

News from the Environmental Team at Opuha Water Limited (OWL) Nov 2023

ENVIROUPDATE

Welcome

This is the third Environment focused newsletter from OWL's Environmental and Regulatory team.

This is an update to keep you informed of what is relevant at the moment, but OWL will always keep you updated on environmental matters as they arise via email and information sessions.

Please feel free to contact the environmental team if you wish to discuss any of the matters addressed in this newsletter.

JULIA CROSSMAN

OWL Environmental and Regulatory Manager



Contribution to South Canterbury – Tom Lambie

OWL were delighted to see Tom Lambie's services to agriculture recognised at the recent South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards where he received the Special Commendation Award. Tom is a proud Opuha shareholder, and we couldn't be happier to list the achievements and accolades he has received over the years (see page 2 of the newsletter).

The video of Tom receiving his award can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthCanterburyChamber/videos/658864699527758> (see minute 27 to 32).

Congratulations Tom, we appreciate your commitment and the contribution you have made to OWL, agriculture, and the South Canterbury community.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM

If you have any questions about issues that have been raised in the newsletter, don't hesitate to get in touch with OWL's Environmental team.

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Tom Lambie ONZM, D.Nat.Res h.c (as delivered at the Business Excellence Awards)

Tom Lambie is a well-respected figure who has lent his experience and wisdom to many organisations and has a long history of leadership.

Tom runs a 415ha dairy farm at Pleasant Point, growing it from 89ha in 1982. In 1987 he became the South Canterbury Dairy Section Chairman of Federated Farmers, then Provincial Vice-President and President, National Vice-President from 1996-2002, and National President from 2002-2005. Tom represented New Zealand on the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, becoming the Federation's Vice-President in 2004. From 2002-2005 he also sat on the Board of the Trade Liberalisation Network. He was chair of the Landcare Trust 2002-2005.

Aligned with the building of the Opuha Dam Tom was a director of the South Canterbury Farmers Irrigation Society 1997-2007. Full farmer ownership of the Opuha Dam was achieved in 2007 when Tom became Chair of Opuha Water Limited, a role he held from 2007-2016, and remained a director until 2018.

For many years Tom was one of the public faces of Lincoln University, serving on the Lincoln University Council for 14 years from 2002. He was Chancellor for 11 of those, retiring from the role in 2016. He is still the Patron of the Alumni Association and the Lincoln University Rugby Club.

Tom was appointed as an ECan Commissioner 2010-2016 and then an appointed Councillor 2016-2019, helping formulate and implement Canterbury's regional planning rules with portfolio responsibilities for Biodiversity and Biosecurity.

Tom was also a member of the Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) to the Minister of Statistics from 2009-2014, and Chair of the Committee from 2011-2014, a Trustee of the Todd Foundation from 2002-2010, the Hikorangi Foundation Chairman from 2007-2012 and on the Motu Research & Education Foundation Board 2008-2011. He was a director of the Aoraki Business Development Board from 1996-1998, Only Organic (Christchurch) 1992-1997, Timaru Milk Company 1987-1997.

In the 2014 New Year Honours list, Tom was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to agriculture. Tom has received two awards from Lincoln University. The Ngāti Moki Trophy for Māori Leadership in 2016 and an Honorary Doctorate in 2018 receiving the degree of Doctor of Natural Resources *honoris causa*. He gained his BAg Com from Lincoln in 1980 and was a Kellogg Rural Leadership Scholar in 1995.

2023 South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards

OWL were a finalist in the 2023 Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards in the 'Environment Canterbury Sustainability and Environmental' Special Award category.

