

26 April 2017

Mr Stephen Woodhead
Chairman
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin

Dear Chairman Woodhead

ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18 SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE FRANKTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Otago Regional Council (ORC) Annual plan 2017/18 comes at a time where the Frankton Community is adversely feeling the effects of sustained and unprecedented growth. We have a local Council (QLDC) who has made their top two priorities in their proposed Annual Plan of; Public Transport and Water Quality. It is obvious from this QLDC statement, that the ORC has shown a lack of leadership in addressing these two issues of which the ORC is wholly responsible.

Frankton is currently experiencing the adverse effects of this sustained and unprecedented growth. We are a Community cut in half by State Highway Six and are home to the Queenstown Airport, we therefore acutely experience the burden of increased growth, in particular traffic movements. Frankton has experienced a 19.5% growth rate in traffic movements in 2015-2016. This is further compounded by the Queenstown Airport passenger growth reported to have increased by 16% for the first half of the FY2016/17 and according to the Queenstown Airports Strategic plan, projected to grow a further 78% by 2025 (1.8M to 3.2M)

We are constantly confronted with congested roads during work hours to a point where residential streets are choked with traffic trying to avoid the State Highway.

We are of a view that a lack of focus and care attributed towards the Queenstown Lakes region by the ORC must cease and investment must be made to address the historical shortfall and the adverse effects of being one of the fastest growing districts in New Zealand. Our review of the Annual Plan document in our opinion does not do this, nor contributes to addressing the urgent needs of the District or our Community.

The following is our submission for ORC consideration:

1. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE WAKATIPU

We welcome the proposal inclusive of extending the boundary to include Jacks Point, and support the efforts made to establish an affordable, reliable and effective public transport system in the Wakatipu. We expect it to be fully supported by the ORC during implementation and operation; and it being a permanent part of the long term plan with the adequate levels of funding, allocated consistent with patronage demand. It is disappointing however that the implementation of a subsidised (Go Card \$2 fare) in the Wakatipu is not included in Section 14.3 specific areas of work in the Annual Plan consultation document. We also note the deceptive question in the Annual Plan feedback from, "Do you support the increased subsidy of public transport in the Wakatipu Basin?" What existing subsidy? Unfortunately the ORC is the worst performing major regional council in encouraging public transport. The recent OECD Environmental Performance Review New Zealand 2017 states:"The level of public transport has increased in all major cities (except Dunedin) since 2002..," It is time for the ORC to meet its public transport obligations and make Public Transport in the Wakatipu a priority.

We are of the opinion that the performance target of 8% patronage growth is insufficient. The current unsubsidised system is underutilised considerably, and we would expect a large increase in percentage patronage due to the proposed schedule of fares coupled with low current user base, increase in local population and forecasted airport passenger growth. The current performance target reflects ORC lack of vision, grasp of growth factors, and resulting limited fund allocation as shown by the transport financial summary. We suggest that a performance target should be increased to a minimum of 15% and a further target of limiting traffic movement growth to less than 1%, we also suggest considering a bold goal in making the Wakatipu the highest share of distance travelled by way of public transport, the largest in any city in NZ. Performance targets should be difficult to reach, they should encourage a focus and tenacity to achieve, a low risk approach, with a slow roll out/implementation will not meet the needs of the Wakatipu and would have an adverse effect of the public perception of a subsidised public transport system.

The current funding statement-transport has no allocated funding for any capital works to meet additional demand. International experience shows that a fit for purpose public bus system results in increased funding pressure on transport infrastructure (terminals, bus shelters, ticketing systems, public information systems etc). This is consistent with the historical development of Auckland's bus service over the last 20 years. The plan shows no short term funding allocation to determine the level of future funding and infrastructure requirements to ensure a successful, sustainable public transport system. The current bus interchanges at Frankton and Queenstown are insufficient for even an 8% patronage growth. Funding should be allocated to address this need. We note that the operating surplus for transport in the 2017/18 year is in the order of \$1.3M. We would argue this is a lazy balance sheet and there is a far greater scope and availability of funds to invest further with the QLDC in public transport matters.

