



OTAGO CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL



USER SURVEY 2008 / 2009

Central Otago District Council
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Introduction

The Otago Central Rail Trail (OCRT) has established itself as one of the major attractions for Central Otago, and along with summer fruit and Pinot Noir is one of the first things that people think about when asked about the district. However, it is a fairly new phenomenon, and there is a general lack of hard information about the trail, both in terms of the benefits it brings to the district as well as the nature of people who come to ride or walk the trail and what their expectations, wants and experiences are.

A series of three user surveys were conducted on the Otago Central Rail Trail during the season of 2008 / 2009. In association with other studies being undertaken by the OCRT Trust¹ it is intended that this research will provide some much needed quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to better match the needs of people doing the trail and those who provide the services they want and need. It will also assist in targeting the OCRT to the appropriate people and ensuring that the promotional efforts of Tourism Central Otago and other groups are to the best effect.

It might be argued that many of the outcomes from this research just confirm what was already known. However, the point is that real data will always be a better basis for decision making than assumptions.

Finally, in line with the intentions of the District's destination management approach to tourism, this research considers the current and potential offerings of the area, and that to grow the Rail Trail we need to consider the entire offering and experience of people. While for some people who come to Central Otago the OCRT may be all they need, for many people there is a desire to experience other things the area has to offer.

¹ The organisation that promotes and develops the Trail in association with the Department of Conservation, which owns and maintains it.

Major Findings

The major findings of the 2008 / 09 Otago Central Rail Trail Visitor survey are:

1. The OCRT is very much enjoyed and appreciated by the large numbers of people who walk or bike it. The surveyed Rail Trailers rated the overall experience 9 out of 10.
2. This degree of enjoyment is not influenced by the time of the year, the direction of travel, the time spent on the trail, the age of the Rail Trailers or where they come from.
3. Just as importantly, the prior expectations of people doing the Rail Trail were also being met and exceeded.
4. Age is the most important determinant of behaviour. Other factors such as expenditure, time on the Rail Trail etc... are generally best explained in terms of the age of the visitor. The exception is how people first hear about the Rail Trail.
5. People come from a large number of places to Central Otago to travel the OCRT. As a generalisation, the typical Rail Trailer is a person aged over 50, slightly more likely to be a woman than a man, from Auckland, Canterbury or somewhere else in the North Island. They are doing the Rail Trail for the first time, probably from the Clyde end, and are especially interested in the historic mining towns and sites.
6. They also went curling and either started or finished by taking the Taieri Gorge Railway.
7. This older person will spend more time on the Rail Trail than a younger visitor and will spend more money, both overall and on a daily basis.
8. This expenditure is mainly on package operator expenses, food and accommodation. Relatively little is spent on retail or entertainment.
9. While South Islanders are more likely to claim that they had always known about the Rail Trail, North Islanders have found out about it by word of mouth and international visitors through guidebooks or magazine articles. Overall, word of mouth is the main way that people find out about the OCRT.
10. Once having discovered the OCRT, people were then most likely to go to the internet to find out more. Interestingly, the more mature people were more likely to use this than the youngest group; who in turn were most likely to visit an i-Site. Many people also turned their cares over to package operators to provide them with the information they needed to undertake the journey.
11. On average, visitors to the OCRT spend just under 4 nights in Central Otago. This ranges from less than 3 nights for people aged under 30 to almost 5 nights for the over 50's.
12. People generally do not extend their stay in Central Otago to do other things around their time on the OCRT. They do, however, take part in a number of activities while on the Trail.
13. While it is advertised, the lack of available water is considered the worst part of the Rail Trail experience. While there were many comments about the surface these did not translate so strongly into a poor rating.
14. The lack and quality of food outlets was also commented on. The lack of healthy food options was mentioned often.

15. The average Rail Trailer spends \$472 while in Central Otago. This means that the OCRT is directly responsible for \$4.7M of expenditure into the Central Otago economy per annum.
16. In addition, it contributes \$2.3M to GDP and 60 full time equivalent positions.
17. If upstream and downstream factors are added, the total value to the Central Otago economy of the OCRT is \$7.2M per annum, \$3.6M to GDP and 75 full time equivalent positions.
18. This is estimated to be between 0.5% and 1% of the total Central Otago economy.



Survey Details

- The Gangers Hut at Seagull Hill, near Wedderburn and at the highest point of the trail, was used as the base for all three surveys and all interviews were conducted there.
- Each survey was conducted over five contiguous days from Thursday to Monday.
- Two survey-takers were based at the site from approximately 8.30AM – 4.30PM each day.
- All Surveys were conducted by one-on-one interview.
- Dates for the surveys were:
 - 27 November – 1 December, 2008
 - 29 January – 2 February, 2009
 - 2 April – 6 April 2009
- The weather for all three surveys was not exceptional, with the first two surveys in particular having days of cool weather, wind and occasional showers.
- Two signs, placed approximately 2-300m in either direction, notified Rail Trailers of the survey and they were invited to stop and “Tell us about your Rail Trail experience”.



- Depending on the numbers of rail trailers passing, interviews were either conducted individually or with groups.
- All people passing were offered a hot or cold drink plus either a piece of fruit or a muesli bar.
- A small number passed through without stopping or participating. When this occurred the survey takers made a note of numbers, gender and the estimated age of these people.
- There were a small number of walkers. For this reason we cannot provide the blanket term “riders” when referring to people who were surveyed.

Seagull Hill is very close to the middle of the OCRT. This means that responses represent individual reflections on only half of the experience. It was felt that this was acceptable as the best feedback would be achieved when the rail trailers were right in the middle of the experience rather than at the end when there may have been other concerns or issues may have become less immediate. As rail trailers came from both directions there is still feedback relevant to the entire trail.

Survey Results

Note: Totals may not always be the same for all questions. Not everyone answered or provided usable information for every question. Also, depending on the question either the number of survey responses or the number of people represented was used.

Observed Data

Table 1: Survey sample and confidence limits on data

Survey	1 (Nov/Dec)	2 (Jan/Feb)	3 (April)	Total
Total counter Wedderburn ²	1726	1470	2387	10,030 ³
Sample Survey	142	68	416	626
Period Sample %	8.2%	4.6%	17.4%	6.2%

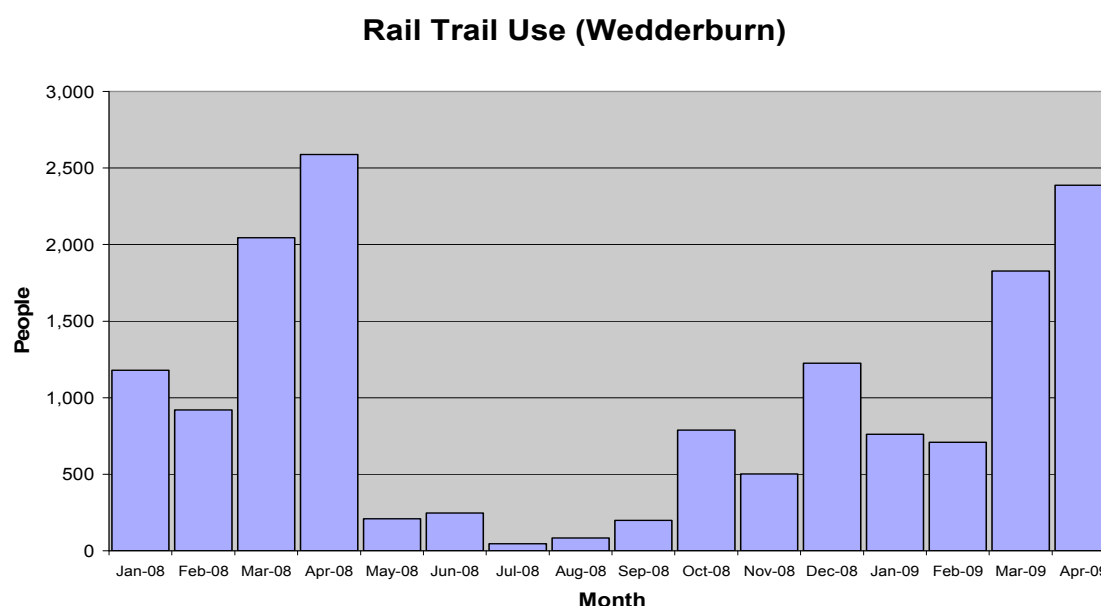
The overall sample represents an estimated 6.2% of the current annual traffic at that point of the rail trail.

