Strategy. Since then, numerous scientific and technical reports have been produced in an effort to inform restoration of the lake. The application of this knowledge has led to greater investment including a water quality monitoring buoy and the diversion of water from the Haehaenui/Arrow River to Mill Creek.

In 2021 Jobs for Nature resources were invested in conservation work programmes around Waiwhakaata, to protect and restore areas of the catchment including wetland enhancement and creation, riparian fencing and planting, and weed/pest management. In 2023 a project was initiated by Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) to recloak Coronet Peak in indigenous vegetation following the removal of a large area of forestry in the headwaters of Waiwhakaata. At the same

time two Kāi Tahu entities Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama Inc. released their respective reports, Waiwhakaata Cultural Values Statement and Waiwhakaata Environmental Statement of Expectations. This final step galvanised the Partners to commission this Strategy.

Current Context and Organisational Stocktake

Today, the Partners acknowledge their respective organisations have matured over the intervening 30 years since the 1995 Management Strategy. The Partners are committed to enhancing Waiwhakaata and are better equipped to take a more inclusive approach to resource management. There is a strong emphasis on working in partnership with Kāi Tahu to progress towards successful outcomes for Waiwhakaata. The partnership has been established on the basis of an equitable approach that provides space for each Partner in the process of developing and implementing this Strategy. There is also a commitment to engage with the community and the introduction of the economic aspects of valuing Waiwhakaata and working with a number of commercial activities in the area. Details about the Strategy Partners are included in Appendix 1.

Key Documents

All Partners functions and responsibilities are informed by key documents. These are listed in Appendix 2 and are summarised for the purposes of this document. There are a number of statutory and non-statutory documents and research reports that also inform this strategy. They are similarly reflected throughout this Strategy.

NON PARTNER DOCUMENTS

A recent report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), Going with the grain (2024), explores different land use changes to changing landscapes. The PCE report is a predominantly rural/farming/forestry context however it has direct application in the Waiwhakaata catchment in several ways. Some of the relevant elements include a catchment focus, integrated management, local collaborative decision making and governance models, enhanced access and quality of information, innovative economic and financial tools and reducing barriers. The one area that received little attention in the PCE report was the benefits and importance of working equitably with mana whenua.

CONFIRMING AN ENDURING COMMITMENT

Where are we going?

Like the 1995 Management Strategy this Strategy is primarily focused on enhancing the environment in the Waiwhakaata catchment. In addition, it deliberately draws the social and cultural ecological systems together ensuring that associations, values and practices of communities are a part of the environment.

This is an important distinction that connects to all Partners' expectations for the future of Waiwhakaata and that in time the mauri of the natural systems will be restored to a point where they can function more naturally, rather than being in a state requiring high levels of intervention and management. This means that the communities who reside, visit and use this area are doing so within the capacity of the catchment to sustain any effects they generate.

The Strategy also places importance on the wider region, other waterbodies, catchments and communities. The Strategy Partners have deliberately designed the Waiwhakaata Strategy as an exemplar

for other catchments and waterbodies within Whakatipu Waimāori including, Kimiākau/Shotover River, Kawerau River, Haehaenui/Arrow River. This relates to the secondary purpose of this Strategy, to test and inform a model that can be transferred to other areas to achieve similar outcomes. The Strategy Partners are also aware of reducing the effects on other communities who may be some distance from Waiwhakaata, such as those along the Mata-Au/Clutha River who will continue to be impacted by environmental effects resulting from the management of Waiwhakaata.

This Strategy is a non-statutory plan (similar to the previous 1995 Management Strategy) that is sought to be adopted and committed to by each Partner using mechanisms that align with their organisational context and processes. Presently there is provision for continued investment in resource management issues in the catchment by QLDC and ORC with a reciprocal investment of capacity and prioritisation by FOLH, DOC and Kāi Tahu.

A Formal Relationship Agreement

The Waiwhakaata Strategy represents a paradigm shift in the environmental management of the lake, its catchment and surrounds by placing the mauri and mana of Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) at its core. This approach transcends traditional regulatory frameworks or integrated catchment management tools by embracing a holistic, partnership-driven model that upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi and reflects the interconnectedness of environmental, Kāi Tahu, social, and economic factors. In recognition of this paradigm shift in environmental management the Partners seek to pursue a formal relationship agreement that reflects their commitment to achieving this Strategy.

A relationship agreement represents a collective commitment to sustain and strengthen relationships through embedded organisational capital. A relationship agreement also includes mechanisms for sustaining and guiding collaborative processes such as the nature and frequency of governance and management engagement, annual planning/funding, operational project management, communications, monitoring and reporting. It is proposed to be structured around the following decision-making principles:

PROPOSED DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

- (a) prioritise the mauri, intrinsic value and wellbeing of te taiao and the eternal relationship Ngāi Tahu has with Waiwhakaata
- (b) uphold the Ngāi Tahu Settlement and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi
- (c) recognise the obligations and responsibilities that tangata whenua, regulatory authorities, and private owners have to te taiao
- (d) recognise the role of people and communities (including landowners) as stewards
- (e) recognise the bond between mana whenua and te taiao based on whakapapa relationships
- (f) enable the application of te ao Ngāi Tahu and mātauranga Ngāi Tahu alongside western science and knowledge, in fulfilling collective responsibilities to te taiao
- (g) form equitable and effective partnerships amongst the Strategy Partners and the community
- (h) ensure informed decision making is achieved by having the information required available in a timely and equitable fashion.

PURPOSE

WHY DOES THIS STRATEGY EXIST?

The overarching purpose of this Strategy is whakakotahitanga⁶:

Combined Partners' strengths accelerate environmental action and restore the hauora of land and water through equitable, collaborative management.

A secondary purpose has been identified:

The Waiwhakaata Strategy is an exemplar for other catchments that is transferable and adaptable.

This Strategy will be evaluated by the Partners at a time when sufficient progress has been achieved to inform a clearer understanding of how a similar strategic approach could be adapted and transferred to other catchments. A staged approach also acknowledges that different environmental management processes, and numerous community organisations are operating across the region.