It is our view that a successful public transport system will be one of the major solutions to addressing the current traffic crisis in Queenstown. As we are geographically constrained the option

of building more roads is limited and would not address traffic congestion, but further compound it. An effective public transport system will considerably contribute to the amenity value of our community, enhanced visitor experiences and economic benefit flow to the greater Otago region. It will also have considerable multiplier effects on ORC goals two to four of, achieving regional partnerships, realisation of new opportunities and aiding in the emergence of “Brand Otago”.

2. LAKE QUALITY

The Annual Plan makes a token contribution in addressing Lake Snow (\$100,000) and the restoration of Lake Hayes (\$90,000 shared with two other water bodies). The fact that lake restoration is an actionable item should at least create a moment of pause and reflection on our contributing efforts that have led to this situation. The Queenstown Lakes District as its name suggests is home to significant lakes and rivers providing Otago and New Zealand, positive imagery that is promoted internationally to entice the international tourist to visit. Any adverse degradation would significantly put this at risk as well as the ORC reputation of an environmental steward. It is also disappointing that even with heightened awareness of fresh water quality the ORC still sees fit to reduce the allocated funding in river management by 25% for the Wakatipu region, another example of ORC neglecting both the Wakatipu area and water management in general.

The Lake Hayes restoration funding allocation is insufficient. The Annual plan suggests \$90,000 spread over three different water bodies. Is this to mean Lake Hayes is allocated \$30,000? An Otago Daily times article dated 14 April 2017 suggested the most immediate effective restoration option would cost no more than \$250,000. With regard to Lake Hayes the time for scoping has long past. This allocation should be spent on the immediate rectification with funds made available this year.

The current allocation of \$100k research towards Lake Snow is insufficient given the high profile that Lake Wanaka, Wakatipu and Hawea have to the tourist industry, not just locally, and regionally, but nationally. Funding should at least be set aside to investigate in collaboration with the QLDC for a low cost, fit for purpose, pre treatment filters to obviate any large capital expenditure QLDC would otherwise have to make to screen the lake snow from our potable water supply, while research is being conducted. Research should continue, however a short and medium term plan should be developed with collaboration with the QLDC and the University of Otago to have targeted solutions with actionable dates attached. Consideration of funding to contribute to post graduate research (Masters/PhD level) at the University of Otago should also be considered.

We also note that no funding has been set aside for tackling Lagarosiphon, the weed is now at the head of the Kawarau River, and yet no action has been highlighted in the proposed Annual Plan to stop its spread into Lake Wakatipu or eradicate it. Is it a case of the ORC ignoring the problem, abrogating their responsibility, like they have with Lake Dunstan?

The latest OECD Environmental Performance Review New Zealand 2017 suggests a lack of long term planning has led to the continual degradation of our freshwater bodies and ecosystems. It reports that “Agricultural and Urban Storm water continue to put pressure on freshwater quality and

ecosystems” The effect of Agricultural runoff is well understood and has awareness with the general public; the effect of urban runoff is however generally overlooked. The FCA acknowledges the recent ORC effort in researching the adverse effects of urban discharges on the water quality effects to freshwater. We suggest that the implementation of urban discharge controls be hastened with the additional development of an Urban Water Quality Risk Assessment, similar to the rural risk assessment for any suitably sized development that could have a more than minor effect on receiving waters. If urban environments are going to hold rural activities to a higher standard than it is only acceptable and fair that urban activity be held to account in a similar fashion, we would expect compliance and monitoring to be of a comparative level as if it were a rural activity. We also suggest any proposed environmental limits be communicated to District Councils early so they can plan remediation measures to existing systems.

3. QUEENSTOWN OFFICE

FCA is in support of the ORC establishing an office in the Queenstown District in the 2017/18 year. The Queenstown Lakes District Council is currently progressing with their Queenstown centre Master Plan which will include provision for new Council offices. It may be prudent to collaborate with them to see if any sharing of facilities could be arranged in the future for the benefit of both organisations.

4. AIR QUALITY

The FCA requests that air monitoring be established in Frankton during the winter months to ascertain a baseline of air pollution due to the increased traffic gridlock as well as the use of inefficient burners.

