

CivicCorp successor raises some concerns

By Jessica Maddock

Queenstown Lakes

Some Queenstown Lakes District councillors yesterday called for greater accountability from a "council controlled organisation" being established to replace CivicCorp.

resource management and regulatory services when CivicCorp's contract with the council ends in June next year, or earlier if the council can negotiate a buyout of the private company.

Of Kathy Neal was concerned the directors of the COO would be accountable to council chief executive Duncan Field who would then provide councillors

with a "watered-down" report. This drew an angry response from Mayor Clive Geddes, who said he would not accept Cr Neal suggesting the chief executive "censored" reports to council.

"I am just concerned that this COO is going to be kept at arm's length from the elected representatives," Cr Neal said, whose suggestion a councillor sit on the COO board was rejected last year.

The COO's statement of intent

stipulated it would report to council half-yearly and annually, Mr Geddes said.

However, Cr Neal's request for greater accountability was supported by Cr Gillian MæLeod, with Cr Sally Middleton adding the issue was one of the most important the council had considered for a long time.

Cr MæLeod also questioned who would be the "face" of the council, the COO's only shareholder.

He said it should be the

selected representatives, not the chief executive.

Cr Lou Alfild suggested provisions be made for the council to review the performance of the COO within the directors' four-year terms, with a view to bringing provisions of the services back-in-house if the COO was not performing.

However, Mr Geddes said he was reluctant to include a clause in the COO's constitution that reflected its demise, with Cr Rick Pettit agreeing the

council would be reviewing the COO "daily, weekly and monthly".

The council voted to regularly review the COO through its statement of intent, with the value of the new structure formally considered in three years.

The directors of the COO, at this stage called QLDC Regulatory Services Ltd, were also appointed at yesterday's meeting, in the public-attended session. Their names will be released on Monday.

IN BRIEF

Power outage

Cromwell: A power blackout in Cromwell yesterday at 6.13am resulted in 2500 consumers being without power for 15 mins.

Delta Utilities operations and project manager David Fitchett said the cause, which was difficult to find, was an open circuit in an 11,000V circuit breaker.

Mr Paterson said usually that would not have resulted in a loss of supply but the second supply for the area, at the Cromwell substation, was being upgraded by Transfield, under contract to Aurora Energy.

Crash victim named

Queenstown: Police have released the name of the woman killed in a single-vehicle crash at Arrowtown on Thursday.

She was Jill Vanessa Rosindale (59), of Arrowtown. Constable Blair Duffy, of Queenstown, said the cause of death was unclear and would be the subject of a pathologist's report.

Holidays approved

Wellington: The Australian Government has had a change of heart about penalising drought-hit farmers who take up offers of free holidays in New Zealand.

The government was offering the farmers respite holidays, but said they had to take them in Australia in order to keep receiving drought assistance.

The agriculture minister has now said any farmer taking up what he called "the gaucho offer" from Federated Farmers in New Zealand of a free holiday would not lose that assistance.

Most oppose wind farm

By Glenn Conway

Balclutha: Most of the 160 submissions received about plans to create a wind farm in the Clutha district oppose the proposal.

Submissions closed with the Clutha District Council at 5pm yesterday. Of those received, 120 oppose the project, 25 support it and the rest either have a neutral view or have not stated one.

Sixty people wish to be heard at the hearing later this year. TrustPower has applied for resource consent to build a wind farm near Lake Mahinerangi capable of producing enough electricity to supply 100,000 homes. The project, involving up to 60 turbines within a "development envelope" of 1723ha of council-owned land, is priced at about \$400 million.

The council's planning and environment manager, Murray Brass, said the council might hold a pre-hearing some time next month.

The council and Otago Regional Council will jointly hear TrustPower's application.

Mr Brass expected a full hearing to be held in May "at the earliest".

It is understood the hearing will be in either Dunedin or Mogiel.