The samples are assumed to represent a stratified random sample, whereby sampling took place at generally random dates within defined periods; spring, summer and autumn. Based on this it is estimated that the overall confidence limits (95%) are of the order of $\pm 4\%$ for data presented at an aggregate level.

The third survey had the largest count of people (roughly 2/3rds), which is reflective of the level of use of the rail trail. According to the Department of Conservation counter over 45% of the total numbers on the trail are there in the months of March and April.

This trend is shown in Graph 1:

Graph 1: Rail Trail Usage – Wedderburn



² Information provided by Department of Conservation

³ Total for the Wedderburn counter is 12 months data.

Table 2: Direction of Travel

	Direction					
	From Clyde		From Middlemarch			
Survey	Surveys	Number of People	Surveys	Number of People	Total Surveys	Total Number of People
1	26	87	17	55	43	142
2	26	48	11	20	37	68
3	99	336	31	80	130	416
Total	151	471	59	155	210	626
%	72%	75%	28%	25%		

- 75% of people who passed the survey point were travelling from the Clyde end.
- In Survey 1 the number of people travelling from Clyde was 61%, 71% for Survey 2 and 81% for Survey 3.
- This direction of travel is generally advocated as preferable as it is more likely to have favourable winds, with the predominant flow from the west.



Demographic Analysis

Table 3: Age estimates and gender of Rail Trailers⁴

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
<30	63	73	136
30-50	85	93	178
50+	130	142	272
Total	278	308	586

- 53% of rail trailers were female, 47% male.
- It was estimated that 46% of people who were surveyed were over the age of 50, 30% were aged 30-50 and 23% were aged less than 30.
- This confirms the view that the Rail Trail has attracted relatively more mature people.

Table 4: Where are people from⁵?

From	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
Auckland	19	2	73	94
Canterbury	30	4	60	94
Other North Island	17	8	61	86
Otago	18	6	44	68
Not stated ⁶		4	39	43
Nelson / Marlborough	9	2	31	42
Southland	16	4	19	39
Local	3	7	20	30
Wellington	4	12	12	28
Australia	13		8	21
Europe	1	12	6	19
UK & Ireland	6	2	6	14
North America	3	4	6	13
West Coast			9	9
Middle East		2		2
Total	139	69	394	602

North Island	53	18	145	216
South Island	63	27	184	274
International	23	20	26	69
Not stated	0	4	39	43
Total	139	69	394	602

North Island	38%	26%	37%	36%
South Island	45%	39%	47%	46%
International	17%	29%	7%	11%
Not stated	0%	6%	10%	7%

⁴ The survey takers estimated ages and recorded gender information.

⁵ Groups often provided multiple answers. These were consolidated and so may not be totally accurate for the entire sample.

⁶ Some people chose not to stop or (due to the larger numbers of people on the trail for Survey 3) were not interviewed. However, their age and direction of travel was still noted.

- While the largest numbers of Rail Trailers were from the South Island, at the next level down, the largest blocks came from Auckland, Canterbury and NI Other, which includes all areas other than Auckland and Wellington.
- The number of international Rail Trailers stayed reasonable constant. This possibly indicates that international visitors are less likely to:
 - a) Have planned their NZ trip around the Rail Trail; and
 - b) Been influenced as to which time of the year is perceived as being best.

Table 5: How does age relate to where people come from?

Age Class					
Where From	<30	30-50	50+	Total	Average Age ⁷
Nelson / Marlborough		12	30	42	51
Auckland	2	30	62	94	50
Other NI	9	16	61	86	49
Australia	1	10	10	21	46
Canterbury	16	17	45	78	45
North America	4	3	6	13	42
Wellington	6	12	10	28	42
Otago	21	20	27	68	41
UK & Ireland	6	4	4	14	38
Not known	18	18	7	43	36
Southland	15	19	5	39	36
Europe	9	9	1	19	34
Local	18	8	4	30	33
West Coast	9			9	25
Middle East	2			2	25
Total	136	178	272	586	44

Where From	<30	30-50	50+	Total	Average Age ⁸
North Island	17	58	133	208	48
South Island	79	76	111	266	42
International	22	26	21	69	40
Not known	18	18	7	43	36
Total	136	178	272	586	44

- People from the North Island were estimated to be older on average than South Island residents, with international visitors being the youngest group.
- The oldest groups of people are estimated to have come from Nelson / Marlborough.
- Only 8% of Rail Trailers from the North Island were estimated to be under 30 while 64% were estimated as being older than 50.
- 30% of People from the South Island were under 30, 29% aged between 30 and 50 and 42% over the age of 50.
- International visitors were the youngest demographic, with 32% aged less than 30, 42% between 30 and 50 and only 30% aged over 50.

⁷ This is very much an estimated figure. People were assigned the ages of 25, 40 and 55 depending on which age class they fell into.

⁸ This is very much an estimated figure. People were assigned the ages of 25, 40 and 55 depending on which age class they fell into.

- It is interesting, but not surprising, that people who did not stop tended to be younger, perhaps reflecting a different approach to the trail than the more mature majority.



Finding out information on the Otago Central Rail Trail

Table 6: How do people first learn about the Rail Trail?

How First learned?	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
Word of Mouth	19	14	48	81
Always known	9	4	31	44
Travel Guide Book	2	4	4	10
Newspaper Article	1	1	7	9
Internet	2	2	4	8
In District for other reason	3		4	7
Magazine Article - General	1	3	2	6
TV Programme	1	1	3	5
i-Site			2	2
Magazine Article - Bike Mag	2			2
Travel Agent		1	1	2
Brochure - other attraction	1			1
Brochure in Accommodation			1	1
Radio			1	1
MTB Book			1	1
Brochure - Sports Shop	1			1
Central Otago Promotion			1	1
Total	42	30	110	182

- Almost half of people surveyed found out about the OCRT through word of mouth.
- Approximately 25% of people claimed to have always known about it.
- Of the main forms of promotion, travel guide books (such as “Lonely Planet”), newspaper features and the internet seem to be the most effective tools.
- Interestingly, the experience of Marcus Lush during an episode of “Off the Rails” was an important event in making some people aware of and interested in the OCRT.
- How people first found out about the OCRT is affected by where they are from.
 - People from the lower South Island were more likely to have “always known” about the Rail Trail.
 - For the rest of New Zealand, Australia and North America word of mouth was the most common way of finding out about the Rail Trail.
 - People from Europe were most likely to have first heard about the Rail Trail from guidebooks or magazine articles.
 - It is worth noting that the survey did not ask if doing the OCRT was the main reason for being in Central Otago or (for international visitors) New Zealand.
- The Central Otago Promotion was at the CHCH A&P Show.

Table 7: Where do people go to find out information?

