
Chief Executive Officer's Report – February 2009



Inducements

Various businesses provided Christmas gifts, which have been used within Council. I was offered one ticket to the pre-season Highlanders-Crusaders rugby game at Timaru but was unable to accept, the ticket has been used by others within Council.

Broad Band

Update on Funding Application

In December 2008 His Worship and I were invited to a presentation by Mr Trevor Storr, from Waimate High School. Mr Storr is the “Aorakinet Director of eLearning”

Aorakinet is a collaborative venture between 11 South Canterbury and North Otago High Schools to diversify the senior curriculum available for students and improve the professional development opportunities available for staff. Using a mixture of internet technologies, Aorakinet schools are able to work closely together as though they were one large school and reap the benefits of economies of scale. The combined roll of Aorakinet is over 6000 students. Currently over 80 Aorakinet students are accessing courses through the Virtual Learning Network brokered by the Ministry of Education and are taking part in classes run from schools as far apart as Northland and Reefton on the West Coast. For example, students at Opihi College are studying Te Reo Maori at Te Kura Taumata o Panguru, Hokianga, while students at Waitaki Girls' High School are studying geography at Timaru Boys High.

The following schools comprise Aorakinet:

Geraldine High School, Timaru Boys High School, Timaru Girls High School, Waitaki Girls High School, Roncalli College, Craighead Diocesan School, Ashburton College, Mountainview High School, St Kevins College, Opihi College, Waimate High School.

- Students are able to access a total of over 160 courses offered by schools around New Zealand. Each course has a real teacher who meets their virtual class for one hour per week using video-conferencing technologies.
- Students have the opportunity to study with classmates from different schools.
- Students can enrol on these courses at no direct cost to the school.
- Aorakinet schools can offer students courses that would not otherwise be available.
- Teachers can collaborate with colleagues in other Aorakinet schools without wasting time travelling to meetings.

Broadband will be a session at Councillors 2009 Strategic Planning Retreat.

A media statement (attached) has been released by Communications & Information Technology Minister, Steven Joyce, stating that the BIF will not proceed, as it was not compatible with the new Government's roll out of ultra fast broadband. Mr Joyce says he will be announcing the next steps towards the roll out of ultra fast broadband in the near future and ensure that they "get it right the first time" with the \$1.5b investment in the digital infrastructure.

Transpower Inter-island Link Pole 1 Replacement Project

His Worship and I had a visit from Transpower representatives. The following is a brief update.

The HVDC inter-island link is the transmission link between Benmore substation in the South Island and Haywards substation just north of Wellington. It enables the transportation of power between the North and South Islands. The link consists of two separate circuits, with major converter systems at each end. These converter systems are called Pole 1 and Pole 2.

The project, worth up to \$672 million, involves replacing the 43 year old Pole 1 equipment at Haywards substation (north of Wellington) in the North Island and Benmore substation in the South Island, with new state-of-the-art thyristor valve units. The project will increase the capacity of the overall HVDC link to 1000 MW from 2012 and 1200 MW from 2014.

Pole 2, which was fully commissioned in 1992, continues to operate reliably and has been able to carry additional electricity since the old Pole 1 was stood down in September 2007.

It is expected that New Pole 1 will be commissioned April 2012, the 1000 MW HVDC link operational July 2012 and the 1200 MW HVDC link operational August 2014.

Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)

With the holiday season firmly behind us, the Waimate District Council staff and Councillors now have their sights firmly set on the completion of the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

This will be our second plan and will cover a 10-year period from 2009 to 2019. This makes it a vitally important document in terms of the future directions and objectives for our community. We are living in challenging times, especially in terms of our economy, which makes careful planning for the future even more important.

Our draft LTCCP is due to be audited next month, after which point it will be ready for public comment. This then presents us with another challenge – how to ensure as many ratepayers as possible read it and then make comment.

We all know that it is not always easy to achieve this. Council documents have been legally compliant, but 5 volumes have been quite daunting for the reader,

therefore it is unlikely that readership has been high. So, we are now focussing on addressing this issue.

By its very nature the LTCCP has to contain a certain amount of statutory information, but along with this, Council staff want the finished plan to be one that residents of our District read and understand. To achieve this we are aiming for a document that is easy to read and not too wordy.

Together we can ensure that the new LTCCP is not a document that will gather dust in a back room, but one that becomes a template for future sustainable growth for our community – a plan that everyone has equal input into and has a part in developing.

We Live in Interesting Times

An extract from an editorial in a Local Government magazine.

“I have always been a firm believer in the old warning “be careful what you wish for; it might come true”.

There has been grumbling and dark muttering from many within the sector about the way central government has passed on duties and costs – without the concomitant funds – over the past nine years.

Mr Hide, for his part, has made plain his disapproval of how the sector is currently operating, raising issues such as ever-increasing rates, layers of governance, core activities and the ever-popular RMA. ACT’s local government policy called for a review of the two-tier structure of local government.

Jeff McNeill, a former regional council employee based his doctoral thesis on whether or not regional government was doing its job. What he found was that regional councils had become too closely focused on one area of their responsibility, to the detriment of other areas. Also, they had been left to fend for themselves by successive governments who between them managed to release one national policy statement in 17 years.

He also questioned why there were problems with the implementation of the RMA and quite properly suggested that if the Act was not completely understood after 17 years in operation would it ever be?

Instead of abolishing regional councils altogether, he suggested that regional government would be a better option, giving more powers – and more responsibility – to regional government.

Whether he is right or wrong is not the issue. What is the issue is that there are systemic problems in the relationship between central, regional and local government in this country.”

Meetings and Functions Attended

Various Ratepayers Issues
Management Meetings
Trevor Storr – Broadband
South CDHB
Mayoral & CEO Dinner
Jo Goodhew
Forestry Manager
Waimate Medical Centre
Glenavy Representatives
Transpower
Jacqui Dean
Timaru 150th Anniversary Dinner
HMNZS Canterbury Dinner
Meridian Energy meetings
Waimate Medical Centre Directors Meeting
Health & Safety meeting
SOLGM Retreat
LTCCP Strategy meeting
Staff meeting

Tony Alden
Chief Executive Officer