



Submission

Waitaki District Council

Draft Annual Plan 2011 – 2012

The Otago Chamber of Commerce would like to speak to this submission

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INTRODUCTION

Ultimately, local economies are about the people that work, visit and live in them. Economic downturns threaten the quality of life of people. And so for Waitaki to remain healthy local leaders must listen to, communicate with, and craft and implement solutions to support people and businesses.

Good plans are not just about generating business or cutting rates; they are about enhancing a quality of life that will retain our community wealth and developing leadership that has intellectual ability to build our region in a positive way.

We believe enhanced community wealth and a higher quality of life comes as the result of a strong economic base built by a business community which generates employment opportunities.

The business community generates the wealth on which our region and its residents depend. It is for this reason that we make this submission. The Otago Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be able to present this submission on behalf of the 1500 Otago businesses.

The businesses that we represent are a broad cross-section of business demographics with regard to size, location and industry. Furthermore, these businesses are representative of the region's wealth generators as well as being owned, managed and staffed by the region's core residents. As such, the Chamber's members are large stakeholders in the economic, social and environmental future of the Otago Region.

The Chamber has submitted on and been involved in discussions on a number of issues relating to the Waitaki District, and we thank Council for your open dialogue with us.

The Chamber continues to support you in helping to achieve your goals as a representative of business throughout the district.

Harbourside

The Chamber supports Council's plans to rejuvenate the Harbour Precinct.

With the development of the Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail, and other visitor attractions, the Harbour Precinct will in the future provide many opportunities for business creation and private capital investment.

It is important for the Harbour Precinct to be a visitor friendly attraction and the Chamber supports Council's determination to lead this.

In particular, the redevelopment of the Friendly Bay Carnival site will go a long way to providing a destination attraction for visitors while at the same time giving the local community a sense of ownership and belonging to the area.

With an eye to the future, Council also needs to have regard to further infrastructure development within the Harbour Precinct. Currently, significant parts of the Harbour Precinct are underserved and services will need to be provided if the real value of future development opportunities and investment are to be harnessed.

Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail

The Chamber commends Council on its initiative in supporting the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail.

We agree that there are significant economic benefits to be made to the District from the development of the Trail. In particular the small settlements of Ohau, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Duntroon, Tokarahi, Ngapara, Windsor and Enfield have the opportunity to capture new opportunities presented by the Trail's presence. The trail will add diversity of job opportunities and in particular many small businesses will be able to grow and support families and their communities.

We note (page 57) that you have funded the Waitaki Development Board \$100,000 to support the track development. It is unclear from your draft Annual Plan where this money will be spent.

It is the creation of business that will be the measure of success for Council's multi-million dollar investment. Council must ensure it targets its funding not just to build the track but to facilitate the growth of these opportunities. Actual measurable goals with targets need to be set to monitor this.

We have already expressed our concern about reductions in economic development funding. We recognise the Waitaki Development Board is primarily a tourism focussed organisation. We also recognise the good work of Tourism Waitaki on this project, but

we reiterate that business heads are needed to drive the economic gains possible from the trail. This is not just a tourism venture.

The Chamber is available to support you with this work.

Industrial Park

The Chamber wishes to again submit on the proposed industrial park at the north end of Oamaru. We wish to impress upon Council our complete support for the park to proceed and request that the Council does all in its power to ensure this happens. The need for more developed industrial land is critical. Oamaru is missing out on a number of opportunities because of the delays in getting the project underway.

We acknowledge that a private developer is driving the project but we hope that the Council is working closely with the developer to facilitate the project, recognising that the district will benefit from extra businesses and employment brought as a result of the project. This facilitation could be in the form of streamlining consent processes, having realistic development contributions and a system which provides the necessary infrastructure for such beneficial projects. Ultimately, this infrastructure could be funded through a special rate on the area of benefit.

The second aspect that we wish to submit on is the land owned by the Council which has yet to be rezoned as industrial zone. The Chamber encourages the Council to prioritise this Plan Change to proceed as soon as possible. Whilst we don't expect Council to work in opposition to private enterprise, we do want to see the land rezoned and ready to be developed in a timely manner in conjunction with private enterprise.

Conclusion

The Otago Chamber of Commerce is very encouraged by the relationship that it has with the Waitaki District Council. Together we have been able to discuss and work on initiatives that benefit the district. We offer Council the skills and support of the Chamber, and look forward to working with you into the future.