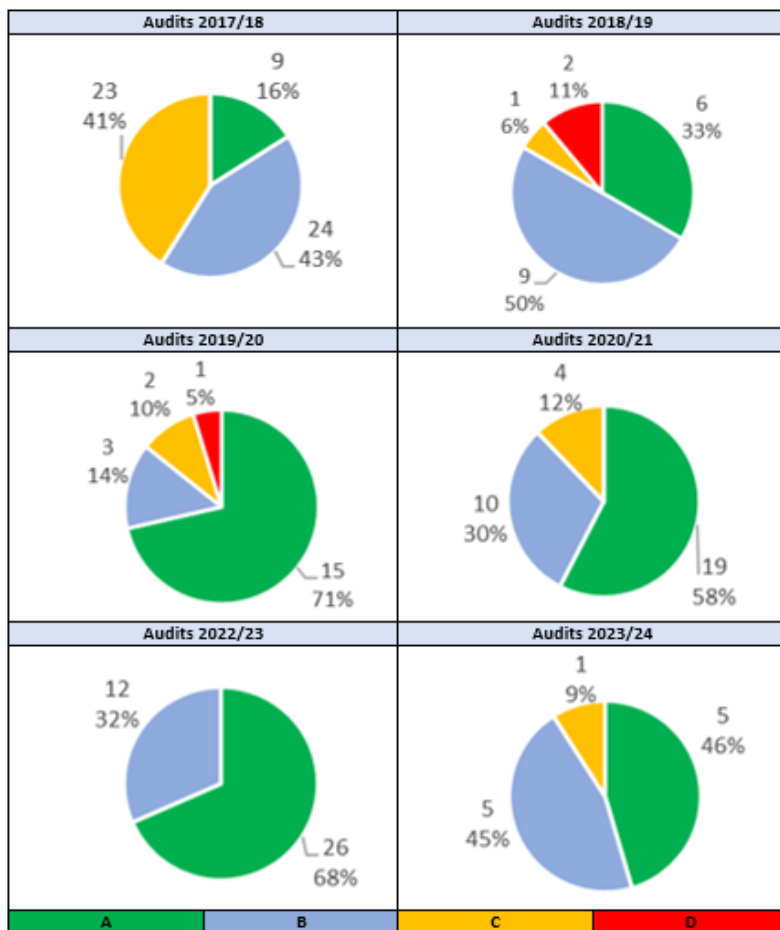
The Special Award category was for any company, organization, farm, community group or school, that is focusing on managing and enhancing the environment and/or sustainability in their organization through economic, social, cultural, or environmental protection.

OWL aims to be a recognized leader in sustainable water management. OWL's environmental initiatives include generation of renewable energy; river augmentation; biodiversity initiatives; water quality investigations and research; community; farm environment plans; education; education and training; and working with schools and universities to further education and research opportunities.

The Environment Canterbury judges commented on OWL's environmental focus across a wide portfolio of activities- including supporting shareholders to develop their Farm Management Plans, to investments into biodiversity. The judges concluded by stating that *it is heartening to see Opuha Water's cognizance of the positive impact they can have across their catchment and for South Canterbury.*



Follow **Opuha Water** on Facebook for media releases and updates.



FEP & Auditing Update

It is great to see Audit results over the last few years trending towards achieving A grades. Well done!

If you have an upcoming Audit, remember to make sure prescribed actions from the previous Audit are completed, along with ensuring you have your records up to date. Overseer nutrient budgets are only necessary if you have made changes to the following system variables, and need to show further evidence to the Auditor;

1. Total effective area
2. Total irrigated area
3. Winter crop grown
4. Farm system change (eg. Sheep & beef to dairy support)

Need to update your FEP? Check in with Lucy to get it done on time, please do not leave this until the last minute.

Need some training? Check in with Lucy to see if there is anything scheduled.

Has your farm manager changed? Check in with Lucy to see what this might mean for an upcoming Audit on your property.

Water usage data requests

OWL is regularly receiving requests from shareholders to get a copy of their water usage data from the previous season for Audit evidence.

Please remember, at all times, it is the water user's responsibility to be able to access your own telemetry to;

- ensure compliance with your consent
- be taking the correct allocation of water ordered from a sub-scheme consent.

An Auditor will expect to see that you know how to access your telemetry, as well as understand what it is telling you.

FLU Consent renewals

Farming land use consent renewals are required to be lodged with ECan 6 months before your current consent expires.

For this process, you will need to have an updated FEP and maps, alongside Overseer modelling with your consent application.

Gathering correct, and up to date information takes time. Ensure you have enlisted help to do this well before the 6 month deadline.

Environmental Policy Review

The Board has recently approved reviews of three policies to bring them in line with each other;

1. FEP & Audit Charging (no substantive changes)
2. Poor on-farm Environmental Performance (no substantive changes)
3. Non-compliant Audit Policy; there are changes to the policy in regards to how non-compliance with N loss is assessed, where further evidence would be required (which may or may not include Overseer). This is dependent on what system variables have altered. Evidential requirements are at the discretion of the Auditor.

Events to look out for.....

Mahinga Kai & Rock Art Management - Workshops & Field days

ECan, in conjunction with the Ngāi Tahu Māori Rock Art Trust, and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, are in the process of planning for farmer workshops and field days to understand the effects of farm management decisions on mahinga kai and Rock Art.

