



Resilient River
Communities



Te Uru
Kahika

Regional and
Unitary Councils
Aotearoa



Kānoa
Regional Economic Development
& Investment Unit



Otago
Regional
Council

PROTECTING PRODUCTIVE LAND AND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Project: West Taieri Contour Channel Upgrade **Location:** Taieri Plain, Otago

The challenge

The existing contour channel is part of the West Taieri Drainage Scheme and provides functionality to the overall Lower Taieri Flood Protection Scheme. The existing contour channel has a horizontal profile over its length and has sections that are prone to overtopping during flood events. This has the potential to expose parts of the contour channel to relatively rapid failure, subjecting 7,300ha of highly productive agricultural land and the Dunedin International Airport to risk of inundation.

The contour channel was originally constructed in the early 1900s using horse and cart construction techniques. The contour channel primarily intercepts runoff from the various steep streams located on the Maungatua Range, conveying this runoff by gravity into Lake Waipori. Flood protection and drainage scheme works in the Taieri Plain date back to 1870.

The programme

The Contour Channel project is the largest of the projects in the ORC Climate Resilience Programme and includes 3.5km of channel upgrades and three bridge upgrades. It is one of four projects which together makes up the ORC's Climate Resilience Programme.

Project funding

Kānoa \$3.2m | ORC \$1.8m

Protecting

7,300ha of highly productive agricultural land and the Dunedin International Airport.

Project completion	Local Jobs (FTE)
June 2025	10

Key Benefits

- ✓ **Protection:**
for 7,300ha of highly productive agricultural land and the Dunedin International Airport.
- ✓ **Enhancing Māori and Pasifika employment opportunities:**
providing a targeted approach to engaging with Māori and Pasifika to enhance employment opportunities for Māori within the Climate Resilience programme and broader ORC activities.
- ✓ **Training:**
exploring opportunities to engage apprentices or cadetships.
- ✓ **Employment:**
20 full time equivalent jobs created, including 10 women (note: not all jobs are full time).
- ✓ **Environmental:**
project is being undertaken with respect to the surrounding environment, including the water body itself. Work may only be undertaken during certain months to protect fish and invertebrates living within the waterway.
- ✓ **Enabling affordability:**
many communities cannot absorb increased cost of rates to pay for new or upgraded flood protection schemes. Contribution by central government has enabled increased resilience to climate change and protection against flooding.