

# NEWSLETTER

MAY 2014



## Avon-Ōtakaro Network

*Manaaki Whenua, Manaaki Tangata, Haere whakamua*  
Care for the land, Care for the people, Go forward.

### WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

After almost 3 years waiting in a backwater there are finally signs that we are picking up a bit of momentum!

There was a strong hint of this with the PM's April announcement that a process will be developed to seek public feedback on future uses of the residential red zone lands and the talk of river parks and cycleways. This was complemented by Mayor Lianne Dalziel's subsequent endorsement with special mention of Avon-Ōtakaro Network (AvON) and key elements of our vision ([www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/blog/post/PM-announcement](http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/blog/post/PM-announcement)). These are only tentative first steps, but after our long campaign for the Avon-Ōtakaro red zone to be turned into an ecological reserve and multipurpose river park, any hint of progress is to be celebrated!

Another important part of our work has been organising public events that help promote our vision. We collaborate with Healthy Christchurch to stage River of Flowers commemorative events every 22 February, and around late October we hold the Spring River Festival.

We celebrate World Wetlands Day in February with BBQs at Travis Wetland and we support River of Life's annual Great Avon-Ōtakaro River Walks. Last

year we collaborated in holding a very successful public forum on South Brighton Reserves to support community submissions on Council's plans for these and recently helped lead a community water-quality testing workshop in conjunction with NIWA.

### Ambitions for the Red Zone

Since submitting our petition to Parliament early in 2012 and appearing before the Local Government and Environment Select Committee, we set about seeking community proposals for the Avon-Ōtakaro red zone. Many of these ideas were presented at our public forum in March 2012 and then a mini-conference earlier this year focussed on some key areas ([www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/projects/archive-generic-forums.html](http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/projects/archive-generic-forums.html))

We have been assisting project champions to draw up concept plans and where possible progress these to feasibility studies and business cases.

Among these key projects are the Mahinga Kai Project (restoration of natural habitat throughout the Avon-Ōtakaro red zone) and its pilot the Mahinga Kai Exemplar; the flatwater sports lake and white water kayaking & rafting course; the eastern cycle and walk way network; Waitākiri eco-sanctuary; stormwater to wetlands; Riverside Heritage Garden Park (and complementary heritage trail); and community food growing initiatives including proposals for gardens, allotments, orchards and

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 24 May**

**"What's with the water in our rivers?"**

An important public forum on water quality issues.

**2pm-4pm, Wainoni Methodist Church, 878 Avonside Drive.**

**Saturday 28 June**

**Matariki Planting - the launch of the Mahinga Kai Exemplar**

A community planting day with 400 indigenous plants, a school garden and fruit trees to plant to start the new season. Our first step in greening the red zone!

Come join us on this significant and historic occasion.

**10am - 3pm, Chimera Crescent, Anzac Drive Reserve**

forage trails ([www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/projects/projects-home.html](http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/projects/projects-home.html))

In October 2013 Lincoln University published its analysis of the benefits of greening the Avon-Ōtākaro red zone ([www.lincoln.ac.nz/Documents/LEaP/AvONreport.pdf](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/Documents/LEaP/AvONreport.pdf)) commissioned by AvON. This indicated that the benefits would be worth almost a billion dollars over ten years excluding the benefits from tourism which are potentially of a similar size.

About the same time the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Trust announced its biggest allocation of funding of \$15 million set aside for the city-to-sea Avon-Ōtākaro corridor. This was a major lobbying achievement. This money will not be touched until an overarching plan for the whole corridor is agreed by all parties including the community.

## **CANTERBURY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FORUM FOCUSES ON WATER MANAGEMENT**

17 March 2014, Lincoln Events Centre. Hosted by Environment Canterbury and Canterbury and South Canterbury District Health Boards.

Approximately 90 people attended the Environmental Health Forum from Territorial Authorities, consultancies, District Health Boards, Research Institutes, Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) Committees, Community and Public Health, Regional council, and universities.

A series of presentations focused on the Canterbury Context (the Land and Water Regional Plan and work of the Environment Canterbury Pollution Prevention Team, community and group drinking water supply sources in Canterbury, and communicating nitrate risks), and latest research on water microbiology and on toxic cyanobacteria.

A variety of practical work was discussed, including ways of working with and alongside CWMS committees, monitoring of water quality and ways of sharing and communicating that data, work to improve communications and inter-agency support, methods for communicating risks, and practical ideas for improving recreational and stormwater quality.

