

WELCOME TO OUR

# Newsletter

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## Quarterly Update



Welcome to the third edition of the Mackenzie Basin Catchment Collective Newsletter!

This quarterly update is packed with exciting news, project highlights, and valuable insights into our ongoing efforts to protect and enhance our local environment. Inside, you'll find success stories from our dedicated members, updates on current and upcoming initiatives, and tips for sustainable land and water management.

Thank you for being a part of our collective journey towards a healthier, more vibrant catchment area.



In this newsletter you will find:

Latest projects, workshops, free resources, and more. Keep Reading!



## Words from the Chair

Kia ora,

We're entering an exciting phase for the Mackenzie Basin Catchment Collective, with several new projects kicking off across our catchment groups. These initiatives are designed to strengthen local collaboration, support environmental outcomes, and build resilience across the Basin.

Community involvement is at the heart of everything we do. As we move forward, we're keen to deepen engagement and create more opportunities for people to contribute ideas, share knowledge, and take part in practical action. Whether it's through upcoming workshops, field days, or hands-on projects, your participation is vital to the success of our collective efforts.

We warmly invite you to get involved—your voice, energy, and local insight make all the difference. Let's keep building momentum together for a thriving, connected Basin.

Ngā mihi nui,  
Douglas Lee  
Chairman,  
Mackenzie Basin Catchment Collective

## Welcome to Our Spring Update: A Season of Foundations

As we move through spring in the Mackenzie Basin, it's clear that this past quarter has been less about planting trees and more about planting ideas. The last few months have been a season of planning, reflection, and laying the groundwork for the year ahead — and we're excited to share where it's taken us.

This quarter, MBCC has focused on building strong foundations. We've welcomed new faces to our team, refined our internal processes, and adopted key policies to guide how we work, how we fund, and how we collaborate. These changes may not always be visible on the ground, but they're essential to ensuring MBCC remains a trusted, responsive, and effective partner for catchment groups across the Basin.

We've also finalised our 12-month workplan — shaped by community input through our environmental survey and strategic workshop with MPI's Janet Gregory and Simon Langley. Together, we reviewed our priorities and made sure our direction aligns with the values of our members and the needs of our landscapes. The result is a clear, actionable plan that supports both innovation and restoration, with a strong focus on collaboration, water management, and community-led action.

And of course, we launched our first formal funding round. After reviewing several strong applications, we've committed \$78,500 to three projects that reflect the best of what MBCC stands for: ecological

resilience, and grassroots leadership. You can read more about these projects in this issue.

While the work ahead is ambitious, we're starting from a place of clarity and connection. This quarter has reminded us that good environmental outcomes don't just come from planting — they come from planning, listening, and building strong relationships.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We're looking forward to the season ahead.

The MBCC Team

## Resource Highlight:

### Your Catchment Coordinator!

This month, we're shining a light on one of MBCC's most valuable resources — our Catchment Coordinator.

With formal qualifications and hands-on experience in environmental management, our Coordinator is here to support catchment groups across the Mackenzie Basin — whether you're just getting started or ready to scale up.

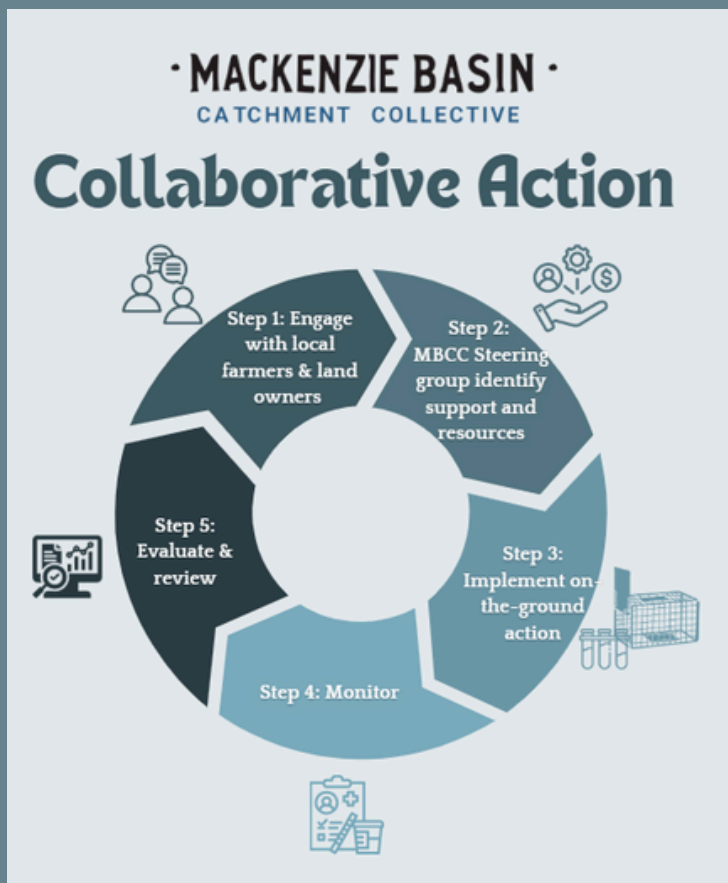
Thinking about launching a new initiative? Need help navigating regulations or writing an Environmental Management Plan? Reach out.

