

# Aoraki/ Mount Cook Village

## LONG-TERM COMMUNITY PLAN



1 JULY 2009 – 30 JUNE 2019

**Prepared for the Aoraki/Mount Cook community**

**2009**

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# 1 Introduction

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The Aoraki/Mount Cook Village is set within the Aoraki/Mount Cook National park (the park). All the infrastructural assets of the village are owned by the Crown who provides local body services to the village community through the Department of Conservation (the department). The costs of providing local body services are recovered from all village stakeholders, a group that comprises the department and all concessionaires with leases in the village. In addition to paying its apportioned share of the costs levied to stakeholders, the department also pays completely for some village services that are not levied (see section 1.6).

The department aims to manage the local body services at Aoraki/Mount Cook village on the principles of consultative inclusion, transparency, fairness, and value for money. This Long Term Community Plan (LTCP) is the first component of that process. It will set the direction and priorities for providing services to the Aoraki/Mount Cook community for the next 10 years, describing any significant works and expenditure that are anticipated or planned during this time.

This plan sets out the levels of service for each activity and describes the external influences that constrain these services provided to the community.

The levels of service that are set are reflected in the financial statements, which predict the budget required to deliver the services to that standard each year.

The department is bound by legislative requirements such as drinking water standards and resource consents, in many of the activities that it undertakes in managing village infrastructure, allowing no discretion to reduce levels of service or make other changes to reduce costs. The department has a different source of funds from territorial authorities. Councils are funded directly by ratepayers and can increase rates to raise more funds, whereas the department is funded indirectly by taxpayers through the government and an annual appropriation which is set by the annual government budget.

The department must raise funds for any development projects through the department's capital allocation processes, and the funding must be available within the department's normal funding streams. Any expenditure comes out of the department appropriation (annual budget), allocated annually by the government, and must meet the rules for government expenditure, including the Public Finance Act 2004. This gives the department less discretion than may be enjoyed by councils. Being a government department, the department is also subject to changes to government priorities and decisions.

Ongoing costs of operating most of the village infrastructure (capital charges and depreciation) are met by stakeholder levies (with a few exceptions funded by the department which are outlined in this plan).

The department has voluntarily opted to write this plan to:

- Set clear accountability, directions, and priorities for the management of the village infrastructure for the next 10 years, in consultation with stakeholders.

- Provide a sound base for monitoring and reporting back to the community and government on how well the agreed levels of service have been met.

Although this document has been produced by the department, it has been written for and in consultation with the community. Village stakeholders have a say in setting the levels of services and annual budgets through the consultation stage of the LTCP process.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the 2004 Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan (NPMP), which describes the overarching management policies that govern the park and the village within it.

This plan, although it's called a Long Term Community Plan, is different from the Long Term Community Council Plans (LTCCP) written by territorial authorities. The department and the management of the park operate under different legislation from territorial authorities and, unlike territorial authorities, the department is not required by the Local Government Act to produce a LTCCP but have elected to do so for good practice reasons.

The department is mandated by the National Parks Act 1980 with the management of the park, including the village, and is required by legislation to be the landlord and decision-maker for the village, as well as the infrastructure manager. Unlike a council, there are no elected officials making these decisions; the decision-making authority over the park and the village reside with the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of Conservation, and their delegated authorities. The department is also a stakeholder in that it benefits from the infrastructure and covers its share of the levied costs of those services.

The village has a different financial situation from most territorial authorities. There is a very small base of financial contributors at Aoraki/Mount Cook and high visitor numbers, resulting in significant infrastructure to be managed by the local body team and funded by stakeholders.

## 1.1 Vision for Aoraki/Mount Cook village

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Aoraki/Mount Cook village will become New Zealand's best-known visitor destination. It will exhibit an exemplary level of environmental quality and visitor experience. It will reflect a distinctive New Zealand natural and mountain character in relation to its site planning, design, and architecture.



## 1.2 History

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The timeline below highlights some of the history of the Aoraki/Mount Cook village and immediate surrounds.

- |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1884</b>    | The first Hermitage Hotel is built at White Horse Hill on the site of the present campground.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>1885</b>    | Hooker and Mueller Valleys are gazetted as the Hooker Glacier Recreation Reserve.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>1887</b>    | Tasman Valley above the Mueller Valley confluence is gazetted as the Tasman Recreation Reserve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>1903</b>    | Hooker Glacier Recreation Reserve is dedicated as Aoraki Domain, and vested with the Minister of Tourism and Health Resorts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>1906</b>    | The first cars are at Aoraki/Mount Cook. Motor service begins a regular service to Aoraki/Mount Cook.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>1912–13</b> | The Hermitage building at White Horse Hill was damaged by flooding from the Mueller Glacier in 1912–13 and replaced with a new building at the site of the present Hermitage, near Governors Bush. This was the first building in the existing village.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>1953</b>    | Tasman Park and Aorangi Domain are declared Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand's sixth.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>1956–57</b> | Base huts are built at Foliage Hill by the Canterbury Mountaineering Club (Wyn Irwin Hut) and the NZ Deerstalkers' Association (Thar Lodge).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>1957–58</b> | In September 1957, the second Hermitage is destroyed in a spectacular fire. A new hotel is operational by the end of May 1958, an amazing feat. A major flood event on Boxing Day 1957 produces flood and debris flows into the village from Glencoe Stream and Kitchener Creek (Figure 12). The Kitchener Creek rock protection dyke and the first Glencoe water intake are built. House One is built for the Chief Guide. |
| <b>1960</b>    | Park Headquarters (Visitor Centre) building begins and opens in 1961. The 'DC3 strip' is reconstructed to become the airport. The first school opens in the village, using a building from Irishman Creek.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>1961</b>    | The Hermitage is extended by 42 beds. Scheduled flights begin operating to Mount Cook using DC3 aircraft. Grid electricity is connected to the village.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>1965</b>    | House 3 access road is built, first water mains installed, and ferro-cement water tanks at Glencoe Stream are installed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- 1966** Alpine Instruction Limited begins a guiding and instruction service operating out of Ball Hut.
- 1968–69** A site at Birch Hill is gazetted for a village, and three houses for park ranger staff are built. A development plan is prepared by Ministry of Works Town and Country Planning Division. Reservations are expressed about the suitability of Birch Hill.
- 1969** Rangers in all national parks cease to be employed by boards and become part of the Public Service, within the Department of Lands and Survey. A decision is made to shift the village to Black Birch Fan due to the exposed nature of the site at Birch Hill and intrusion of houses into the national park landscape. A first stop bank is constructed at Black Birch Stream and the top sewage pond and the Ponds Access Road is built. Pilots Houses are built on Black Birch Fan.
- 1970** The first Visitor Centre car and bus parks are built. Kitchener Drive, Wakefield Drive, and Sebastopol Drive are built.
- 1972** The first staff houses appear on Black Birch Fan, relocated from Birch Hill, signalling a decade of intensive development of village infrastructure.
- 1973** A major addition to the Visitor Centre is built. Chalets are built.
- 1974** Chalet macerator pump and controls are added to the sewerage system.
- 1975** The new sealed highway (State Highway 80) from Pukaki is opened, greatly improving access. The second major addition to the Visitor Centre is built.
- 1976** An industrial (voluntary) fire brigade is established in the village. The second sewage pond is built; sewerage and water reticulation networks, and Ponds Access Road are extended. The first school is shifted from Irishmans Creek.
- 1977** Black Birch drinking water intake, water-pump station installed in Sebastopol Drive with two pumps and three 1 million-litre tanks added to the water system. Two kilometres of asbestos-cement pipe are added to the 'ring' water main in the lower village. The 40-room East Wing (now the Wakefield Wing) of the Hermitage is opened.
- 1979** A severe storm causes a civil defence emergency, damage to some buildings, and a rethink of safety standards. Housing mounds are built in the village and stream control installed at the Chalets. Work begins on building Terrace Road and Larch Grove Road.

