



# Council News

a newsletter from the Clutha District Council

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West Otago

May 2022

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## From the Mayor

The whole world seems to be overheated at the moment. Cataclysmic events that we would expect to experience once in a decade are occurring almost on a monthly basis, and especially around council's operations the external forces at play are having a huge impact on how we do things now and into the future.

COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, Three Waters reforms, disruption of supplies, staff shortages, there are so many huge dynamics at play, and collectively they are contributing to what is rapidly becoming the largest challenge of them all, inflation!

I don't want to be alarmist in my statements, this is a reality that all sectors of our economy presently face, but from a Council perspective as we strive to work in unison with our communities it is crucial that everyone understands the problem, and positively contributes to establishing new tactics to mitigate where we can.

Clutha is fortunate that we are in a very strong financial position. That said, we are also in a phase of growth, and we do have areas of exposure. Take for example our Three Waters operations, last year's Long Term Plan saw us allocate \$141 million in infrastructural upgrades, since then we have seen concerning trends develop at a blinding pace. The one that certainly first got our attention was a relatively small

stormwater project that went from a budget of \$600k to an actual of \$1.6 million.

Duplication of services, inefficiencies, and lack of staffing and supplies are some of the larger contributors to this trend nationwide, and with Three Waters there is now the new regulator Taumata Arowai to ensure that all councils have no option other than to comply regardless of costs. I suspect the Government's argument to reform this sector has strengthened considerably in recent months.

I take confidence from how Clutha has responded to past challenges. We have a reputation that has been built up in recent years as a proactive council that gets things done, and at the same time we have maintained our self-imposed rates cap of 4%. We have options but it would be naive to believe that things will be business-as-usual for the foreseeable short term, at least.

Another dynamic that we all must be familiar with is the frustrating misinformation that oozes from social media. Council is aware of the importance of engagement with our public and the sharing of verifiable information that you can trust our auditors will make sure of this. Our assurance is that we will continue to embrace our entire district and keep you informed. The well familiar consultation sessions have been a great way to build contact. We all need to engage and contribute to these interactions as we work through the changes required to respond.

From an intergenerational perspective a district's vitality and prosperity are not so much dictated by how they react in favourable times, it is how we react to adversities.

Onwards and Upwards.

# Improving your customer experience

We've been working on several projects aimed to improve the customer experience when dealing with Council.

## Rosebank Office Refurbishment

Major refurbishment work began in February 2021 to alleviate the various issues we were having with the building.

From functionality and customer experience, health and safety, security, fire and access conditions in parts of the building, and addressing maintenance issues like the level of deterioration of the existing asbestos roof.

A \$2.34 million budget was set to undergo work to replace asbestos roofing and Council Chambers, installation of a new heating and ventilation system and foyer/office realignment.

While it was planned to be fully completed in September 2021 the ongoing issues due to the impacts of COVID-19 around the world, including supply demands, meant the final landscaping was finished in February this year.

The building work was extensive and Council would like to thank the public for understanding when visiting Council in the past months.

Here is a list of the improvements that will make your visit to the Rosebank Office on Council business better:

- The foyer area has been reconfigured so that three individual small meeting rooms (pods) have been created to allow confidential conversations with our staff.
- Two new multi-purpose meeting rooms have been created off the foyer on an unused terrace area beside the front door. These two rooms can be combined into one large one when required.
- The reception area has been refurbished including a new larger reception desk with a specially designed area for visitors to Council with physical impairments.
- Heating and lighting in the foyer have been improved.
- An area has been created in the foyer which will be equipped with computers to allow customers to call in and complete applications online.
- The public toilets have had some maintenance including an improved and more efficient water supply and a publicly available accessible toilet (and shower) has been created.
- The council chamber has been refurbished with the ceiling lowered with new heating and lighting. An emergency exit has been installed along cabling and ports that enable the chamber to act as an Emergency Operations Centre when needed.
- Security doors have been installed between the public and staff work areas.
- The asbestos roof, and the asbestos panelling from the garage have been professionally removed and replaced with safe materials.
- Landscaping at the front including the removal of two large trees (one a stump) which had roots that were damaging the building foundations. The area has been stabilised.

## Digital Property Files

All of Council's property files that were previously stored and managed in paper form are now available to you in a digital format.

Council teamed up with Power Business Solutions (PBS) a New Zealand owned company who have over 14 years of experience working with local governments across Australia and New Zealand digitising paper records to deliver this project.

It took about 18 months to complete the project which involved 1,000 files processed at a time. Those files were moved offsite for scanning. This took around 4-6 weeks to complete, depending on the size and complexity of the files. Then the next 1,000 and the next 1,000 until all Council files were scanned.

We thank you for your patience while this project was being completed.

To request a file, go to Council's website and complete our online form. Then we'll arrange for you to access the file via OneDrive.

Property file requests are generally responded to within three working days, however Council has five working days to complete your request.

Council will inform you of any costs that may be charged if your request is complex or extensive.

If you have any problems with the form, please call 03 419 0200 or email us at:

[propertyfiles@cluthadc.govt.nz](mailto:propertyfiles@cluthadc.govt.nz)

To request a property file visit Council's website: [www.cluthadc.govt.nz/council/do-it-online/request-a-property-file](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/council/do-it-online/request-a-property-file)



The new customer reception area at the Rosebank Office.



New meeting rooms for staff to meet with residents and ratepayers.



The refurbished council chamber.



All of Council's paper property files have now been scanned and are available to the public in digital format.



## “ youth leading the way

### *Downhill Mountain Bike Park being constructed in Balclutha*

A group of dedicated mountain bike enthusiasts have been working away to develop and construct a downhill mountain bike park in Balclutha.

