



Otago Conservation Board

Annual Report

1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016



Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority pursuant to section 6(O) of the Conservation Act

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1987

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Introduction

This is the seventeenth annual report from the Otago Conservation Board.

The Otago Conservation Board is an independent body established by Section 6(L) of the Conservation Act 1987, to provide for interaction between the public and the Department of Conservation at the regional/district level.

Conservation Boards focus on planning and strategic direction. A major responsibility for the Otago Conservation Board is overseeing the Otago Conservation Management Strategy, and the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan.

Each Board represents the community of interest in the work of the Department and conservation in general within the Board's area of jurisdiction. Its primary role is to advise the department and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

The Functions of Conservation Boards are outlined in Section 6(M) of the Conservation Act 1987 and the powers of Conservation Boards are outlined in section 6(N). Conservation Boards have a number of functions outlined in section 30 of the National Park Act 1996.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires that every Conservation Board provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Otago Conservation Board submits this annual report for the New Zealand Conservation Authorities consideration

Chairman's Report

The Otago Conservation Board has had a busy and varied year in fulfilling its statutory role as a well-informed voice of the community, providing considered strategic advice to the NZCA and to the Department.

The Letter of Expectation from the Associate Minister of Conservation, the Hon Nicky Wagner and the Workplan the Board developed, have provided the basis for the year's programme. Some highlights:

- The Review of the Otago Conservation Management Plan was finally approved by the NZCA in June 2016 after a long gestation. Finalising detail around the text clarifying the special relationship between Ngāi Tahu and the Department in terms of conservation oversight, took some time but future planning documents will benefit from the understandings reached. The CMS review process has consumed a large part of the Board's energy and time over its development but the process has also given Board members a great insight into conservation issues and aspirations for the Otago region. It will replace the current CMS and became operative in September 2016.
- A combined meeting with the Southland Conservation Board was held in Tahakopa in the Catlins on 18th, 19th February. The Catlins area provided an excellent opportunity to share common issues and to applaud the local voluntary initiatives contributing to conservation and the expansion of visitor experiences. The relationship developed between the two Boards has resulted in a combined initiative to partner in running a Tourism Forum to be held in Queenstown in October 2016.
- Advice to the Department on Statutory Planning documents, concessions and submissions presented on proposed legislation and to local authority plans, has also been an important focus over the year. Submissions made included:
 - Otago Regional Council General Policy Statement
 - Marine Protected Areas Legislation
 - Otago Regional Council Annual Plan
 - Conservation Streamlining Bill

In November, the Board spent a day with the Associate Minister of Conservation the Hon Nicky Wagner, visiting a number of sites around Alexandra, including the Mokomoko predator free sanctuary for the protection of Grand and Otago skinks. It was a great opportunity to be out in the field with the Assoc. Minister, discussing local conservation issues.

The Board's April meeting was held on the Puketeraki Marae at Karitane where we received a warm welcome from the Rūnaka. The Marae was a fitting place to farewell and thank Francie Diver for her contribution to the Board over a period of six years.

The realignment of Departmental structure into a more narrowly focused Partnership Group with Conservation Boards coming under the aegis of the Operations Group, has been very positive. However, the Otago Conservation Board area is now split with Inland Otago managed from Invercargill and Coastal Otago, managed from the Canterbury office. From the Board's perspective, this has added an extra and more distant layer to the relationship with the Department. One of the practical impacts of this is that there are now two committees that allocate Community Conservation Partnership funds for the Otago Region, requiring separate Board membership.

I believe the relationship between the Department and the Otago Board is on an excellent footing. The Department recognises the independence of the Board which encourages our decision making and advice to be direct and well considered.

We experienced significant concerns and difficulties during the reporting year around the Board Support Service the Department provides, with five different Board Support Officers servicing the Board since July 2015. The ability of the different folk involved was not the issue, it was rather that each new person managed a meeting or two then was replaced. This has required a much greater input from Board members in order to work through that early initiation of a new BSO into the role. I cannot emphasise strongly enough that the Board support role that the Department provides, is crucial to the effectiveness of our contribution towards conservation.

