

# Friends of Lake Hayes Society Inc Submission to the

## ORC 2022-23 Proposed Annual Plan

Friends of Lake Hayes Society Inc. wishes to submit on the proposed Otago Regional Council Proposed Annual Plan 2022-23.

It would also like to be heard when Council holds public consultation on the draft plan.

### 1. Introduction

Friends of Lake Hayes Society Inc (FOLH) is a community-based group and was formed in 2008. Its aim is to improve the currently degraded water quality in Lake Hayes. From existing scientific reports together with linear catchment sampling programme carried out between ORC and FOLH we have used expert advice to develop a remediation plan with shared responsibilities of all stakeholders, i.e., FOLH, ORC & QLDC. We are now actively promoting this as a vision for the future of Lake Hayes. This Plan involves a major long-term integrated remediation programme in the lake's catchment. FOLH has named this the Vision Lake Hayes Project. It has the aims of:

1. Improving the outflow from Lake Hayes by replacing the culvert under SH 6.
2. Augmenting the flow of water through Lake Hayes by adding cool, surplus water from the Arrow Irrigation Scheme. Most of the required funding for this already exists and completing this project forms part of year 1 21-31 OP Plan. Ongoing running costs associated with providing water from the Arrow Irrigation Co. will be met by maintenance budget starting in year 2 of the 21-31 OP plan.
3. Supporting the implementation of a major integrated catchment management programme in Mill Creek from its headwaters to the lake involving riparian remediation, the restoring of existing wetlands, reconstruction of one new wetland and the installation of sediment traps with ongoing removal of sediment. This project is being undertaken by the local Iwi Trust – Mana Tahuna.

### 2. Progress made in 2021-22

In the first year of the Long-term Plan 2021 – 2031 some significant progress has been made toward meeting our objectives.

The Wai Whakaata/Lake Hayes Strategy Group has been initiated and now provides a sound relationship-based forum across stakeholders and agencies to progress the long-term well-being of Lake Hayes and its catchment. This has been facilitated by staff and logistical support provided by ORC. We are very grateful for this and believe that the resources expended to achieve this will prove to be an excellent investment for both the ORC and the community as a whole. FOLH was a strong proponent for this forum and will continue to support it in any way that it can.

FOLH is also pleased that at last there is real progress being made with improving the outflow from the Lake outflow via Hayes Creek. We understand that a solution may be in place by late spring this year. We also acknowledge the generosity of local philanthropist Rod Drury for his undertaking to fund the necessary works. When this project is completed we expect that the popular Lake Hayes walk way will be accessible to the public all year round and that the improved outflow will help increase the rate of expulsion of excessive nutrients from the lake.

We are also pleased with the role that ORC has played in provision of infrastructure to augment the flow of clean water into the lake by using excess water from the Arrow Irrigation Scheme. We hope in the near future that the additional flow will help reduce the amount of nutrients in the lake and reduce excessive algal blooms.

The greatest achievement in the last year has been the commencement of the Lake Hayes Vision catchment remediation project. Mana Tahuna has successfully applied for funding from Central

Government under the Jobs for Nature programme. The role of Rod Drury who has provided a very significant amount of seed funding must be gratefully acknowledged. The multiyear project has begun with extensive riparian planting and pest control work. However, at present the main set back is the delay waiting for a resource consent from ORC before proposed more substantial remedial work can be started in Mill Creek.

FOLH as part of the review of QLDC District Plan has actively sought to provide safeguards to protect water quality in Lake Hayes from inappropriate or poorly designed and implemented development in the catchment. It has also supported ORC Water Plan process with the proposed introduction of measures under Plan Change 8 Urban Issues to reduce the impact of sediment loss from development activities.

We believe that the working relationship between FOLH/the local community and ORC has improved considerably over the last year. This has come from more regular contact with key staff in the water, biosecurity, biodiversity and science areas. This has been facilitated by ORC increasing its staff levels and supporting them to interact directly with communities which have particular interests and needs. We would encourage ORC to continue to build its staff capability and capacity so these critical relationships will enable more direct action can be taken to address the many pressing environmental issues around the Otago region.

### **3. Funding**

Friends of Lake Hayes Society Inc continue to support the investment in Lake Hayes remediation as per the original Long Term Plan adopted by Council for the 2021-31 period. This will allow for the continued implementation of programs committed to in 2022 and now in progress.

FoLH note that this investment is supported through a targeted rate increase, which is now fully supported by the community on the basis the programs supported will, in part, deliver the remediation of Lake Hayes. FoLH also note that this investment is only part of the total investment now bearing brought to bear to achieve this outcome (including central government, community and private investment), and all are dependent on each other for success.

### **4. Looking Forward**

FOLH looks forward to further developing its collaborative relationship with ORC as well as with other agencies including Iwi, QLDC, DOC, Fish and Game, NZTA, and LINZ, in progressing all programmes leading to the remediation of Lake Hayes.

It sees an effective and productive long-term partnership between the stakeholders and the local community with the agencies which are responsible for managing our natural and built resources as critically important. This relationship will not only bring about early strategic alignment on the key issues but will also empower everyone to collaboratively solve the water quality problems in Lake Hayes in a timely and cost-effective way.

**Mike Hanff**  
**Chair, on behalf of the Friends of Lake Hayes Society Inc**

3 May 2022