VISION

WHAT INSPIRES US?

The overarching vision of the Waiwhakaata Strategy is:

To uphold the mana of the name, Waiwhakaata, so our actions are reflected in the waters

Te pupuri i te mana o tō mātou ingoa, o Waiwhakaata, e whakaatatia ai ā mātou mahi i ngā wai

This vision statement confirms the longstanding Kāi Tahu associations with Waiwhakaata and the Whakatipu Waimāori area through enduring ahikāroa, their expectations to exercise rangatiratanga and uphold their kaitiaki responsibilities alongside the Strategy Partners.

The vision offers a place where the Strategy Partners and the community can collaborate with each other and see how their collective efforts can combine together for the benefit of Waiwhakaata. The vision applies the meaning of Waiwhakaata in a way that requires all Partners to self-reflect and reflect on each other's actions to protect and restore the

mauri of the environment, when they look into the waters of Waiwhakaata. The vision also confirms the paramountcy of water as central to the interdependent connections across communities and te taiao⁸ as an indicator of hauora, ki uta ki tai.

Expectations to guide the Vision

Four expectations underpin the vision to help guide the implementation of the Strategy, including how success is measured and monitored. The four supporting expectations are:

1. Waiwhakaata is recognised as part of an integrated freshwater system, ki uta ki tai, encompassing the Mill Creek catchment, and extending to the Mata-au and the sea.
2. Ka mua, ka muri informs our long term thinking in a whakapapa context – past-present-future⁹.
3. Te mana o te wai and te taiao is enhanced through utu (reciprocity actions) to restore the mauri of Waiwhakaata.
4. Te Tiriti/the Treaty underpins the relationship between the Strategy Partners and is expressed through kotahitanga with stakeholders and the wider community.

⁸ The environment

⁹ This whakatauki can be understood metaphorically as walking backwards into the future – learning from the past so as not to make the same mistakes now and in the future. This approach is a response to the decade's long prevalence of a short term growth paradigm.

OBJECTIVES

TO ACHIEVE THE VISION



Applying kotahitanga through a ki uta ki tai lens

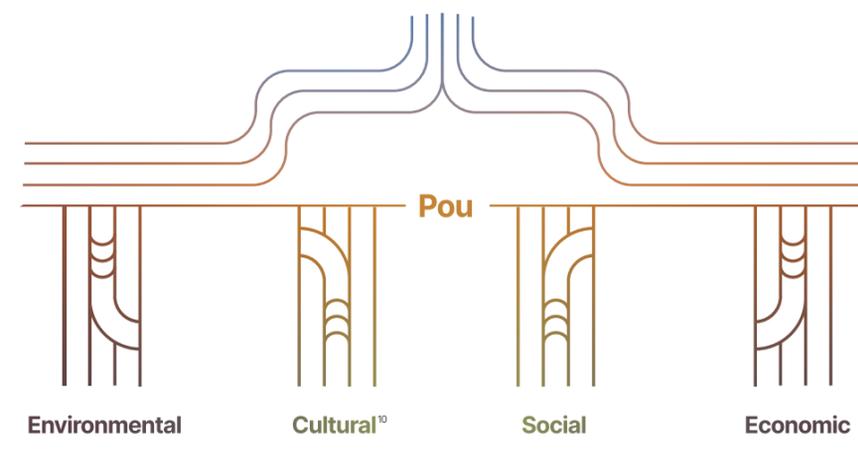
The previous 1995 Management Strategy was primarily focused on the improvement of lake water quality and tributaries, drawing connections to other activities that impact water quality, such as land development and unmanaged discharges. Moving beyond an historic focus on water, this Strategy broadens the scope to include the environmental expectations and objectives of Kāi Tahu and the community for Waiwhakaata.

There is also a focus on an economic context to enhance the management of Waiwhakaata by exploring opportunities for sustainable economic investment that supports environmental, social and Kāi Tahu outcomes. The Partners acknowledge

there must be space in this Strategy for people to exist as part of the environment and, through the environmental enhancement of Waiwhakaata as a priority, return value to the communities who contribute, and benefit.

Guiding pou

The approach of this Strategy is designed to address four pou that together offer a framework for sustainable management of Waiwhakaata, including:



¹⁰ The inclusion of a cultural pou should not be interpreted as constraining the expectations and aspirations of Ngāi Tahu to one sphere of influence, its inclusion is more conceptual in nature. Rather, Ngāi Tahu expectations and aspirations are woven throughout the other three pou, environmental, economic and social reflecting the way Ngāi Tahu understand their relationship with te taiao.

Waiwhakaata Objectives

The objectives have been co-designed during a series of collaborative engagements during the last 2 years in the process of creating this Strategy.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>01 Utu/Reciprocity
Toitū te marae o Tāne, Toitū te marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te Iwi Toitū
Care for the land, care for the water, and the people will be sustained.</p> | <p>06 Kaupapa Māori and Science Monitoring
Indicators and measures of success using multiple knowledge systems are co-designed, monitored and reported on annually.</p> |
| <p>02 Wai/Water
The mauri of wai¹¹ is restored, with the natural function and water quality of Waiwhakaata reflecting the name of the lake.</p> | <p>07 Informed Restoration
Contaminant monitoring is informing decision-making to restore Waiwhakaata ecological systems back to natural nutrient levels and hauora.</p> |
| <p>03 Ki Uta Ki Tai
The mauri of Waiwhakaata is enhanced allowing the wairua to thrive with minimal intervention or management.</p> | <p>08 Whakawhanaungatanga: Collaborative Action
Partners, stakeholders, and the community of Waiwhakaata are actively engaged and take ownership of the lake's restoration, expressing the principle of kotahitanga.</p> |
| <p>04 Mahinga Kai
Waiwhakaata supports thriving indigenous biodiversity that enables the practice of mahinga kai.</p> | <p>09 Te Ōhanga / Socio-Economics
Economic activity in the Waiwhakaata catchment is expected to restore natural balance, ensuring tangible benefits for te taiao and the wider community.</p> |
| <p>05 Matching Use, Capability, and Mauri
The mauri of Waiwhakaata is sustained through land-use activities that reflect land capability and environmental limits.</p> | <p>10 Capability, Capacity and Knowledge Systems
Diverse knowledge systems enhance capability and capacity amongst the Strategy Partners.</p> |

