

# Our Place

## Community Plan

# Catlins

We're backing these key projects intended to promote living and working in The Catlins.



Clutha District Council  
[www.cluthadc.govt.nz](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz)

# INTRODUCTION

Clutha District Council's goal is to promote living and working in the Clutha District. To help achieve this goal, Council has developed the Our Place Catlins Community Plan, which lists a series of key projects intended to make The Catlins a more liveable community, and make it more attractive for people to live and work here. The projects included in the Community Plan were identified through public engagement with stakeholders and the

public in the summer of 2018-2019.

Although the Our Place Catlins Community Plan is primarily about Council assets (such as infrastructure and facilities), it is also intended to help guide the activities of community groups and other organisations, when they make decisions about their own assets. Some of the agencies which play a role in ensuring The Catlins is a great place to live and work

include Catlins Coast Inc. (tourism & community development), and the Department of Conservation (environment). Coordination with the Southland District Council is also essential, as the westernmost section of the broader Catlins area lies in Southland.

The Our Place Catlins Community Plan ties closely with the district-wide 'Economic Development' and 'Living and Working in

Clutha' strategies. The objective of these two strategies is to help generate growth in our district, and to create a place where people want to come and work.

The Community Plan is intended to provide a structure through which these two strategies can actually be implemented, as shown in the following diagram. Similar plans are being developed for Clutha's other main towns.



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  - Parks and reserves
  - Roading
  - Freedom camping
  - Planning for the effects of climate change

# THE CONSULTATION PROCESS...

Consultation and engagement for Our Place Catlins aimed to seek input from the public, to support and inform the development of this community plan. The objectives of the consultation were to stimulate interest in the project, encourage feedback, and develop stronger relationships and partnerships. The consultation process was designed to provide accurate information for decision-makers, to assist them in making

informed choices around the resourcing of future Catlins-based projects and initiatives. The engagement plan was prepared in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy and was signed off by Council on 29 November 2018.

The initial role of Council's elected members was to provide input and leadership for the project, approve consultation material and methods, and assist

with consultation and engagement activities. The public consultation phase took place from January to March 2019. A flier was developed for consultation to help prompt ideas and discussion, and this was delivered to all mailboxes in the main settlements and rural delivery runs in The Catlins. It was also posted to ratepayers who own property in the Catlins Ward, but don't live there permanently. Copies of the document were available from

the Catlins Information Centre/Owaka Service Centre, other Council offices, and Councils website.

A key component of the consultation material was inclusion of a Feedback Form which included a structured survey for respondents to indicate the importance (or priority) of some of the ideas presented. The results from this survey are summarised below on the following page.

Other activities and methods used to obtain a diverse range of feedback included:

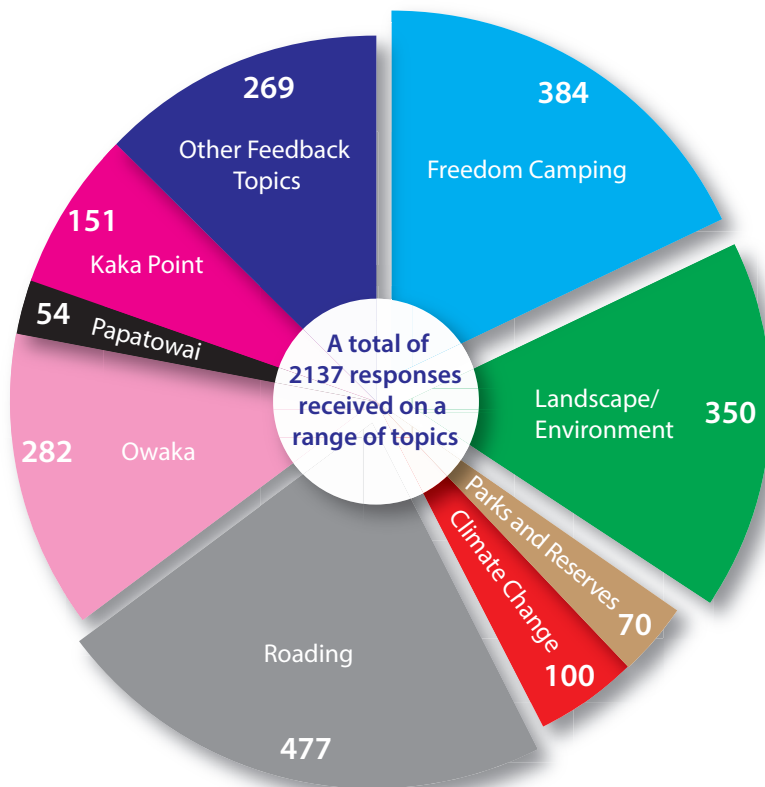
- Focus group meetings with local groups such as Owaka Going Forward, the Kaka Point Community Group, and Catlins Coast Inc.
- Supporting existing events such as the Kaka Point Market Day and the Papatowai Challenge.
- The 'Consultation Caravan', which visited smaller settlements around The Catlins, over the busy summer holiday period.
- Targeted youth input, via senior students at Catlins Area School.
- Social media advertising and feedback.
- Additional engagement with stakeholders such as DOC, and Papatowai and District Community Association.



# FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The consultation process aimed to seek input from the community to inform the development of this Community Plan. This section provides a brief summary of the feedback received, while a more comprehensive Feedback Report is available from Council's website. More than 2,000 comments were

received from the community and stakeholders on a range of topics, as shown in the graph below. Analysis of this feedback was used to inform the specific projects and initiatives which make up the Our Place Catlins Community Plan, which are listed in subsequent sections.

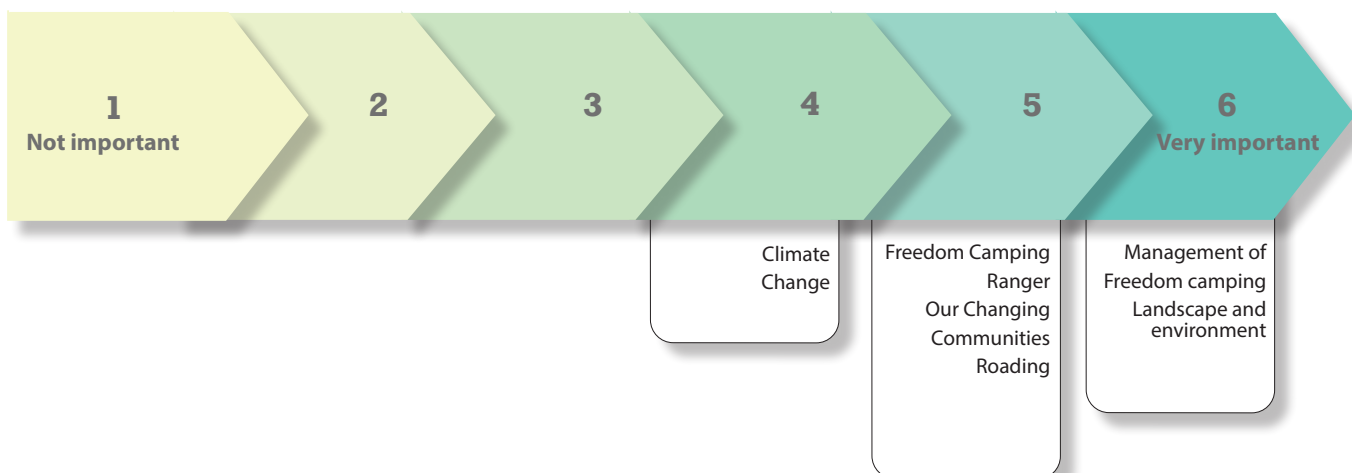


## SUMMARY OF RANKINGS

The Survey asked respondents to rank various topics, on a scale between 1 (not important) to 6 (very important)

The average rank for each topic is shown in the graph below.