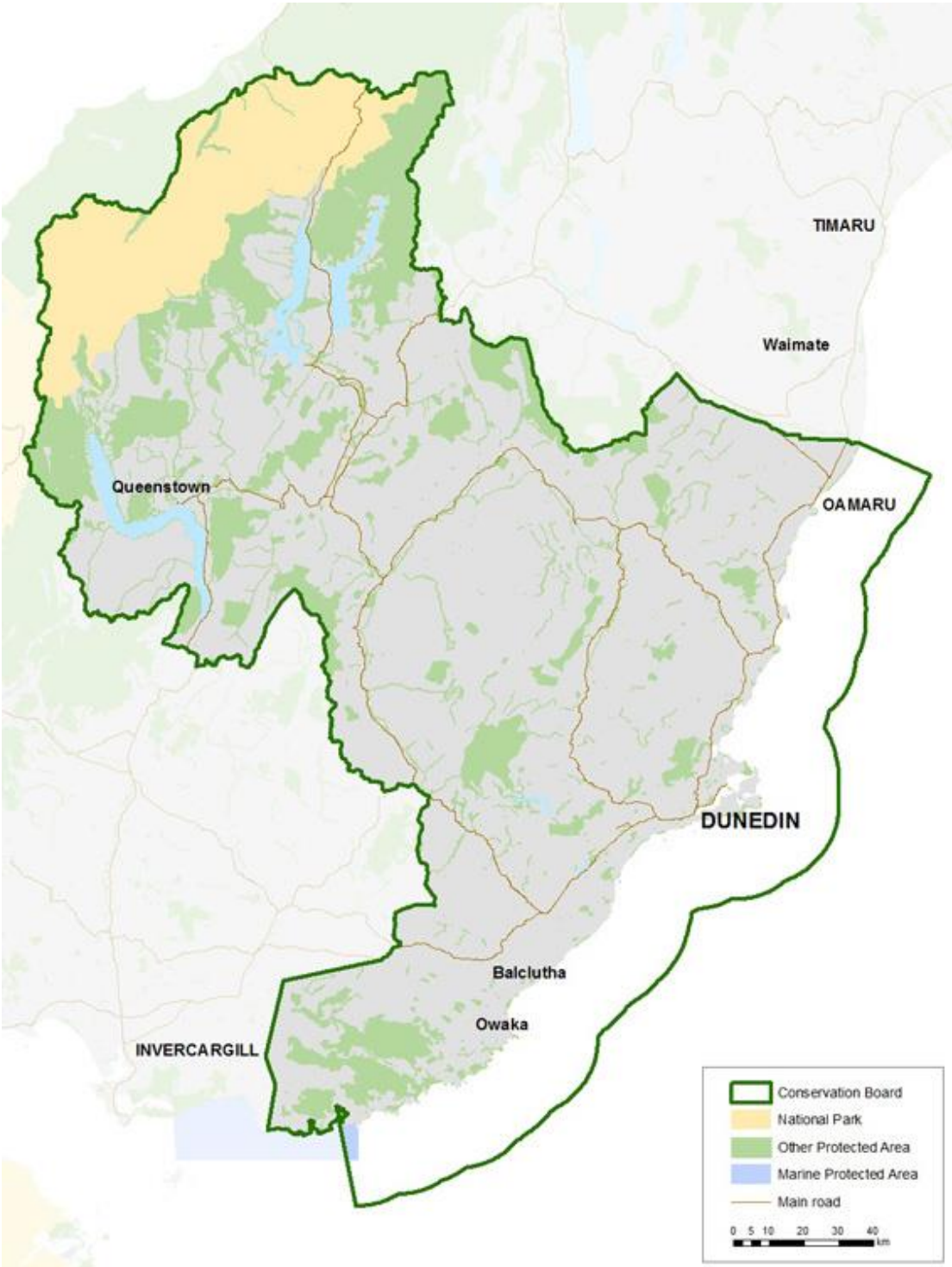
Thankfully we now have a permanent Board Support Officer, Sarah Gerard working from Queenstown and we are most grateful to Sarah for the skills she brings to the role and for her enthusiasm. I would also like to mention the support that John Roberts, Statutory Manager, Queenstown has provided to the Board. He is a great sounding board and his knowledge and input have been invaluable.