- 1980–81** Storm water control is built – kerb and channel on existing roads, and sumps. Terrace Road, Larch Grove Road, Blackburn Place, Glencoe Access Road, Mueller Place, Kea Place, Sealy Place, Du Faur Place are built. A standby diesel generator is installed for the Black Birch water pumps.
- 1982** Paths are built throughout the village.
- 1984** The Hermitage celebrates its centenary. A flood-control wall is built at Governors Bush.
- 1985** Alpine Guides Limited opens a new shop/office in the village. Snow-plough blades are purchased to fit into the existing truck and loader.
- 1986** A YHA hostel is opened. World Heritage Status (the first in New Zealand) is bestowed on the park, together with Westland/Tai Poutini and Fiordland National Parks. A flood-control warning system is installed on Sebastopol Bridge over Black Birch Stream.
- 1987** The Department of Conservation replaces Lands and Survey as the department responsible for the park. The centenary of New Zealand's national parks is celebrated. A Hino 4WD fire truck is purchased. A new road in the lower village, Pilots Way, is built. A day shelter is built in the village for visitors to the park.
- 1989** The park, as part of the South West New Zealand (Te Wahipounamu) World Heritage Area, is recognised by UNESCO as one of the world's outstanding natural landscapes.
- 1990** Aoraki Conservation Board is established in place of the National Parks and Reserves Board. Tennis courts are built.
- 1995** Legislative change removes control of about 10 hectares of park land, mostly in the village, from Tourist Hotel Corporation jurisdiction.
- 1996** Scientific reports identify major potential natural hazards in the village, resulting in a halt to all new building while protection work is undertaken over the following two to three years.

- 1998** The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 is enacted by Parliament. The official name of the park and village is changed from Mount Cook to Aoraki/Mount Cook. The Aoraki/Mount Cook tōpuni confirms and places an 'overlay' of Ngāi Tahu values over Aoraki/Mount Cook (the mountain), the Mount Cook Range, and the Hooker Valley.
- 1999** The long-awaited community centre for village residents is subsequently opened. There is a major upgrade of the water supply system. A new tank (the balance tank) is added to the water supply system at Glencoe Stream, and new control system, fire main, and reticulation/sprinkler pipes are installed. Glencoe Tanks Access Road, Black Birch Access Road, and Hermitage Tanks Access Roads are built.
- 2000** Major geotechnical protection works in the village are completed, paving the way for building development to resume.
- 2001** The Hermitage is extended with a new wing of 60 rooms (Aoraki Wing). The airport terminal is reconstructed following a fire in 2000.
- 2003** The first new independent business in the village since the 1996 freeze on development, The Old Mountaineers' café/bar, is opened in the village on the old helipad next to the visitor centre.
- 2005** Emergency services (ambulance, fire, search and rescue, civil defence) are shifted out of the park headquarters into a purpose built Emergency Services Building, sited by the department workshops. A concession is granted for a new accommodation lodge in the village, Aoraki/Mount Cook Alpine Lodge, which opens later in the year.
- 2007** The Hermitage undergoes further development with the opening of the Sir Edmund Hillary Centre, comprising a café/bar and museum complex, 3D-movie theatre, and planetarium. The school building is extended.
- 2008** Work starts on redevelopment of the Visitor Centre and car park, and it opens later in the year. Whitehorse Hill Campground undergoes major redevelopment with a new public shelter, toilets, hugely increased parking, and camping areas. The campground is connected to the village water and sewerage systems. The Hooker Valley Road is tar-sealed. The water system in the village is upgraded to a UV-treated system and the pumping sheds and systems undergo major upgrade.

**2009**

The sewage oxidation ponds are substantially upgraded and the reticulation network inspected and repaired. The first Long Term Community Plan for Aoraki/Mount Cook village is written.

### 1.3 Ngāi Tahu

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Ngāi Tahu are the people who hold the rangatiratanga (chieftainship) and mana (authority) within the takiwā (area) of Ngāi Tahu whānui, which includes the park. The Crown has formally acknowledged this rangatiratanga through the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, and the apology recorded in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

Ngāi Tahu is governed by a 'tribal council', Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, which is made up of 18 Papatipu Rūnanga holding the rights and responsibilities to defined areas of land and waters within the takiwā of Ngāi Tahu. These rights are founded on traditional occupations, and whakapapa from ancient times to the present day.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, based in Christchurch, is the collective tribal voice, a function that in relation to most matters is exercised through Papatipu Rūnanga. The Papatipu Rūnanga with particular interest in day-to-day management of the park are Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua and Te Rūnanga o Waihao, centred at Temuka and Waihao in Canterbury respectively, and Te Rūnanga o Moeraki centred at Moeraki in Otago. These organisations represent the tākata whenua for the park.

## 1.4 Legal and policy setting

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### **Overview**

Aoraki/Mount Cook village is set within the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park (the park).

The park is managed for the Crown, on behalf of the New Zealand public, by the department, under the Conservation Act 1987 which sets up the department, and gives it the authority to administer several other pieces of legislation, including the National Parks Act 1980 and the Reserves Act 1977.

The Minister of Conservation and Director-General of Conservation have the right to recover from concessionaires the cost of providing community service benefits or facilities<sup>1</sup>. All concession documents contain clauses in the conditions of the contract requiring the concessionaire to pay levies or contributions for the provision of local body services, as required by the Minister of Conservation. This requirement is enforced through the individual concession contracts rather than through policies or plans.

A territorial authority such as a district or city council, has a range of 'soft' activities, including regulatory, recreation, and community well-being, as well as the 'hard' activities of water, sewage, rubbish, and roads. However, the services provided to stakeholders and the community by the department are limited to the provision of the essential services required for the village to exist in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Aoraki/Mount Cook village is within the Mackenzie District, and a General Rate and Uniform Annual Charge is charged by the Mackenzie District Council to lease holders within the village.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 17ZH of the Conservation Act (included under the National Parks Act 1980 in Section 49 of that Act). Refer to page 108 of this document for further detail.

