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[View tide data](#)

- [Your Council](#)

- [News and Events](#)

The latest Council news and events

- [Meet the team](#)

Our staff and elected representatives

- [Meetings and Agendas](#)

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- [Community outcomes](#)

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- [Requests for Information](#)

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- [Visit the Chatham Islands](#)

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- [Local elections 2022](#)

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- [Previous newsletters](#)

- [Our submissions](#)

- [Services](#)

- [Primary Services](#)

[Infrastructure](#) [Waste Management](#) [Pest Management](#) [Biodiversity](#) [Emergency Management](#) [Resource Management](#)

- [Community and Culture](#)

[Animal Control](#) [Cemeteries](#) [Library Services](#) [Gambling Venues Policy](#) [Historic Places](#) [Heartlands](#)

- [Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Your Rates](#) [Building and Resource Consents](#) [Food and Alcohol Licensing](#) [Council Dues & Charges](#)

- [Coastal Services](#)

[Port Charges](#) [Navigation Safety](#) [Swing Moorings](#) [Marine Pests](#)

- [Environmental Data](#)

[Rainfall Data](#) [River Flow and Water Level Data](#) [Soil Temperature Data](#) [Tide Predictions](#) [Water Quality Data](#) [Wind Data](#)

- [Essential Freshwater package](#)

[What are the new regulations?](#) [Freshwater Farm Plans](#) [Wetland management](#) [Stock exclusion](#) [Fish passage](#)

- [Documents](#)

- [Annual Plan](#)

Sets out our work and priorities for the next financial year

- [Long-Term Plan](#)

Our work and priorities for the next decade

- [Annual Report](#)

An overview of the Council's activity

- [Resource Management Document](#)

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[View tide data](#)

Resource management framework summary

- [Regional Land Transport Programme](#)

Transport priorities for 2021 – 2031

- [Dog Control Policy & Bylaw](#)

Dog Control Bylaw overview

- [Vehicles on Beaches Bylaw](#)

Waitangi Beach vehicle bylaw

- [Rates Remission Policy on Māori & Moriori Freehold Land](#)

- [Navigation Safety Bylaws](#)

Managing boating and other activities on water

- [CDEM Group Plan](#)

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- [Investment Strategy](#)

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- [Search all Documents](#)

- [Contact](#)

- [View weather](#)

- [View tide data](#)

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- [News and Events](#)
- [Meet the team](#)
- [Meetings and Agendas](#)
- [Community outcomes](#)
- [Requests for Information](#)
- [Visit the Chatham Islands](#)
- [Local elections 2022](#)
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Rising to the Essential Freshwater challenge

• Last Updated 22 Sep 2022

In May 2021 two Environment Canterbury staff, Adrian Meredith, Rachel Tutty, and Ian Whitehouse (an independent facilitator) visited the Island to talk about resource management and the [Essential Freshwater package\(external link\)](#).

Adrian Meredith is a Principal Scientist of Water Quality and Ecology based in Christchurch and Rachel Tutty is a Planner based in Timaru.

Adrian, a seasoned Chathams visitor with six or so trips under his belt, was there for two purposes.

Firstly, for the same purpose as every trip that he takes biennially, to build the picture of data gathering on the Chathams; changes, trends, issues and how to refine and improve the water monitoring programme,

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respectively.

With 15 years' worth of this data, he also went to present a report containing this information.

The second purpose was to talk to Islanders about the Essential Freshwater package, which was Rachel's primary reason for visiting.

Rachel, who had not had the privilege of visiting before, in her planning capacity wanted to work with key agencies to create a plan for implementing what is required under the Essential Freshwater package.

[Find out more about the Essential Freshwater package and Environment Canterbury's advice\(external link\).](#)



Adrian and Rachel exploring the Island's beautiful landscape.

Seeing the Island

Their trip ended up starting a little late, with fog on the Island delaying their flight in, so they arrived only one day before the workshop.

This resulted in one long day of driving around large parts of the island seeing any changes in the challenges Islanders face in living on and farming the island.

It was a rushed day, but hugely valuable to go into the workshop prepared and informed.

Both found the scouting mission a great opportunity to gain a clear picture of what is happening and changing, including an obvious shift from predominantly sheep farming to much more beef cattle.

Rising to the challenge

With an expectation that the workshop would be heavily affected by the challenges the Island faces, Adrian and Rachel were blown away by the can-do attitude of all who attended.

Despite the difficulties and obstacles, the three agencies in attendance, the Chatham Island Council, the Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust and the Hokotehi Moriori Trust, were all positive and supportive of engaging with and implementing the package.

Having representatives from all three agencies together in one space was a real win. The agencies were all on the same page and brought a positive energy.

The reality is that there are many issues, including waste management, water shortages, unreliable bores and stock access to lakes and streams, but perhaps the biggest barrier is the cost of implementation.

That was why Adrian and Rachel were so impressed with the enthusiasm they met.

As a result, there will be ongoing discussions on possible changes to the way the Chathams approaches resource management, including managing and monitoring rivers, lakes, and the lagoon.

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Adrian and Rachel sampling a bore

Highlights

As a newbie to the Island, Rachel was surprised by how big the Island is and how diverse the landscape. She found it a beautiful environment and loved the native vegetation.

A highlight for both Adrian and Rachel was meeting new people and building relationships. As a new initiative, Adrian was identifying and measuring the characteristics of groundwater bores.

They really appreciated how engaged and positive everyone was and wherever they visited they received a warm welcome.

All in all, it was a great trip that highlighted how hardy Chatham Islanders are, ready to tackle challenges face on.

Thanks for always being such great hosts to Environment Canterbury staff!

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[Requests for Information](#)

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[Rates, Consents and Licensing](#)

[Coastal Services](#)

[Environmental Data](#)

[Essential Freshwater](#)

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