

18/4/21

### Ashburton River Trail

The Hakatere community river trail interest group is a group of volunteer Hakatere residents and has been part of the Ashburton Hakatere River Trail Committee for several years. We maintain the river trail track over a total length of approximately 6km from Hakatere River mouth right up to Gibsons Road. We've done this on a completely voluntary basis by keeping the tracks clear for the many users by removing all branches, trees and debris from the track anywhere along the 6km, as these problems occur.

We support the maintaining of Council support for the River Trail and the River Trail Committee and ask that our submission to be considered by Council as part of the Long-Term Plan 2021-31.

Our Hakatere community volunteer group as part of the River Trail Committee, has had good support from Council since the committee was formed 10 years ago. This has included a dedicated budget allocated specifically to developing and maintaining the trail including spraying to control growth overtaking the track and surrounding trees and the maintenance of gates, public signage and access paths to the river trail itself.

We believe Council should recommit to continue supporting the various interest groups including ours. This will have worthwhile benefits to both a significant portion of the local community plus the many and varied visitors to our region we constantly see using the river trail. These outcomes directly align to the values in the Long-Term Plan, in particular :

- Residents will achieve a sense of community and belonging through the opportunity to contribute to the development of a valuable community asset that is the riverside tracks.
- The riverside tracks form part of our district's great spaces and places - they are the ultimate natural-environment recreational space to assist in promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- Many of the groups working alongside the river have a strong environmental focus. Through native planting we are helping to promote a sustainable resource that can be enjoyed by many generations to come.
- The tracks we have developed attract visitors to our area thus assisting with the economic development of the district. Cycling in particular is enjoying a significant increase in popularity amongst several different age groups nationwide with multiple regions already recognising this and working to support it. We believe this market is currently untapped within Mid-Canterbury as a whole.

We believe the previous work of Council combined with the significant contributions such as ours and other volunteer interest groups should be preserved and further enhanced by way of an ongoing partnership and maintenance program. To succeed, this will require a financial commitment from Council in conjunction with transparent and open communication between the groups.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission, and trust Council will consider our points with the interests of the wider community and particularly the many and varied river trail users.

**Hakatere Residents, Volunteer River Trail Group**