

More information about the Otago Region Corrections Facility

Minister endorses site suitability

Corrections Minister Mark Gosche has announced that he will seek planning approvals to develop a corrections facility on the proposed site at Milburn. The Minister fully endorses the site as a suitable location for the new 330-bed Otago Region Corrections Facility.

The Minister's decision comes after careful consideration of a range of information, including the results of the in-depth investigation and public consultation to date. His decision takes into account: the environmental effects of a corrections facility at the site; the findings of geotechnical investigations; cost factors plus community feedback and your correspondence.

In-depth investigation reports

The Department's resource management consultants have summarised the findings and recommendations resulting from the in-depth investigation. Copies of this comprehensive summary entitled *Otago Region Corrections Facility: Technical Summary Report* are now available.

The individual specialist reports on which the summary is based contain additional information on the methods used for the investigations and more detailed analysis. These reports cover cultural, social, economic, archaeological and ecological impacts; potential visual/landscape, noise and traffic effects and geotechnical findings. Copies of the reports are available separately.

Property valuation report

The Department has also commissioned a report on the potential effects of the proposed corrections facility on property values. This is now completed and is available upon request. A summary of the results will be provided in the next *Corrections Communicator*.

Consultation report

In addition to the specialist assessments described above, the results of the Department's consultation with site neighbours, stakeholders, and the wider community formed an essential component of the site assessment. The consultation activities undertaken and the response to these are described in the Consultation Report.

To obtain a copy of any of the above reports please call our freephone 0800 263 880. The technical summary report is also available on the Department's website: www.corrections.govt.nz

Consultation will continue

If you would like us to meet with you or a community group to discuss ways of reducing or avoiding the identified and any other potential effects of the proposed facility, please contact us. We will continue to consult widely and to report progress through the *Corrections Communicator*.

Seeking planning approval

The Minister will be seeking a designation from the Clutha District Council and any necessary resource consents from the Otago Regional Council for the establishment of the corrections facility.

We originally thought the prison could have been a permitted activity with planning approval being sought via a certificate of compliance.

However, it is now clear that seeking a designation is more appropriate. A designation within a district plan allows a specified area of land to be used for a designated purpose.

Designation process

A key advantage of the designation process is that it will allow you and interested groups to voice your support for, or opposition to, the proposed facility. This is a formal process conducted by the Clutha District Council independent of the Department of Corrections.

The role of the Department is to prepare the Minister's application, which is known as a Notice of Requirement.

The Minister plans to lodge a Notice of Requirement and any necessary resource consent applications in April or May next year. We will keep you informed of progress.



Participating in the designation process

Throughout the designation process there are opportunities for you to be involved. These are outlined below.

Write a submission

After the Notice of Requirement is lodged, the Clutha District Council will invite submissions from directly affected parties and the wider public.

The detailed Notice of Requirement documentation will describe:

- effects of the prison and how these can be minimised
- consideration of alternative sites nature and extent of consultation carried out and any resource consents that may be needed.

The Council will advertise receipt of the Notice of Requirement and the availability of submission forms in local newspapers. You will have at least 20 working days to send in a submission.

Attend a Council hearing

After the submissions are received, the Council will hold a hearing.

A pre-hearing meeting may also be held, depending on the issues raised in submissions. This provides an opportunity to resolve some issues before the hearing itself.

Those people who have sent in a submission will be invited by the Council to attend the hearing and any pre-hearing meeting.

Only those people who have sent a submission to the Council and their witnesses may speak at the hearing. Other people will be welcome to attend as observers.

Appeals process

After considering the Minister's application and the issues discussed at the hearing, the Council will recommend that the application is either (a) confirmed with or without conditions/changes or (b) withdrawn.

The Minister of Corrections will decide whether to either accept or reject the Council's recommendation or modify the requirement.

The Council will inform affected parties and people who made submissions, about the Minister's decision.

Appeals against the Minister's decision can be lodged with the Environment Court. All appeals must be lodged within 15 days of the decision being announced.

More detailed information on the designation process is available from the Department of Corrections or the Clutha District Council.

What else is happening?

Over the next few months the Department will:

- consult local runanga and the community about a suitable name for the corrections facility
- consult site neighbours and other affected parties about landscaping options
- identify the optimal site for the building platform
- continue to explore options for the provision of water and wastewater services
- continue to consult with stakeholders, affected parties and interested groups
- begin preparing the documentation for the Notice of Requirement
- identify what resource consents are required.

Would you like to contact us?

If you are not on our mailing list and would like to automatically receive progress reports about the Otago Region Corrections Facility project, please contact us.

Letters and comments are always welcome if you have suggestions or concerns.

If your contact details have changed or you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

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