Category	Detail	Total
Internet	Not Stated	65
	OCRT site	2
	Google search	1
Package Operator	Not Stated	24
	Trail Journeys	19
	SLS Tours	6
	Off the Rails	4
	Ranfurly Bike Hire	3
	Cycle Surgery	2
	Rail Trail Services	2
	Pure Trails	1
	Altitude Adventures	1
i-Site	Not Stated	21
	Alexandra	4
	Cromwell	2
	Wanaka	1
	Dept of Conservation	1
	Gore	1
	Dunedin	1
	Oamaru	1
	Mt Cook	1
Word of Mouth	Not Stated	16
	Youth Group	1
	Other users	1
Brochure(s)	Not Stated	10
	Rail Trail Book	1
Guide Book	Peddlers' Paradise Guide Book	3
	Lone Planet	1
Operator or Business	Middlemarch	1
	Blind Billy's	1
	Clyde Service Station	1
	Not Stated	1
Media	TV	1
	Newspaper	1
	Radio	1
Travel Guide	Lonely Planet	1
	Not Stated	1
	NZ Bicycle Tours	1
Travel Agent	Not Stated	1
Central Otago Promotion	CHCH A&P Show	1
Total		208

- The internet was the most common place for people to find out detail about the rail trail, followed by package operators and information centres (i-Sites).
- It is apparent that it is important for i-Sites well beyond Central Otago to have information about the rail trail.

Table 8: How does the age of Rail Trailers relate to where they go to find information?

Category	Age Group			Total
	<30	30-50	50+	
Internet	28%	30%	36%	33%
Package Operator	17%	30%	34%	30%
i-Site	33%	20%	8%	16%
Word of Mouth	6%	5%	11%	8%
Brochure(s)	17%	7%	1%	5%
Guide Book		2%	3%	2%
Operator or Business		3%	2%	2%
Media			3%	1%
Travel Guide		2%	2%	1%
Central Otago Promotion			1%	0%
Travel Agent		2%		0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

- People aged 50+ were 25% more likely to use the internet to find out more information than people under the age of 30.
- Older people were also twice as likely to place the planning in the care of a package operator and were also more likely to use word of mouth than younger people.
- People under the age of 30 were three times as likely to use an i-Site to find out more information than were people over the age of 50. They also used brochures as major sources of information.

While this data should be used cautiously (due to small sample size) it is possible that this reflects that older people were more structured in their planning while younger people were more likely to plan the trip on the fly, and use convenient information sources where they are at the time. It certainly flies in the face of conventional wisdom about age and use of the internet!



Time on the Otago Central Rail Trail

Table 9: How many times have people undertaken the Rail Trail and are they doing all or part of it?

Completing?	How many times?	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
Part	1	5	8	13	26
	2	3	2	5	10
	3			5	5
	5		2		2
	12		1		1
	50			1	1
Part Total		8	13	24	45
Whole	1	122	44	248	414
	2	8	8	69	85
	3			2	2
	4			4	4
	6			3	3
	8	1			1
	20			5	5
Whole Total		131	52	331	514
Total		139	65	355	559

- 92% of people were completing the whole trail. Survey 2 had a greater number (20%) completing part only.
- 79% of all people were completing the trail for the 1st time. 96% of people were either on their first or second time on the trail.
- Local people were more likely to have done the trail multiple times.

Table 10: Why are people doing the OCRT at this time of the year?

This question was only asked for the third survey⁹.

Category	Total
Autumn weather	65
Fitted personal circumstances	23
Travelling - in the area	8
Family reasons	6
Advice from others	3
Autumn colours	2
Holiday time	2
Booking availability	2
No reason	1
Avoided Easter	1
Avoided School Holidays	1
Total	114

⁹ This was an oversight that was considered worth addressing, even if it resulted in no comparison of answers with the first two surveys.

Table 11: How many nights are spent in Central Otago?

(a): Based on age group

Age Group	Count	Average Nights
<30	39	2.9
30-50	56	3.4
50+	90	4.5
Overall	187	3.8

(b): Based on where people have come from

Where From	Count	Average Nights
Nelson / Marlborough	12	5.6
Auckland	31	5.1
West Coast	2	5.0
North America	7	4.6
Other NI	28	4.2
Canterbury	26	4.0
Wellington	8	3.8
UK & Ireland	9	3.3
Australia	8	3.3
Europe	11	3.0
Southland	11	2.7
Otago	19	2.6
Middle East	2	2.0
Local	13	1.8
Overall	187	3.8

- There is a strong correlation between age and nights in Central Otago. The older the people the longer they stay. Not surprisingly, this extends to where people come from.
- By making some broad assumptions about the average age of people with each age group the most elderly groups came from Nelson / Marlborough and Auckland, while the youngest groups were from the Middle East, the West Coast or were locally based.

Table 12: How many days are spent on the Rail Trail¹⁰?

Days on the Rail Trail	Total
1	6
2	5
3	36
4	44
5	18
6	3
8	1

- The mean number of days was 3.7 and both the mode and median were 4.
- For Survey 3 the mean number of nights was 4.3.
- This suggests that the OCRT is generally the main activity undertaken by people coming to Central Otago to do it. While they may undertake some activities during the time spent on the trail they do not seem to be spending much time in the district before or after this to do other things.



¹⁰ This question was only asked for Survey 3. Nights was initially considered the more important factor as this has a greater impact on expenditure within the district. The decision to ask for information for days was driven by a desire to have some point of comparison so that the importance of the OCRT to peoples stay in Central Otago could be indicated.

Other activities

Table 13: What other activities do people do while in Central Otago¹¹?

Activity	Additional Detail	Total
Gold Mining Heritage	Historic Mining Towns	34
	Hayes Engineering	17
	Naseby	12
	Ophir	11
	Golden Progress Mine	10
	Not Stated	5
	Gilchrist's Store, Otarehua	1
	Bannockburn Sluicing's Walk	1
	Otarehua	1
	St Bathans	1
Curling		76
Taieri Gorge Railway		64
Visiting Friends & Relatives		48
	50th Birthday Party	1
	Graduation	1
	Wedding	1
Sightseeing		50
Visited Wineries		33
Other	Visits to Pubs	4
	Fishing	3
	Visit to Arrowtown	2
	Visit to Queenstown	1
	Mountain biking at Naseby	1
	Ranfurly Art deco	1
	Ranfurly Museum	1
	Shopping	1
	Skippers tramp	1
	Social club event	1
	Holiday home	1
	Boating on Lake	1
	Crafts & Potteries	1
	Golf	1
	Visit to Haast	1
	Visits to Sheep Farms	1
	Look at Real estate	1
	Tracing Family History	1
	Classic Car/ Farmers market	1
	Southernman event	1
	Photography	1
	Tramping	1
	Visit to Dunedin	1
	Visit to Macrae's Mine	1
Old Cromwell Town		25

¹¹ While some of these activities were listed on the survey form, the survey takers did not prompt for answers using these. Activities were listed to save time in recording responses.

- The most common / popular other activity undertaken by people completing the OCRT was to visit towns or sites associated with Central Otago's gold mining heritage.
- This was followed by visits to the Maniototo Curling International all season curling rink in Naseby, the Taieri Gorge Railway, visiting friends and relatives and general sightseeing.



Matching Expectations

People were asked to rate out of 10 how well their experience so far had matched their expectations prior to coming here. They were then asked to explain why.

For some responses people gave direct comments regarding poor experiences at Central Otago businesses. Where a business was named in a negative sense that business is represented by “#####” in this report. While there are some businesses in Central Otago that do not always leave a good impression with visitors it is not the place of this report to publicly name and shame them. We are very happy, however, to include complimentary comments where these occurred!