¹¹ Water

UTU/RECIPROCITY: RESTORING BALANCE

WAI/WATER

Objective 01

**Toitū te marae o Tāne,
Toitū te marae o Tangaroa,
Toitū te Iwi**

**Care for the land, care for
the water, and the people
will be sustained.**

This whakatauki is set out as the first objective to assist with placing the following objectives in order as well as how they are woven together. This objective seeks continuous improvement reflecting not only the need to restore Waiwhakaata and the catchment but to also reflect

that achieving enhanced hauora¹² across land and the water the better quality life communities will enjoy as part of the natural system. Objective one makes clear that the environment is the primary focus of this strategy.

Objective 02

**The mauri of wai¹³ is restored,
with the natural function and
water quality of Waiwhakaata
reflecting the name of the lake.**

Te wai o Waiwhakaata te toto o te whenua – the water of Waiwhakaata is the lifeblood of the land. This statement indicates the paramount nature of wai as the connecting element within Waiwhakaata which also sustains the way the Partners interact with the environment. In support of the responsibilities of the Regional Council to manage water, the expression of Te Mana o Te Wai is an important context for Kāi Tahu. The qualities of Te Mana o te Wai requires identification of those combined elements that support hauora, or the health and well-being of waterbodies, and their associated environment and communities.

The multiple classifications, uses and measurement of wai in a Kāi Tahu paradigm should be used as key mechanisms to emphasise attributes that can influence the way wai is managed, prioritised, and restored. Wai is seen as a central element of te taiao that enables the tangible and metaphysical connection across all objectives in this Strategy. Water incorporates the spiritual qualities of mauri and wairua, and the well-being of these qualities is dependent on the physical health of the water making an explicit connection to the vision of this Strategy.

¹² Hauora is understood to be a state of health, which can be thought of as meaning fit, well, vigorous and robust, describing a healthy resilience for waterbodies. When a waterbody is no longer in the state of hauora, then is it degraded - Bartlett, M. et al. (2020) Draft Murihiku Southland Freshwater Objectives, p.5

¹³ Water

KI UTA KI TAI

MAHINGA KAI

Objective 03

Waiwhakaata is managed as part of an integrated catchment in which all elements are seen as interconnected along waterways and across landscapes.

Ki uta ki tai is a Kāi Tahu environmental philosophy recognising that everything is connected and must be managed as such. Ki uta ki tai reflects that mana whenua (people) belong to the environment and are only borrowing the resources from generations that are yet to come. Ki uta ki tai is the basis of Kāi Tahu Iwi Management Plans and is frequently recognised in local government planning documents creating an opportunity for all resource users to enhance their management practices

and undertake a holistic approach to environmental outcomes¹⁴. Ki uta ki tai is important for the framing of this Strategy not only for Waiwhakaata but also the wider Whakatipu Waimāori region. Ki uta ki tai should not be thought of as linear, or only as pathways from mountains to the sea such as rivers, it is more about the interdependent relationships across landscapes and within nature, including people.

Objective 04

Waiwhakaata supports thriving indigenous biodiversity that enables the practice of mahinga kai.

Mahinga kai was, and is, central to the Kāi Tahu identity and way of life. The management, collection and processing of mahinga kai is an important ecological, social and economic activity. Fundamental to Kāi Tahu culture is the ability to learn and practice customary gathering of food and other resources, to put kai on the table at the marae and at home, and to ensure customary knowledge and practices are passed on from generation to generation¹⁵. Mana whenua aspirations and expectations for mahinga kai are commonly expressed in any management tool relating to the environment, also noting its fundamental position in Kāi Tahu cultural identity, social cohesion, and economy. Mahinga kai is considered by Kāi Tahu to be, in today's language, the principal 'environmental indicator' in natural systems. If mahinga kai is not present, is unsafe or unable to be harvested, then that natural system is under stress and requires remedial action.

Mahinga kai can also be a proxy for representing healthy ecology. For instance, when there is species abundance and the ecological systems are resilient, biodiversity is thriving. Equitable governance and management of natural resources, including mahinga kai practices, supported by mātauranga and western science, can significantly enhance biodiversity outcomes¹⁶. The Waiwhakaata Strategy area includes many important mahinga kai which highlight Kāi Tahu associations. The area was well known for seasonal harvest and management of bird species and resources such as plant fibre, plants for mōkihi to move along waterways, weka, many plant and fish species. Currently access to and availability of mahinga kai is very limited and predominantly governed and managed by Crown agencies.

¹⁴ Te Tangi o Te Taurira, 2008

¹⁵ Aukaha (2023). Cultural Values Statement: Waiwhakaata

¹⁶ Tauli-Corpuz, et al., (2020). Cornered by PAs: Adopting rights-based approaches to enable cost-effective conservation and climate action.

MATCHING USE, CAPABILITY, AND MAURI

KAUPAPA MĀORI AND SCIENCE MONITORING

Objective 05

The mauri of Waiwhakaata is sustained through land-use activities that reflect land capability and environmental limits.

Since colonial settlement land around Waiwhakaata has been used for a variety of exploitative purposes with resulting impacts from these uses on nature and communities, particularly downstream effects. More recently residential development has contributed significant environmental effects through unmanaged discharges in and around Waiwhakaata including downstream. These activities have significantly changed the whenua¹⁷ from its original identity and degraded many of the associations that connect

Ngāi Tahu. This objective seeks to introduce a more sustainable approach to those areas of the environment where the Partners can influence the type of land use that occurs. The approach is to match the capacity of land with a relevant land use in an effort to reduce environmental effects and where possible enhance environmental outcomes such as ecological restoration and community wellbeing and restore whakapapa connections.