Our Coordinator can offer direct support or connect you with the right people, tools, and resources to move your idea forward. From technical advice to strategic planning, they're here to make things easier — and to help you turn good intentions into real impact.

So if you're ready to get involved, or even just curious about what's possible, don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Mikayla Bennett**

**[coordinator@mackenziebasincatchmentcollective.com](mailto:coordinator@mackenziebasincatchmentcollective.com)**





# Listening to the Land: What Our Community Survey Told Us

Before launching our first funding round, MBCC wanted to make sure we weren't just acting — we were responding. So earlier this year, we put out a community environmental survey to hear directly from those who know this land best: our farmers, landowners, and catchment groups. The response was moderate but meaningful. What came back was a clear signal that our next 12-month workplan is heading in the right direction — aligned not just with MBCC's values, but with the priorities and concerns of the wider community.

We asked: *What are the biggest risks and challenges you face in managing land and water in the Mackenzie Basin?*

The answers were thoughtful and consistent. The top concerns weren't just about physical degradation — they were about connection. Respondents pointed to

a lack of communication, limited collaboration between groups, and uncertainty around water use and management as key barriers to progress. These are systemic issues, and they're exactly the kind of challenges MBCC was formed to help address.

Pest management also came through as a major factor in environmental degradation. But interestingly, most respondents indicated they were already taking action — whether through trapping, fencing, or coordinated efforts with neighbours and agencies. It's clear that pest control is a priority, and that landowners are already investing time and energy into it.

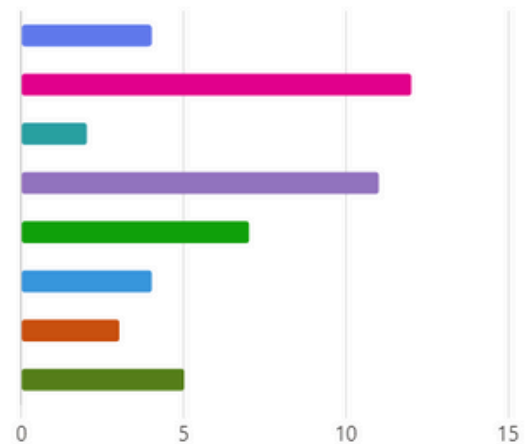
What stood out most, though, was the level of proactive commitment across the board.

- 78% of respondents said they had an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) in place



14. What do you think are the biggest risks to the long-term health of the Mackenzie Basin ecosystem? (choose up to 3):

● Unsustainable land use	4
● Poor water management	12
● Climate change	2
● Lack of collaboration	11
● Low community awareness	7
● Inadequate regulation	4
● Loss of native species	3
● Other	5



- Half of those described their EMP as comprehensive
- And 88% said they'd be willing to get involved in environmental initiatives and activities

These numbers speak volumes. They show that our local farmers aren't just ticking boxes – they're thinking long-term. They're protecting their land not just for compliance, but for their families, their communities, and the generations to come.

*So what does MBCC do with this information?*

We listen. We adapt. And we act.

We've taken note of the initiatives you find useful – and the ones you don't. While pest management remains important, we recognise that there's already strong momentum in that space, driven by landowners and supported by other organisations.

Instead, we'll focus our efforts where the gaps are:

- Providing clearer, more accessible information around water use and restoration
- Supporting on-the-ground action and,
- Creating opportunities for shared learning.

This survey has helped shape not just our funding decisions, but our broader strategy. It's a reminder that good environmental management isn't just about science or policy – it's about people. And when people are informed, connected, and empowered, real change becomes possible.

Thank you to everyone who took part. Your insights are helping guide MBCC's work, and we're excited to keep building with you.