## **Relevant legislation, policies and plans**

The Aoraki/Mount Cook village is managed by the department under a hierarchy of legislation and policies:

- The National Parks Act 1980 is the statute (legislation) around the management of national parks. The General Policy for National Parks (2005) sets out policies under the legislation that detail how national parks are to be managed on a national basis, to ensure nationally consistent interpretation and application of the legislation through all 14 national parks.
- At the regional level, each conservancy office of the department is required by the Conservation Act 1987 to prepare a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for approval and adoption by the New Zealand Conservation Authority, an independently appointed national body.
- Each CMS document details the natural, historic, and recreational values within each conservancy, and details the management objectives and policies for administering all public conservation lands including national parks. Including national parks in the CMS process allows for their consistent management in the context of the surrounding areas.
- Finally, each national park has a management plan which details the specific management objectives and policies for the management of that park.

None of these documents may contradict the policies of a higher level document; for example a National Park Management Plan may not contradict a national policy from the general policy, or contradict the National Parks Act.

The department is required to comply with the Resource Management Act 1991 and holds a range of resource consents authorising various aspects of local body operations granted by the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury). These are described in more detail under each local body activity.

This Long Term Community Plan cannot derogate or contradict the legislation or policy framework that governs the management of the national park.

Appendix A contains more detailed information and links to the relevant documents on the internet.



## **Financial legislation**

The department is funded through an appropriation from the government which is approved annually by Cabinet in the budget. All use of government money is governed by the Public Finance Act 2004 (PFA).

No expenses or capital expenditure may be incurred by the government unless it's in accordance with an appropriation or other statutory authority. Appropriations are limitations of amount, scope and period, and these limits are legally binding. The department is bound by the annual approval of appropriation, and must spend it within the year that it's budgeted.

All expenses and capital expenditure may only be incurred in accordance with these specifications, except in the limited circumstances where the PFA permits some variation to appropriations.

Operating expenditure for the Aoraki/Mount Cook Local Body is recovered quarterly in arrears from financial stakeholders, with reconciliation at the end of each year. Capital works are funded through the department's appropriation, and are subject to the department's appropriation levels and budget constraints, which results in both multi-year capital planning and annual business planning. Once capitalised, the capital costs of assets are recovered from financial stakeholders through capital charges and depreciation on the asset.

Government departments are prohibited from borrowing money. The PFA states that the Crown must not borrow except under statute (Section 46) and the Act provides this authority solely to the Minister of Finance (Section 47 and 48). The Minister may not delegate this power in the same way that other powers are delegated under the State Sector Act (Section 48).

All capital expenditure indicated in this document is subject to the constraints of the annual appropriation and departmental capital-expenditure processes and cannot be guaranteed.

## **Village amenities area**

The Aoraki/Mount Cook village is a gazetted amenities area under Section 15 of the National Parks Act 1980:

Section 15(2) of the National Parks Act 1980 states: *'While any such area is set apart, the development and operation of recreational and public amenities and related services appropriate for the public use and enjoyment of the park may be authorised in accordance with this Act and the management plan.'*

These 'amenities' include services to the public such as accommodation, food, visitor centres, park management, and related services such as accommodating the essential staff who are needed to run these businesses and manage the park.

The village management objectives in the NPMP describe the way in which the village is to be managed (Section 5.2 of that Plan). The management plan objectives require that the village is managed in such a way that it does not detract from the park's World Heritage Area status; and visitors are to be encouraged not to see the village as a destination in itself but as a gateway to the park.

The boundaries of the village amenities area, and hence village development, are set by the gazetted area.

A Development Issues and Options Report for the village was commissioned by the department in 1997. Recommendations from this report have been incorporated within the NPMP, in part by managing three distinct zones within the village; a Commercial Zone providing for commercial activities, including visitor accommodation; a Semi-Independent Zone to provide for visitor accommodation and day shelter facilities; and the Residential Zone, for residential accommodation for staff living in the village. These are described more fully in Section 5 of the NPMP.

Figure 1 shows the village boundary and the designated zones within the village.

## **Requirements for commercial development**

All business activities taking place within the park, including the establishment of any premises or dwellings within the village, require an authorisation in the form of a concession (Sections 49 and 50, National Parks Act 1980 and Part IIIB Conservation Act 1987). The Hermitage operates under a long term lease granted before the current Part IIIB provisions. The terms and conditions of that lease mean that there are some differences in the way that the lease is managed to some of the newer, Part IIIB, concessions in the village.

Sections 9 and 10 of the General Policy for National Parks set out the policies for concessions and establishment of buildings for visitor accommodation and other purposes.

Section 50 of the National Parks Act 1980 authorises the Minister of Conservation to *'establish, or authorise, or assist in the establishment by any body or person (whether incorporated or not), of camping grounds, huts, hostels, accommodation houses, hotels and other buildings, or facilities in any park.'* (Section 50(1)a National Parks Act 1980).

The NPMP sets out the detailed policies for new commercial development and new applications to continue existing commercial operations in the village in Sections 4.3 – Concessions; 5 – Village Management Objectives; and 6 – Village Management Policies.

Section 5 of the management plan sets out the structure and layout of the village into Commercial, Semi-Independent, and Residential Zones. These are shown in Figure 1 of this document.