Finally, my thanks to Board members for their input throughout the year and to the staff and management of the Department.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J.P. Garden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light yellow rectangular background.

Pat Garden

Otago Conservation Board Jurisdiction

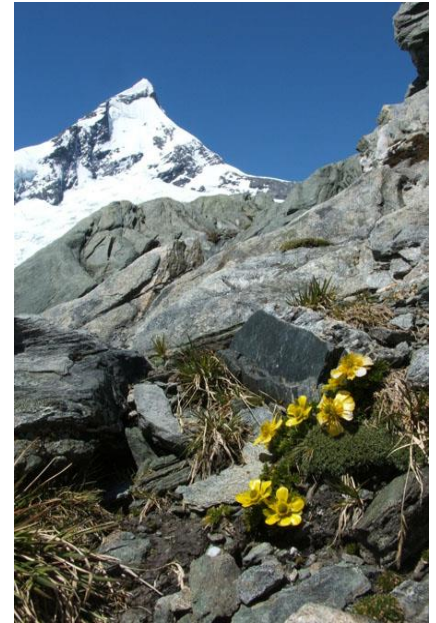


Otago Conservation Board Jurisdiction

There are several areas of significant importance within the Board's jurisdiction. Key sites include: Mount Aspiring National Park, Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park, Te Papanui Conservation Park, Hawea Conservation Park, Oteake Conservation Park, Otago Central Rail Trail, Coronet Peak / Remarkables / Treble Cone.

- **Mount Aspiring National Park**

This park comprises 355,531 hectares, consisting of 192,855 hectares in the Otago district and 162,676 hectares in the West Coast Tai Poutini district.



- **Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park**

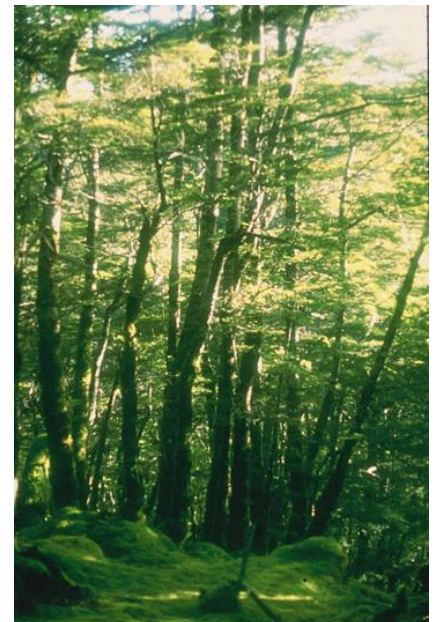
This is a collective name for the Catlins Conservation Park of 50,693 hectares, consisting of 32,933 hectares in the Otago district, 17,760 hectares in the Southland district, and numerous reserves and conservation areas located along or near the Catlins coastline.

- **Te Papanui Conservation Park**

This park comprises 20,591 hectares of tussock grassland, wetlands, shrubland and silver beech forest remnants on the Lammermoor and Lammerlaw Ranges, and is located in the north-west of Lake Mahinerangi near Lawrence.

- **Hawea Conservation Park**

The Hawea Conservation Park covers about 105,000 hectares of public conservation land around Lake Hawea and the Hunter River, as well as areas on the McKerrow Range near Makarora. Large areas in the park are covered with native beech forest and shrublands.



- **Oteake Conservation Park**

About 65,000 hectares of public conservation land on the St Bathans, Hawkdun, Ida, Ewe and St Mary's Ranges and parts of the upper Manuherikia Basin. The vegetation is dominated by tussock grasslands.

- **Otago Central Rail Trail**

This very popular recreational facility for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders follows the route of the former Otago Central Branch railway line for 150 kilometres between Clyde and Middlemarch. It is now one of the official New Zealand Cycle Trails.

- **Coronet Peak / Remarkables / Treble Cone**

Parts of the public conservation land at these sites are occupied by commercial ski fields that are well-known for winter recreational activities, but are popular summer destinations too.