Clutha District Council Community Support and Development Advisor Jean Proctor said the mountain bike park idea was first brought to Council when Connor Bond and Jak Buckingham submitted to the Council's Long Term Plan 2021/2031. As part of Mrs Proctor's role at Council, she began working with Connor and Jak not only to help with scoping the project, but to provide support to help facilitate a public meeting last year to generate interest in the project.

"Since that meeting there has been a group of keen members of the community that have come together to form a club and with support and guidance from recognised track developers, district mountain bikers and members of the community, the stage one track is well underway," Mrs Proctor said.

Council had designated land between the Balclutha Golf Club and the Kaitangata Highway for the bike park.

"There is an amazing solid team of volunteers driving this project that have been taking part each week at the 'Dig Nights' since December 2021, with the number of people committing increasing each week.

"This is a true example of youth leading the way and everyone involved giving 100%," Mrs Proctor said.

While the park is not yet operational and not open for members of the

public to use, Mrs Proctor said the progress so far was inspirational. "500 volunteer hours of work have been completed on site and just last week they commenced first steps on cutting out their first expert track (black) with their beginner (green) intermediate (blue) tracks either underway or close to being complete."

The group is working positively with neighbours of the site to ensure the site is secure and to establish safe, acceptable access for everyone.

Mrs Proctor acknowledged the following supporters of the project:

- Balclutha Rotary and Balclutha Lions for their commitment to work together on the park and future mutual fundraising support.
- Clutha Foundation: \$7,000 donation.
- Powerzone Motorcycles: \$2,000 donation.
- Anonymous: \$1,000 donation.
- Duffy Engineering Ltd: \$1,200 towards a container to secure tools and materials.
- Duffy Engineering Ltd: Transportation and placement of the container and bollards.
- Balcrom Balclutha: 6 concrete bollards.
- IMPACT Weightloss & Wellness: entrance warning signs.

She also acknowledged that club members had purchased tools and materials in order to get the project moving.

It is planned that future key tasks will include:



*Volunteers working on the new Mountain Bike Park in Balclutha.*

- Some perimeter fencing.
- Weed eradication/spraying plan.
- Planting and landscaping.
- Appropriate access to the top of the site.
- Maintenance plan.

Should you wish to become a member, or to assist with track work, or to donate contact:

Chris Till 0276377914, Jo Bond 0276315748 and Jean Proctor 0273185555.

Like and follow the South Otago Mountain Bike Club on Facebook to check out the bike park's progress.

### Water email & text alerts

If your cell phone coverage is limited you can have your local water scheme alerts sent to you via an email notification. Sign up to our email or text alerts and keep up to date with rural water scheme notices and warnings. Phone us on 0800 801 350 or contact us online: [www.cluthadc.govt.nz](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz) / do it online / request for services



### Have you downloaded the Antenna App yet?

Antenna lets you receive notifications about core Council services direct to your phone. Stay up to date with Council announcements and information. It is free and easy to download from your App Store or Google Play.

We're backing

# Our Place



We've been out and about undertaking a public consultation, to help inform the Our Place West Otago Community Plan.

Staff and elected representatives talked to 200 people, at 15 events, during 5 action-packed days, between 28 January and 9 March 2022.

We visited schools, community halls, local cafes and pubs, and other key sites in Heriot, Tapanui, Waikoikoi, Waipahi, and Leithen.

We met with a wide range of people, from school kids, business leaders, farmers, shearers, retirees etc.

We have also received about 100 responses to our survey, with some still coming in.

Feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive, with some well-considered suggestions coming through.

Popular themes include walking and cycling trails, new community facilities, and a need to create additional housing in West Otago.

Staff are now preparing a Feedback Report, which will then help to inform a series of priority projects intended to make West Otago an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The final Community Plan is expected to be completed by June.



Some of the various consultation events held by Council to collect feedback to help inform the Our Place West Otago Community Plan.



## For those unable to visit a library...

All you need is a library card and an internet service and you can:

- Access 1000s of e-books and audio books.
- Check out our new movie and TV streaming service, or access a wide range of other digital content, that you would otherwise have to pay for.

**If digital is not your thing**, all library books, magazines, jigsaws and DVDs are currently being issued for six weeks – so fill up a bag or two the (this extended loan period will be reviewed as the COVID-19 situation changes).

**No card?** You can register online at [library.cluthadc.govt.nz/liberty/](http://library.cluthadc.govt.nz/liberty/) with the button at the top right of the page – or give us a

call and we'll walk you through it.

**We offer lots of links to great reading** (eBooks or Audio-books). If you like to watch we also have some great options for movies or TV.

**If learning is your thing**, we've found some great tutorials to help upskill your computer and internet skills, or learn about new technology. We can also direct you to some journal articles, newspapers, and magazines; and have great craft tutorials to get those creative juices flowing.

**For full information on all of these great deals** check out [www.cluthadc.govt.nz/community/libraries/resources/eresources](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/community/libraries/resources/eresources). For help getting access, please contact your local library.

## Download our new app?



Download the 'Otago Gets Ready' app and help do your bit to get us through in a Civil Defence emergency.

'Otago Gets Ready' is a proven two-way communication tool that can send Otago residents real-time localised email/text alerts during emergencies and help be part of a coordinated community response.



Either scan the Otago Gets Ready QR code or visit [www.getsready.net](http://www.getsready.net)

## Public Health Notice

Some plumbing fittings have the potential to allow minute traces of metals to accumulate in water standing in the fittings for several hours.

Although the health risk is small, the Ministry of Health recommends that you flush a cup-full of water from your drinking water tap each morning before use to remove any metals that may have dissolved from the plumbing fittings.

We are recommending this simple precaution for all households, including those on public and private water supplies.