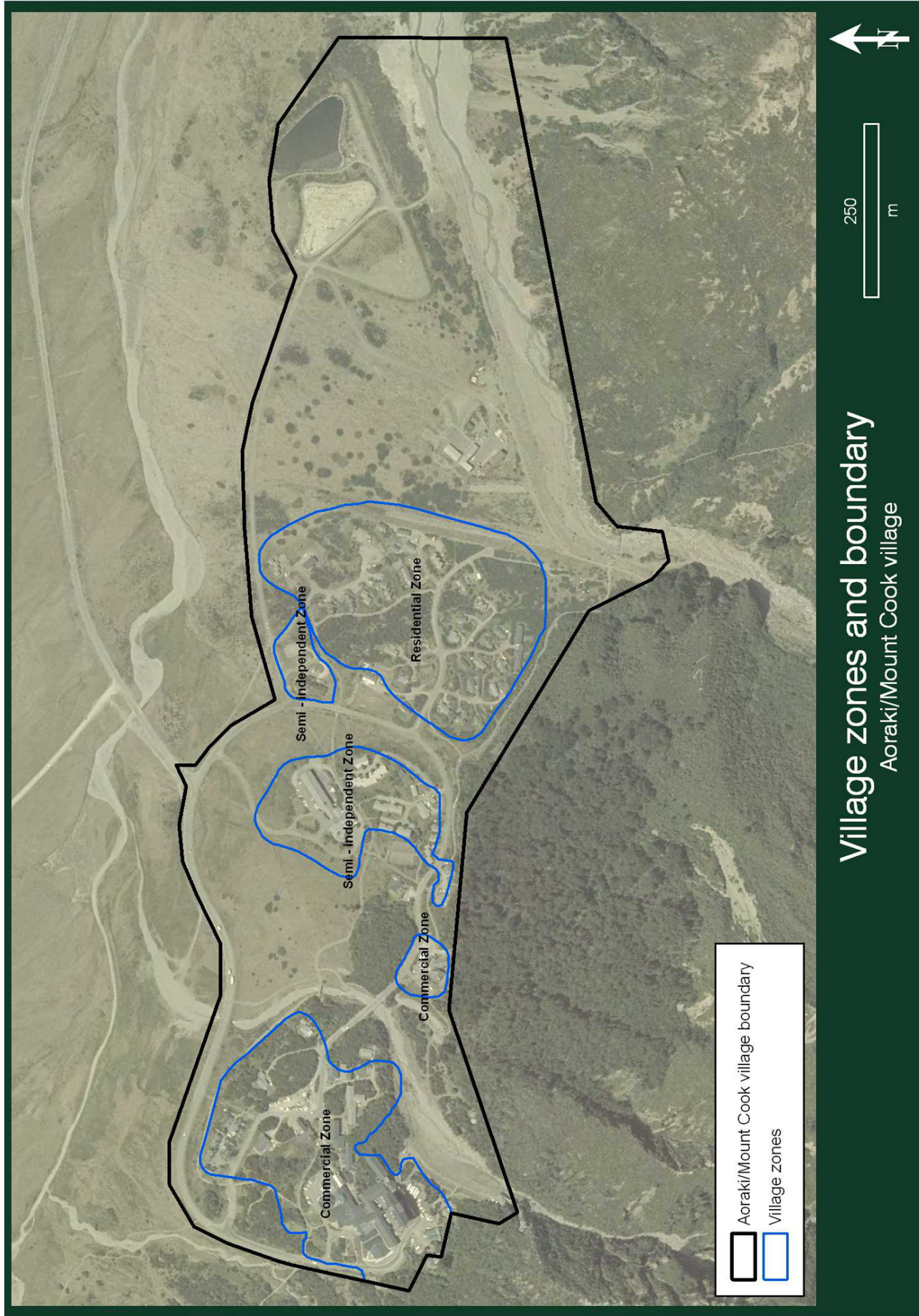


Figure 1 – Aoraki/Mount Cook village showing the boundary of the amenities area and village zones

## **Operating a business at Aoraki/Mount Cook**

The Aoraki/Mount Cook village is a unique environment in which to start or operate a business. Being in a national park, all commercial activities are required to be authorised by concessions, so any prospective business owner rapidly becomes acquainted with the department and the concessions system.

Because the village's local body infrastructure and services are operated by the department on behalf of the Crown, all concessionaires are required to financially contribute to the running of the village through community service levies. This LTCP sets out what those community services are and the levels of service provided, and gives the department's best evaluation of what the costs and future development in local body infrastructure will be for the next 10 years.

The commercial reality of operating a tourism-based business in the Aoraki/Mount Cook village is that the village is seasonal in its annual pattern of visitor numbers. The majority of visitors (approximately 260,000 per year) visit the park between the months of November and April. The village is at the end of a one-way road with no other major visitor destinations unconnected to the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Heli-skiing, ski-touring, and glacier skiing in the park attract a few visitors for snow-based recreation in the winter, but in low numbers compared to the visitor numbers at other winter destinations with downhill ski areas such as Methven, Wanaka, and Queenstown.

Costs of operating can be higher at Aoraki/Mount Cook than in other locations that would, at first glance, seem to be comparable. The village is set in an active geological environment and is subject to extreme weather, all of which may accelerate wear and tear on buildings and infrastructure. The department has had to install geotechnical protection works to protect the village from flooding, rock debris, and avalanche risk from the stream catchments and slopes above.

Legally, the land in the Aoraki/Mount Cook village is part of the national park. This imposes a level of regulation over what activities may be permitted in the village (see this section, 'Requirements for commercial development', and 'Requirements for private accommodation' for more information). Residential dwellings can only be built for people who are required to be resident in the village for the management of concession businesses or the management of the park. Consequently, there is no private rental accommodation closer than Twizel for staff, and business owners must gain concessions to build any accommodation they require in the village to operate their business. This is an additional cost on the operation of businesses at Aoraki/Mount Cook.

This requirement for dwellings to be connected to the businesses in the village means that the numbers of stakeholders who contribute to the infrastructure costs is much lower than comparable locations which are outside national parks and which have much larger numbers of ratepayers.

The department is also affected by these constraints. It's required to provide and maintain housing for staff, and contributes to the costs of local body services using the same apportionment mechanism applied to other stakeholders (see section 1.6 of this document for more information).

## **Requirements for private accommodation**

The legislation and policy around the provision of private residential accommodation in parks is set out in Sections 49 and 50 of the National Parks Act 1980, Section 8 of the General Policy for National Parks, and the NPMP.

All residential dwellings in the Aoraki/Mount Cook village are required by legislation and policy to be provided only for those people who are required to live there either for park management purposes or to run a concession business in the park. This makes Aoraki/Mount Cook a special community in New Zealand, along with Whakapapa village in the Tongariro National Park.

Other communities adjacent to national parks throughout the country, such as Arthur's Pass village, have been developed on land zoned out of the national park.

Section 50(1) of the National Parks Act states that accommodation may be built in a national park for people engaged in the *'administration, control, or management of the park or the protection of forests in or adjacent to the park.'*

It also states that the Minister may *'grant concessions over or in respect of land within the park as sites for dwellings for persons or bodies (whether incorporated or not) carrying on any activity within the park.'* All accommodation within a park must also be *'in accordance with the management plan for that Park'*. The General Policy for National Parks (Section 9(d)) requires that *'...it cannot reasonably be located outside the National Park'*, and *'...the applicant cannot reasonably use or share an existing facility.'*

All applications for concession leases in the Aoraki/Mount Cook village for private residential accommodation must therefore satisfy these requirements – that the accommodation of persons is necessary to be in the village and the needs cannot satisfactorily be met by accommodation being provided outside the park.

The NPMP, in Sections 5 and 6, outlines the detailed objectives and policies for the management of the Aoraki/Mount Cook village. Links to these sections of the plan on the department's website are included in Appendix A.

## 1.5 Scope of this plan

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The Long Term Community Plan sets out the management and intentions for the infrastructure of the Aoraki/Mount Cook village. This infrastructure is primarily focussed around the core village, in the amenities area of the national park.