Significant Indigenous Species

There are many significant or well-known indigenous species found within the Board's area including Lizards, Birds and Marine mammals. Some of these include:

Otago Skink (Mokomoko), Grand Skink (Mokomoko), Jewelled Gecko (moko kākārīki), Royal Albatross (Toroa), Haast Tokoeka, Yellow Eyed Penguin (Hōiho), Buff Weka, Yellow Head (Mōhua), South Island Robin (Kakaruai), Stewart Island Shag (Kōua), New Zealand Sea Lion (Pakake), Hectors Dolphin (Upokohue), New Zealand Fur Seal (Kekeno), Southern Right Whale (Tohorā).



Pakake



Haast tokoeka



Mokomoko



Moko kakariki



Hectors tree daisy



Peripatus



Hoiho



Mohua



Chafer beetle

There are also invertebrates, Freshwater Fish and Various native plants including; The Cromwell chafer beetle (*Prodontria lewisii*), Hectors tree daisy (*Olearia hectorii*), Rare Grass (*Simplicia laxa*), Rare Cresses (*Lepidium kirkii* and *Lepidium sisymbrioides*, *Pittosporum patulum*).

Otago is a biodiversity hotspot, home to 13 of New Zealand's most endangered non-migratory galaxiids. These include the Teviot Flathead, Eldon's Galaxiids, Central Otago Galaxiids, Dusky Galaxiids, Gollum Galaxiids among others.

Otago Conservation Board Membership

The Otago Conservation Board has Nine members, two of which are appointees of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, in accordance with section 273 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

The members are shown in the table below

Name	Term Started	Term Ending	From
Francie Diver*	01/01/2011	30/06/2016	Alexandra
Jim Williams*	10/11/2015	01/07/2018	Dunedin
Pat Garden	01/05/2014	30/06/2016	Millers Flat
Vance Boyd	01/05/2014	30/06/2018	Queenstown
Jason Gaskill	01/05/2014	30/06/2016	Oamaru
Anna Thompson	01/05/2015	30/06/2016	Dunedin
Bruce Jefferies	01/05/2014	30/06/2018	Wanaka
Ann Lockhart	01/07/2014	30/06/2017	Wanaka
Andrea Ludemann	01/07/2014	30/06/2017	Waitaki

**Ngāi Tahu Representative*

Meetings

The Otago Conservation Board Planned to hold five meetings during the reporting period. The location of Board meetings is usually rotated around the region, to enable as many communities and members of the public as possible to have access to Board members through the public forums at each meeting.

The table below shows a list of all meetings and where they were held.

	Date	Location
1	Friday 3 rd July 2015	Dunedin
2	Friday 3 rd September 2015	Oamaru
3	Thursday 5 th November 2015	Cromwell
4	Thursday 18 th February 2015	The Catlins
5	Tuesday 19 th April 2015	Karitane
6	Thursday & Friday 30 th June and 1 st July 2015 <i>(this meeting falls in two different reporting years)</i>	Dunedin

The below table shows a list of all board members and the number of meetings they each attended.

Name	Area	Attendance
Francie Diver*	Alexandra	2/5
Jim Williams*	Dunedin	4/5
Pat Garden	Millers Flat	5/5
Vance Boyd	Queenstown	3/5
Jason Gaskill	Oamaru	2/5
Anna Thompson	Dunedin	4/5
Bruce Jefferies	Wanaka	5/5
Ann Lockhart	Wanaka	4/5
Andrea Ludemann	Waitaki	5/5

Field Trips

During the reported year the Board went on three field trips

Mokomoko Field Trip - November

Associate Minister of Conservation Hon Nicky Wagner spent the day with the Board, visiting a number of sites around Alexandra, including the Mokomoko predator free sanctuary for the protection of the Grand and Otago skinks; Butcher's Dam and Mitchell's Cottage. Wide ranging discussions covering Stewardship land, Tenure Review, Otago's cycle trail network and the management of historic sites were held. An excellent opportunity to talk directly with the Associate Minister.