The feedback received indicates that the management of freedom camping, and protecting our landscape and environment are particularly important to this community. Managing the effects of climate change was rated lowest, but still had an average rank of 4.9 out of 6.



# COMMON THEMES

The first table below shows the two most common themes for each topic, while the second table shows the most common feedback themes received from each settlement in The Catlins.

TOPIC	MOST COMMON THEME	2 <sup>ND</sup> MOST COMMON THEME
Landscape and the environment	Walking & cycling tracks	Greater protection of natural resources
Our changing communities	Encourage and enable new businesses	Housing
Parks and reserves	Maintenance, safety and administration of reserves	Enable greater use of Willsher Bay
Roading: Safer roads	Seal high-use roads	Encourage slower driving
Roading: Priority seal extensions	Owaka Valley Road	Purakaunui Falls Road
Freedom camping: Additional infrastructure?	More / better toilet facilities	No free overnight stays
Freedom camping: Other improvements or initiatives?	Campers should stay at existing campgrounds	No free overnight stays
Climate change: What areas are vulnerable?	Marine and coastal environment, wildlife	Low-lying areas, especiall roads
Climate change: Priority areas to focus on?	Managing coastal erosion	Coastal townships and roads / Pounaweia estuary
Kaka Point and surrounds: Priority activities or facilities	More / Better toilet Facilities	Kids activities, playgrounds
Kaka Point and surrounds: Ideas to promote living & working	Enable businesses / tourism	Walking / cycling tracks
Owaka and surrounds: Priority activities or facilities	Rubbish / recycling	Roading improvements
Owaka and surrounds: Ideas to promote living & working	Roading improvements	Mobile coverage / internet
Papatowai and surrounds: Priority activities or facilities	More / better toilets (especially Tautuku)	Rubbish / recycling
Papatowai and surrounds: Ideas to promote living & working	Keep it unspoilt and special	Enable tourism

SETTLEMENT	MOST COMMON THEME	2 <sup>ND</sup> MOST COMMON THEME
Papatowai	Walking & cycling tracks Traffic management	Waste management
Tahakopa	Roading improvements	Visitors should show respect, and pay for the facilities they use
Jacks Bay	Roading improvements	Traffic management
Pounaweia	Community facilities	Traffic management
Newhaven	Roading improvements	Traffic management
Kaka Point / Nuggets	Community facilities	Traffic management
Owaka	Community facilities	Roading improvements
Feedback received from visitors to the Catlins visitor Centre	Roading improvements	Managed freedom camping

# IMPLEMENTATION

This document describes the projects and initiatives that together make up the Our Place Catlins Community Plan. These have been determined by community feedback provided through the Our Place Catlins project, 2018-28 Long Term Plan, and through regular assessment by Council of its own assets.

The tables in the priority projects section summarise the key outcomes that are anticipated, who is leading particular projects, and background information about why they are important to the community. They have been grouped into the following 6 categories:

CATEGORY	WHAT IS IT ABOUT?
Our changing communities	Managing challenges such as a small and aging population, and attracting / managing visitors to the Catlins.
Landscape and the environment	Ensuring that the recreational, cultural, landscape and ecological values of The Catlins are maintained for future generations.
Parks and reserves	Determining which are the most important parks and reserves, and what improvements should be prioritised for these areas.
Roading	Additional traffic safety measures, urban seal extensions, replacement of key bridges, exploring options for additional sealing of high-use roads.
Freedom camping	Improving the way we manage any issues regarding freedom camping, and ensuring we have adequate infrastructure for visitors.
Planning for the effects of climate change	Planning and preparing response options so that our communities, and the services and infrastructure which support them, can remain resilient into the future.

The timeframe and scope vary between each identified project. In some cases the timeframe is clearly defined, while other projects which simply reflect community aspirations may not yet have specific funding allocated or an implementation plan in place. These will likely take longer to develop and are included to help guide planning and decision-making. Updates on progress for all projects will be made available on Council's website ([www.cluthad.govt.nz](http://www.cluthad.govt.nz)).