Science and research investigations were discussed, revealing that there are a variety of topics we still don't understand, but also that collectively there is a lot we do know. More research was suggested for topics already under investigation (e.g. nitrates, microbes, cyanobacteria) as well as on emerging issues, such as health and water quality, impacts of pesticides and insecticides. Although some room for improvement in cross-agency communication and support was identified, networking and connections were a theme for

the day. Different agencies were able to answer questions for each other, and information about various websites, forums, meetings were exchanged.

*Ann Kennedy*

## **THE 3rd GREAT AVON ŌTAKARO RIVER WALK**

Early morning, on the last Saturday in March a small group of walkers set out from the artificial source of the Avon Ōtakaro heading for the South Brighton domain over 30k away. Throughout the day others joined them for a stretch of the river. Most of the initial group made it all the way.



*Mark Gibson soothes his feet in St. Mary's Stream at lunchtime.*

Once again it was an incredible journey of endurance, discovery and sharing. Walking the whole river in one day deepened our awareness of the stark contrast between west and east in the city, and the way in which the water quality of the river deteriorates along its route.

For the first time we were able to follow the river through the CBD. Every year we notice the changing landscape in the east, and in the lower reaches the river is increasingly feeling like a semi-rural river. Through the red-zone there was more conversation amongst walkers of the possibilities for transformation and ecological restoration that lie there.

Next year the walk organisers, The River of Life project, are thinking about shortening the walk to the public-access section of the river starting at Little Hagley Park, and possibly incorporating it into other river events.

*Mark Gibson*

## MAHINGA KAI EXEMPLAR PROJECT

One of our more detailed proposal plans which is gaining traction is the Mahinga Kai Exemplar project. Christchurch City Council has agreed to the use of reserve land adjacent to Anzac Drive and the red zone. The plan is to enhance the site's ecological significance and create open air 'classrooms' where stories weave interconnecting threads together. Ngāi Tahu interprets mahinga kai in its broadest sense to include food for body, mind and spirit. Education, learning ('food for thought') and spiritual sustenance are thus as much a part of mahinga kai as the physical food.

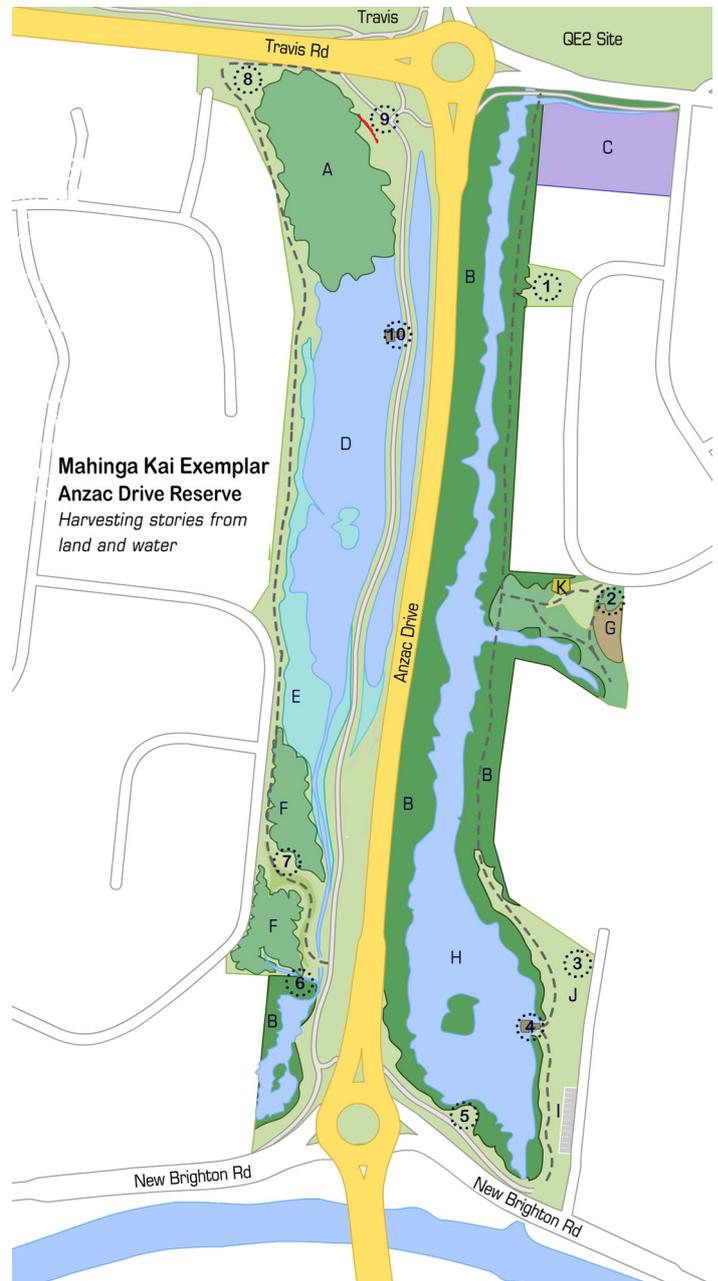
In locations around the site (see map), the various story lessons for the outdoor classrooms will include:

- 1 Mahinga Kai: Ōrua paeroa
- 2 Food: Gardens, orchards
- 3 Women's Suffrage: Kate Sheppard
- 4 Fish: Inanga, tuna & more
- 5 Waterways: Drainage, Tides & floodwaters
- 6 Birds: Of bush, gardens & waterways
- 7 Plants: Indigenous wet plain vegetation
- 8 Earthquakes: When Rūaumoko awakens
- 9 Anzac: The birth of nationhood
- 10 Wetlands: Kidneys of the City

## PLANS AND FEEDBACK

From the start we have been actively working on an overarching plan for the residential red zone in which all the proposals are spatially integrated. As well as working on our own spatial plan AvON has been collaborating closely with Eastern Vision.

EVO::SPACE (<http://evospace.co.nz>) is a website where you can find many of these proposals and their proposed spatial locations. The website also provides an opportunity for you to provide your feedback on each of these proposals. Although it will be officially launched in June it is already up and running. CERA and CCC will receive all the response data and analysis and we have been assured that this will significantly inform future decision making.



More information on many of these proposals can be found on the AvON website:  
<http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/projects/projects-home.html>.

If you're interested in actively contributing to the AvON Strategic Steering Group we would be keen to hear from you. Please send us an email at [AvonOtakaro@gmail.com](mailto:AvonOtakaro@gmail.com)

***'In rivers, the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes; so with present time.'***  
**Leonardo da Vinci**

# WHAT'S WITH THE WATER IN OUR RIVERS?



PUBLIC FORUM: 2PM, 24 MAY  
WAINMAN, METHODIST CHURCH  
878 AVONSIDE DRIVE (OPP PORRITT PARK)

CANT PADDLE, ROW, OR SAIL  
WITHOUT RISK OF INFECTION  
& NEED FOR SANITISERS!

COMMUNITY RIVER  
EVENTS CANCELLED!

CANT EAT WHITEBAIT,  
FISH OR SHELLFISH!

EVERY TIME IT RAINS  
THE HEALTH WARNINGS  
GO UP & WE LOSE OUR  
AMENITY!

FLOOD WATERS ARE  
ALWAYS CONTAMINATED!

SWIMMING IS NOT AN OPTION!

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?  
- COMMUNITY VIEWS

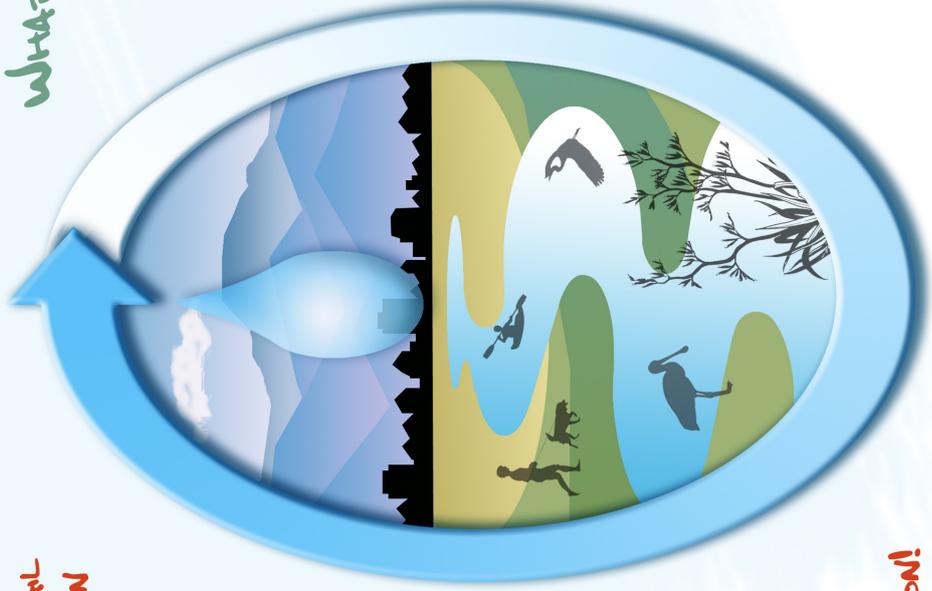
CAUSES OF POOR WATER  
QUALITY IN THE RIVERS

HOW CAN WE FIX THIS?

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE?

ORGANISED BY...



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