Catlins Coast Field Trip - February

The day focused on the local community's contribution to conservation, from monitoring Yellow Eye Penguins, providing information displays and signage for the increasing numbers of tourists and the monitoring of native bats and mohua. Both boards came away with a great deal of admiration for the commitment of community volunteers to further conservation in this very special place of Otago.

Huriawa Peninsular Field Trip - April

The Board visited the Huriawa Peninsular jutting out into the bay. It contained the ancient site of the pa tuwatawata and gave the Board a valuable insight into the challenges of upholding ancestral rights not only in the distant past, but in much more recent times. Richard Saunders of the Dunedin City Council explained the management plan the council has put in place for Mt Watkin/Hikararoa. The mountain has a special spiritual connection to the Puketeraki Runaka.

Community Involvement

Throughout the 2015/16 year the board welcomed presentations at its meetings from number of different organisations and individuals.

- Fergus and Mary Sutherland
- Roy Johnstone
- Robyn Shanks
- Janet Ledingham
- Emeritus Professor Sir Allan Mark
- Emeritus Professor Carolyn Burns
- Professor Katherine Dickinson
- Assoc. Professor Brent Lovelock
- Professor Hamish Spencer
- Professor Abigail Smith
- Associate Professor Alison Cree
- Ms Nicola Wheen
- Sophia Leon de Barra
- Mike Garrity
- David Barnes
- Jason Arnold
- Kara Edwards

Sub - committees

Land & Water Committee

The purpose and function of this committee is to draft submissions on Tenure Review, and take part in statutory consultation on Land and Water matters for board sign-off.

The members of this committee are:

- Vance Boyd
- Bruce Jefferies
- Andrea Ludemann
- Anne Lockhart
- Pat Garden ex-officio

Conservation Management Strategy Sub-committee

- Jim Williams
- Bruce Jefferies
- Jason Gaskill
- Pat Garden ex-officio

Board Functions under the Conservation Act 1987

“To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of Conservation Management Strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies under the relevant enactment of 6M(1)(a)”

During the 2015/16 year the Board worked closely with the Department to finalise the Otago Conservation Management Strategy. It was approved by the NZCA in June 2016 and is to become operative on 1st September 2016

“To approve Conservation Management Plans, and the review and amendment of such Plans, under the relevant enactments 6M(1)(b)”

No management places were reviewed, amended or approved during the 2015/16 period. The board is awaiting the review of the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan in early 2017.

“To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director General on any proposed change of status or classification or any area of national importance 6M(1)(d)(i)”

No areas of national or international importance have changes status or classification during the 2015/16 year

“Any other Conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board 6M(i)(d)(ii)”

The Department sought advice from the Board on the following matters:

- A proposed pipeline across conservation land in the Remarkables area.
- A proposal seeking an easement for the conduct of water and electricity across the Mata-Au Scientific Reserve
- A proposal to increase Snow and Glacier landings in the Mt Aspiring National Park
- The re-instatement of one off landings in the Dart Valley - within the remote zone of the Mt Aspiring National Park.
- An application for Guided Trail running on the Routeburn Track
- The Aramoana Spit pilot houses and the management of the area.

“To Liaise with Fish & Game Council’s on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board 6M(1)(f)”

Liaison has continued in an informal manner with the Fish & Game Council.

“To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister this Act or any other Act 6M(1)(g)”

The Minister has not delegated powers or functions under this sub-section.

“Every Board shall have such other functions as are conferred on it by or under this act or any other act 6M(2)”

The Board ensures that its decisions and recommendations are consistent with the requirements of Section 4 and the Conservation Act 1987.

Section 6.1 “Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions 6N(1)”

The Board recognises the powers granted under the Act and seeks to apply those powers in a considered and positive manner. The Department has been supportive of the Board’s role, and acknowledges its independence and the value the deliberations of the Board can offer to the Department.

Section 6.2 “without limiting the generality of sub-section (1) of this section each board may 6N(2)

Advocate its interest at any public forum or in any statutory planning process 6N(2)(a)”

Territorial Local Authorities within the region include; Clutha, Queenstown Lakes, Central Otago and Waitaki District Councils; the Otago Regional Council and the Dunedin City Council

The relevant liaison members, assisted by the Board Support Officer, monitor legislative changes, district plan reviews and resource consent applications, and refer issues to the board where conservation values are threatened.

