

Community Waterways Partnership Charter

Our Vision

A collaborative partnership that supports the development of community-based initiatives to improve the ecological health, indigenous biodiversity and the amenity value of our urban waterways.

Purpose of this Charter

This charter is a shared statement of intent among community groups, researchers, businesses, and local, regional and central government. We seek to work in partnership under a Charter, to achieve outcomes that cannot be attained independently. We will do this by sharing expertise, networks and resources to promote and achieve solutions needed to improve the ecological health, indigenous biodiversity and amenity value of our urban waterways. We uphold Te Mana o Te Wai, to actively protect and enhance the mauri of Christchurch urban waterways.

This Charter is a statement of intent to work in partnership. It imposes no binding authority, decision or obligation on partners. Each signatory partner remains autonomous and none is bound by the Charter in undertaking everyday activities. The partnership is not a new formal structure or organisation.

Background

Christchurch has many passionate community groups that are already working to further protect and improve their local waterways. Activities involving local communities and schools, with support through the partnership, will bring about behaviour changes, at individual, household and community level, to stop contaminants entering stormwater and waterways that degrade water quality.

The Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) was established in 2009 and sets a framework for a collaborative approach to managing freshwater in Canterbury. The Christchurch West Melton Zone Committee and Banks Peninsula Zone Committee were established to help implement the CWMS in the Christchurch area. The role of these committees is to work collaboratively with the community to make recommendations to Environment Canterbury and Christchurch City Council.

The Christchurch West Melton Zone Committee has identified stormwater as a priority issue. Untreated, contaminated urban stormwater is a major environmental problem for waterways. Routine water quality monitoring of Christchurch's urban waterways reveals regular exceedances for contaminants above guideline levels. Water quality varies considerably across and within catchments. Monitoring identifies areas that need to be improved and it will take time and everyone working together to make a positive difference.

Municipal stormwater treatment infrastructure alone will not address this water quality problem. It also needs communities to actively prevent pollution in the first place. To achieve community action requires communities to be aware of the issues and the actions that they can undertake. Given that in 2017, only 55% of Christchurch residents surveyed were aware that stormwater from roads and properties mostly leads to waterways, so there is a definite need for community awareness-raising and engagement initiatives.

Benefits of a Community Waterways Partnership

- Reducing barriers to positive action;
- Increasing coordination, sharing and communication;
- Increasing ability to source funding and resources;
- Increasing consistency of key messages to share with the wider community;
- Having a collective voice to be more influential;
- Having a coordinated response across catchments, sectors and stakeholders;
- Increasing support for community groups and organisations;
- Increasing efficiencies by facilitating the sharing of resources;
- Providing potential for collective advocacy;
- Advocating as one voice for appropriate action from local, regional and central government and businesses;
- Identifying gaps and initiating projects to address these;
- Increasing the ability to resource a behaviour change, education and awareness-raising programme;
- Improving capacity and capability;
- Sharing risk.



Outcomes

We will work together to:

1. Establish a strong collaborative partnership between community groups, businesses, researchers, and local, regional and central government;
2. Achieve consensus on messaging interwoven with appropriate cultural narrative, and market these with an innovative package of shared and consistent material suitable for a variety of audiences;
3. Develop a network of trained people to deliver the key messages professionally and consistently;
4. Design and implement stormwater, habitat and water conservation educational resources to supplement existing resources for use in schools and community events;
5. Advocate for incentives that enable community implementation of positive stormwater, habitat and water conservation actions and solutions.
6. Establish and facilitate a network of water care champions and kaitiaki;
7. Advocate for national legislative change to better address stormwater contaminants;
8. Develop research to evaluate outcomes and improvements in our knowledge of best practice community interventions;
9. Establish, facilitate or support projects to deliver these outcomes;
10. Advocate for resources to sustain the partnership and deliver these outcomes.

We will employ the following to deliver the outcomes we seek:

- An inclusive and collaborative working environment;
- Time for listening but being willing to make the big decisions;
- To work with the process; but reaching beyond the ordinary with a culture of enablement;
- Clarity on scope and not trying to solve everything in one go;
- Clear communication to avoid surprises and ensure all voices are heard;
- Constructive, challenging and respectful debate;
- To be brave, ambitious and bold for our city's waterways;
- To have fun and celebrate success.

We will achieve this with the following behaviours by:

- Being open to new ideas and ways of doing things;
- Being prepared to say when we are confused or unclear;
- Seeking to understand what others need to succeed;
- Leaving our badges at the door – being the best for our urban waterways;
- Being accountable for our areas of responsibility and maintaining our integrity;
- Respecting differences and embracing diversity.