However, there are other concessionaires and department facilities which, although situated outside of the amenities area, utilise some of the local body services. This involvement needs also to be recognised and taken into account when allocating local body cost recovery levies.

The concessions and facilities outside of the core village, and the local body services that they consume, are as follows:

- White Horse Hill campground (the department) – connected to water and sewage; uses the rubbish collection and fire brigade.
- Unwin Lodge, SH80 (New Zealand Alpine Club) – no connections, is not protected by geotechnical works; uses the rubbish collection and fire brigade.
- Thar Lodge, White Horse Hill (New Zealand Deerstalkers Association) – connected to water supply but not sewage; uses the rubbish collection and fire brigade.
- Wyn Irwin Hut, White Horse Hill (Canterbury Mountaineering Club) – connected to water supply but not sewage; uses the rubbish collection and fire brigade.
- Aoraki/Mount Cook Airport (Aoraki/Mount Cook Alpine Village Limited) – no connections, is not protected by geotechnical works; uses the rubbish collection and fire brigade.

## 1.6 The department's contribution

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The Department of Conservation, on behalf of the Crown and taxpayers, as the manager of the national park, pays for the infrastructure in the wider park. This is not levied to stakeholders.

Village infrastructure costs are split between national park and local body programmes, including capital costs (capital charge, akin to interest; and depreciation), and operational costs (such as staff wages and maintenance costs).

The department has reviewed all village assets as part of the development of this Plan and as a result has moved several of the assets into the asset pool of the national park. These assets and their operation and maintenance (to the level of service of the wider park) are fully funded by the department in the same way as other wider park assets outside the village, such as mountain huts, tracks, and the Hooker Valley Road.

Village assets in the village have been split into two categories, depending on their primary purpose:

- Department local body assets, which provide visitors with a service via a concessionaire or other entity in the village.
- Department visitor assets, which visitors need to access and enjoy the national park.

The department recently paid the residue debt associated with the geotechnical protection works for the village that was previously being repaid through a levy on concessionaires' turnover.

Village infrastructure that is now included in the park visitor assets and is fully funded by the department, including operational costs, has a total net book value as at 30 June 2009 of \$2.3 million. Section 12 of this document has more details about the national park assets in the village and their value.

Local body assets that have their asset-related costs fully covered by the department are itemised in the Aoraki Local Body Asset Schedule on page 118, and have a total net book value as at 30 June 2009 of \$3.248 million.



## 2 Local body policies

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Business operators and residents require infrastructure for essential services to be cost-effective and sustainable. The presence of the village within the park means that the infrastructure must be consistent with national park values.

To avoid uncontrolled developments with many independent systems for sewage and water, the infrastructure is planned and managed on behalf of the stakeholders and the public by the department in its local body role as part of the management of the wider park.

The assets and infrastructure that underpin the services provided to the Aoraki/Mount Cook community are owned by the Crown and managed by the department, which provides staff to fulfil the local body function of operating and maintaining the infrastructure.

The Conservation and National Parks Acts authorise the collection of a community service contribution to recover the costs of providing services and facilities to concessionaires. This contribution covers the costs of the capital charge and depreciation on assets, and the cost of the operational day-to-day work that is needed to keep all of the services running. It's paid by all concessionaires and the department as joint financial stakeholders in the village.

Objectives and policies for the management of the Aoraki/Mount Cook village within the park are described in sections 5 and 6 of the NPMP. Overarching policies for the management of local body services within the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park are set out in the NPMP in Section 6.2.9 Services, which sets out the policy for utility services within the village as:

*'6.2.9(a) To ensure the provision to a high standard of those utility services that in other communities would be the primary responsibility of the local authority.'*

*'6.2.9(b) To place all utility services underground, where possible.'*

The Methods section of the NPMP state that *'2. The Asset Management Plan Aoraki/Mount Cook village once approved will be used to manage those assets in the future.'* This Long Term Community Plan will supplement the Asset Management Plan, and contain the overarching plan for the management, operation, and replacement of local body utility infrastructure. This plan is intended to be supplemented with annual plans detailing the work planned for each financial year (July to June).

### **3 Community outcomes**

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Public meetings were held with the Aoraki/Mount Cook community to identify what is important to the community. The ideas raised during meetings were analysed and distilled into five community outcomes, which are noted below.

- A village that is healthy, self-contained, environmentally-friendly, and sustainable.
- A place to live because people love the mountains and value the unique privilege of living and working or running a successful business in the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.
- A place to live that is safe, family-friendly, inclusive of all visitors and residents, with recreational opportunities for people of all ages, and strong connections to wider, social, educational, and cultural communities.
- An environment where businesses can prosper and succeed.
- Clean, safe drinking water; culturally and environmentally appropriate disposal of sewage and rubbish; and roads and footpaths that are in good condition while recognising there is a balance to be reached between setting an appropriate level of service, regulatory requirements, and affordability to stakeholders.

These outcomes represent the ideals of the Aoraki/Mount Cook community for how they want their community to develop over the next 10 years.

The department's level of direct involvement and sphere of influence in these community outcomes applies only to the provision of the hard infrastructure services as outlined in the last outcome above, and the consideration of applications for new concessions in the village, where these apply to or influence the community outcomes.

The department can't make these community outcomes come to fruition, but can help to facilitate the community desire to make them happen, while recognising the additional constraints imposed by being in a national park. The national park values and requirements must be met. This will restrict the community to the expression of outcomes in a way that is appropriate to being in a national park.

These outcomes should be taken in conjunction with those for the wider Mackenzie District, as set by the Mackenzie District Council.

The community outcomes for the Mackenzie District are:

- An attractive and highly valued natural environment.
- A thriving economy.
- A democracy which upholds the rights of the individual.
- A fit and healthy community.
- Safe, effective, and sustainable infrastructure.
- A supportive and contributing community.

## **4 Aoraki/Mount Cook village today**

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Many of the people who live at Aoraki/Mount Cook are active, outdoor-type people who value the natural environment and the park as a place for recreation.

The Mount Cook Residents Association is an incorporated society formed in 1985. The Association owns the community hall (situated next to the school in the residential zone), and can apply for funding from sources such as pub charities, licensing trusts, and government.

This body has the necessary independence to lobby for the good of the Aoraki/Mount Cook community. The community would like to have better representation on the Mackenzie District Council.

The local school is tightly integrated into the Aoraki/Mount Cook community. Residents would like to integrate the school further into the community, with suggestions such as creating additional outdoor learning and recreation areas, and a community garden at or near the school that the children could be involved with. The school has a pool which is used by the community: they would like to see this covered and heated to extend its use. Residents would also like to see an improved playground facility available for children.

There is a community 'book exchange' housed at the school. This is simply a bookshelf where people can leave books and pick up new ones, rather than being a formal library arrangement. The nearest libraries are at Twizel and Tekapo.

