

United World College plan for Glenorchy

By: WOOD Alan

Glenorchy could soon become a top training ground for international students -- with a planned college near the tourist town aimed at springboarding youngsters into world universities.

A couple of New Zealanders want to open the **United World College** concept in the playground of Central Otago at the aptly named Paradise, just north of Glenorchy.

The \$50 million plus development -- that could cater for 250 students a year -- is being planned as a copy of the template provided by 10 existing overseas UWC schools.

Queenstown's John Hilhorst and Nelson's Tony Baldwin are about to embark on a feasibility study for a trust-owned NZ UWC, to be opened by 2012 to cater for 16 to 18-year-olds.

That study would determine the size of building and project and concurrently they would seek funding from overseas and in New Zealand, Baldwin said. Consultation with Government and the local community was part of the process.

The feasibility study to be completed in 2007 would be followed by financing. "There are a range of organisations that believe in it and would look forward to supporting it, but it's certainly a challenge (to raise funds)."

Central Otago is already the site of a recently opened a multi-million dollar tertiary tourism college -- Queenstown Resort College -- backed by Rich List member Eion Edgar.

Former South African president Nelson Mandela is the honorary leader of the UWC movement and his sons have attended the colleges.

There were three components to the study -- including an "Outward Bound"- based experience, Baldwin said. The UWC concept was established by Kurt Hahn, who founded Outward Bound after World War 2.

The other two components were academic-exam work, and community service.

Students chosen on merit would not have to pay to attend the college, but \$7m of funding a year would have to be found to keep the university going. "It's pitching the academic standard as providing admission to any university in the world, which, of

course, is a prerequisite if you want to get international kids to come here," Baldwin said.

They had approached the Paradise Valley Trust Board for use of an undeveloped site in the Paradise area.

Hilhorst added the pair were working on a basis of a memorandum of understanding with the trust, which would be subject to ratification after the completion of the feasibility study.

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