The following were brought to the board during the 2015-16 year

- Marine protected areas legislation
- Otago Regional Council Annual Plan
-

“Appoint committees from members and other suitable persons and delegate to them functions and powers”

Each committee of the Board has in accordance with its delegated powers the ability to investigate issues, draft submissions and do other similar preparatory work, before referring it to the full Board for ratification.

“The Conservation Authority may consult any Conservation Board about the draft of a general policy after receiving submissions on it 17B(3)(1)(ii)”

There have been no general policies put in place since the General policy for National Park and the Conservation General Policy in May 2005.

“Draft freshwater fisheries management plans are to be prepared by the Department in consultation with the Conservation Boards affected by them 17K(1)(a)”

No such plans affected the Board’s jurisdiction in 2015/16

“The Minister of Conservation shall consult the relevant Conservation Board about any proposal made by a Crown Land disposal agency to reduce the width or, or provide an exemption from, a marginal strip, and on being satisfied this it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so, the relevant Conservation Board may request the Minister to publicly notify the proposal 24B(a)”

No such applications were considered by the board in 2015/16

“Any Board may co-opt for such term as it thinks fit any suitable person or persons to be a member or members of the Board. 6Q(1)”

There were no co-opted members in the 2015-16 year

Board Functions under the National Parks Act 1980

The Board is responsible, in conjunction with the Department, for preparing draft reviews of management plans, for hearing and deciding on public submissions on any draft review and for recommending any review to the New Zealand Conservation Authority for approval sections 30(a) and 45-47.

There is one National Park in the Board's area of jurisdiction. The Mount Aspiring National Park, has a management plan review on a 10 yearly basis. The MANPMP was approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority on 25th of June 2011 and is up for review again in early 2017.

“In addition to the functions specified elsewhere in this Act or any other Act, the functions of each Board shall be to give advice to the Director-General or the Authority on any other matter relating to any national park within the jurisdiction of the Board. 30(1)(f)(iii)”

The Board continues to have an ongoing interest in the management of the Mount Aspiring National Park, and advises the Department where required on concessions and other matters. No amendments were made to the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan in the 2015/16 year.

Liaison

The Board has appointed various members to liaise with outside agencies.

Organisation	Liaison Person
Southland Conservation Board	Ann Lockhart
Queenstown Lakes District Council	Ann Lockhart
Clutha District Council	Anna Thompson
Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board	Anna Thompson
West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board	Vance Boyd
Central Otago District Council	Pat Garden
Waitaki District Council	Andrea Ludemann
Otago Regional Council	Pat Garden
Dunedin City Council	Jim Williams
Fish & Game Council	Francie Diver

Other Conservation Boards

The Boards immediate neighbours are the Canterbury Aoraki, West Coast Tai Poutini, and Southland Conservation Boards. The Chairperson, liaison members and the Board Support Officers ensure there is regular communication between the Boards. A very successful combined meeting with the Southland Board was held at Tahakopa in the Catlins region in February 2016.

The Otago and Southland Boards are currently planning for a Tourism Forum to be held in Queenstown, and run together.

The Public

The board has continued to involve the community in its work, and holds regular meetings around the region and the public is encouraged to participate in public forums at these meetings. This is seen as successful, with a number of people from local communities taking the opportunity to bring their concerns to the Board. The Board seeks to represent the public interests and continues to strive to learn the views of the public.

The Board would like to encourage more people to attend the meetings and take advantage of the opportunity to address the Board during the public forum.

City, District, and Regional Councils

The Board has continue to develop a good relationship with councils and have liaison members for all relevant councils in their area. The relevant Mayor of the area where the Board is meeting is always invited to attend the meeting.

Iwi

Ngāi Tahu nominates two members of the board, selected by their Papatipu Rūnanga. Their status as representatives of local hapū is endorsed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Currently Dr Jim Williams and Francie Diver are the Ngāi Tahu representatives, although Francie is due to retire at the end of the reporting year.