

Otago Mayoral Forum

Friday 13 June 2025

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

Chair: Mayor Gary Kircher

Time	Item		Paper
9:00 [5']	1	Welcome Apologies – received from Mike Theelen and Steve Hill, and Alex Parmley for lateness Minutes of the previous Otago Mayoral Forum on 28 March 2025	p. 3
9.05 [30']	2	Regional Public Service – Kainga Ora Kerrie Young, Regional Director Kainga Ora, joins the Forum to discuss social housing matters across the region. Steph Voight, Otago Regional Public Service Commissioner, will attend as part of the Forum's commitment to a joined-up public service in Otago.	
9.35 [40']	3	Ongoing reforms and initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Deals An opportunity for members to update the Forum on regional deal proposals and plans within Otago.• Water Services Delivery Plans Members are invited to provide an update on their council's approach to Water Services Delivery Plans, including collaborative arrangements where applicable.• Resource management reform Key issues to raise at the speaker-led session later in the meeting.	
10.15		Morning tea	

10.30 [30']	4	Mayoral Forum reflections Otago's local authorities will enter into a new triennial agreement before 1 March 2026. The attached paper invites the Forum to reflect on how the Forum has operated since 2022, and raise opportunities to improve collaboration and joint advocacy.	p. 7
11.00 [15']	5	General Business General business as arising	
11.15 [45']	6	Resource management reform Al Cross, Te Uru Kahika, and Clare Wooding, Taituarā, will update the Forum on the Government's ongoing resource management reform. Their presentation will outline key proposals, the direction of change, MfE's engagement structures, and the implications for councils and our region.	
12.00	-	Close <i>Te Rōpū Taiao follows at 12.30pm</i>	

Minutes of a meeting of the Otago Mayoral Forum
held on Friday 28 March at 9.00am
in the Council Chamber and via Zoom



Membership

Mayor Tamah Alley	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 (apology)	Queenstown Lakes District Council
Mayor Gary Kircher	Waitaki District Council

Chief Executive Peter Kelly	Central Otago District Council
Chief Executive Steve Hill (apology)	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
Kylie Darragh, Governance Support Officer, Otago Regional Council
David Ward, Acting Chief Executive, Clutha District Council

1. WELCOME

Cr Robertson opened the meeting with a karakia at 9:07 am. Chair Kircher welcomed all and extended a special welcome to David Ward as Acting Chief Executive for Clutha District Council.

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mayor Glyn Lewers and Chief Executive Steve Hill.

It was moved:

That the apologies be accepted.

Moved: Mayor Cadogan

Seconded: Mayor Alley

CARRIED

1.2 Minutes confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of the Otago Mayoral Forum meeting held on 13 December 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Mayor Alley

Seconded: Cr Robertson

CARRIED

2. LGNZ NATIONAL COUNCIL UPDATE

Mayor Radich provided a verbal update on LGNZ matters, in his capacity as National Council member representing the metro sector. The discussion focused on retention of members. Mayor Radich said that LGNZ is focused on how it can better serve members and the local government sector in New Zealand, retain existing members and encourage former members to rejoin the group. Mayor Radich called for constructive ideas to take to National Council.

There was an opportunity for questions and discussion and Chair Kircher thanked Mayor Radich for the update.

9.23 am Richard Saunders left the meeting.

9.35 am Richard Saunders joined the meeting.

3. WATER SERVICES DELIVERY PLANS

Forum members shared updates on water services reform discussions at their respective councils.

Speaking on behalf of the four-council group that includes Waitaki, Clutha and Central Otago, Mayor Alley advised that consultation on a joint approach is on track for 9 May. There will be slight variations across the group due to differing LTP processes. While financials are a focus, the consultation materials will outline non-financial benefits of collaboration, such as access to expert staff and board advisors.

Mayor Radich advised that Dunedin City will consult on water delivery options alongside 9-year plan consultation, beginning 31 March. Two delivery models will be presented – an in-house model and a Council Controlled Organisation (CCO). Sandy Graham advised that the proposed CCO has been designed to allow for other councils to join at a future date.

Mike Theelen said that Queenstown Lakes will be following a similar path to Dunedin, putting forward in-house and stand-alone CCO models for consultation.

Chair Kircher thanked the Mayors and Chief Executives for their input.

4. YOUTH (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

Mayor Radich raised the matter of youth disengagement in Dunedin, while also noting some improvement in behaviour at the city's bus hub. There are several government and non-government organisations able to provide support. Mayor Radich is looking at connecting shop owners to various groups who can offer positive pastoral support prior to police becoming involved.

The respective mayors shared their views on the current state of their communities. Mayor Cadogan noted that disengaged youth in Clutha are younger than previously, which changes the support they require.

At 10:23 am the Forum adjourned for morning tea break.

The meeting recommenced at 10:43 am.

5. REGIONAL DEALS

Forum members shared updates on regional deal proposals in Otago.

Mayor Alley and Chair Robertson spoke on behalf of the Central Otago Lakes grouping. They described the three councils as working together well on what was a challenging process. Successful regions will begin working towards a memorandum of understanding with Government, before beginning negotiations on the deal itself. Timing for these stages remain uncertain.

