



THOMSONS CATCHMENT PROJECT MEDIA RELEASE

Thomsons wetland milestone as land protected through QEII Trust

24 October 2024

Thomsons wetland, a five-hectare constructed wetland in the Manuherekia catchment, will soon be legally protected by a QEII National Trust covenant.

The signing of the covenant agreement on Thursday 24 October was marked with a special gathering at the wetlands.

QEII chief executive Dan Coup was in attendance and thanked the McLeod family and the Manuherekia Catchment Group for their foresight and enthusiasm for the project and their partnership with QEII to secure legal protection.

“It’s great that Pete and Robyn McLeod and their family are protecting this wetland for the future. The land stays in their ownership but will now have a covenant on its title preserving it. QEII has historically not been a big player in the Upper Manuherekia catchment, but we’re delighted to be working with the McLeods and other neighbouring landowners to protect the unique landscapes and biodiversity of the region.”

The wetland will be protected by a special type of QEII National Trust covenant, known as a ‘restoration agreement’, which is different from the usual ‘open space covenant’. Restoration agreements are designed as an intermediate step to secure potential biodiversity values while an area develops to the point where it would warrant full open space covenant status.

With Jobs for Nature funding, the QEII Trust was able to develop and trial this new form of protection, providing the opportunity for restoration projects to get legal protection while they are still in the early stages.

“It is an innovative protection mechanism that recognises the McLeods’ ownership of the land while acknowledging that the Manuherekia Catchment Group will manage the area,” says Dan.

The Thomsons wetland, part of the Thomsons Catchment Project has been constructed from scratch, receiving funding from the Ministry for the Environment’s Jobs for Nature fund to create a five-hectare wetland over a three-year period.

Nicola McGrouther, Thomson Project Manager, said “to see the small puddle surrounded by old willow become the thriving wetland less than two years into the project, is absolutely incredible”.



“We now have over 40,000 native plants in the ground, and rare birds using the wetland as their home. Having the land protected with a QEII covenant marks an important milestone for the protection and future of the wetland.”

QEII’s Central Otago regional representative Rob Wardle says that the trust was pleased to be able to offer legal protection of the area.

“With less than 10% of the pre-human extent of wetlands remaining in New Zealand, partnering to protect wetlands is a high priority for QEII National Trust,” says Rob.

“Protecting wetlands helps to control flooding, filter nutrients and sediments from watercourses, and ultimately is an efficient and effective way to help protect the habitat of threatened animal and plant species”.

The wetland is also officially being renamed the Orkney wetland in honour of the farm it’s on. The McLeod’s farm, Orkney, was named by the original settlers, the Corrigals, who hailed from the small Scottish Island.

Ends

In photos: Dan Coup QEII CEO. Landowners Robyn and Pete McLoed and Nicola McGrouther (as witness).

Other attendees:

MCG: Clare Hadley, Andrew Paterson and Phil Smith.

QEII: CEO Dan Coup, QEII reps Rob Wardle and Mark Sutton

Thomsons Catchment Committee: Nicola McGrouther, Jan Manson, Roger Williams, Haines Battrick.

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