# Funding Round 1: Community-Led Restoration Takes Root Across the Mackenzie Basin

This August marked a major milestone for the Mackenzie Basin Catchment Collective (MBCC): our first formal funding round. After months of groundwork, community engagement, and strategic planning, we're thrilled to announce the successful recipients of Round 1 funding — three projects that exemplify the values we hold as a collective: ecological resilience, community empowerment, and collaborative action.

But this wasn't just a matter of reviewing applications and writing cheques. It was a process grounded in listening, learning, and aligning with the needs of our basin.

Earlier this year, MBCC issued a public call for project proposals from catchment groups across the Mackenzie Basin. We wanted to hear directly from the communities doing the work — those who know their waterways, their challenges, and their opportunities best.

*Below: Mt Cook Alpine Salmon's team collecting water samples for the Wairepo restoration project.*



*Above: General area - flow paths, culverts under road. Showing Wairepo restoration paths.*

To support this process, we also undertook a community environmental survey. The goal was to better understand local priorities, concerns, and aspirations for freshwater health, biodiversity, and land management. The responses were thoughtful and diverse, highlighting everything from pest control and riparian planting to innovative technologies and cultural monitoring.

This survey helped shape our funding criteria and gave us a clearer picture of where MBCC's support could have the greatest impact.

With proposals in hand, MBCC convened a strategic workshop in Twizel, joined by Janet Gregory and Simon Langley from the Ministry for Primary Industries' Catchment Extension Services (CES) programme. Their insight and experience were invaluable as we reviewed our workplan and assessed each application.

# Funding Round 1: Community-Led Restoration Takes Root Across the Mackenzie Basin

Together, we asked: Which projects best reflect MBCC's mission? Which ones offer tangible ecological benefits and strong community engagement? Which ones are ready to go – with the right partners, the right plan, and the potential to inspire others?

It wasn't easy. We received several excellent proposals, and unfortunately, we couldn't fund them all this round. But the decisions we made were grounded in shared values and a commitment to supporting projects that will deliver real, lasting change.

## The Projects We're Supporting

In total, MBCC has committed \$78,500 to three projects that will be delivered over the next 12 months. Each one is unique, but together they represent a powerful cross-section of what community-led restoration can look like in the Mackenzie Basin.

### Twizel River Enhancement – Phase 1 Funding committed: \$50,000

Led by the Lyford Lane Catchment Group (LLCG), and supported by Meridian Energy, this ambitious five-year initiative focuses on invasive tree removal and stream revitalisation within the Twizel River catchment – specifically the area below the Pūkaki Canal, northwest of State Highway 8 and east of Glen Lyon Road.

Phase 1 will target the Dry and Fraser Streams, where dense stands of Crack

Willow, Grey Willow, and Alder have severely restricted flood flow capacity. Phase 1 will assess the suitability of accelerated bank erosion, and displaced native vegetation. The group will systematically remove these invasive species and replace them with native riparian plants endemic to the Twizel area.

Demonstration sites will be established to showcase restoration outcomes and encourage broader community participation. The project also includes signage and educational outreach.

Future phases may expand to the Twizel River and Bendrose Stream, with ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and annual work planning. Meridian Energy has committed funding over five years to support the initiative, and MBCC will provide administrative support, strategic input, and co-funding.

This is a high-visibility, high-impact project that exemplifies what can be achieved when landowners, the electricity generation sector, government agencies, and community members work together.

### Wairepo Creek Restoration – Phase 2 Funding committed: \$15,000

Led by the Wairepo Catchment Group, this project builds on successful remediation and planting work completed in May 2025 with support from the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee. Phase 2 focuses on deepening the ecological and cultural impact of the

restoration effort along Wairepo Creek, a key waterway in the Basin.

The project will plant over 1,000 flood-tolerant native species — including purei, wiwi, harakeke, and karamu — across 0.8 km of riparian margins. These species were selected for their ability to stabilize banks, filter runoff, and support biodiversity in flood-prone areas.

In addition to planting, the group will install pest control infrastructure to reduce pressure from invasive species and protect native flora and fauna. They'll also work closely with local iwi to incorporate mātauranga Māori and cultural indicators into monitoring, including tuna (eels) and water quality metrics.

Quarterly site visits, survival rate assessments, and adaptive management will ensure the project stays on track. Educational signage and school engagement will help raise awareness and foster stewardship.

This is a model for collaborative restoration — one that blends science, culture, and community action.