### **A snapshot of Aoraki/Mount Cook – trends and observations from the 2006 Census**

Census data from the 2006 Census of the New Zealand population showed a population of 210 people who describe themselves as "usually resident" at Aoraki/Mount Cook. This figure is trending downwards over the 10 years to 2006 with counts of 279 in 1996 and 234 in 2001.

The geographic area of the census data is likely to be wider than the village and immediate surrounds but the number of people resident in the general area, but outside the village, would be low. In addition to this, the sample size is very low.

Gender split in 2006 was exactly equal, a very small change from a slight male bias in previous census counts. Aoraki/Mount Cook has an interesting age distribution with a bulge in the 20–39 age group demographics compared to the Canterbury region. This is unsurprising given the nature of Aoraki/Mount Cook and the strict criteria for living in the village – business owners or employees in very specific industries that tend to employ large numbers of young people.

The population of Aoraki/Mount Cook is ethnically diverse. It has:

- A lower proportion of residents identifying with European ethnic groups than the rest of Canterbury (but comparable with the country as a whole).

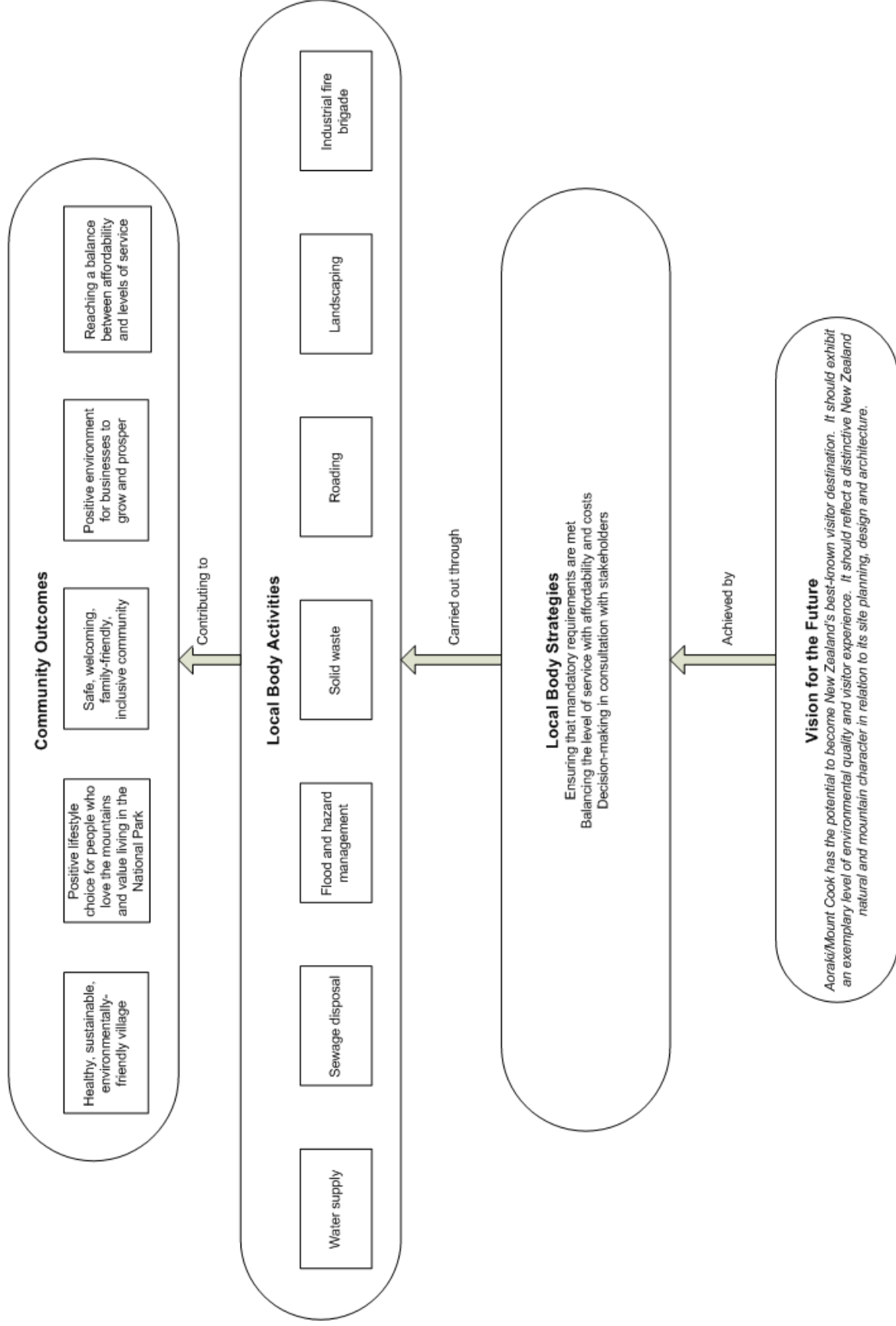
- A similar number of people identifying as Māori as the rest of Canterbury, which is lower than the national figure.
- A low number of people of Pacific Island ethnicity, and higher numbers of people of Asian ethnic groups than the national or Canterbury average, reflecting the nature of the tourism-based economy at Aoraki/Mount Cook, which has traditionally had high visitor numbers from Asian countries.

Religious affiliation of Aoraki/Mount Cook residents shows a different distribution from Canterbury as a whole. Higher numbers did not identify with any religion, the number of people identifying as Christian was much lower, and the number of people identifying with some other religions or “not elsewhere included” was higher than the Canterbury average. Overall, slightly more than half (59%) of the normally resident population identified with a religion.

Aoraki/Mount Cook residents are generally well-qualified, with a higher proportion holding some form of qualification other than a school qualification than the general population of Canterbury. However, given the much younger population, higher levels of qualifications would be expected compared to a population with high numbers of older residents for whom education beyond leaving school was much less common. The percentage of people with “other” qualifications is likely to reflect the spread of occupations represented in the district, with farmers, tradespeople, and mountain/outdoor guides being well-represented.

Aoraki/Mount Cook residents are predominantly on wages or salary, reflecting the make up of the community with few businesses and comparatively more employees. The median income for the district is \$29,500, higher than the Canterbury median of \$23,500, reflecting the higher proportion of employed people in the community.

# 5 Long Term Community Plan diagram



## **6 Community vision for tomorrow**

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By 2019, Aoraki/Mount Cook will be a thriving, desirable village which has a strong community spirit and good social and business relationships among all stakeholders and residents.

The infrastructure that underpins the village will be in good condition and well maintained. It will conform to all regulatory standards, and match current best practice for essential services provided to a community of the size of Aoraki/Mount Cook village. By 2019, the sewerage, solid-waste disposal, and water systems will have undergone recent significant upgrade and renewal, all roads will have been resealed, and street lighting will have been upgraded to modern technology which provides good lighting that minimises upward light spill and electricity consumption.