Pool complex to be beautified with art

By Jessica Maddock

Queenstown

Concern was raised at yesterday's Queenstown Lakes District Council meeting that money was being spent on artwork to beautify the new \$18 million aquatic centre, possibly at the expense of the pool's facilities.

Councillor Gillian MæLeod said she would be "fueled by my children" if beautification was prioritised over entertainment facilities such as rope swings and pools.

However, Mayor Clive Geddes said the council had promised the community the aquatic centre, at Frankton, would be embellished with artwork and it needed to keep that commitment.

Sculptures valued at up to \$150,000 have been retained in the plans.

However, councillors voted to put a hold on plans for an \$81,000 reflection pond, although its resource consent stipulates the feature must be added within five years, or a variation to the consent would need to be sought, at a cost of over \$200.

Four sculptures, valued at between \$10,000 and \$84,000 each, have been shortlisted from 28 submissions.

Cr Rick Pettit was concerned

one of the proposed pieces of artwork was a group of sculptures ranging in size from 2m to 12m. The pieces would cost \$30,000, but would be lost on the "rugby field"-sized site, he said.

Cr John Wilson said he would rather see the money budgeted for artwork spent on solar panels for the aquatic centre.

However, Mr Geddes said it has already been decided solar heating was not the most effective or cost-efficient method of powering the complex and it was too late to reconsider.

Project manager Ken Goumett assured councillors the aquatic centre would be among the most energy-efficient buildings in the South Island.

Construction of the aquatic centre is expected to be completed in May next year.

Mr Goumett said it was unlikely "substantial" community fundraising for the aquatic centre would be required.

It was likely any significant funds would be raised through corporate sponsorship, resulting in naming rights of some features of the facility.

Discussions with the Aurora electricity company had already been held and approaches to other local business corporations would be made, Mr Goumett said.

Sewerage scheme cost increases by 10%

By Jessica Maddock

Wanaka

Queenstown: The cost of Wanaka's new sewerage scheme has increased 10% to \$20.8 million during the past year.

The Queenstown Lakes District Council will soon call for tenders for construction of Project Pure.

The council's engineering services general manager, Mark Kunath, yesterday said about half the price rise was due to construction cost increases.

The cost of complying with resource consent conditions and resolution of the three appeals by opposing submitters to the Environment Court made up the remaining 50%.

Seven companies would submit a tender for the work. They were identified during a registration of interest process last year, Mr Kunath said.

Project Pure is expected to

have sufficient capacity to treat sewage from Wanaka and Albert Town until 2021. Additional capacity can be added as required.

The scheme involves a new sewage treatment plant at Wanaka airport, where the treated effluent will be discharged to land through subsurface pipes.

New sewers and pump stations will be built at Wanaka and Albert Town to pump sewage to the new treatment plant.

The project spells the end of disposal into the Clutha River and signals the eventual closure of the Wanaka and Albert Town oxidation ponds.

Mr Kunath said the company that won the tender would operate the treatment plant for two years to ensure it met promised performance targets.

Recommendation by board

Boaties face prohibition from bay

By Marjorie Cook

Wanaka

New bylaws are being proposed to keep boaties out of Brenner Bay, Lake Wanaka.

The Wanaka Community Board on Thursday voted to recommend the shallow area of Brenner Bay near Eddy Point be declared a reserved area and no vessel be permitted to moor or anchor there.

The council has yet to approve the recommendation.

Queenstown Lakes District Council harbourmaster Marty Black said in a report on Thursday the area should be reserved for passive activities.

Complaints were received this summer and last about a boat anchoring or mooring in Brenner Bay on a permanent basis, he said.

The nearby property owner had been approached and dis-

puted his right to anchor where he saw fit for as long as he wanted, Mr Black said.

"[He] has had his lawyers look into the matter and [has] insisted that he was quite within his rights to anchor or moor as long as he wanted," he said.

Mr Black said it was important control be maintained in special areas such as Brenner Bay.

It was a "nest swimming area", dangerous for craft, and not ideal for anchoring on a permanent or long-term basis as it had a sandy bottom, he said.