### **Ultrasonic Technology Trial for Water Quality Management - Phase 1** **Funding committed: \$13,500**

This innovative project, also led by the Wairepo Catchment Group, explores the use of ultrasonic technology to manage water quality in Kellands Pond and Wairepo Arm — two man-made waterbodies that

have developed significant ecological value over time. The project aims to investigate the effectiveness of the ultrasonic units for reducing harmful algal blooms and improving trophic level index (TLI) scores. The team will conduct baseline water sampling (nutrients, pH, turbidity, chlorophyll-a, cyanobacteria), ecological surveys, and a technical feasibility study based on site-specific conditions.

The technology — trialled successfully at Lake Tewa earlier this year — uses a broad frequency range (20–250 kHz) to disrupt algal buoyancy and growth. In that trial, cyanobacteria levels dropped from 25 million cells/mL to undetectable levels within six days. Peer-reviewed studies have shown no adverse effects on fish or amphibians, making it a promising, non-invasive solution. If Phase 1 confirms suitability, the group plans to lease and deploy ultrasonic units in partnership with Environment Canterbury and iwi, with ongoing monitoring and community engagement.

### **Looking Ahead: A Basin in Motion**

These projects are just the beginning. They represent the kind of work MBCC was created to support — locally led, scientifically grounded, and deeply connected to place.

We're excited to see them unfold over the coming year, and we'll be sharing updates as they progress. We also want to acknowledge the other proposals we received. While we couldn't fund them all this round, we were impressed by the quality and vision behind each one.



Our next formal funding review will take place in February 2026, and we encourage all catchment groups to apply. Whether you're restoring a stream, trialling a new technology, managing pests or building community capacity, we want to hear from you.

In the meantime, we extend our thanks to MPI's Catchment Extension Services programme for making this funding possible, and to all the individuals and groups who are working every day to care for the Mackenzie Basin.

Together, we're building a future where our waterways are healthy, our communities are connected, and our landscapes are resilient.



## **Growing Capability from Within: MBCC and the ACE Programme**

As MBCC continues to support catchment groups across the Mackenzie Basin, we know that strong environmental outcomes depend not just on funding and fieldwork — but on people. The success of any restoration effort hinges on the capacity, confidence, and coordination of those leading it. That's why we're proud to be actively participating in the Aotearoa Catchment Extension (ACE) Programme, a national initiative designed to build capability among catchment leaders.

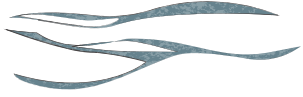
Led by NZ Landcare Trust and supported by the Ministry for the Environment's Essential Freshwater Fund, the ACE Programme offers structured learning, peer support, and practical tools for those working in catchment coordination roles. It's designed for the people who are often at the heart of local action — the facilitators, committee members, and community connectors who bring projects to life. And here in the Mackenzie Basin, we're leaning in.

Two of MBCC's steering committee members, along with a couple of catchment group facilitators, are currently enrolled in the ACE Programme. Their participation reflects a shared commitment to strengthening our collective capacity — not just for today's projects, but for the long-term health and resilience of our catchments.

For MBCC, this investment in people is strategic. As our network grows and more groups come on board, we need skilled facilitators who can support planning, reporting, and coordination across diverse landscapes and communities. The ACE Programme helps ensure that our leaders are equipped with the tools, language, and confidence to do just that.

The Mackenzie Basin is vast and varied. Each catchment has its own character, challenges, and community dynamics. Supporting local leadership means recognising that one-size-fits-all solutions won't work — and that the best outcomes come from empowering people to lead in ways that reflect their place.

## MACKENZIE BASIN CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE



### WATER QUALITY

Protecting our waters is a priority for us. We want to support farmers and groups to preserve our environment.



### PEST CONTROL

Maintaining biodiversity is key to protecting our environment. We work with groups by collaborating with industry experts to create effective management strategies.



### RESOURCE SHARING

Our website is constantly being loaded with resources to help you keep up with regulatory and compliance changes. However, if there is something you want to know more about or think would be valuable; let us know so we can get it added!



### EDUCATION

We are always looking to connect people to information and experts on a range of environmental matters. Please reach out if there are any initiatives or programs you want to highlight in the community!

## Visit our website!

EVENTS | RESOURCES | BLOG | TOOLS



Dedicated to enhancing environmental, social & economic outcomes, ensuring a resilient community for future generations of the Mackenzie Basin

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