Council has made it clear that projects can generally proceed where financially it is rates neutral, but where a project would be seeking additional Council funding it would go through a due process for consultation via the Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan process. Alternative sources of funding will also be considered, and Council will work alongside community groups and other agencies to make progress on some projects.

As noted, some of the items listed below may not be progressed immediately, due to budget constraints or other limitations. However, in the short term, Council

has built into each project a requirement to consider "easy wins" as a priority.

Council's role will be to help facilitate Community Plan projects. This will vary from project to project, but examples of the type of support Council may provide include:

- Staff and contractors undertaking work as directed, within existing budgets and work programs.
- Advocating on behalf of the community, for actions or decisions by other agencies, which will make the Catlins a more liveable community.
- Direct involvement of a Council Project Manager, to direct and implement work.
- Providing administrative support to groups or organisations which have been set up to manage projects.
- Providing other technical support (e.g. mapping, guidance on consenting issues).



# PRIORITY PROJECTS COUNCIL IS BACKING

## OUR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

There are a range of existing facilities and services which underpin communities in The Catlins. This project is about enabling a coordinated approach, so as to make the most of these limited resources, as well as finding other innovative ways to enable and encourage people to 'live, work and play' in The Catlins.

### PROJECT 1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This project is about ensuring our community facilities are:

- Fit for purpose, and are well-used by residents and visitors
- Are well maintained, or refurbished where necessary.
- Reflect community requirements and aspirations



OUTCOMES	WHO'S LEADING IT?
1.1 Renewal work on Council-owned facilities.	Council-led project
1.2 Investigate potential upgrades or alterations to the Kaka Point Surf Life Saving Club buildings, including the possibility of creating a hub for a range of services.	Community-led project
1.3 An increased level of service for the Catlins Information Centre / Owaka Service Centre.	A Council-led project, to be informed by the Clutha Destination Strategy
1.4 Investigate and consult with the community on the concept of burying the power lines in central parts of Owaka and Kaka Point.	Council-led project

### PROJECT 2: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The District Plan review will aim to ensure there is adequate residential-zoned land available to cater for expected growth. Amongst other things, it will consider demographic trends, including demand from certain sectors, and in particular geographic areas.

OUTCOMES	WHO'S LEADING IT?
2.1 Enabling additional housing, particularly in existing settlements, and to provide for permanent residents.	The primary mechanism to enable this project will be the upcoming District Plan review. As such, this will be a Council-led project, with significant community input.

### PROJECT 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This project is about:

- Ensuring the visitor economy provides positive economic benefits for the community and local businesses.
- Managing tourism growth, along any with environmental and social impacts.
- Delivering action on priority areas within the Economic Development Strategy, with relevance to The Catlins

OUTCOMES	WHO'S LEADING IT?
3.1 Initiatives to support business development, 'living and working', and workforce skills development.	There are various Clutha Development initiatives which will help drive this project. Increasing the number of domestic tourists to The Catlins will be a key focus, at least in the short term.
3.2 Tourism marketing and management initiatives.	

### PROJECT 4: WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Council currently provides limited waste management services in The Catlins, due to the small and distributed population. Our Place Catlins consultation revealed that improved waste management is a priority for this community, to protect the image of this area as a natural 'eco-tourism' destination, and to meet the requirements of different customers such as crib owners, tourists and the farming community.

OUTCOMES	WHO'S LEADING IT?
4.1 Improvements to existing waste management and minimisation methods and facilities.	This will generally be a Council-led project. However, it may also involve community initiatives, commercial operators, and private landowners.
4.2 Support for additional waste management and minimisation initiatives. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation of joint service agreements (CDC, DOC, SDC)</li> <li>• Applications to central government to fund tourism-related waste management.</li> <li>• Community, Council or tourism operator programs which aim to reduce waste and recycle.</li> </ul> Additional facilities to manage waste generated by campers and visitors. Additional enforcement capacity	This project will need community leadership, as well as support and technical input from Council to succeed. It may also require investigation of funding mechanisms to pay for additional work.
4.3 Technical support for community groups wanting to develop greenwaste management initiatives	Council support for community initiatives





# LANDSCAPE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Protecting the landscape and environment of The Catlins was ranked as the most important consultation item. This shows the importance of this project to The Catlins, and the projects listed below are intended to help underpin many of the things which are so highly valued in this area.