Objective 06

Indicators and measures of success using multiple knowledge systems are co-designed, monitored and reported on annually

Currently the monitoring programme for Waiwhakaata has a predominant focus on water. This Strategy requires a broader range of socio-ecological elements to the scope that should be reflected in the monitoring programme to match. This objective enables Partners to make informed decisions about the investment

in actions to deliver the Strategy and to understand the efficacy of any decisions by analysing the relevant monitoring data. New indicators will be needed such as the measurement of mauri however existing monitoring frameworks already in use could be adopted or adapted for Waiwhakaata.

¹⁷ Land

INFORMED RESTORATION

WHAKAWHANUANGATANGA: COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Objective 07

Contaminant monitoring is informing decision-making to restore Waiwhakaata ecological systems back to natural nutrient levels and

Waiwhakaata is typical of many catchments in the region that have undergone significant land use transformation over the previous 150 years. Today the lands and waters are the subject of higher than normal effects from contaminants including chemical elements such as phosphorus and nitrogen based compounds, sediments, pathogens such as e-coli and heavy metals. While there is a slow but

steady improvement to some contaminant measures over the last decade, many are still at levels in excess of what the environment can naturally manage resulting in Waiwhakaata being in a state of degradation rather than hauora. In addition, the methods and type of contaminants measured and monitored has changed over time.

Objective 08

Partners, stakeholders, and the community of Waiwhakaata are actively engaged and take ownership of the lake's restoration, expressing the principle of kotahitanga.

This Strategy will succeed through support and buy in of the community, including residents, visitors and businesses around Waiwhakaata. To address this a communications and engagement plan is required to guide Partners' relationships with the community. The plan should ensure the community is informed of actions and outcomes in delivering this Strategy, opportunities for engagement to get involved, and contribute to actions and to understand the benefits and value

being achieved. The communications and engagement plan should be a collective plan that supports the role FOLH have played in recent years and be informed by a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise to understand the scale and interconnections of the communities involved. An engagement plan should emphasise education around delivering on a new environmental management paradigm as represented in this Strategy.

TE ŌHANGA/SOCIO-ECONOMICS

CAPABILITY, CAPACITY AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Objective 09

Economic activity in the Waiwhakaata catchment is expected to restore natural balance, ensuring tangible benefits for te taiao and the wider community.

Economic development frequently generates environmental effects particularly land use, often occurring at the expense of nature and communities. This Strategy seeks to encourage the development of approaches and mechanisms that are environmentally sustainable and beneficial for te taiao. Using land for economic benefit in the Waiwhakaata catchment comes with an expectation there is a reciprocal level of benefit that aligns with the objectives

of the Waiwhakaata Strategy, ensuring environmental restoration, sustainability, and tangible benefits for te taiao and the wider community. In order to progress this approach, the costs for the objectives and associated actions will need to be quantified such as the cost for removing sediment from the catchment until such time as a 'natural, no/low cost' nutrient budget is achieved.

Objective 10

Diverse knowledge systems enhance capability and capacity amongst the Strategy Partners.

One of the keys to making progress in environmental management is the capability and capacity of Partners to affect change through the contribution of different knowledge systems. This objective acknowledges that different knowledge systems such as mātauraka and western science can exist alongside one another equitably which is supported by increasing evidence that diverse knowledge combined can lead to substantially better outcomes. Improved understanding of other's paradigms through targeted education also builds depth and trust that

will enable Partners to undertake actions that extend across paradigms. Education provides pathways to understand the how contributions can be made in numerous ways beyond regulation such as, clarifying how to demonstrate improvements to nutrient runoff caused by development beyond enforcing regulatory provisions in the district plan. Kotahitanga also seeks to enhance knowledge by leveraging strong relationships for effective processes, avoiding the duplication of investment and tendency to work in siloes.

MOVING FROM OBJECTIVES TO ACTION ON THE GROUND

The objectives of this strategy create the scaffolding for the Strategy Partners to work more cohesively and effectively in their delivery through actions. They offer medium to long term guidance to support practical outcomes and are sufficient in their scope for a range of actions to be undertaken.

The objectives are designed to guide practically based outcomes rather than be aspirational, requiring consistent commitment over time to be successful. Several of the concepts and terms used come from a Kāi Tahu context, reflecting the diversity of knowledge systems that are essential to a collaborative approach to address complex environmental issues.

The objectives reflect a holistic approach to enhance the cohesion between the roles, responsibilities and paradigms of the Partners who have co-produced them. This approach avoids over-reliance on any one regulatory framework, and combined, the objectives reflect a future paradigm shift in the approach to environmental management in the Whakatipu Waimāori area and the wider region. This Strategy is designed to be a living document which should be regularly reviewed and updated by the Partners to take account of future development around Waiwhakaata and as aspects of te taiao change and improve.

Next Steps: Mapping The Road Ahead

The Partners are committed to ensuring this Strategy is implemented. To achieve these objectives, the Partners have agreed to several next steps to secure the delivery of this strategy over the medium to long term. The Strategy will also be used to inform their collaborative actions and shape how the Partners can work with the community to achieve the vision by progressing the following:

- Step 1:** Explore options for a formal relationship agreement between the Strategy Partners.
- Step 2:** Undertake a stocktake of all activities in the catchment contributing to the enhancement of the mauri of Waiwhakaata.
- Step 3:** Engage with the Waiwhakaata community to begin dialogue about priority actions that align with this strategy.
- Step 4:** Develop a work programme informed by the stocktake and community feedback on priorities to optimise collective resources to deliver action on the ground.