Table 14: How well did the rail trail experience match expectations?

Expectation Rate	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
4	1			1
5	1			1
6			3	3
7	3	2	11	16
8	10	14	26	50
9	9	6	28	43
10	17	11	44	72
Total	41	33	112	186

Mean	8.8	8.8	8.9	8.8
Median	9	9	9	9
Mode	10	8	10	10

- All three surveys scored their expectations being met at nearly 9.
- This suggests that on average expectations were either being met or exceeded.
- There was no difference in how expectations of people had been based on direction of travel, although interestingly, people aged 30-50 reported a slightly lower score than the younger and older age groups (8.6 vs. 9.0).
- People from the South Island had seen their expectations met marginally better than people from the North Island and overseas (9.0 vs. 8.7).
- These differences are not significant.

Table 15: Why?

Expectation Rate	Survey #	Why
4	1	Tiger hill was a killer, some parts of surface too soft & rough, consistent surface would be great
5	1	Hard surface to ride – frustrating
7	1	Flatter, more shade/trees - tent access
		Hard with wind
		Surface rough - some sections worse than others
	2	Gravel surface a bit scary
		Type of country - was in agriculture. Not happy with riding through farm land. More fishing info
	3	Food - snacks / over fries
8	1	Barren stretches
		Scenery great, quiet
		Sighted dead stock 6mths+
		Surface is hard work - some sections are pleasant, pebbles near Oturehua are terrible
		Wind
		Wrong info from i-Site re bike hire - short section hire should be advertised better
	2	After 2500 kms of traffic cycling here is wonderful - without traffic
		Expectations high anyway
		Gorgeous scenery
		In places too much gravel
		Just what expected
		Landscape - the way the trail goes through, cycle without cars. It's an historic journey.
		Loved it / good hospitality
		Meets expectations
		More green
		Scenery is 10, but when cycling can't see as well - had luggage and had to watch surface.
	3	Enjoying it, friendly people & Beautiful Country
		Good
		Metal surface harder than anticipated
		Not hard enough!
9	1	3 barrier crossings at Clyde are hard to manoeuvre panniers and luggage through
		Amazing scenery, few people
		Clean, easy, meeting locals is good
		Company good, just can't give a 10
		Harder than what proposed in brochure, signage to access to Auripo road from Lauder not specific enough
		Land, grandeur, Historic parts - old guys in the gold days made this
		Luggage lost, had to wear same clothes each day
		Wind
	2	Accommodation at lauder hotel mucked up was booked at #####
		Beautiful but found scenery bare after West coast
		Great countryside. Nostalgia -used to live in Alex. The challenge, to be able to say we'd done it

		If had done more homework could have been more prepared
		Really good, makes you appreciate the work putting the rail trail in, in the 1st place
	3	Expected more valleys & hills
		##### Landlord
10	1	Awesome
		Being part of it satisfaction of completing
		Everyone we meet is positive - waving, smiling etc. Great no phones too
		Fantastic
		Good trail - great scenery - old stuff
		Great Facility
		No cars, well signposted, well maintained, scenery, drinks at top of hill
		Scenery
		Scenery, weather
		Signs, interpretation panels & sheds good
		Walking - the whole experience
	2	Definitely quite stunning
		Great
		Infrastructure
		Like the toilets and information sheds
		Much better than expected. Landscape & weather
		Superb CO Hotel - Hyde great
	3	Very good
		Everything wonderful
		It's Great
People (Hospitality Fantastic)		
		Scenery & Well organised

- As can be seen, the feedback is generally very positive and highlights the things we would want the OCRT to be known for – the stunning scenery, the lack of cars, the sense of being away from it and the friendliness of the people.



Rating the Experience

People were asked to score their response out of 10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent. They were then asked to tell us what would need to happen for their answer to become a 10.

This follow up question focuses respondents on the one or two aspects that are most important to them, and if addressed, would have the greatest effect.

For some responses people gave direct comments regarding poor experiences at Central Otago businesses. Where a business was named in a negative sense that business is represented by “#####” in this report. While there are some businesses in Central Otago that do not always leave a good impression with visitors it is not the place of this report to publicly name and shame them. We are very happy, however, to include complimentary comments where these occurred!

One challenge in interpreting this information is that while the question specifically asked people to comment on what should change to make it a 10, many chose to comment on an aspect without suggesting if it was good or bad. Therefore, some responses need to be second guessed to see if they are suggested improvements or highlighting an existing problem. For example “Fried food” could either be suggesting that more is needed or that there is already too much. Similarly, the name of an operator next to a rate of 10 is likely to imply a good opinion, while one next to a rate of 5 probably reflects that there was an issue.

Table 16: How aspects of the OCRT experience were rated

Aspect	Number of Responses	Average Rate (out of 10)			
		Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Overall
Overall Rate	186	9.0	8.8	9.0	9.0
Accommodation	165	9.2	9.2	8.9	9.0
Dining / Eating	153	8.8	9.0	8.2	8.5
Package Operators	93	9.3	9.1	8.9	9.0
RT Signage	182	9.1	8.8	8.6	8.7
RT Interpretation Panels	171	9.8	9.6	9.6	9.7
Trail Surface	186	8.3	7.8	7.8	7.9
Access to Water	135	5.6	2.3	6.1	5.6
Toilets	129	8.9	9.7	8.7	8.9
Visitor Information Centres	65	9.4	9.8	9.3	9.4

- As the rate is a score between 1 and 10, for most of the feedback to be in the range of 8 to 9 indicates that people were generally very favourable in their views.
- In other words we can assume (by-and-large) that they were having a great time riding or walking the Otago Central Rail Trail.

- The highest rate was for the Interpretation panels on the trail, while the lowest rate was for access to water.
 - Overall, people rated the rail trail as a 9 out of 10 experience.
 - With one exception, the time of the season makes no obvious difference to how well people enjoyed themselves and their experiences.
 - The one exception is for water – access and availability. The score from Survey 2 was particularly low. While this difference was not statistically significant¹² it may indicate that people were more aware of the lack of water during the peak of summer.
 - This lack of difference between surveys is important at two levels:
 - a) Firstly, it provides comfort that there is a degree of homogeneity in users.
 - b) Secondly, it indicates that the time of season may be a bigger concern for Central Otago operators and interests than it is for people who come to Central Otago to undertake the OCRT. To explain; although there is a clear need to widen the window of popularity of the trail, most interests advise prospective visitors that the “best” time is in the Autumn, when the weather is the most settled and the colours are starting to turn. If, however, the degree of enjoyment of the people doing the OCRT is the same over the whole season, then the promotion of the trail should not emphasise one time over another. This is important!
 - Further analysis indicates that none of the following factors plays any part in the enjoyment of people on the rail trail:
 - Time of the year
 - Age
 - Where people have come from
 - Which direction they are travelling
 - How long they spend doing the Rail Trail
- In other words, the Otago Central Rail Trail is equally enjoyable to all people in all situations and occasions!



¹² Chi-squared test for significance, 2 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level.