A coastal Otago expression of interest was also submitted, but with high-level information only. There is a need for further analysis and discussion.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

LGNZ Remit for Security Payments

Mayor Alley outlined a proposed LGNZ remit to allow elected representatives to apply for funding to install private security systems at their homes. A similar allowance is available for Members of Parliament. The entitlement for elected representatives would sit with the remuneration authority and be available in a similar way to the Childcare Allowance. More details will be circulated on this soon.

RM Reforms

Mike Theelen provided a brief update on ongoing reform to resource management legislation and policy. Mr Theelen is a member of Local Government Reference Group. He described the reforms as fundamentally similar to the previous Government's proposal with two key differences: a strong focus on property rights, and significant plan standardisation. He expressed concern that councils will have less of a decision-making role under the new system, but the public will expect them to be accountable for decisions made.

Sandy Graham reflected that water reforms have been a focus for territorial authorities over the last few years, but the resource management reforms are more significant in their impact.

Waste minimisation and recycling

Alex Parmley shared an update from Anna Robinson, Otago Regional Waste Officer. Ms Robinson's recent activity includes a series of public webinars on construction and demolition waste; connecting Otago's waste teams with CDEM Otago to discuss the Government's draft National Disaster Waste Management Plan; and work towards a regional campaign on the safe disposal and recycling of small batteries. Opportunities for regional advocacy include the Right to Repair Bill, and upcoming changes to the Waste Minimisation Act (2008) and Litter Act (1979).

Marianna Brook advised that the Forum had received a reply from the Minister for the Environment, Hon Penny Simmonds, acknowledging the Forum's concerns about Budget 2024 changes to the Waste Levy and inviting feedback through the Waste Minimisation Act and Litter Act consultations.

Triennial Agreement

Marianna Brook reminded members that Otago's councils are required to enter into a new triennial agreement by 1 March 2026 covering the period until the next local government elections. Among other functions, the triennial agreement includes protocols for communication and co-ordination among the local authorities. In Otago, the triennial agreement incorporates terms of reference for the Otago Mayoral Forum and Otago Chief Executives Forum and sets expectations for other cross-council groups.

There will be an opportunity at the next Otago Mayoral Forum for members to reflect on existing mechanisms for regional collaboration and make recommendations for the future. The Otago CE Forum is also exploring how a future Mayoral Forum might define its priorities for the region at the beginning of the triennium.

11:30 am Mike Theelen left the meeting.

11:43 am Mike Theelen joined the meeting.

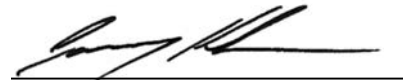
7. REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER FOR OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

Regional Public Services Commissioner Steph Voight and Senior Advisor Kathy Gibbs joined the Forum to discuss areas of mutual interest. Ms Voight noted various changes to leadership roles across Otago, including that Te Whatu Ora Southern Group Director of Operations Hamish Brown has resigned; and David Tapp has been appointed Director of Education for Otago and Southland, taking over from Julie Anderson. While funding is tight across a number of areas, she has observed overall support for Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs and Heartland Service Centres – both examples of efficient support for rural communities.

Ms Voight asked the Forum for feedback on the role and activities of the Regional Public Service function in Otago, raising as examples an economic development 'summit' and support for councils to engage with Mana Whenua.

Action: Forum members invited the Otago CE Forum to consider how the Regional Public Service could support connections between the central and local government sectors in Otago.

The meeting closed at 12.13 pm with a karakia from Cr Robertson.



Chair Gary Kircher

13 June 2025

Date

Date: 13 June 2025

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

Preparation for the next Otago Triennial Agreement

Purpose

1. This note invites reflections on the Otago Mayoral Forum over the last three years, to inform a refreshed triennial agreement and Mayoral Forum terms of reference (TOR) for the triennium to come.

Background

2. Every three years, Otago's local authorities consider and codify how they will coordinate and communicate in the triennium ahead.
3. At the Otago Chief Executives Forum on Friday 23 May, members proposed a broader approach to the triennial agreement than in previous years, favouring an agreement that sets out a framework for Councils working together in Otago.
4. A practical outcome of this approach is to separate the TORs for the Mayoral Forum and the CE Forum, rather than having these contained within the agreement. This will give space and formality to the many other ways Councils work together, such as working groups and joint committees.
5. The triennial agreement must be approved by all Councils in the region by 1 March 2026. A separate Mayoral Forum TOR would be approved by the Forum itself.

Discussion questions

6. The Mayoral Forum is invited to reflect on the current triennium to inform the above documents. The following questions are provided to guide the discussion:

- From your perspective, what are the key achievements of the Otago Mayoral Forum in the last 3 years?
- How could the Otago Mayoral Forum:
 - be more valuable for participants?
 - better connect and communicate with Councils and Councillors?
 - complement and work alongside the Otago Chief Executives Forum?
 - encourage and enable Otago's local authorities to work together?
 - provide strong collective leadership for Otago's communities?

Next steps

7. The next triennial agreement will be drafted over the coming months, guided by further discussion at the August Otago CE Forum, September Otago Mayoral Forum and other occasions as identified.