



Council News

a newsletter from the Clutha District Council

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May 2024 | www.cluthadc.govt.nz | 0800 801 350 | help.desk@cluthadc.govt.nz | CluthaDistrictCouncil

From the Mayor



Thanks to those of you that have already got involved in this year's Long Term Plan. And to everyone else we would really appreciate your input, joining with council in considering our districts future. Without a doubt this will be the most significant Long Term Plan we have ever undertaken. The stakes are high and our options are few, as we navigate new and fast-changing issues.

We appreciate that the unprecedented speed and complexity of change is hard to follow, especially with so much misinformation to cloud the issues. Consequently, it is Councils' intention to follow the process and remain determined to do everything possible, to ensure that you can source the audited and verified facts to base your submission on.

It is a cold comfort knowing that we are no different than all other councils around the country. The creation of the new regulator, Taumata Arowai, has set a chain reaction in motion, giving councils absolutely no option but to commit to upgrading wastewater and water infrastructure as consents fall due. This is the primary catalyst to the rapid increases in debt around the country and is the dominant issue to be considered in this year's plan.

The ensuing three waters frenzy has created a tendering

environment with spiralling price escalation. The new structures that were intended to run in conjunction with the introduction of the regulator have now been shelved, denying all councils the protection that would have come from an optimal collaboration, with the size and efficiencies to enable the necessary work to be done in the most cost-effective manner.

Take the South Island, where we now have 21 Mayors, 21 Councils, 21 organisations with their own hierarchy and structure. Councils are shackled into the same financial structure for over 100 years, giving councils limited tools (namely rates and debt) to pay for an ever-increasing number of tasks assigned from Wellington. Where is the efficiency!

The straw that has literally ruptured Councils' back is the upheaval in the three waters reform process. That, for the time being, leaves councils to fend for themselves while trying to formulate new collaborations with whichever other councils are willing to listen.

This is our reality as you decide on the topics you wish to focus your submission on, so please consider who we should be in collaborative discussions with, and who might want to consider us. When you look around the South Island it's not hard to find issues. Solutions are a scarcer commodity, but Council is determined to promote our strengths and draw on the relationships we have developed over the years, to find the best options for Clutha. It won't be easy; nothing is with three waters, but there is no other option presently available.

Over 80% of year one increases are three

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From the Mayor continued...

water imperatives. Council believes it is only prudent to undertake projects as legally required and not wait for the inevitable response from the regulator if we delay. That is the reasoning behind so much of the recent debt that we have taken on. Clutha has 16 water schemes, and 11 sewerage schemes and the third longest water reticulation network in the country, meaning new consents along with the enormous costs are a constant and endless obligation.

There are other priorities we need

to carefully balance, such as recovery of our district's population in recent years from the crippling losses of a decade ago. The principal driver has been Councils' community enhancement projects. Population growth has huge positive impacts, enhancing the vibrancy and vitality of a district and our increased rating base certainly strengthens our ability to function, but there are growing calls for us to consider the balance of projects and whether it is prudent to maintain the momentum in the present environment. This will be one of the

principal considerations for this LTP. Like never before I'm sure you can see that we need to work together, dealing with the facts no matter how challenging they are. We look forward to hearing from you during the remainder of our consultation period, so that you can compile your submission knowing you have the audited facts and figures available for your consideration.

Thank you for your input, we value your assistance and together we will get the best outcome for Clutha's future prosperity.

Onwards and Upwards

spotlight on / let's talk | kia kōrero...

// Consultation is underway for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan

The consultation period is now underway and Council has already received strong interest in making submissions from ratepayers and residents, which is fantastic to see.

Community consultation is a critical part of producing the Long Term Plan (LTP) for 2024-34, which sets out what Council aims to achieve for the Clutha District over the medium-to-long term, such as its priorities and projects it intends to deliver, the costs of providing them, and how Council intends to measure progress towards the projects contained in the plan.

The Long Term Plan is updated every three years and sets the direction we are heading for the next 10 years.

We ask for your opinion on some key decisions. We also provide a breakdown of the expected rates impact of these decisions.

Projects include infrastructure, three water services (drinking water, waste water and stormwater), community services, waste management, climate change and community engagement, to

name a few.

A breakdown of our financial statements and position is also provided, showing how our proposed rates are struck, the amount spent on operations, and information regarding debt.

In these difficult times, with inflation, increased government drinking water standards and other challenges, an increase in rates is unfortunately a reality that is affecting all councils in New Zealand.

Council has been successful for many years in keeping rates low, and all ratepayers benefited from that fiscal restraint. Council continues to subsidise rates for everybody from investment returns to a limited extent.

We are encouraging everybody to get involved in the consultation process and have your say. We want to hear from all ages, because this LTP affects all of us.



How can I get involved?

A consultation document was inserted into the Clutha Leader during April, with a submission form at the back of the document.

Electronic copies of the document are also available online, and you can submit your feedback via our website.

Copies of the consultation document can be found:

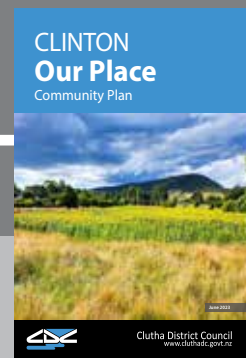
- On our website - please visit www.cluthadc.govt.nz/consultation.
- At all of our community libraries and the Clutha isite Visitor Information Centre.
- From the Clutha District Council office in Balclutha.

You can submit your feedback by either using the paper form attached to the consultation document, or through the online submission form on our website.

All submissions can be received at our Balclutha Rosebank office, the Clutha isite, any of our community libraries, or by posting to Freepost 54066247, Clutha District Council, PO Box 25, Balclutha 9240.

