

Otago Mayoral Forum

Friday 6 September 2024

9:00am-12:30pm, ORC Council Chamber
Level 2, Philip Laing House, 144 Rattray St, Dunedin

Chair: Mayor Gary Kircher

Time	Item	Paper
9.00 [30']	1 Hon Rachel Brooking MP Rachel Brooking, MP for Dunedin, joins the Forum as part of its ongoing initiative to build relationships with Otago-based and Otago-representative Members of Parliament. Also attending is Glen Bennett MP, Labour spokesperson for Economic Development and associate for Energy.	-
9:30 [15']	2 Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies – none received• Minutes of the previous Otago Mayoral Forum on 15 March 2024	p. 3
9.45 [30']	3 New Dunedin Hospital Blake Lepper, Head of Infrastructure Delivery, Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora, joins the Forum to update members on the New Dunedin Hospital project.	-
10.15	- <i>Morning tea</i>	
10.30 [45']	4 Local Water Done Well working group <u>Southland Mayoral Forum to attend</u> . Co-chairs from the Otago Local Water Done Well Working Group will provide an update on the group's ongoing programme of work exploring options for working together on water services delivery across the two regions.	Separate papers

11.15 [15']	5	Water services matters (continued) Closing discussion on water services matters, following the working group presentation and joint session with the Southland Mayoral Forum.	-
11.30 [15']	6	Engagement with Ministers, including upcoming Regional Summit Organised by Kānoa, MBIE's Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit, an Otago regional summit takes place on Friday 4 October. Minister Shane Jones will attend. Members are invited to signal their priorities for this event and for further engagement with Ministers and Members of Parliament.	-
11.45 [15']	7	Regional deals: framework announcement The Government has released its Regional Deals Strategic Framework. The attached note summarises key matters for Otago.	p. 6
12.00 [30']	8	General Business and wrap up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on regional collaboration priorities • Agenda items for the next Regional Leadership Group hui • General business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Winterstellar Charitable Trust briefing note ○ Matters arising from the LGNZ conference and AGM ○ Unitary councils ○ Waitangi Day / Te Rōpū Taiao funding and attendance ○ DIA restructure 	p. 8
12.30	-	Close	

Minutes of a meeting of the Otago Mayoral Forum
held on Friday 7 June at 9.00am
in the Council Chamber and via Zoom



Membership

Mayor Tim Cadogan	Central Otago District Council
Mayor Bryan Cadogan	Clutha District Council
Mayor Jules Radich	Dunedin City Council
Cr Gretchen Robertson	Otago Regional Council
Mayor Glyn Lewers	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Mayor Gary Kircher	Waitaki District Council
Chief Executive Peter Kelly	Central Otago District Council
Chief Executive Steve Hill	Clutha District Council
Chief Executive Sandy Graham	Dunedin City Council
Chief Executive Richard Saunders	Otago Regional Council
Chief Executive Mike Theelen	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Chief Executive Alex Parmley	Waitaki District Council

In attendance

Marianna Brook, Principal Advisor, Mayoral Forum Secretariat
Deputy Mayor Ken Payne, Clutha District Council
Jeanette Wikaira, Acting CE, Dunedin City Council

1. WELCOME

1.1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mayor Tim Cadogan, Mayor Gary Kircher, Sandy Graham and Mike Theelen.

1.2. Minutes confirmation

The minutes from March 15 will be confirmed at a future Forum meeting.

2. WATER SERVICES COLLABORATION

Southland Mayoral Forum members joined via Zoom to discuss the progress and direction of work underway to better understand water services options across the two regions. Dave Ward, General Manager 3 Waters & Transition, Dunedin City Council, and Erin Moogan, GM Infrastructure, Invercargill City Council, spoke on behalf of the working group established following a joint Otago and Southland Mayoral Forum discussion in March.

The working group continues to progress three workstreams: potential regional models; collaboration and shared services opportunities; and national/sub-national collaboration.

The working group is developing a roadmap towards a regional model that would benefit a number of councils. They acknowledge that councils across the regions have different levels of interest and ambition with regards to this work, but all need good information to make decisions.

The group has identified four discrete opportunities to collaborate, which it may be able to progress in a shorter timeframe than any new regional model. The group is now seeking staff with an interest in each of the opportunities to explore them in detail and report back.

In terms of oversight, it was noted that CEs have had a number of meetings with the working group chairs and are engaged in the work. Regarding the Government's overall policy direction, some of the rules of the game are still unclear, but the working group's analysis will put Otago and Southland in a good starting position.

A number of Forum members will be attending a Ngai Tahu-facilitated hui on approaches to water services across the Takiwā, scheduled to take place on July 25. It will also be important to ensure that councillors across the two regions are aware of the work underway. The working group will be considering whether it can provide shared report or presentation material for councils' use.