"If one person is allowed to anchor on a regular basis, it will set a precedent and more will follow."

Mr Black said he did not intend to stop people from camping in many of the bays

around Lake Wanaka overnight, provided boats had holding tanks and disposed of waste properly.

The QLDC's lawyers had been consulted, he said.

Mooring is a prohibited activity under the district plan so it needs a resource consent.

Councillor Leigh Overton agreed anchoring would set a precedent. The bay was suitable for kayaking and inflatable toys, he said.

Councillor Aaron Heath said he was concerned whether the board could legally make a by-law prohibiting motorised craft from Brenner Bay.

Board member Graham Dickson said the board was only making a recommendation and he assumed the council would look into any legal matters arising from the recommendation.

International college takes one step closer

By Tracey Roxburgh

Queenstown

A \$50 million school came one step closer yesterday after members of the United World College (UWC) advisory group signed a memorandum of understanding with the Paradise Trust, owners of the 128ha piece of land for the proposed New Zealand campus.

UWC International board member Dr Anthony Richards, UWC South East Asia ex-senior school principal Carolyn Solon, principal policy consultant Tony Baldwin, UWC graduate Lucy Barnard, project manager John Hiltner and UWC New Zealand organising committee chairman Paddy Marra made their first site visit to Paradise,

at the head of Lake Wakatipu, with three senior Ministry of Education staff, including the Ministry's national operations senior manager Kathy Phillips.

There are 12 United World Colleges around the world, which are based on the philosophy of Kurt Hahn, who also initiated the Outward Bound movement.

The colleges offer two-year residential programmes for year 12 and 13 pupils based on the International Baccalaureate curriculum.

Students apply to attend the colleges and go through a rigorous selection process. Each student is chosen on merit. At the school, they learn to promote strong humanitarian and

environmental values.

Once accepted, they are each provided with a full scholarship.

Yesterday, the group and the representatives from the Ministry of Education visited the Paradise site, where the ministry representatives were given a better understanding of the school's history and ethos.

Mr Hiltner said this was the second or third attempt at establishing the school in New Zealand — it will be the only UWC school in the Southern Hemisphere, with the closest being in Southeast Asia.

The New Zealand campus would cater for between 200 and 250 students, 40% of those would be New Zealanders, with a total of 60 staff including 37 teachers.

The only thing standing in

the way of the Paradise school, planned to open in 2012 to coincide with UWC's 50th anniversary, was finding the \$50 million.

Mr McCulloch said the bulk of the funding for the New Zealand school would probably come from overseas investors.

The next step was to prepare an "implementation plan" which would look at things such as the resource consent process, delivery of essential services, architects, buildings and where on the site the school would be located.

McCulloch and Partners had offered their services to prepare the plan pro bono and it was expected work on that would start soon.

Once the plan was in place, the school would use that information to help gain the necessary funding.

Anglers encouraged to complete survey

By David Bruce

Oamaru: Anglers are being encouraged to take part in a national survey about the perception they have of river flows.

The survey is part of research being undertaken by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) into human perception of river flows.

The aim is to ensure regional authorities are better informed when making decisions on allocating water — particularly the attributes people have about changes in flow regimes, how they perceive those changes and what levels of water allocation they consider appropriate.

Yesterday, two fish and

game councils — North Canterbury and Central South Island — notified its members to take part in the survey on the Internet website www.nzrivers.info.

It explores knowledge of, familiarity with and attitudes towards natural and modified flows in streams and rivers.

The replies will be assessed to determine people's ability to perceive changes in flows, identify the principal indicators of flow changes and define key characteristic likely to trigger concerns about low flows with different river types.

The survey, which takes about 15 minutes to complete, closes on March 10.

Yesterday, two fish and

Police tactical squad to target crime areas

By Glenn Conway

Balclutha

A new Balclutha police tactical squad has been formed to take a more proactive stand against some key areas of offending in the district.