## PROJECT 1: IMPROVED ACCESS - WALKING AND CYCLING

Quite simply, this project is about providing a wider range of options for people to get around – in order to exercise, to commute to work or school, or to access the various attractions in The Catlins. During the consultation process, a wide range of routes and trails were suggested, and these are listed in a supplementary report, available on Council’s website.

OUTCOMES	WHO’S LEADING IT?
1.1 Investigate the development of informal links and trails within townships.	Consultation revealed considerable local support for improved access via walking and cycling trails. In order to progress, the project will need to be led by the community, with support from Council as appropriate.
1.2 Investigate broader connections between key destinations.	

## PROJECT 2: PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Community feedback was that protection of the outstanding landscape and natural environment in The Catlins should be a high priority. This project is about taking a structured approach, with coordination between Council, the Department of Conservation and the community. Key considerations include pest and weed control, restrictions on dog and vehicle access, fencing, and education/signage.

OUTCOMES	WHO’S LEADING IT?
2.1 Protection of natural coastal areas.	In general, this project will be community led; with other agencies playing a supporting role, because local projects which have community buy-in and support are more likely to reflect community aspirations, and to be successful. As well as local landowners and community groups, the agencies that have a role to play include DOC, CDC, ORC, and other government agencies. The Catlins Partnerships Group comprises many of these stakeholders, along with Southland District Council.
2.2 Protection of remnant areas of native vegetation.	
2.3 Protection of waterways.	
2.4 Protection of native fauna.	
2.5 Outstanding Natural Landscapes review	Council is undertaking work to define outstanding natural landscapes in the Clutha District, as part of the District Plan review. The objective of this review is to ensure that such areas are appropriately managed.

## PROJECT 3: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

There is a need for any work within this project to be carefully managed and coordinated, and for risks (including potential adverse outcomes) to be considered and mitigated. A strategic approach is therefore required.

OUTCOMES	WHO’S LEADING IT?
3.1 Develop a strategic direction for The Catlins which identifies areas where improved access/additional development may be appropriate, as well as areas which require more careful protection from human activity.	The Clutha Destination Strategy is being prepared by Clutha Development and Council, and will include a focus on sustainability and responsible tourism.

3.2 Improved stakeholder cooperation, through the Catlins Partnerships Group.	Stakeholders include Council, Clutha Development and other local agencies
3.3 Investigate the possibility of gaining National Park status for parts of the Catlins area.	Community-led, with support from Council and other key stakeholders.
3.4 Develop a Catlins Signage Strategy to inform better practice and enable consistency between agencies.	Clutha and Southland District Councils.

## PARKS AND RESERVES



This project is primarily about prioritising investment so that existing playground reserves at Pounawea (Park Lane), Kaka Point (Esplanade) and Owaka (Owaka Highway) are well maintained, and that existing assets are enhanced where appropriate. The objective is to ensure these playgrounds are vibrant, well-used spaces. In addition, and in response to feedback received, this project includes investigation to determine if there are opportunities to make better use of the Willsher Bay and Pounawea Domain reserves, which are sited in prime locations close to the coast.

### OUTCOMES

### WHO'S LEADING IT?

1 An improved level of service for existing playground reserves and the structures within them to emphasise their 'destination' qualities.

2 Replacement/refurbishment of some play equipment at the Kaka Point (Esplanade) reserve.

3 Progress The Catlins Reserve Management Plan, with flexibility for community plan-related options and developments, to a draft stage for formal consultation.

4 Investigate and consult with the community on potential future options and facilities at the Willsher Bay, Hina Hina and Pounawea Domain reserves.