All present expressed broad support for this programme of work as it gets underway. It was noted that CEs would be invited to a discussion on resourcing (both time and funding) for the working group in the coming days.

3. REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE – EDUCATION

Julie Anderson, Director of Education for Otago and Southland, Ministry of Education, joined the Forum to discuss education matters, with a focus on school attendance and engagement. Steph Voight, Regional Public Service Commissioner for Otago, and Ginny Howden, Regional Public Service Director – Otago also attended.

Steph Voight acknowledged that it is a difficult time across the public service at present, with difficult choices made every day to meet the Coalition Governments savings expectations. Performance and tangible results are a strong focus, and especially the nine Government Targets approved by Cabinet in April.

Julie Anderson raised a number of education matters, including a move towards greater consistency in the curriculum, including structured approaches; the importance of community support for attendance and school engagement; and, top of mind for principals, learning support and school property. She noted that there is new leadership for the Ministry of Education in Oamaru.

4. BUSINESS SOUTH

Mike Collins, Chief Executive at Business South, joined the Forum to discuss business and the economy in Otago. Mike reported that he is hearing that businesses and private investors are seeking a strategic view of growth and investment priorities in Otago. His visit was to canvass interest among Forum members for a regional growth plan or similar unifying document providing a strategic picture of growth opportunities in Otago.

The Forum expressed support for the initiative and suggested that it may be possible to align with the Otago Regional Economic Development (ORED) Framework, as well as the ORED working group's work on government investment priorities. It was noted that leaders of all stripes would benefit from speaking as one voice to attract investment, whether from government or the private sector.

The Forum agreed that members of the ORED working group should contact Business South to discuss joint opportunities.

5. ADVOCACY, REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND REGIONAL/CITY DEALS

This item was truncated for timing reasons, but nonetheless allowed the Forum to pick up on various themes raised in the previous discussion. Members reminded one another that, while each Otago district has its own needs and priorities, there remain matters that we can progress as a collective, and there is also benefit in being able to provide a clear story for the region, including its diversity. Resilience may be a positive theme to pursue, as the region has significant resilience challenges and infrastructure resilience especially is a priority for the Coalition Government.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS AND WRAP UP

- Members provided a high-level update on Long Term and Annual Plans at their respective councils. These processes have been challenging across the board, with a combination of rising costs and policy change impacting everyone. Most have seen significantly higher numbers of submissions this year than in previous years.
- Marianna Brook reported that the role of Otago Regional Waste Officer has been filled and the appointee starts in early August. The Regional Waste Officer will support Otago's councils to work together on waste and recycling matters, as well as undertaking projects, research and communication tools that benefit the entire region. The new role is a direct result of the Otago Mayoral Forum waste project initiated last triennium.

The meeting closed at 12.14pm



Chair Bryan Cadogan (Acting)

6 Sept 2024

Date

Date: 6 September 2024

Drafted by: Marianna Brook, Principal Advisor, Mayoral Forum Secretariat

Regional Deals Strategic Framework

Purpose

1. This note contains key details of the Government’s Regional Deals Strategic Framework and its initial implications for Otago. It is intended to inform discussion at today’s meeting.

Background

2. The Minister for Local Government Simeon Brown released the 26-page [Regional Deals Strategic Framework](#) on 22 August. The framework sets out the Government’s expectations for Regional Deals, including criteria for selecting regions to take part.
3. Five regions will be invited to provide a ‘light-touch proposal’, to be assessed against the criteria, with one region selected for a 2025 deal and further ‘waves’ thereafter. The framework states that ‘regions’ in the context of regional deals could be regional, sub-regional or another appropriate scale, so long as they are defined economic and geographic areas with functional local authorities.

Criteria

4. The following table sets out the criteria¹ against which each region’s expression of interest proposal will be assessed. The right-hand column provides comment/further detail with specific reference to Otago.

Criterion	Comment
Alignment with the strategic framework	Early deals will address three “priority objectives”. These are: Build economic growth; Deliver connected and resilient infrastructure; Improve the supply of affordable, quality housing. In theory, any region could tailor a deal to these objectives.
Growth potential	“Councils being in a growth area” will also be a priority for early deals. Growth area is not defined, but we can observe that only parts of Otago would be expected to comply.
Commitment to a regional spatial plan	Within Otago, spatial plans have been progressed (separately) in Queenstown Lakes and Dunedin. Very early conversations are exploring how these might be extended to other districts. No commitment has been reached and significant effort would be required to achieve this.

¹ There are two slightly different lists of criteria, on p. 20 and 24 of the framework.