They will be specific to South Canterbury and provide opportunities to hear from experts in these fields.

Keep your eye on your emails later in December, with events pencilled in for February 2024. OWL will be involved in the coordination of providing information out to its shareholders, along with the wider community, and assisting with the events.

Small block Biodiversity Planning

In 2022, OWL's larger property owners had biodiversity plans developed for their properties. OWL would like to provide an opportunity for smaller block owners to learn about biodiversity in a workshop setting with Lang Sustainability Ltd. OWL is considering appropriate timing for such an event(s), if this interests you, watch out for an email with further details.

If you would like to register your interest now for any of these upcoming events, please let Lucy know by email to

lucy@opuha.co.nz 😊

Predator Trap Library

OWL supports the removal of introduced predators so native biodiversity thrives. We have collaborated with DOC and the Pleasant Point Lions to establish a predator trap library in Pleasant Point and are working with the Fairlie Heartlands Centre and MENZ shed to establish a trap library there. The trap library scheme allows locals to borrow traps for up to two months, to help control introduced predators.

Pleasant Point Predator Trap contact: Neville Burt
nevilleburt@xtra.co.nz or call 027 6148121.

Fairlie Predator Trap contact: Lisa North, Heartland Fairlie Centre 0276858243.

OWL are also providing a small contribution to the cost of plant guards for the Heartland Centre's Opihi River Restoration Project.

Quarterly reporting

OWL shares the results of our extensive monitoring program with the community. Publishing 'warts and all' reports show we take water quality seriously, demonstrating environmental leadership.

Reports are viewed at [Water Quality Monitoring Reports – Opuha Water Limited](#).

[June to August 2022](#)

[January to March 2023](#)

[April to June 2023](#)

Key Findings from April 2023 to June 2023 Report

- Rain events during April to June resulted in short-term increases in turbidity in Lake Opuha.
- The cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) health warning was current for Lake Opuha during the reporting period but has since been lifted.
- Heavy metals and DDT concentrations in Lake Opuha surface sediments were of low ecological risk.
- Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) scores for the Kakahu River since 2008 show similar values upstream and downstream of OWL's discharge location.
- Quantitative Macroinvertebrate Community Index (QMCI) scores for the Kakahu River in 2022 showed similar results upstream and downstream of OWL's discharge location. QMCI data for other years did show some differences.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & SUCCESS



OTOP Zone Committee Funding

Congratulations to Parahaki Ltd, Te Awa Land Co, & WHL Devondale who were recipients of 2022/23 OTOP Zone Committee (ZC) funding towards implementing some of their Biodiversity Plan Actions.

2023/24 ZC funding is available now.

If you are interested in applying, please contact Lucy for support with the process.

NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust

OWL have recently been made aware, by our local Fish & Game officers, of an available fund that provides financial backing for hunting and conservation in New Zealand.

Each year the money raised from game bird habitat stamps is transferred from F&G councils to the NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust.

The Trust Board uses this money to help create and enhance habitat for the benefit of game birds and other wildlife.

So if you have a great duck pond, or wetland site that could use some improvement, this could be the fund for you.

Applications for grants close on June 30 each year and are open to anyone with support from the landowner and a recognised habitat referee.

For more information about the Trust or how to apply for a grant, please refer to the forms available at [The New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust | Fish and Game](#), or contact your local Fish & Game office.

Lucy is available to help with your application if you are interested, don't hesitate to get in touch!



Lake Opuha Biodiversity Enhancement – Fonterra Hapori funding

The Catchment Collective South Canterbury Society (CCSC) on behalf of and in association with the Upper Opihi-Opuha catchment group, applied for funding from the Fonterra Hapori fund and were successful! The project is based on improving the biodiversity values at Lake Opuha by enhancing the main recreational area on Bennetts Road. The first stage of the planting was completed in November in an area of open ground between willow trees on OWL's land near the reserve. The willows will provide shelter during the establishment phase, however in the long-term it is intended to remove the willows and replace them with natives.

Helping with the planting day were 60 Y7/8 students from Mackenzie College, their teachers, and the Upper Opihi-Opuha catchment group. A total of 500 natives were planted, each with a plant guard to protect them from predators, and surrounded by woodchip to help suppress weeds. A variety of natives were used, including Harakeke (NZ Flax), Ti Kouka (cabbage tree), Mingi mingi (tree daisy) and manuka. See page 6 for photos of the day, and make sure you check them out next time you're visiting the lake!

Lake Opuha Planting Day 3rd November 2023