Table 17: Overall rail trail experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To Make it a 10?
6	3	Flatter
7	1	Made aware fitness important
		Not fit enough
	2	Didn't like ##### motel at all, but surface improved
		One member wasn't coping so well had to drop out
	3	Accommodation main points not available
8	1	Healthy food, more craft shops
		More cafés
		More shade, more camping spots
		Rough track and wind
		Strike weather right would be great - very windy
		Surface of trail
		Unfavourable accommodation 1st night, more trees
		Water missing, shade would be good
		Weather
		Wind
		Wind - perfect day would be great
	2	All down hill, more interpretation panels on boring bits
		Better surface to ride on
		Gravel needs fining down – too big
		Greener
		Less hills
		Seal it like French ones
		The surface improvement
		Track
		##### late with pick ups
		Wanted to fish, couldn't get info on it
	3	Blisters
		Food
		More side attractions
		No wind
		Paved lanes
		Should say 2kms to ...
9	1	Better info re bike hire needed
		Lost luggage tainted experience
		No wind would be great
		Noisy room, compressor in commercial kitchen next door. Food set up in Hyde Hotel mix with locals
		Road signs, should be warning signs to major road crossings
		Wind
	2	Motor on bike
		Personal
		Seal
		Seal it - surface variation
		Shoot 1st motel owner! - ##### Motel
	3	Biking etiquette
		##### lunch could be better - she's taken on too much
10	1	Surface good

- While there were some concerns with the experience people had with operators, the largest number of suggestions to improve the overall experience related to the physical environment and the quality of the trail itself.
- The comments need to be taken in some context, as the majority were made by people who had rated the overall experience 8 out of 10 or better.



Table 18: Accommodation comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
2	1	#### Alexandra bad experience
5	1	#### in Alexandra bad, rest fantastic
	3	Bunk house
		Could have been better
		#### could have been quieter
		Not enough choice in Clyde
6	1	Tenting
	2	Reasonably expensive
	3	Misinformation re Food / Café / Dinner etc
7	1	Some staying in private places – others fussy
	2	Ensuite
8	1	1st backpackers too expensive
		Mice at ####, TV not operational
		No hooks in bedrooms, Omakau Hotel lovely people
	2	Camping
		Good 2nd night but had bad coffee
	3	Average
		#### lodge overpriced, no soundproofing
		Omakau party next door very noisy until early hours
		Warmer bedding
9	1	Hooks for clothes in rooms
		#### forgot butter
		Single bunks
	2	2nd night great - Lauder school house
		Budget accommodation
		Hot breakfasts
		More room choice, loved the Crows Nest
	3	Had roll together bed in Clyde
10	1	Bed & Breakfast
		Camping
		Tenting
	2	Inverlair Lodge
		Value for money at Lauder Hotel

- There are no real clear trends or messages here.
- Also, given the number of surveys conducted there are relatively few comments about accommodation.

Table 19: Eating establishment experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
5	1	Greater expectations of #####
	3	##### Hotel poor not enough variety for tour
		Better quality
		Not many healthy options
6	1	Too many chips not enough healthy choice
	3	##### Hotel too much chips room for improvement
		Food good - hotels busy - long waits
		High price not exciting
		Hotels understaffed at peak time
		Let down at times
		More homemade baking at Gilchrist's store
		##### publican resents the rail trail
7	1	Could be more
		Lunch good, dinner not good
	2	##### hotel limited - too much fried food
		Need better selection in Otarehua
		No food at ##### when we got there
		##### pub advertises food all day but not avail
	3	##### poor
		Grumpy Publican at #####
		More variety
		Not much choice
		Nothing between Lauder & Otarehua
		Omakau good, ##### publican rude
		Too much fried food, not enough vegetarian
		Variety & health food
8	1	Expensive for what you get
		Had to wait
		Healthy options would be great
		##### hotel a bit slow - Becks hotel really good
		More cream donuts
		More variety to choose from
		Operator grumpy but good food
	2	Better outdoor dining area
		More variety
		##### tavern not open till 12 not impressed
	3	Greasy food similar menus
		Grumpy at #####, Lauder good food
		Inverlair great
		Lauder Operator
		More healthy options
		Not much lunch at #####
		##### pub - bad attitude
		##### very busy
		Pub food
		Pub food - fried too much
		Pub ##### grumpy
		Pubs ok
9	1	Had to wait at #####, should have more staff on
		Lauder not open on Sunday
		##### hideous - Becks hotel great
	2	Buffet options

	3	Need a food option in Ophir
		Half meals at Omakau commercial
		No sandwiches left at pub more variety
		One not great
		#### Grumpy
		#### pub a "problem"
10	1	Free internet at Middlemarch, pies & ice-cream good
	3	One we weren't happy about
		#### not enjoyable
		Self catering

- As can be seen, compared to other aspects there tended to be much more targeted comments about eating establishments.
- Over half of the negative comments related to one establishment located near the rail trail.
- The main generic comments relate to:
 - The lack of variety
 - The lack of healthy options available; and
 - The need for more places selling food.



Table 20: Package Operator experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To Make it a 10?
0	3	#### bus late, driver drove 120km/hr on phone!
3	3	Itinerary differed with ####
5	1	Lost luggage
	3	#### pub ran out of meals
		Trail Journeys saved the day #### mucked up booking
7	2	#### felt started too late @ Middlemarch
	3	Due to muck ups
8	1	Interpretation of itinerary going west to east
	2	#### baggage glitch
		Options fitted with operator not client
		#### forgot helmet
		#### - different person every time spoke
		#### didn't explain accommodation choices
	3	Guide excellent
		Online responses
		Trail Journeys
9	3	Ranfurly bike Hire
10	1	Bikes only
		Cycle Surgery
		E tours
	2	Cycle Surgery
		Ranfurly bike Hire
		Trail Journeys
	3	Cycle Surgery
		NZ Bicycle tours
		Off the Rails
		Rail Trail Services
		Rail Trail Services
		Trail Journeys

- While operators may not have been identified, the issues highlighted are clearly ones that any of the operators could and should look to address.

Table 21: Rail Trail signage experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
1	3	Needs improvement
4	1	Oturehua not clear entry & exit
	3	Could be better
		Could be bigger
5	2	More info signs
		Haven't seen many
	3	Could be better on trail
		Could be more accurate with km's
		Directed to start at Middlemarch
		Getting out of Clyde & into Alexandra bad signage
		More little markers pointing
		Signage in Alexandra bad, Brown bad colour
6	1	Too small - would love rail crossing signs
	3	Clyde no indication on Anniversary track
		Lauder better signage
		More on heights & distances
		More signage at Wedderburn
		Need to be earlier
		Needs more signage
7	1	Biased east to west
		Needs more distances to places
		Trouble finding trail from some towns eg Alex
	2	Clearer distance markers
		Interrelating with km's map rather than Miles
		Km's seem incorrect
		More plaques with place names i.e. Mt Ida etc
		More signs to dams - no sign to RT from River Track
	3	Adequate
		Bridges didn't name river they are crossing
		Good to have a few more
		Inconsistent re number keys
		Lacking signs
		More geology
		More "how many km's to go" signs
8	1	Distance markers would be good
		Road ahead signs could be larger
		Should be warning signs to major road crossings
		Some too obtrusive, not visible
	2	Couldn't find Ida Burn Dam – no signage
		More signage in Alexandra
	3	Better with no advertising
		Distances would be great
		Inverlair need signage at Oturehua, not in pamphlet
		Km's more often
		Needs improvement
9	1	Chatto Creek Tavern needs one
		Distance signs would be good
		From Cromwell confused with access went to Clyde
		Km's distance signs should be good
	2	Double sided signs are same on both sides
		Needs signage
	3	All great

10	1	more distance signs
		Problems with signs in Clyde
		Ida Valley Station have put Omakau instead of Oturehua Like the km's



Table 22: Rail Trail interpretation panel experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
9	1	Distance and overall height in general
		Haven't read many
	3	Good - loved geographic brass plaques
10	1	The information
	2	Especially Tiger Hill
		More gold information
	3	Maybe a whole map at each hut showing where you are
		Panoramic views