The village will be thriving with visitors from New Zealand and around the world coming to visit and enjoy the park. The community will have successfully fundraised and gained the necessary concessions for community facilities that meet the community's needs and make Aoraki/Mount Cook an even better place to live. More business opportunities will exist in the village.

The community will be healthy, happy, and have a stable core of residents who appreciate what living at Aoraki/Mount Cook village has to offer.

## **7 Overview of significant activities**

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There are eight key services provided for the Aoraki/Mount Cook village by the department through its local body function, funded by stakeholder contributions, and/or funded by the Crown through the department's management of the national park.

These services are:

- Water supply (drinking water and fire fighting).
- Sewage reticulation and treatment.
- Flood, debris flow, and avalanche protection.
- Solid-waste and recycling collection and disposal.
- Roads, lighting, storm water, and snow clearing.
- Landscaping and pathways.
- Industrial fire brigade.
- Civil defence and natural hazard management. (This is primarily a Mackenzie District Council responsibility but the department has some obligations as a provider and manager of infrastructure).

This section provides background on the management of all activities provided by the department. Details of each key activity are described in section 8 of this document.

## 7.1 Maintenance and operating

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The local body function provided by the department covers the following areas:

- Management and administration, including maintenance, contract and project planning.
- Regulatory compliance.
- Water supply.
- Sewage disposal.
- Flood and debris flow monitoring.
- Avalanche monitoring.
- Rubbish disposal.
- Snow clearing.
- Road maintenance.
- Landscaping.
- Plant and machinery maintenance.
- Building maintenance.

Maintenance and operational work is planned annually, based on the following principles:

- Mandatory requirements from legislation must be met, e.g. the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards, Resource Consent conditions, New Zealand Fire Service requirements and standards.
- Infrastructure to be maintained in good working condition that will enable the levels of service to be met.
- Infrastructure must not run down to a condition where expensive repairs are required.

The diagram overleaf shows the decision-making process to be followed in the event of the levels of service not being met or upgrade to assets being required.

Additional information about maintenance and operating will be included with the different local body activities in the following sections where relevant.



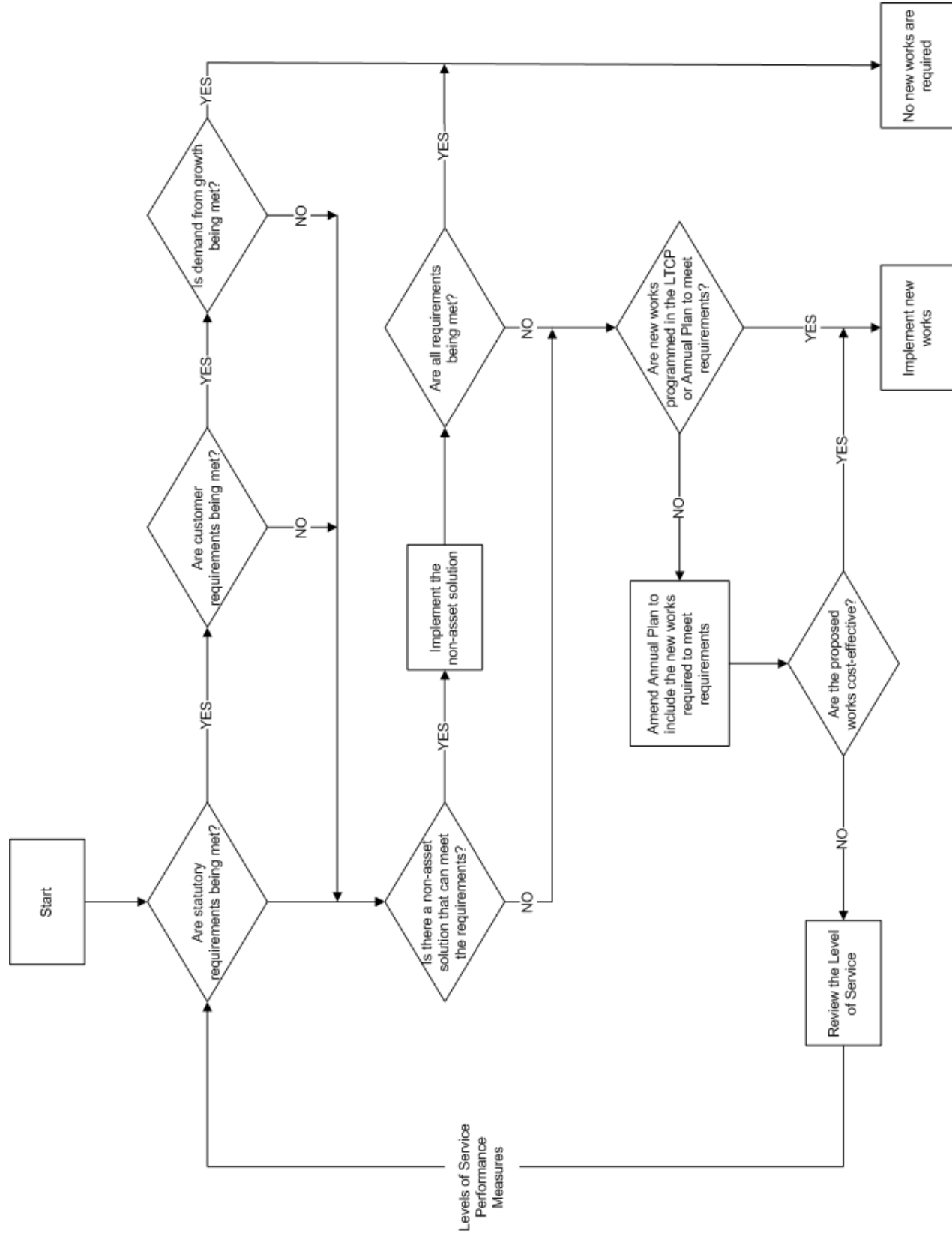


Figure 2 – Decision-making process for planning new works

## 7.2 Planning and reporting

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Every year the department will plan the work for the following year. The performance of the local body during the previous year will be reported against the performance standards under each level of service.

## 7.3 Levels of service

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Throughout the Plan we talk about 'levels of service'. This is the standard to which local body services will be provided to the Aoraki/Mount Cook community and stakeholders by the department through its local body function.

We have described levels of service in this document that attempt to balance the need for reliability of infrastructure and failure risk minimisation against the cost of significant upgrade and replacements.

In some activities, the department is required to maintain a certain level of service by legislation or by external authorities. Examples of these include meeting the New Zealand drinking water standards, meeting conditions of resource consents, and managing the industrial fire brigade equipment to New Zealand Fire Service operational standards.

Setting required levels of service brings costs when the condition or capacity of infrastructure means they can't be met. This document sets out levels of service for each activity with a forecast of maintenance and operating costs into the future to maintain that level of service, based on the best information available at the time of writing.