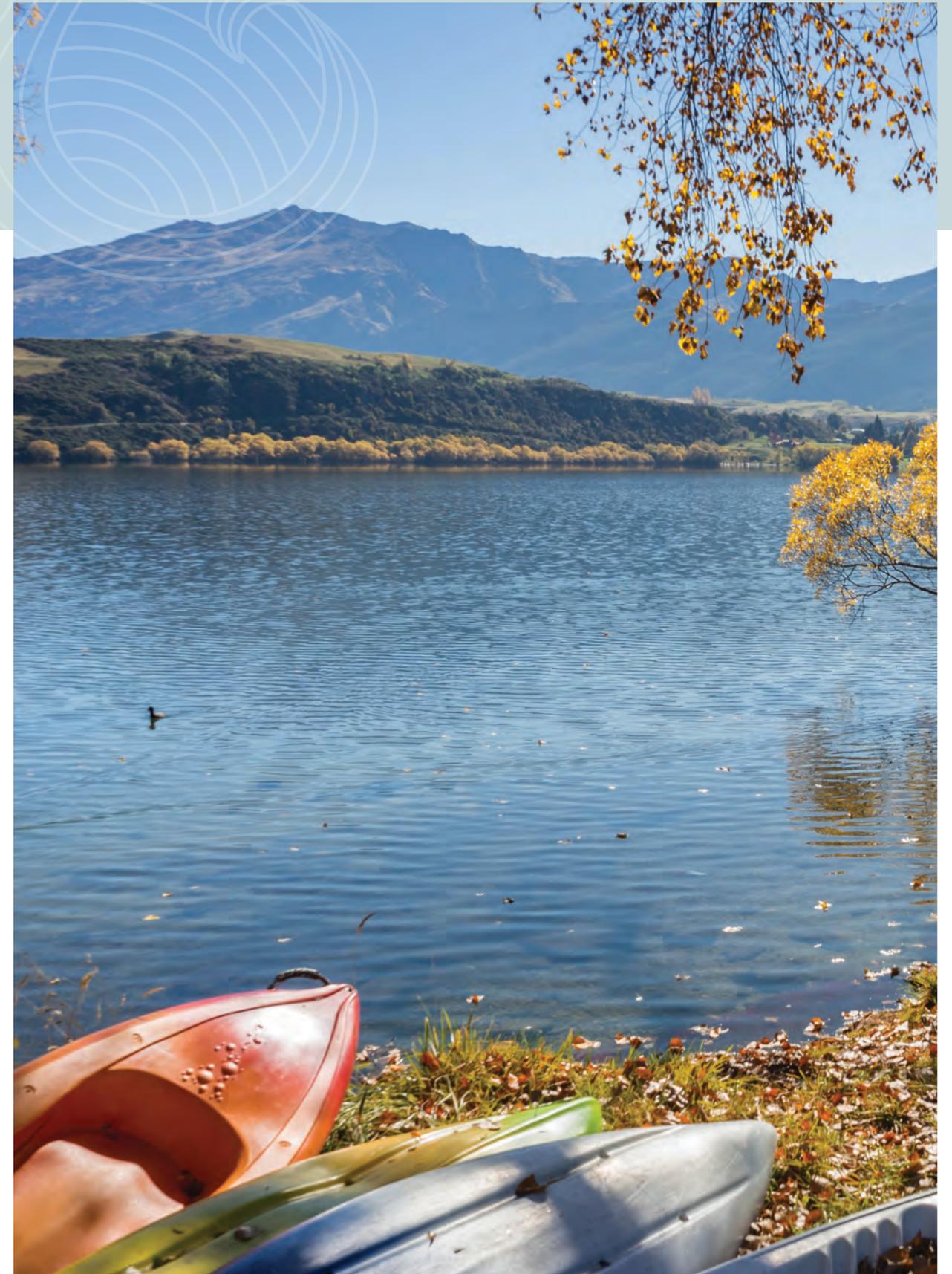


Image Credit Shutterstock

APPENDIX 1:

SUMMARY TABLES OF STRATEGY PARTNERS' ROLES RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK PROGRAMMES

The five Strategy Partners involved in the development of this Strategy established a working group to complete this task. Each Partner brings diverse strengths and expertise that together are more effective than acting individually. This appendix contains a brief stocktake of the Strategy Partners, their roles, responsibilities and some of their current activities and focus areas in the catchment currently. The purpose of this is to ensure there is accurate acknowledgement of the functions and areas of influence of each of the Partners. The stocktake is included to inform the Strategy as it evolves and identify accountabilities when considering implementation during phase two of the Strategy.

PARTNER: FRIENDS OF LAKE HAYES (FOLH)

Description:

The Friends of Lake Hayes is a charitable society formed in 2008 by a group of local property owners who were concerned about the deteriorating water quality of Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes). They are working together to restore the water quality at Waiwhakaata through lobbying, raising public awareness, and research.

The group's purpose is, "to do whatever is reasonably necessary to enhance and maintain the quality of water in the lake for the benefit of use and enjoyment of everybody residing in the vicinity of Lake Hayes and for all visitors and users of the lake."

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

The primary role of FOLH is to work with councils, the Department of Conservation, and other agencies on lake management policies and development impacts. FOLH also commission and support scientific research studies to understand lake behaviour and explore restoration methods. The group has also opposed some development proposals that could further degrade the lake's catchment.

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

Lake Hayes Vision Project (2021): In 2021, the FOLH and e3 Scientific developed a catchment management plan to reduce contaminant loads to Lake Hayes, called the Vision Lake Hayes (FOLH 2021). This plan aims to map contaminant sources in the catchment and set out areas for mitigations including the enhancement of existing wetlands, the development of extensive riparian vegetation corridors along creek banks, the installation and maintenance of sediment traps, and the construction of a wetland just back from the north shore of the lake. Some of the catchment mitigation work outlined in Vision Lake Hayes is currently being implemented¹⁸.

Arrow River Diversion (with ORC): Designed to pipe water from the existing Arrow River irrigation scheme, near Macetown, to augment the water volume of Mill Creek at Millbrook. From there, the irrigation water is piped into Lake Hayes.

