

COMMUNITY DRIVEN CATCHMENT GROUPS IN SOUTHLAND.

Farmer led community catchment groups have evolved in Southland over the last few years. They have a general purpose of increasing awareness and understanding of water quality issues and environmental policy changes through community engagement and information transfer. While each group is different, it is not a 'one size fits all' model, and they have developed for slightly different reasons, there are many commonalities with goals, strengths, challenges, and learnings tending to be the same. All of these voluntarily led groups are engaging with multiple organisations seeking science and policy information so they can help ensure water quality is protected now and for future generations.

GOALS

- Have farmer led community engagement to raise awareness and understanding of water quality issues and environmental policy changes.
- Engage with relevant organisations to gain information to enable individuals and their communities to address environmental issues.
- Be involved with and heard in the policy decision making process.
- Improve public perception of agriculture by demonstrating farmers are serious about environmental issues.
- Create positive on farm change for the right reasons.
- Be solution orientated and take ownership of issues and solutions within their catchment.



WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS?

- Knowledge! Scientific information is required to enable understanding if there is a problem in their catchment.
- Time to understand & implement what needs to be done.
- Information transfer and open conversations between all involved.



HOW DO THEY DO IT?

- Voluntarily!
- Field days, workshops, meetings, guest speakers, research.
- Passing on information farmer to farmer.

CHALLENGES

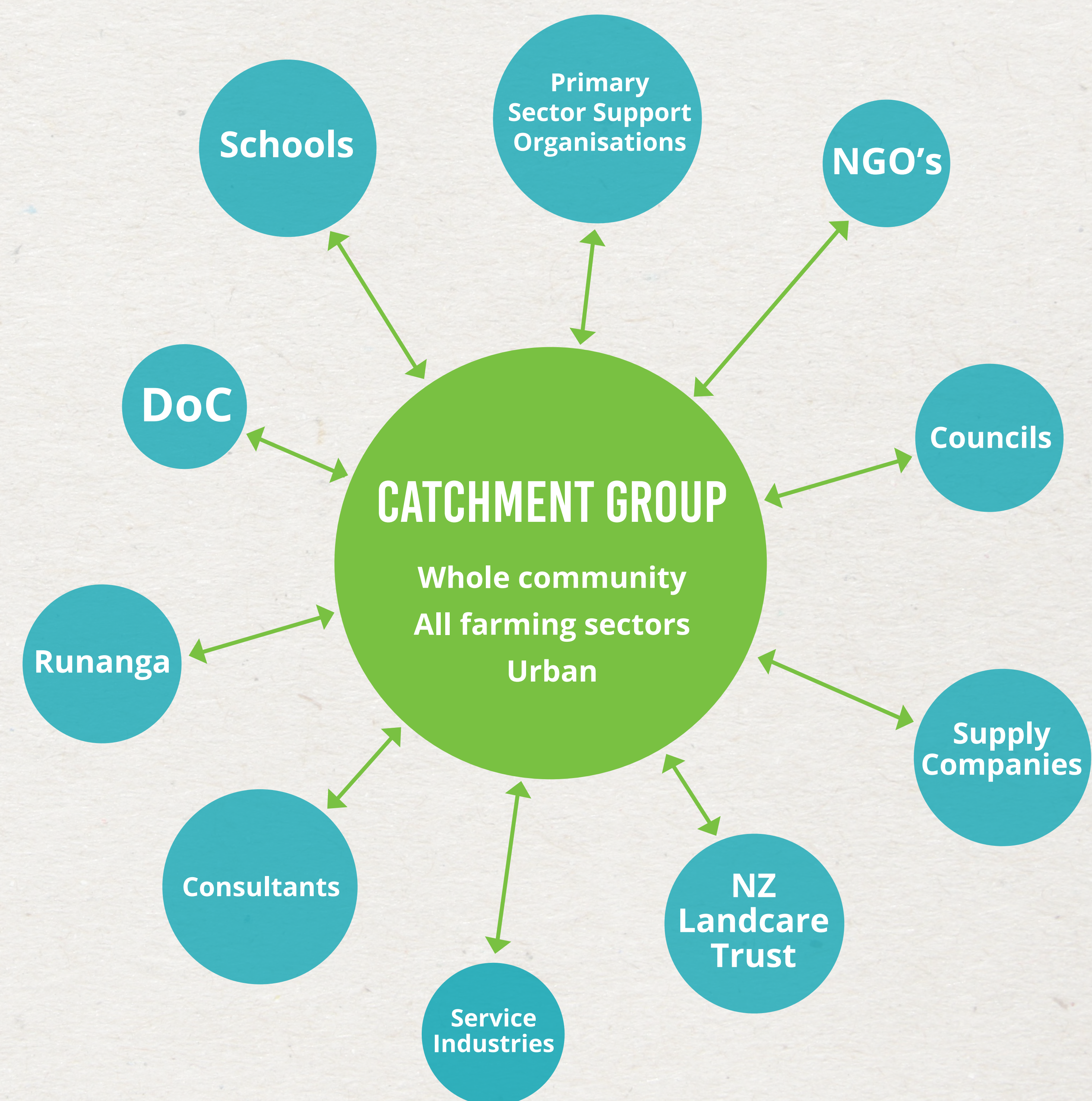
- Gaps in knowledge, both scientific and how policy will be implemented.
- Lack of understanding of issues and changing rules.
- Resistance to change.
- Financial and time restraints.
- Ensuring their voice is listened to.
- Generating urban and full community involvement.
- Retaining momentum & succession within the group.
- Funding.

STRENGTHS

- Encourages community innovation and flexibility.
- Conduit for information flow between communities and involved organisations.
- Builds stronger relations between communities and involved organisations.
- On farm change is implemented voluntarily.
- Communities have a voice.
- Grass roots driven.



WHO'S INVOLVED



LEARNINGS

- Be inclusive of all and approach challenges united.
- Build networks and use the resources of sector support organisations.
- Initiate engagement with decision makers.
- Use the expertise of individuals in your community.
- The grass roots approach with well informed people will assist change across all farming sectors and the general community, we can make a difference.
- Change attitudes and behaviour change will follow.