Clutha police sub-area controller Senior Sergeant Lane Todd said staff numbers in the police's Combined Investigation Bureau (CIB) had been boosted as police target drug offending, disorder in Balclutha's main street area, drink-driving and other areas of concern.

The main objective was to become more pro-active and more visible in trying to stamp out these kinds of crimes, Sen Sgt Todd said.

The new strategy involved a "mini" tactical squad that would develop intelligence on offenders and target those believed to

be committing the offenses being focused on.

The squad began operating on Thursday by making five drug-related arrests in a mini sweep on known drug offenders.

Five people, ranging in age from their mid 20s to mid 30s were arrested after five separate search warrants were executed in Balclutha and Kaingata.

The five face a variety of charges, ranging from possession of cannabis to the cultivation of the drug. All five are expected to appear in the Balclutha District Court on March 27.

Sen Sgt Todd said the drug arrests would be the first of several targeted operations in the next few weeks.

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'Wonderful locations' work magic on captivated 'Prince Caspian' crew

By Matthew Haggart

South Westland

The magical land of Narnia has been transported to South Westland, with the region hosting a small army of 250 film and production crew over the past week.

Location shoots for *Prince Caspian* — the second film in the *Narnia Chronicles* series — have taken place at the Mosoraki River mouth near Haast and at an undisclosed river valley in the Mt Aspiring National Park.

Prince Caspian New Zealand production manager Tim Coddington said the locations were selected by New Zealand direc-

tor Adam Adamson.

"We know we would be going off the beaten track and we found some wonderful locations here," Mr Coddington said.

Filming permits were issued by the Department of Conservation for the production to film at the remote locations on Doc land. However, Doc communications spokeswoman Annette Smith would not reveal the location of the shoots.

"We want to avoid a *Lord of the Rings*-type situation, where film locations have subsequently

been visited by large numbers of tourists," she said.

Location site books and visiting tour groups accessing the sites had a significant impact on the scenic locations used for filming, Mrs Smith said.

The *Otago Daily Times* understands filming took place near the Gates of Haast in a river valley, within sight of Mt Brewster and the Brewster Glacier.

Prince Caspian publicist Ernie Malik said 250 production crew had been accommodated across South Westland and in Wanaka. Their arrival last Saturday coincided with the middle of the peak South Westland

tourist season.

"We've used a combination of rented houses, hotels, lodges, and private accommodation, with crew spread between Franz Josef, Haast, and down to Hannahs Clearing and Jackson Bay," Mr Malik said.

He confirmed cast and crew were being flown by helicopter to the locations shoots each day.

The child actors from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, William Moseley (Peter), Anna Popplewell (Susan), Skandar Keynes (Edmund), and Georgie Henley (Lucy), had stayed in Wanaka and were helicoptered in daily to the location.

"We've made sure crew who need to be there first thing in the morning are all fairly handy to the location. There has been a lot of travel for some, but these kind of remote locations make it necessary."

The Haast World Heritage Hotel manager Simon Harrap said they had booked some of the crew into units, but were very busy and booked out with tour bus business.

"In terms of weather, it's a great time for them to film, but one of the busiest and worst times to find accommodation,"

Haast Hotel bar manager Matt Helm said the bar had been

filled most nights with production crew after their day's work.

"They all roll in here about 9pm and ask for a meal and a few beers. They've definitely pumped a lot of money into the community," he said.

Production crew said the shoot involved long days. Preparation started early, with filming beginning at first light and continuing through the day until dusk, around 9pm, one crew member, who declined to be named, said.

Mr Malik said an "international" production crew was involved in the shoot and a large number from Auckland and

Wellington who had worked on the first *Narnia* film.

The week-long shoot would produce about 12-15 minutes of screen time, Mr Malik said.

The production was shifting to Glenorchy and the Paradise Valley today for a further week's filming, before heading back to Auckland.

Mr Coddington said the hospitality of the Haast community had been "incredibly good."

"Despite what people say, we have had the most wonderful weather here and the shots we've got from here will be reflected as some of the prettiest scenery in the film."