Member of Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group: The Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been set up to revise the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy and develop a new action plan for the lake. The Strategy Group includes representatives from Mana Whenua, Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

FOLH has regularly monitored and undertaken research relating to water quality. This knowledge makes an important contribution to the deeper understanding of the key water quality drivers, which is poor but generally improving.

An opportunity exists to work collaboratively as a key partner to confirm the key actions and research that continue and potentially enhance water quality further.

FOLH see a more joined up approach across all partners will enable water quality hot spots and activities to shift the dial to be identified and targeted.

While water quality is a major issue in the catchment it is one element of many that requires attention in the strategy.

¹⁸ 742908_003ee998c0b246fea6ba61fe32d202b8.pdf (savelakehayes.org.nz)

PARTNER: TE AO MĀRAMA INC. (TAMI)

Description:

Te Ao Mārama Inc. (TAMI) represents Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku mana whenua for resource management and local government purposes. The membership of TAMI is made up of the four Papatipu Rūnanga. in Murihiku:

- Te Rūnaka o Awarua
- Hokonui Rūnanga
- Ōraka/Aparima Rūnaka
- Waihopai Rūnaka

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

Papatipu Rūnanga hold shared mana whenua, rangatiratanga, and kaitiaki obligations throughout the catchment. This is a shared interest area with the Papatipu Rūnanga represented by Aukaha. A key focus for TAMI is to achieve their expectations under the Resource Management Act and Local Government Act. These expectations are set out in the relevant Iwi Management Plan - Te Tangi o te Tauira, and other documents and reports they have produced.

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

Member of Waiwhakaata/Lake Hayes Strategy Group: The Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been set up to revise the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy and develop a new action plan for the lake. The Strategy Group includes representatives from Mana Whenua, Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Involved in local and central government processes and programmes: RMA consultation, research, policy development, cultural advice, conservation, and Crown projects.

The Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Environmental Statement of Expectation for Waiwhakaata was completed in 2023. The Environmental Statement of Expectations outlines strategic objectives for Waiwhakaata through the mātauranga, kawa and tikanga of Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku. This is a critical step for Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku in considering biocultural, environmental, and intergenerational outcomes for the lake and catchment. The approach outlined in the Environmental Statement of Expectation aids Ngāi Tahu Whānui with:

1. Long-term visioning and goal setting.
2. Defining baselines, expectations and measures of success.
3. Identifying where the best points of influence are for any matters to be addressed or progressed.
4. Commonality in reasoning and outcomes sought.
5. Effectively using everyone's skills, time and resources¹¹.

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

Beyond the contribution of the Waiwhakaata Environmental Statement of Expectation the Iwi Management Plan (IMP) Te Tangi o te Tauira provides clear strategic and policy guidance on the expectations of ngā Papatipu Rūnanga ki Murihiku.

While the IMP identifies targeted policies and issues relating to multiple environmental matters the kaupapa of the plan provides a holistic approach to understanding the environment and importantly about the place of people as part of nature, not separate from it. This is fundamental to how a strategy such as this for Waiwhakaata should be considered ensuring that the linkages of waterways, species, trails, resource use and occupation of these environments are thought of in a connected context. A strategy that takes the catchment (and wider environments) into account allows a systems approach to be taken. This approach seeks to avoid further disruption of the environment from further fragmentation and therefore become more vulnerable to development pressure and change.

Waiwhakaata sits in the High Country section of Te Tangi and includes policy guidance about mahinga kai, Biodiversity, Biosecurity, cultural landscapes and freshwater, all set in a ki uta ki tai construct.

TAMI do not have the capacity to deliver on all its priorities. Working in partnership on a catchment scale enhances what is achievable as a single entity. TAMI attempt to focus on outcomes but can be drawn into reactive processes that require them to respond to others processes and approach.

TAMI seek to create space for whānau to authentically action kaitiaki roles including cultural monitoring and supporting advocacy and education emphasis. The skills within TAMI demonstrate identifying connections and relationships between different paradigms and knowledge systems.

PARTNER: AUKAHA

Description:

Aukaha was established in 1995, originally as an environmental management agency called KTKO (Kāi Tahu ki Otago). KTKO was set up by Otago-based Papatipu Rūnanga to represent their views and aspirations. Its work initially focused on the Resource Management Act 1991 and the requirement for councils to consult with mana whenua for policy statements, planning documents, and consents.

Aukaha is owned by five Papatipu Rūnanga: Te Rūnanga o Waihao, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, and Hokonui Rūnanga. Its governance board comprises representatives from each Rūnanga and one independent director.

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

Provide professional planning advice and advocacy

Resource consenting

Policy and planning

Advocacy, engagement and expression of the awakening of Te Tiriti.

The four Papatipu Rūnanga developed their Iwi Management Plan in 1995 called Kai Tahu Ki Otago Iwi Management Plan. It contains comprehensive guidance on the expectations and aspirations of Kāi Tahu ki Ōtākou. It provides specific emphasis on Ki uta ki tai, mahinga kai and biodiversity including freshwater fisheries, wai Māori/freshwater, cultural landscapes/wāhi tupuna.

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

Involved in local and central government processes and programmes such as Resource Management and Local Government consultation, research, policy development, cultural advice, conservation, and Crown-led projects.

Delivered Cultural Values Statement Waiwhakaata Report. This report identifies the key expectations and values centered around the restoration and protection of the Waiwhakaata ecosystem, as well as the cultural significance of the area to the mana whenua including:

- Partnership and Governance:
- Restoration of Mana and Mauri:
- Indigenous Biodiversity and Mahika Kai Values:
- Land Management and Waterway Health:
- Education and Mātauraka:
- Employment and Social Outcomes:

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

Limited capacity to respond to everything

Examining the strategy through a te ao Māori lens adds a more holistic approach which is well suited to this kind of strategy.

The Iwi Management Plan contains significant information about Kāi Tahu expectations for this area where Waiwhakaata is located.

A contribution to this strategy will address several shortcomings that currently exist in other statutory and regulatory documents that are insufficient to respond to Kāi Tahu expectations.