Table 23: The Riding Surface experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
1	2	Smooth it out
2	3	Photos of trail surface misleading on brochure
4	1	Bit rough & soft in places – Oturehua
		Pebbles at Oturehua bad
	3	Adequate
		More small chip compacted less loose gravel
		Seems newly surfaced
5	2	Viaduct rough & lips of bridges
	3	A bit rough in parts
		Novice has to concentrate too much to keep in smooth part that don't watch the scenery
		Rough & in lanes
		Rough & loose in places & big blue chips
6	1	A bit loose in the Ida Valley
	2	More even surface not so many larger sharp stones
	3	Could be better in places
		Need to concentrate due to surface
		Need to watch track so can't see scenery
		No advice on Middlemarch part roughness in brochure
		Rough for a road bike
		Rough in places too large stones
		Too much shingle
7	1	Could be worse
		Hard going at times
		Not maintained around Hyde
		Paved
	2	Bridge entrances a bit rough
		Could be better in places
		Gravel varies too thick
		Smoother in some sections
		Some parts rough near Auripo
		Walkers - seal it
	3	Gets rough in places
		Narrow tracks - can't look round, metal excessive in places
		Rough in places
8	1	Getting better
		Has been a bit rough
		Heavy gravel a problem
		Improve in places
		Not enjoying some of the surface
		Smoother
	2	Crushed lime is better
		Hyde to Waipiata section rough
		Places gravel a bit rough
		Rough coming up to Hyde
		Seal or grader
		Smoother track
		Some stones very large
	3	Better than before needs grading
		Hyde rough for walking on in some parts
		Nails on bridge trusses sticking up

		Rough in places
9	1	Bridge & cattle stop entry & exits have been rough
		Rough in places
		Some bits a bit rougher - generally good
	2	Adequate
		Bridges terrible especially going off them
		Bumpy - Seal it
		Rough sometimes
	3	Cattle stop bumpy
10	1	Different to what used to - road cyclists
		Some sections need grading
	2	Compared to Canada
		No potholes

- There are a large number of comments about the quality of the riding surface. It may be that this is an issue with expectations.
- Some specific comments about the surface around bridges may have some merit.



Table 24: Access to Drinking Water experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
0	3	None found
		None seen
		None
		Not seen
		Not seen any
		Poorly signposted
		Unless you search
1	1	Perhaps supply in gangers sheds etc
		Lauder only
	2	Bought own - more needed
		None seen
		Not enough places
	3	Needs improvement
		Not seen any
		Oturehua only
		Saw one in Oturehua
2	1	Didn't see any
		Haven't seen any taps
		Is there any?
		Water in Clyde bad, Omakau OK
	3	Can we drink water that's available? Not in brochure
		Could be better
3	1	Go to hotels etc to fill bottles they not happy to allow this
4	1	Only at Lauder
5	1	Good to have more taps
		Haven't noticed taps
		Lacking
		Operators obliging but need to have more taps
		Pubs could be nearer to trail
	3	1 at Oturehua
		Basic water taps
		Not seen many places
		Only at accommodation
		We carry our own
		Where is the water?
6	1	Water taps for cyclists would be useful
	2	More signage where to obtain
7	1	Brought own but haven't seen taps
		Not enough access
	2	Not clear enough
	3	More stops
8	1	"Growly" business owner
	3	Lauder & Oturehua only
9	1	Brought own but haven't noticed taps
10	3	Brought own
		No problems

- The main Rail Trail brochure¹³ does state that water is not freely available and that dehydration can be severe. It goes on to state "Replenish with commercially

¹³ "Otago Central Rail Trail: ride it – walk it – experience it" Otago Central Rail Trail Trust.

available bottled water available at businesses and communities along the Rail Trail”.

- Nevertheless, the comments confirm that the lack of water on the trail is an issue for people.
- There are two aspects:
 - The lack of water
 - The lack of information or signage about this.

Table 25: Toilet experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
0	3	Not where marked on map
3	1	Hadn't noticed any
5	1	No toilet at Wedderburn
	3	Middlemarch
6	1	Haven't seen many
7	1	More notices
	3	1 or 2 more maybe
8	2	Felt they were clustered together
	3	Another few
		Gel to wash hands
		Oturehua poor
		Toilet paper & hand gel
9	1	#### toilet unclean
		Haven't used
		Seen but didn't use
	3	Very good very clean no bugs
		Good
		More frequent
		Need more
10	1	Very good
		Bring own toilet paper
	2	Great
		Looked good
		Take toilet paper

- The locations of toilets are clearly marked on the main Rail Trail Brochure¹⁴.
- It also advises that toilet paper is needed.

¹⁴ “Otago Central Rail Trail: ride it – walk it – experience it” Otago Central Rail Trail Trust.

Table 26: Visitor Information Centre experience comments

Rate	Survey #	To make it a 10?
2	3	Queenstown
7	1	Alexandra no rail trail t shirts
8	3	Dunedin
		Queenstown
		Ranfurly
		Ranfurly (not enough Rail Trail souvenirs)
9	1	Ranfurly
	3	All good
		Good
		Ranfurly
10	2	Alexandra
		Booked via Alex i-site
	3	Alexandra
		Beautiful at Ranfurly
		Claire @ Alexandra
		Cromwell & Catlin's
		Cromwell & Ranfurly
		Queenstown
		Ranfurly
		Trail Journeys
		Wanaka



Is anything missing?

People were asked if there were any facilities or activities that they thought were missing and would improve their experience if available.

A wide range of answers was received.

Table 27: Additional facilities or activities ideas

Other Activity Category	Other Facilities or Activities?
Accommodation Options	Bath in accommodation, plunge pool, more spas/hot pools or the like
	Freedom camping sites available
	More accommodation place would be good & variety
	More camping sites and more information about camping
	More informal campsites & signage to them
	Spa, massage at end of each day
	Spa / Massage or hot pools
Activities	Hot pools would be great
	Kayaking
	Lack of activities etc makes experience exceptional
	Swimming spots, Flying fox across river, club hire at Wedderburn Golf course
	Things to do at night time
	Might be fun to have private operators doing diversions to get you off the bike
All Good Now	All good
	All ok
	All pretty good
	Content
	Exceeded expectations
	Fine fabulous trail
	Good mix
	Like it as it is
	Marvellous the way it is
	Superb all round
Food & Water	Coffee stops at Hyde & Waipiata
	Fruit stalls along the way
	Fruit stalls or somewhere to get it
	More businesses/stops
	More cafes in places with healthy options - lighter meals not greasy
	More food stops
	More Muddy Creek cafes
	More refreshment stops
	More variety of eating & coffee places
	More water
	More water stations
	More water stops
	Need local food for sale i.e. rabbit & Sheep. Lauder opens @10am, should be 9am
	Omakau to Oturehua more food options
	Otago food/fare could be pushed
	Overcharged for water - ##### miserable person - really bad!
	Snack stops maybe

