

# Wild rivers



## Those were the days...

During the Central Otago goldrush of the 1860s, the Shotover was nicknamed 'the richest river in the world.' This was demonstrated by the story of two goldminers who jumped in to save their dog and got carried down the river, managing to gather 11 kg of gold from the rocky walls of the river gorge before climbing ashore!



## Top of the class

William Hamilton was the Kiwi who invented the Hamilton jet – a speedboat that pushes water out of the back of the boat very quickly to create momentum. This innovative design allows the Central Otago jet boats to travel in water as shallow as 10cm and accomplish their amazing manoeuvres which include 360 degree turns.

From being a source of our wealth, to a source of our power, to a source of our thrills, and our admiration, Otago's mighty rivers are a defining feature of the region's landscape. They have carried alluvial gold from its rock source for the miners of the 1860s, and the pounamu for Māori before that; they provide hydroelectricity to send to our North Island neighbours; and now they are the foundation on which our world-renowned adventure tourism industry is built.

The mighty Clutha is a long and swift Otago river that carries the greatest volume of water of any New Zealand river. It has 12 tributaries, and the largest catchment area in New Zealand. It is dammed at the small township of Clyde, forming an artificial lake named Lake Dunstan. The course of both the Clutha and the Kawarau Rivers plunges through schist gorges from snowy mountainous origins. The Kawarau is fed by Lake Wakatipu, and makes its way 54km to Cromwell, joined by the Roaring Meg river near its narrowest point along the way. Here, a power station harnesses the intensity of the passing water for electricity.



The Shotover Jet in action

The Shotover and Kawarau Rivers are best known for their contribution to the adventure tourism for which Otago is famous. Whitewater rafting, bungy jumping, kayaking, and jet boating are all commercial operations run on these rivers, including the world's first jet boat and bungy commercial operations.

The Taieri River runs from headwaters in the Lammerlaw Range, mostly meandering as it runs its course from the Maniototo Plains, around the Rock and Pillar Range and down towards the coast, where it meets the sea just south of Dunedin. It provides many a spot for fishing, picnicking, sailing, and waterskiing, especially where it meets Lake Waihola.



The Kawarau River, home to the world's first bungy operation