Because of the demands from numerous organizations to engage in projects and statutory processes Aukaha sees everything from all other agencies and would be beneficial if this could be captured spatially or digitally.

This is a valuable capability that may assist to overcome siloed approaches that often hinder optimal outcomes.

PARTNER: QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL (QLDC)

Description:

QLDC is the territorial local authority (TLA) that governs the Queenstown Lakes District in the Otago region. The district covers an area of 8,719 square kilometres and encompasses the entire Waiwhakaata catchment, as well as the towns of Queenstown, Arrowtown, Glenorchy, Wānaka, Hāwea, and several smaller settlements.

QLDC is responsible for addressing the needs of both permanent residents and the high volumes of domestic and international visitors to the area through the delivery of local services.

The primary statutory responsibilities of the council relate to the Resource Management Act (RMA) and Local Government Act (LGA).

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

QLDC has a numerous land management responsibility that it undertakes for the community. These include:

- Roading
- Building regulations
- Parks & recreation (including several recreational reserves adjoining Waiwhakaata).
- Political leadership, democracy
- District planning – spatial/strategic planning
- Climate and resilience planning
- Economic development / destination management
- Policy and advocacy for the district
- Respond to regional/central government activity/reforms
- Treaty partnership
- Regulator / Plan development – land-use focus,
- Financial contributions from development
- Enforcement and compliance
- Enforcement and compliance
- Asset owners – 3W, property
- Landowners/land administrators (e.g., parks and reserves)
- Community infrastructure
- Community capability building – activation/facilitation
- Emergency management – response and recovery

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

Operative District Plan (March 2024): The Operative District Plan (ODP) is the current version of the plan which contains objectives, policies, and rules for resource management activities across our district. These provisions will still apply until there are no more appeals on the Proposed District Plan provisions.

Proposed District Plan (April 2021): A proposed plan by the Queenstown Lakes District Council that sets out policies and rules to manage land use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources across the district.

QLDC Parks and Open Space Strategy (July 2022): Provides guidelines around the protection and enhancement of the existing reserve network and the expansion of the network to meet the district’s growth. Also represents a range of Kai Tahu values and several priority outcomes through the inclusion of the Kai Tahu Values Framework and the inclusion of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act mechanisms in the district.

QLDC Future Parks and Reserves Provisions Plan (March 2022): Sets out a traditional local government approach to reserves and parks planning and is largely driven by the QLDC Development Contributions policy.

QLDC Spatial Plan (July 2021): The Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan is a vision and framework for how and where the communities of the wider Wakatipu and Upper Clutha can Grow Well and develop to ensure our social, cultural, environmental and economic prosperity. Related to the Whaiora Grow Well Partnership, an Urban Growth Partnership between Central Government, Kāi Tahu, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Otago Regional Council.

QLDC Heritage Strategy (2010): The Heritage Strategy references Māori alongside other historic activities associated with colonisation and changing land uses, such as mining, farming, and urban development. It is based on a vision for heritage values, places, and items to be identified, promoted, and sustainably managed for the appreciation of present and future residents and visitors.

Arrowtown/Lake Hayes Reserve Management Plan: Management Plan for the QLDC administered reserves adjacent to Waiwhakaata and Arrowtown. Includes Lake Hayes Pavilion infrastructure.

Member of Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group: The Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been set up to revise the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy and develop a new action plan for the lake. The Strategy Group includes representatives from Mana Whenua, Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Draft Blue Green Network Plan: A draft report was given to QLDC in 2024 which outlined Kāi Tahu expectations of a Blue Green Network, including how it should apply in the context of Kāi Tahu Tino Rangatiratanga and the Treaty Partnership - reflecting a Kāi Tahu paradigm and Kāi Tahu concepts, associations, and ancestral connections in the region.

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

QLDC does not have a restoration strategy for the district. In most instances restoration activity is undertaken where community efforts are located. Strategic guidance for restoration in the catchment would provide a more cohesive and targeted approach informed by co-designed criteria such as threats, mahinga kai, resources, community engagement.

QLDC have an increasing focus on reciprocity for te taiao and in coordinating efforts within QLDC including activities, resourcing, and outcomes.

There is also an emphasis on building relationships internally and externally and using opportunities to bring people together.

PARTNER: OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL (ORC)**Description:**

The Otago Regional Council is the governance authority for the Otago region. It manages the natural resources of the Otago region, including air, water, coastlines, and biosecurity. Its area spans approximately 32,000 square kilometres. The primary statutory responsibilities of the council relate to the Resource Management Act (RMA) and Local Government Act (LGA).

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

ORC is primarily responsible for environmental management in the region, including flood control, air and water quality, and pest control related matters in the region. This includes:

- Environmental policy
- Coastal planning
- Flood protection
- Public transport planning
- Monitoring discharges to land, air and water.
- Regulator
- Develop strategy and policy
- Undertake environmental monitoring (State of the Environment Reporting)
- Civil defence and emergency management
- Flood control
- Weed and pest management
- Support for best practice land management
- Public transport, harbour/lake management and safety
- ORC Environmental Implementation
- Community engagement and involvement in environmental protection
- Project delivery e.g. environmental restoration

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

ORC Long Term Plans 2021-2031 & 2024-2034: Sets the direction for ORC and identifies key work programmes for the next 10 years. Also includes information about what proposed works will cost, how they will be funded, and the projected impact on rates. Presently there is a residual budget of \$11,000 in the financial reserves attributed to Lake Hayes Remediation.

Clutha Mata-au FMU: Under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater, ORC must manage water via areas called Freshwater Management Units (FMUs). The Waiwhakaata catchment is within the Dunstan Rohe of the Clutha Mata-au FMU. The FMU report for this rohe is yet to be completed.

Regional Plan - Water: First became operative on 1 January 2004, and is the primary document that manages water within the Otago region's boundaries. It is a legal document that helps ORC manage water resources by regulating the environmental effects created by the use of water, activities in water bodies, or discharges of contaminants into the environment. It will be superseded by the proposed Land and Water Regional Plan which is currently in draft.