Did you know that the Clutha District

'Our Place' Community Plans



can be found on our website?

The 'Our Place' Community Plans that have been developed for our district can be found at www.cluthadc.govt.nz/community-planning.

Through community consultation, we have developed Community Plans for a number of areas across the district, taking into account important areas where residents would like to see improvements made.

Once a Community Plan is approved by Council the real work begins. Bringing the aspirations of these Community Plans to fruition takes work, time, and collaboration.

Visit our website to find out more about your local Community Plan.

Milestones celebrated in Kaitangata

It has been an exciting start to the year for Kaitangata, with the opening of the Kaitangata Memorial Garden and ownership of the Kaitangata Community Swimming Pool handed over to a local community group on the same day in late February.

The pool handover came about following consultation back in 2015, when the community was overwhelmingly in favour of the pool remaining open and receiving a major upgrade. To achieve this, a community group was formed and have worked tirelessly to get to this point of ownership.

Committee members and councillors held a transfer ceremony and pool party in February to mark the occasion.

Following this, the new Kaitangata Memorial Garden was officially opened to the public by Kaitangata Promotions, with Mayor Bryan Cadogan and councillors in attendance.

The Memorial Garden, located in central Kaitangata, is the result of a joint project which has been led by the Kaitangata community, as a result of the Our Place Kaitangata Community Plan.

Mayor Bryan Cadogan said that the combined ceremonies was an excellent way to celebrate the great community work going on in Kaitangata.

"It is fantastic to see the community so involved in the future of Kaitangata, once again banding together to make good things happen."



Rates Rebate

Applications for the current 2023/2024 rating year close soon.

If your household is on a low income, you might be eligible for subsidised rates through the rates rebate scheme.

The rates rebate scheme provides assistance for ratepayers with low incomes.

If you think you may qualify and have not applied since July 2023, please complete and return an application form by the 30 June 2024.

Visit www.cluthadc.govt.nz/rates or call 0800 801 350.

spotlight on / fluoridation...

Fluoridation of water supplies was reactivated earlier this year for those living in Balclutha, Kaitangata, Milton and Tapanui. Deputy Chief Executive Jules Witt said Balclutha had been fluoridated for decades and the other three towns were newly dosed around 2010, following public consultation. It was suspended in July 2019 due to health and safety concerns raised by the contractor relating to the fluoridation dosing equipment.

At a Council meeting in December 2020 it was agreed to reinstate fluoridation, as a more cost effective solution that met health and safety requirements, had been found. "At the time it was noted that it was not a decision about whether to fluoridate or not, because fluoridation had only ceased due to health and safety chemical operator

concerns, but rather a decision around the cost, as the actual cost was a 10% increase on the previous system."

Mr Witt acknowledged there had been delays and challenges with funding, supply, equipment, and training and it was good to get dosing underway again. Fluoride occurs naturally in water, although at levels that are not high enough to provide oral health benefits. For more detailed information please refer to: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/fluoride-and-oral-health/community-water-fluoride-safe-effective-and-affordable. There are options for those that want to remove fluoride from their water supply however Council does not provide reimbursement for this, he said.

Watch our Council meetings online

We are now livestreaming all Council and Committee meetings.

Stay up to date and never miss a beat - visit our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@cluthadistrictcouncil8457) to view all the latest meetings from the comfort of your own home.

Each meeting is livestreamed, meaning that you can watch online in real time, or catch up later at a time that suits you.

Civil Defence PIM Media Liason Training

Our Public Information Management (PIM) team recently completed a training session with Emergency Management Otago Engagement Advisor Erica Andrews, to ensure that we are prepared in the event of an emergency.

The PIM function is an important piece of the puzzle in a successful emergency response. Their role is to ensure that the public understands what is happening and how we are responding when an emergency event occurs.

Part of the training involved a media liaison exercise, which included gathering information, briefing our spokesperson and Mayor, liaising with FENZ, Police and Deaf Aotearoa, and then holding a full media standup with a press Q & A session.

This training will be invaluable in the event of a disaster in the Clutha District. Thank you Erica for your time and expertise!



Pictured from left: Kevin Sutton (Fire & Emergency NZ), Mayor Bryan Cadogan, Sam Morris (NZ Police), Brydeee Strang (Deaf Aotearoa), Local Controller Gavin Scott.

Backflow prevention programme

The Clutha District Council has developed a backflow protection programme, to mitigate and reduce the risk of harmful contaminants entering our water systems from private connections.

In order to ensure that our water is safe and clean, Council will be working with the public to locate potential areas of risk in the water networks and remedy any risk of contamination.

Water pressure within the network ensures water is delivered to your property. However, if the water pressure changes in the network, then backflow can occur. Backflow poses a serious risk to our public, so we want to work with property owners to prevent this happening.

Council is opting to manage the risk by requiring backflow prevention devices be installed at the boundary of all properties that pose a risk of backflow. Council will work together with property owners to determine potential areas of risk, where prevention devices will be required, and assist in arranging installation of the devices.

Over the coming months Council will be writing to property owners that may have a potential risk of backflow occurring, based on their listed land use.

If you are contacted by Council regarding a property inspection and have any questions about the process please get in touch by phoning 0800 801 350.

Save paper.. receive your rates invoice by email!

Visit www.cluthadc.govt.nz/do-it-online and sign up to receive your rates invoice by email.

Get the latest information...

If there's important information about anything from burst pipes to planned water works, you can get this directly from the council by:

- Downloading the Antenno app from the App Store or Google Play
- Subscribe for text and email alerts:



www.cluthadc.govt.nz/water-notice