	Spigot water signs on map
	Taps to fill water bottles
	Wine tasting & lunch place at Lauder
	Water would be good
	On long leg Omakau to Otarehua more cafés in Otarehua would be great
	Water stations
General	Better than what is at home
	Cheaper service to visit Naseby - more info on other cycle tracks
	DoC's Website says come in March/April
	Encourage people to go off trail & see surrounding areas
	Info required re short day bike hire - maybe at Dunedin and outside info centres
	Keep it simple
Operators	Motivator up hills
	Very tempting to ride on flat parts of sealed highway
	No wind!
	Operators - grumpy with groups not booking ahead. Should be in brochure if this is what they want
	Private operators to provide other activities on trail
Rail Trail	Barn great - more would be good
	More facilities between Lauder & Otarehua
	Shade
	Shaded areas to sit along the trail
	Sunscreen available
	Too many / more facilities would detract from the nature of the trail
	Water access & more free camping
	Trees, sun shelters.
	Few more seats would encourage people to stop & look at scenery
	Better road surface so as to enjoy the landscape
	Light in the tunnels
	More access to creeks etc on the trail
	More seats to stop & have lunch
	Rubbish bins - none around
	More railway memorabilia
	More signage saying "2kms to <township>" on track
	Let people know about Magpies
	More toilets at end of Galloway and Chatto Creek stretch.
	Relics by side of the rail
	Less shingle so I could look round more
Retail Options	Wood on bridges suspect / run planks onto bridge
	More shopping would be good. Galleries that would post purchases on.
Signage	Quality products in shops
	A sign that says 'Reached the top' be put up
	Advertising re accommodation
	Being aware of stopping points
	More and easier to see signage
	Orientation points - more signs from road to say direction, km's & next stop
	Signage at stops / mountain range
	Kilometre distance signs
	More signage for golden progress
	Signage to towns.
	Signage

Townships	Mileage signs
	More engraved maps of hills like Poolburn.
	Better facilities in Otarehua
	More eating establishments at Otarehua to reduce waiting time
	Later shopping in Ranfurly
	No picnic spot in Otarehua to sit & eat own Lunch
	More tea places in Lauder to open on Sunday.

- The responses were categorised to give a better feel for where people's thinking lay.
- As can be seen, in some way these represent better feedback and ideas on issues such as signage than may have been garnered by the direct questions.
- The ideas raised may represent opportunities to further improve visitors experience or to develop business opportunities on the Rail Trail (although it is also quite clear that not everyone wants the same thing, as some people have expressed that less is more, and an over-commercialisation would affect their enjoyment).



Financial Analysis

People were asked to estimate the expenditure they (and their group) would incur during their stay in Central Otago.

Table 28: Survey and per person expenditure¹⁵

Cost Area	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
Package Operator	\$34,338	\$11,820	\$121,596	\$167,754
Accommodation	\$9,168	\$3,775	\$22,605	\$35,548
Food	\$13,910	\$4,850	\$44,350	\$63,110
Retail	\$1,839	\$385	\$1,816	\$4,040
Entertainment	\$810	\$4	\$2,508	\$3,322
Drop off / transfers	\$1,160	\$950	\$3,643	\$5,753
Baggage transfers	\$0	\$170	\$1,355	\$1,525
Bike hire	\$1,600	\$360	\$2,510	\$4,470
Other	\$1,050	\$134	\$1,585	\$2,769
Total	\$63,875	\$22,448	\$201,968	\$288,291
# of People	126	68	416	610

Per Person	\$506.95	\$330.11	\$485.50	\$472.61
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- On average the expenditure of people completing the OCRT is estimated to be \$472.61 per person.
- The largest single item of expenditure is for Rail Trail Package Operators. In addition to the management costs of the Package operator this category includes components of several of the other categories, including accommodation, transfers and bike hire.
- The second greatest area of expenditure is for food. This is generally not included in operator packages.
- Relatively small amounts are spent in the areas of retail and entertainment.
- Possible reasons for the smaller per person amount in Survey 2 will be explored in Table 29.

¹⁵ People were also asked to estimate the cost of travelling to and from Central Otago. This information has not been incorporated in the analysis.

Table 29: Understanding per person expenditure**(a) Expenditure by person by age class**

Age Class	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
<30	\$372	\$174	\$300	\$297
30-50	\$442	\$211	\$404	\$387
50+	\$667	\$614	\$582	\$598
Total	\$507	\$330	\$486	\$473

(b) Average nights stay in Central Otago

Age Class	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
<30	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.6
30-50	3.0	2.3	3.1	2.9
50+	3.8	3.7	4.2	4.1
Overall	3.0	2.9	3.7	3.4

(c) Expenditure per person per night

Age Class	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Total
<30	\$156	\$65	\$115	\$116
30-50	\$147	\$92	\$131	\$134
50+	\$175	\$165	\$137	\$145
Average	\$168	\$113	\$133	\$139

- By considering the expenditure per person per night it can be seen that not only do the more mature visitors stay longer, they spend more per night in the district.
- The lower average expenditure per person from Survey 2 can be isolated to people from the younger age classes. More mature people continued to spend more per person per day.



Table 30: Total financial impact

Impact Summary	Direct	Total
Output	\$4,740,255	\$7,216,923
GDP	\$2,364,930	\$3,547,169
Employment (FTE's)	59.7	74.9

Key

Direct and Total

The direct measures are the ones derived directly from the survey and are based on the sample % brought up to the total annual population. There are standard factors used to determine both value added and employment numbers that are specific to industry groupings within Central Otago¹⁶.

Total measures include up and downstream multiplier effects. That is, every dollar of direct expenditure generates a certain flow of additional expenditure into the community.

Value Added

Value added measures the total value contributed by the activities of all businesses and organisations. In theory it is equal to the value of the output of business (i.e. sales or turnover) less its purchases from other businesses of goods and services used in production. In practice *value added* is akin to the sum of wages, salaries, profits and operating surplus arising from all economic activity.

Employment (FTEs)

Measured as the number of employed persons - but in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs), such that *two part-time* employed persons is counted as *one full-time* person, or *two people employed full-time for 6 months* is counted as *one full-time* person

Comments

- People doing the Otago Central Rail Trail are estimated to directly put in the order of \$4.7M into the Central Otago economy, per annum leading to \$2.4M of value add (GDP) and the generation of the equivalent of 60 full time positions.
- The total annual impact, once full flow on effects are considered, is estimated to be \$7.2M, \$3.5M and 75 equivalent full time positions respectively.
- This is estimated to represent between 0.5% and 1% of the total Central Otago economy¹⁷.
- It is possible that the actual FTE number is conservative and needs some interpretation:
 - The FTE number is an annual equivalent, yet the main effects come from the two months of April and May; therefore, there may be many more people employed as a result of Rail Trail activity over a shorter period.
 - Also, there are few businesses that rely totally on the income derived from people doing the OCRT. Therefore, it is probable that the benefit derived from the Rail Trail makes the difference between economic sustainability and failure for a relatively large number of businesses.

¹⁶ Central Otago District Industries I-O tables and multiplier 2003 – 04. Butcher & Associates.

¹⁷ Central Otago District Economic Performance 1998 – 2008; BERL, 2008.

Final Thoughts

People were asked if they had any last thought. These are summarised, without comment or clarification in all their range and glory!