5. PEST MANAGEMENT

The Annual Plan makes a meagre effort in addressing Wilding Tree Control (\$100,000) and no mention of any effort with regard to Rabbit control. The real concern is that the Chairman of the ORC has a real lack of appreciation of the problem as was shown by his reaction to the wilding question, saying that in some areas they were regarded as an asset! During the ORC Annual plan consultation meeting in Queenstown. The FCA requests that funding be increased to at least \$500,000 and include gorse and broom control, an equivalent effort be made with rabbits as is being proposed with wallabies.

6. CIVIL DEFENCE AND MANAGEMENT

FCA encourages the development of a comprehensive Otago wide Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group plan. We support option one for the rates structure to fund CDEM as we agree that civil defence is for prioritising people not property. However we would expect that this increase in rates demand is in return invested in the Queenstown Lakes region as it is this area that will feel the greatest impact of a seismic event.

We do note that the Annual Plan document states that flood events are the key focus for Council. It is our view that this key focus is misplaced and should be more concerned with a large seismic event (Alpine Fault rupture). The reasoning for this is twofold: The first is that flood events are usually predictable and have a warning period either by way of weather forecasts or water level measurements upstream whereby mitigating actions can be put in place prior to the event. This is in contrast to a seismic event that is sudden and for the foreseeable future unable to be predicted by conventional science. Secondly the general devastation, expenditure of social capital and potential time of isolation for communities is far greater than a flood event of the same return period.

The FCA would suggest that a further item under specific areas of work in 2017/18 that a seismic event preparedness campaign be held in tandem with the proposed flood awareness campaign. We would also like to see planning for a collaborative emergency response centre at the Queenstown Events Centre with the QLDC.

7. FLOOD PROTECTION AND CONTROL WORKS

We suggest that the Shotover flood protection rating area be extended to include Jacks Point/Hanley Farm residential area. The residents from these areas receive the same benefits as the residents in Frankton and wider urban areas of the Wakatipu. Therefore it is only equitable for the rateable area to increase to include these large and developing residential areas, this would also be consistent with the proposed public transport area extension.

8. NEW DUNEDIN OFFICES

The FCA is against any moves to build any new ORC office, while neglect of the Lakes region continues. We are of the view that the money should be allocated towards the ORC's primary duties Land, Air and Water instead of a new building that does not contribute to the wellbeing of the Queenstown Lakes District.

9. SIGNIFICANT FORECASTING ASSUMPTIONS

It is disturbing to read in the Annual Plan document, it assumes the ORC's expected levels of activity for the Otago region is not sensitive to population growth. The OECD Environmental Performance Review New Zealand 2017 states: "High growth regions in New Zealand lead to increased pressure and demand on infrastructure. Sustained population growth has led to bottlenecks in transport, increased nutrient and contaminant load into receiving waters and pressure on social infrastructure. Infrastructure bottle necks have a high risk of becoming a barrier to economic growth." For the ORC to conclude that their current assumption is of low risk is concerning in the extreme and suggests that the ORC does not have a full account of what is occurring in the Queenstown Lakes District or the ORC is negligent, both of these scenarios is worrying.

We ask that the ORC investigates the actual growth concerns of the district and implements a

program that adequately addresses their core responsibilities. Further disinterest in the Wakatipu region and baseless assumptions underpinning the Annual Plan process will only cause further frustration and aggressive representation from within the Queenstown Lakes District.

In conclusion the ORC is planning on increasing the rates they charge, to do activities that we would have otherwise be the primary duties of a Regional Council. The Queenstown Lakes District ratepayers are facing the largest increase in rates demand. Our expectation is that the ORC actually engages with the Queenstown Lakes Community and its presence is felt, and is positive, exactly the opposite of what is occurring now. We expect that with an increase in rates that the ORC works collaboratively with the QLDC in tackling the significant challenges the district is facing created by such unprecedented growth.

Yours Sincerely

Glyn Lewers
Chairman
Frankton Community Association

Note that the FCA wishes to speak to its submission at the ORC Annual Plan Hearing