5 Investigate and consult with the community on potential options and facilities at the Papatowai Picnic Area Reserve.

This project will be Council-led, although support from, and partnerships with community groups and individuals will also be a requirement.

# ROADING



Roading is a core service provided by Council, and The Catlins has an extensive roading network which is used by local residents, tourists, crib-owners as well as for economic activity - including forestry, farming and transport operators. Making further improvements to this network was ranked highly, particularly the sealing of high-use roads, and encouraging slower driving (especially through settlements).

## OUTCOMES

## WHO'S LEADING IT?

1 Traffic safety measures including:

- Speed limits or traffic calming measures in settlements.
- Direction arrows on key tourist routes.
- Footpaths / cycle lanes on busy roads.
- Maintenance / trimming of roadside vegetation.

2 Seal extensions in urban areas. Six roads have already been given priority for new sealing between 2018 and 2021: Wratten Road in Pounaweia, Selsea, Wood and Brighton streets in Kaka Point, and Cross/Lily streets in Papatowai.

3 Investigate the feasibility of additional sealing of high-use roads - in particular Owaka Valley Road, which was ranked highly by respondents. Investigations will help to inform the 2021-31 Long Term Plan decision-making process.

4 Investigate the possibility of creating a commercial Park and Ride option from Willsher Bay to The Nuggets, to cope with increasing visitor numbers.

5 Scheduled replacement of the Hina Hina, Papatowai and Maclennan bridges.

6 Scheduled maintenance of gravel roads, to meet an adequate level of service is to continue. Council retains the ability to temporarily close sections of road to heavy commercial vehicles if significant damage is occurring.

This project will be Council led, because roading is a core Council service.



# FREEDOM CAMPING



Community feedback was that freedom campers in The Catlins can place significant pressure on the environment, and that there can be tension between locals and campers. Many respondents said that freedom camping should be better managed. A lack of toilets and facilities for campers and other visitors was identified as a key concern. Public feedback, along with Council monitoring, suggests that changes to the current approach are required, both from a regulatory perspective, and in terms of visitor facilities.

## OUTCOMES

## WHO'S LEADING IT?

- 1 Assess the results of a more restrictive approach to freedom camping, as trialled in The Catlins during the 2019/20 season.
- 2 A demand-based investigation of public toilets in The Catlins, the identification of possible gaps in the network, and potential improvements.
- 3 A review of CDC's Freedom Camping Policy and Regulatory Bylaw.
- 4 Engaging with LGNZ and Central Government to raise concerns about national issues such as vehicle certification and visitor education.
- 5 Prepare applications for central government funding (e.g. the Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the Responsible Camping Fund).
- 6 Continue to implement a freedom camping ranger program in The Catlins, preferably with other stakeholders such as DOC and SDC, and with a focus on education and responsible camping.

This project will be Council-led, with community and stakeholder consultation as required.

# PLANNING FOR THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



By the end of the century, it is predicted that The Catlins will be considerably warmer, with an increase in heavy rainfall events, with longer dry spells in between. Sea-level rise will expose low-lying settlements and their service roads to inundation during storm events. While warmer weather may bring more tourists, these changes will also impact the areas unique wildlife and endanger access to coastal landforms. The agricultural and forestry sectors may also face new challenges in terms of water management, pest control and general land management.

Our Place Catlins feedback primarily related to the marine and coastal environment (beaches, and coastal townships), as well as important infrastructure such as roads, water supplies, and sewage schemes.

OUTCOMES	WHO'S LEADING IT?
<p>1 Progress Council's Climate Change Leadership and Response project, comprising the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe climate change effects.</li> <li>• Undertake a climate change risk assessment.</li> <li>• Determine a climate change risk management and mitigation approach.</li> </ul>	<p>Council-led with community consultation as required, and input from other agencies including Otago Regional Council.</p>
<p>2 Integration of existing knowledge into the 2021-31 Long Term Plan and associated Activity Management Plans.</p>	
<p>3 Identify the location of any capped landfills along The Catlins coast, along with an assessment of associated risk, and possible management options.</p>	