- Advice on Dunedin long term parking.
- All bike hire people need a mobile repair man on call
- All good
- All good - stop the wind!
- All great
- An enjoyable experience - will recommend to others. A pleasant oasis in the middle of nowhere.
- Appreciate information & surveys for that information
- At gates places to lean bikes on. Railway sleepers to lean them on?
- Awesome & accessible
- Awesome, hard but fun
- Better road surface
- Better website for OCRT.
- Bridge approaches drop off on sides can be daunting. Sheep to keep grass down as fire risk on trail
- Brilliant
- Brilliant
- Brilliant
- Brilliant really nice track thoroughly enjoyed it
- ##### messed up bike pick up through Octagon i-site.
- Cellphone coverage for emergencies
- Challenge
- Clyde bridge narrow caused injury bolts exposed / loving it all - southern hospitality great
- Coffee shop at Alexandra Station for people from Clyde end
- Colin from Ophir Commercial took on an Ophir tour gratis.
- Congratulations - amazing trip
- Could be charging North islanders money to use South island facilities
- Countdown km's to towns, height above sea level on trail
- Curling better advertised in Dunedin & CHCH
- Day hire around Ida Valley / Poolburn Gorge would be good.
- Dedicated emergency landlines every 30 km's
- Disappointing at ##### plus lack of cafes
- Don't make it too commercial
- Earlier bus from Middlemarch
- Electric bikes would be great - no noise would be a requirement
- Encourage donations - put it on signage. Suggest amounts of full trail =\$50, part =\$10 or what you can afford
- Enjoyable
- Enjoyed trail people there should be more trails
- Enjoyed, biking with small child on back seat
- Enjoying doing sections of the trail
- Enjoying it
- Everyone been friendly, go along river track to Alex instead of trail
- Everyone friendly , keep the track non commercialised
- Everyone hospitable
- Everyone is happy & enjoying the Rail Trail
- Exceeded expectations

- Excellent, will be back, but not to #####
- Fabulous idea, boon for everyone
- Fantastic
- Fantastic
- Fantastic - impressed with forethought into venture
- Fantastic asset for central Otago
- Feel like a train
- Fitness levels over estimated on web site, need to be moderately fit plus
- Found Lauder to Otarehua long, café or shop would be great
- Fun
- Fun! Thanks to Alexandra I-site
- Galleries with facilities to post home
- Gates annoying - cattle stops better
- Glad to have done it especially in a group, operators really good
- Good concept, should empathise how easy it is
- Good trip
- Good would recommend
- Great
- Great experience / lovely people
- Great facility but no rubbish bins
- Great fun
- Great idea keep local produce promoted, wooing tree wine at Lauder, stone fruit on trail, Home baking
- Great lovely
- Great no litter
- Great NZ asset-possibly could have a user pays component to help DOC expand network - could pay \$50? Overseas pay \$100 for these, & already pay for DOC huts
- Great people - Hand cycle ridden by amputee
- Great really enjoyed it a change from the treks we have done.
- Great resource
- Great time
- Great way to get fit & have a good time. Team building or Xmas do
- Great weather
- Hang in there
- Happy
- Happy - what thought it would be
- Happy with everything
- Having good time
- Highest point signage needed
- History is not concise – needs to be more comprehensive
- How about Railway crossing signs but with Road Crossing or Rail Trail Crossing
- Hyde section rough - large rocks. More tunnels would be great. Gangers sheds great
- In campervan /going to Milford / enjoyed trip
- Its been good
- Just awesome Have a crib at Cambrians. Husband transporting gear.
- Keep it simple .Bridges too hard for recumbent bikes.
- Lack of EFTPOS in accommodation needs to be made known in brochures etc
- Like the fact that there aren't many others on the trail at present
- Like the idea of passports
- Like the passports well done
- Like to see more trails like this around the country

- Little disappointed in long periods of same scenery
- Looking forward to the top. More signage from town to trail
- Love central would live here if could.
- Love the space / sky / scenery, makes the countryside accessible
- Love weather
- Loved
- Loved it all
- Lovely part of the world, able to take time to do the trail leisurely, everyone very friendly.
- Magpies a huge problem. Is it advertised overseas?
- Map stating how to get to Naseby & other sightseeing spots.
- Member of party badly broke ankle and in Dunedin Hospital caused by crossing cattle stop - had surgery
- More Gangers Huts
- More promotion as walking track
- More trees for shade
- Need pinot to have more oomph!
- Never use ##### again.
- No sunscreen available
- Not happy - ##### organisation time.
- NZ needs more trails like this
- OCRT website phone link to CO info centres to help contact from overseas to arrange itinerary
- On Tour
- Operators provide microwave meals to buy?
- Overall great, excellent
- Part of 2 week Pacific tour via Christchurch
- Part of group of 17
- Passports are fantastic
- Passports excellent idea. Promote the trail as a family activity, safe
- Rail Trail brochure - passports are great
- Rail trail shirts with collars, polo shirts would be great. Cycle tops as souvenirs too
- Rail trail through Naseby
- Ranfurly B&B excellent
- Real asset to area.
- Really enjoyed it - weather good
- Really need water places - cant take enough bottles for high temps of 30+
- Recommend the bottle cider
- Recommend to others
- Recommended - question some hospitality. Love it - weather fantastic
- Recommended & more practice
- RT website doesn't say that info centres do bookings & helps credit card transactions.
- Rubbish taken from cattle stops
- Running late
- Something everyone should do
- Suggest highest point be marked by schist plaque not concrete.
- Tail wind all the way would be good
- Tarmac on trail
- This was a good stop
- Thoroughly enjoyed it
- Todd Niall report made it more interesting.

- Train - why doesn't it go every day?
- Travelling through - its good
- Training may have helped
- Very clean
- Very enjoyable
- Very happy
- Walking the trail
- Want an "I survived the Rail Trail" t-shirt
- Weather can make or break, especially when you're camping
- Weather fantastic
- Weather great Omakau pub fantastic
- Well conceived & executed. Happy to have cloud cover today.
- What other off trail riding in the area? Put in a publication
- Where are all the old signals & stations?
- Wine too expensive at #####
- Wonderful
- Wonderful experience
- Wonderful for a family & marketing overseas needed
- Worth doing again
- Would love more railway
- ##### publican moved them on whilst sat on grass verge outside pub

Appendix 1: Survey Form

Interviewer Notes:

Date	Time	Direction	Age Group	Gender
		From Clyde	<30	M:
		From M'march	30-50	F:
			50+	

Hello,
Can you take a few minutes to fill out a survey on your rail trail experience?

The survey is being undertaken by the Central Otago District Council. Your views will assist us to enhance future user's experiences.

- Where are you from? _____
- What is your email or phone number (so we can contact you if you win the prize)? _____
- How did you first learn about the rail trail? _____
- Where have you gone to find out information about the rail trail?

Website (name)	Package Operator	i-site	Word of Mouth	Other

- How many times have you visited or ridden the rail trail? _____
- Are you completing the whole trail or just a section? _____
- Why are you doing the trail at this time of the year? _____
- How many days are you spending on the rail trail? _____
- How many nights is your total visit to Central Otago? _____

10 What activities have you or will you do during your stay in Central?

Curling		Old Cromwell Town	
Sightseeing tours		An event (name)	
Taieri Gorge Railway		Historic gold mining towns and reserves (ie, St Bathans)	
Visited Wineries		Visiting friends and relatives	
Other1		Other 2	

11. How well has the rail trail experience matched your expectations? (1 = not at all, 10 = totally exceeded)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Why?

12. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the following (1 = Poor, 10 = Excellent) (Put a line through it if not applicable or no opinion)

#	Item	Rate	To make it a 10?
1	Overall rail trail experience		
2	Accommodation		
3	Eating establishments		
4	Package operator		
5	Rail trail signage		
6	Interpretation panels		
7	The riding surface		
8	Access to drinking water		
9	Toilets		
10	Visitor Information Centres		

13. Are there any facilities or activities that you think are missing and would improve your experience if they were available?

We have a few questions about your expenditure while in Central Otago

14. How many people are in your immediate group?

15. What is your best estimate of what your (your groups) expenditure will be for your total rail trail ride (including accommodation and food at both ends)?

#	Category	Expected total
1	All up costs (if with package)	\$
2	Accommodation	\$
3	Food and beverages	\$
4	Retail shopping, including souvenirs	\$
5	Entertainment / activities / attractions	\$
6	Drop off / pick up transfers	\$
7	Baggage transfers	\$
8	Bike or gear hire	\$
9	Getting to and from home to Central Otago	\$
10	Miscellaneous / any other spending	\$

16. Do you have any other comments or thoughts?

Thank you for your input. The survey is for statistical purposes only and your information will not be used in any other way.