Otago Regional Policy Statements 2019 & 2021: The Otago Regional Policy Statements provide high-level direction for resource management in Otago and contain objectives, policies and methods to achieve integrated management of natural and physical resources. Regional and District Plans must give effect to it.

Proposed Otago Land and Water Regional Plan: The ORC is developing a Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) for Otago that is intended to give new, comprehensive direction for managing land and water resources in the region. The plan is required in New Zealand law, replacing an outdated Otago Regional Council planning framework that is no longer fit for purpose¹⁹.

Waiwhakaata Monitoring Buoy: An autonomous water quality monitoring system with two parts: a weather station and a water quality sensor package.

Member of Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group: The Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been set up to revise the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy and develop a new action plan for the lake. The Strategy Group includes representatives from Mana Whenua, Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Arrow Diversion Project: Designed to pipe water from the existing Arrow River irrigation scheme, near Macetown, to augment the water volume of Mill Creek at Millbrook. From there, the irrigation water is being piped into Waiwhakaata/Lake Hayes.

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

ORC does not have a restoration strategy. In most instances restoration activity is undertaken where community efforts are located. Strategic guidance for restoration in the catchment would provide a more cohesive and targeted approach informed by co-designed criteria such as threats, mahinga kai, resources, community engagement.

Unmanaged discharge issue: concern about increasing land use intensity and associated nutrient runoff issues remain. – could describe the progress that has been made.

The proposed LWRP was intended to include provisions that gave effect to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater 2020 (NPS-FM) and Te Mana O Te Wai, though direction on this is now unclear given the coalition government's intention to repeal and replace the NPS-FM.

In relation to this project ORC have an increasing focus on supporting project delivery, community engagement (soft skills/functions) and weaving together different community outcomes to produce better results for the environment.

PARTNER: TE PAPA ATAWHAI/DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (DOC)

Description:

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is responsible for managing and protecting the natural and historic heritage of New Zealand, including in the Otago region.

Role and Responsibilities in the Waiwhakaata Catchment:

- Conservation land management (including Lake Hayes Marginal Strip and Slope Hill Recreational Reserve)
- Biodiversity protection
- Community partnerships
- Education
- Research and monitoring
- Recreation and tourism opportunities (hiking trails, campsites, and visitor facilities in the region's national parks, forests, and other public lands).
- Historic site preservation nearby (Arrowtown Chinese Settlement and goldfields sites)
- Concession/permissions regulation and management (Coronet Peak)
- Connection to Jobs for Nature funding through Mana Tāhuna.
- Land management (Slope Hill, marginal strips)
- Wildlife Act responsibilities
- Native taonga – regulator
- Track management – communications

Current/Ongoing Projects in the Catchment:

Otago Conservation Management Strategy (CMS): The Otago Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) describes the conservation values of Otago. It guides DOC's work in the form of a vision, objectives, outcomes for places, policies, and milestones.

Project Gold: Project Gold is a DOC-initiated project dedicated to the protection and enhancement of kōwhai trees in Otago by gathering seeds, growing seedlings and planting a new generation of kōwhai.

Jobs for Nature Program: Jobs for Nature was a \$1.19 billion central government programme that managed funding across multiple government agencies to benefit the environment, people, and the regions. It was part of the COVID-19 recovery package.

Member of Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group: The Waiwhakaata Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been set up to revise the 1995 Lake Hayes Management Strategy and develop a new action plan for the lake. The Strategy Group includes representatives from Mana Whenua, Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, the Department of Conservation, and Friends of Lake Hayes.

Synergies and Gaps Analysis:

Although the CMS provides for Treaty partnership and a range of associations and practices with open spaces and waterbodies, there is little reference to Waiwhakaata and its protection/enhancement. This may reflect the relatively minor amount of conservation land in the catchment and that the majority of the investment in this DOC area is targeted towards the Tititea Mt Aspiring National Park. The Treaty partnership elements of the CMS are somewhat out of date, proving a practical opportunity for DOC to express its approach to treaty partnership through the Waiwhakaata Strategy.

Besides DOC conservation focus their commitment to this project is also to provide support for the Treaty partnership with Ngāi Tahu.

Opportunities to work in partnership with DOC in particular on Stewardship classified land should be identified as potential areas to reclassify to support management and practices in partnership with others that might enhance the approach to the Waiwhakaata Strategy.

A tenure map from DOC for the catchment area would be a beneficial contribution to this project.



APPENDIX 2:

KEY DOCUMENTS USED TO INFORM THE WAIWHAKAATA STRATEGY

Otago Regional Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council (1995) Lake Hayes Management Strategy

Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 and Deed of Settlement 1997

Ngāi Tahu 2025

Kāi Tahu ki Otago (2005) Iwi Management Plan

Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku (2008) Natural Resource and Environmental Iwi Management Plan Te Tangi a Tauria Cry of the People

Department of Conservation (2016) Conservation Management Strategy: Otago

Schallenberg, M., Schallenberg, L. (2017) Lake Hayes Restoration and Monitoring Plan

NIWA (2018) Lake Hayes Water Quality Remediation Options

The Nature Conservancy Aotearoa (2020) Lake Hayes/Wai Whakaata Innovative Approaches for Minimising Water Quality Impacts from New Urban Development

e3 Scientific (2021) Vision Lake Hayes

Queenstown Lakes District Council (2021) Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Otago Regional Council, Clutha Mata-Au Freshwater Management Unit (FMU): Dunstan Rohe

Aukaha (2023) Cultural Values Statement: Waiwhakaata

HydroSphere Research (2023) Lake Hayes State of the Environment

Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku (2023) Environmental Statement of Expectation for Waiwhakaata

Kauati (2024) A Kāi Tahu Blue Green Network

Please note that this is not a complete list of all documents and work programmes reviewed in drafting this Strategy.



Image Credit: Glenn Guy