In some instances, the community may be comfortable with a lower level of service and higher risk of failure of infrastructure. Sometimes when finances are tight, communities can be tempted to delay maintenance or upgrade of infrastructure. This can lead to significantly increased costs when work is done if the delays mean that maintenance turns into significant repairs. The Aoraki/Mount Cook community is in this situation now with some roading infrastructure: stakeholder feedback resulted in some maintenance being deferred and more significant work is now required to get it to standard.

Aoraki/Mount Cook is a highly active environment and is at a higher level of risk of catastrophic failure than most communities. Higher progressive rates of deterioration due to the severity of storm events, flooding and snow damage are a reality in the management of the village infrastructure. The levels of service described in this plan can't be guaranteed in the event of damage to infrastructure from earthquake, debris flow, avalanche or flood.

## 7.4 New works and upgrades

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These local body projects are planned for the next 10 years:

- Repair and reseal of minor village roads (Kitchener Drive, Wakefield Drive, Sebastopol Drive, Blackburn Place, Mueller Place, Kea Place, and Du Faur Place).
- Upgrade of the water treatment plant to increase capacity.
- Refurbishment or replacement of the ferro-cement water tanks at Glencoe Stream.
- New fire engine and breathing apparatus.
- Full survey of the water reticulation line using closed circuit TV and GPS.
- Installation of new, environmentally friendly street lighting.
- Introduction of a self-contained Refuse Transfer Station.
- Repair and reseal of Terrace Road, Bowen Drive, and Larch Grove Road (known as the village loop road). This project is being fully funded by the department from its park management budgets.

## 8 Significant activities

### 8.1 Water supply and reticulation

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#### **What we do**

The department manages a reticulated water supply for the Aoraki/Mount Cook village. Water use is measured by metering from the source to end-users as required by resource consents.

Water is provided to two standards:

- Domestic use (potable water and hydrant supply)
- Commercial use (potable water, hydrant supply and sprinkler supply).

Water is taken from an intake in Black Birch Stream, treated through an ultraviolet-light treatment plant, and reticulated throughout the village through water mains and to a fire hydrant supply.

Untreated water from Glencoe Stream is stored in tanks (owned by the Hermitage) for fire-fighting supply to the upper village (the commercial area), where buildings are fitted with sprinkler systems.

Overflow from these tanks can be diverted into the potable water supply system upstream of the treatment plant, as required to boost the input from Black Birch Stream.



*Figure 3 – Fire-fighting tanks (top), header tank, balance tanks and treatment plant (bottom), Glencoe Stream.*

## **Why we do it**

People need a clean, safe source of water for drinking and domestic use.

Aoraki/Mount Cook village is an isolated community with occasional further isolation in winter due to snow and ice blocking roads. The village contains significant visitor accommodation including multi-storey buildings. A reliable source of water for fire fighting is essential to the safety of visitors and residents.

Water could have been obtained by individual residents and businesses via private intakes from the Black Birch and Glencoe Streams. The absence of a reticulated water system would result in a proliferation of water intakes in the streams, unsightly holding tanks, and no controls or treatment of the water, with a resulting risk to public health. These risks are mitigated by the provision of a reticulated water supply that meets the New Zealand drinking water standards.

## **Managing the impacts of the activity**

Taking sufficient water from a stream to provide a reticulated drinking and fire-fighting water supply could affect that stream and the downstream environments that rely on water from that waterway.

The local body team will take all possible measures to mitigate environmental effects upon Black Birch Stream, Glencoe Stream, and Kitchener Creek of the infrastructure, taking of water, and return of water to these streams by complying with resource consent conditions.

The department holds resource consents from Environment Canterbury as follows:

**CRC054838 To take and use water:** expires 27 February 2044.

Authorises the taking of water from Black Birch Stream, Glencoe Stream, and Kitchener Creek.

**CRC054839 To undertake works in the bed and banks of a river:** expires 27 February 2044.

Authorises use and maintenance of intake structures and pipes in Black Birch Stream, Glencoe Stream, and Kitchener Creek.

**CRC 054830 To discharge water to water:** expires 27 February 2044.

Authorises the discharge of overflows and diversion from intakes when water sediment levels trigger automatic closure of intakes, into Black Birch Stream, Gumboot Pond, and Glencoe Stream.

The department is required to comply with resource consent conditions for the water intakes which limit the amount of water that can be taken. This is measured by water-flow meters on the Black Birch and Glencoe Stream intakes

The local body team will also be ensuring that all water connections are metered, so use of water can be managed and measured, and the presence of any major leaks in the reticulation network quickly identified and fixed.



*Figure 4 – Black Birch Stream*

## Levels of service

The level of service provided to the Aoraki/Mount Cook community by the department is dictated by the New Zealand Drinking Water Standards (currently NZDWS 2008). Potable water supply is provided to 51 domestic and 10 commercial properties as well as nine other buildings<sup>2</sup>. A fire-fighting sprinkler water supply is supplied to the Hermitage, Glencoe Lodge, the Chalets, the YHA, and department's Visitor Centre. The department will supply water to the village to the service standards outlined below:

Function	Level of service	Performance standards	How we will measure this
Reliability of water infrastructure for potable water.	To provide adequate flow and pressure.	Provide potable water at flow rates of not less than 10 metres and not more than 70 metres.	Monitoring of flow rate into and through the reticulation system.
	Ensure reliability of water system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maximum outage length: 4 hours.</li> <li>➤ Maximum outage: 1/year/consumer.</li> <li>➤ Response time: 30 minutes.</li> </ul>	Monitoring and recording of all outages.
Reliability of water infrastructure for fire-fighting supply.	To provide adequate flow and pressure.	<p>Sprinkler supplies for commercial connections meet the New Zealand Code of Practice for Fire Fighting supplies.</p> <p>Hydrant supplies throughout the village meet the New Zealand Code of Practice for Fire Fighting supplies.</p>	Regular testing of sprinkler supplies and hydrants to New Zealand Fire Service operational standards.
	Ensure reliability of water system.	Water available on demand as required.	Monitoring and recording of all outages.

<sup>2</sup> Connections have been divided into Commercial, Residential and Other. Other buildings include administration buildings, workshops, the Emergency Services building, the day shelter, the school and the community hall.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Level of service</b>	<b>Performance standards</b>	<b>How we will measure this</b>
Safety of potable water quality.	Drinking water systems are safe, reliable, and clean, meeting New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.	Water meets the current New Zealand Drinking Water Standards (currently NZDWS 2008).	Water testing and monitoring as required by the current New Zealand drinking water standards.
Information about assets.	As-built plans are up to date and all infrastructure is mapped.	Water system information is maintained up to date and stored in the department's Geographic Information System (GIS). This will be completed by the end of June 2011.	Measurement of GIS information against actual assets.