Capability, capacity, readiness to deliver	The framework notes (p. 25) that Urban Growth Partnerships (such as that in Queenstown Lakes) may satisfy this criterion. For the region, formal collaboration is limited to that captured under the Otago Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement, and more specific matters such as emergency management and transport planning.
Commitment to fiscal prudence	Further detail is required to evaluate this criterion.
That councils meet all their regulatory standards (economic and water quality regulation)	This is a criterion in the list of criteria on p. 20 only. Further detail – including a list of relevant standards – is required to evaluate this criterion.
Commitment to broader government reform objectives such as Local Water Done Well and Going for Housing Growth.	This is a criterion in the list of criteria on p. 24 only. These policies are still in development, but Otago Councils are committed to working together to implement the policies as more is known.

'First Wave' Criteria

5. On p. 25, the framework specifies key criteria for the 'first wave' of regions, as follows:

Criterion	Comment
Councils being in a growth area that has clear objectives around economic growth, productivity and infrastructure	Whilst there is collaboration on economic growth in Otago under a broad regional economic development framework, there are not clear region-wide objectives that are seen in other regions.
Identified functional economic area	Otago is comprised of more than one functional economic area.
Existing partnership, supporting structures, spatial plans and future development strategies in place with funding and financing proposals for infrastructure development and delivery	There are no such partnership arrangements for the Otago region at present. As noted above, the Queenstown Lakes Urban Growth Partnership may satisfy this criterion, with participation from the Crown (DIA, HUD, Kāinga Ora, NZTA), iwi, ORC, and two Government Ministers.
Capability, capacity, and a track record	If a potential regional deal were on offer, capability and capacity would be found. Demonstrating a track record of working together across Otago and with government to deliver would be more challenging, especially when compared to other regions.

Next steps

6. Members are invited to consider Otago's approach to regional deals. Consideration should be given to Otago's approach to the first wave, and, separately, whether there is ambition to secure a regional deal in the future, as that would require Otago Councils to be on a different collaboration path than currently.

To: Otago Mayoral Forum
From: Winterstellar Board
Subj: Otago Dark Skies
Date: 26 July 2024

Recommendation

The Mayors are invited to

- note the progress over the past two years on Otago Dark Skies and
- note the proposed next steps including the creation of “Astronomical Site” designation

Background

Two years ago, the Chair of Winterstellar Charitable Trust presented to the Otago Mayors Forum on Dark Skies. Winterstellar Charitable Trust was established in February 2022, to promote astronomy, Māori culture and the benefits of dark skies through astrophotography to the communities of Otago.

Outcomes

Following the encouragement and support received at the Mayoral Forum in 2022, the Directors of Winterstellar have donated over 2,000 hours of their time to achieve the following outcomes:

- Over 10,000 members of the community and visitors to the region have been reached via the annual winter/spring astrophotography exhibitions in Arrowtown and Alexandria.
- The Alexandria exhibition has been instrumental in keeping the Central Stories Museum open to the public.
- Over 5,000 people have been reached in presentations and events held in Queenstown, Coronet Peak, Arrowtown, Gibbston, Alexandria, Clyde and Cromwell. Events have been focussed around Matariki, featuring Māori Mataranga.
- Support has been provided through the provision of measuring equipment, expert knowledge, or donations to fund raising efforts, primarily to the communities of Gibbston and Glenorchy in their successful bids for international dark sky status.

These outcomes have also been supported by Otago District Councils as follows:

- QLDC’s existing Southern Light strategy (and associated policies in the relevant chapters of the District Plan), which has provided the foundation for lighting protection in the Gibbston and Glenorchy international dark sky applications.
- CODC’s recognition of astro-tourism as an important part of their visitor strategy.

Next Steps

Given the broad community support and engagement, including that of District Councils and the Mayors themselves, Winterstellar proposes to increase its engagement in the following areas.

- Extend its reach into other part of Otago, via its presentations and exhibitions.
- Extend its support for the increasing number of Otago communities seeking International Dark Sky Status e.g. Catlins, Naseby and other areas of Central Otago.
 - In this respect, Winterstellar recognise the very significant hurdle these small communities face in bringing together the resources required for a successful application to DarkSky International.
- Winterstellar therefore plans a simple “Astronomical Site” designation process for aspiring Dark Sky communities that will assist them in promoting the quality of their Dark Sky as they seek international accreditation. As part of being an Otago “Astronomical Site” communities will be required to show that they have in principle support from their local council.

Ultimately, these efforts are designed to place Otago in a leadership place in respect of a long-term national strategy to establish Aotearoa/New Zealand as dark-sky nation. Even in New Zealand, Otago occupies a special place, being part of only 0.1% of the world’s inhabited land mass within 4,500km of the southern geomagnetic pole [with readily visible/photographable aurorae] and visibility of the rich star-fields towards the centre of our Milky Way galaxy.