

CORRECTIONS Communicator

Updating the community on the Otago Region Corrections Facility

39 submissions on prison proposal

The Clutha District Council received 39 submissions on the Notice of Requirement to designate the site at Milburn for a prison.

Thirty-six of the submissions were from individuals or organisations within the Milton, Milburn or Waihola areas including a submission from the Tokomairiro Awareness Group.

Seven submissions supported the proposed facility, six neither opposed nor supported it and the remaining 26 were against the prison.

Those supporting the facility perceived benefits from employment opportunities, increased business growth and larger school rolls. Reasons for being opposed included:

- potential social impact on a small community;
- impact on ratepayers of likely upgrades to water and wastewater services;
- visual impact and increased traffic affecting the area's rural character.

Twenty-three submitters recommended conditions be placed on the corrections facility should it go ahead. The most common conditions concerned:

- limiting the number of inmates;

- mitigating the visual impact of the facility;
- funding to enable local organisations to develop their services in anticipation of increased demand.

Twenty-one submitters indicated they want to speak at the designation hearing.

After hearing all points of view, three independent commissioners will recommend to the Council whether the site designation should be confirmed and if so, what conditions should be recommended.

Minister views site

During September the Minister of Corrections, the Hon. Paul Swain, visited the Milburn site. He was keen to get a good sense of the site from close up and further afield. He was also interested in how proposed landscaping would screen the facility.

Visiting the site gave him the opportunity to review the context of the issues raised in public submissions.



DEPARTMENT
OF CORRECTIONS

Welcome

Greetings and kia ora. As the end of the year fast approaches, it's time once again to update you on the Otago Region Corrections Facility project.

In July the Corrections Minister lodged an application with the Clutha District Council to designate the Milburn site for a prison.

This newsletter includes feedback from people who made a submission on the designation application. We also look at discussions about water and wastewater issues, topics covered at meetings with the Milburn Neighbours' Group and highlight the recommendations for minimising the impact of the prison.

Thirty-nine parties made a submission to the Council on the proposed prison. While some submissions were positive, a number of people expressed concern. The idea of having a corrections facility nearby can be hard to get used to. Our experience with other corrections facilities in New Zealand shows that prisons are responsible neighbours and an asset to the communities they are in.

The Council-managed designation hearing starting on Monday 8 December 2003 in Milton is a key part of the planning approval process. If you are not speaking I hope you will consider coming along to listen to the submitters and Department present their views.

William Whewell
National Property Manager

Water and wastewater

Discussion continues with the Clutha District Council on options for water supply and wastewater services for the proposed facility.

Initial investigations of the Milton Water Treatment Plant have shown that it needs to be upgraded or replaced to meet new drinking water standards, provide for future demand and overcome health and safety concerns. While the Council has been aware of these issues for some time, an interest in supplying water to the corrections facility has brought forward their consideration.

The Council is also investigating an upgrade of the Milton Wastewater Treatment Plant and whether existing resource consents will need to be varied or renewed. Options for upgrading would depend on the extent to which wastewater is

treated before it leaves the proposed facility.

It is feasible to partially treat wastewater on-site using an oxidation pond system if necessary, however a decision on this is yet to be made. The Otago Regional Council has recently confirmed that such an on-site wastewater treatment system would be a permitted activity.

Final decisions are some time away as options and costs need to be investigated in more detail. The Council will be consulting ratepayers about possible changes to the water and wastewater plants and how these could be funded.

The Department would contribute its fair share of capital costs and continue to pay annual charges.

Resource consents granted

Resource consent applications were lodged in August with the Otago Regional Council relating to stormwater discharge, flood protection and the internal access road.

The likely environmental effects from such work were assessed by the Department's resource management consultants who consulted with affected parties. The affected parties gave their approval and the Regional Council subsequently issued resource consents in October 2003.

The Department has lodged an objection in relation to some of the conditions.

Consultation continues

Since the announcement that the Government would seek planning permission to build the new Otago prison we have met regularly in Milton with the Milburn Neighbours' Group. Five meetings have been held so far to discuss issues of importance to people living near the prison site. On average 20 have attended each meeting.

Topics of discussion have covered:

- potential impact on property values;
- the location of the building platform and road access;
- progress on options for water and wastewater services;
- landscaping options;
- the type of lighting and its potential impact;
- the facility's name;
- the designation and submission process.

Each meeting has included questions from the floor and these have usually concerned aspects of day-to-day prison management and procedures or how the facility might impact on local services.

We have also provided opportunities for neighbours to visit Christchurch, Rolleston and Dunedin prisons.

Consultation has continued with local runanga regarding wastewater options, the landscape concept plan and possible design features for cultural facilities. We have also been talking with HealthCare Otago about the potential requirement for forensic medical services.

If the designation is confirmed we would continue to consult with the wider community. It is likely that a Community Liaison Group comprising the Council, iwi, community, Police, and Department representatives would be formed. This has happened at most of our existing prisons.

Prison visits

Earlier in the year 10 neighbours visited Rolleston and Christchurch Prisons to observe security systems (including visitor protocol), learn about different rehabilitation programmes, see the effects of night lighting and meet with Rolleston Prison neighbours.

More recently five Milburn neighbours visited Dunedin Prison and would have seen the limited and rather outdated facilities of the old prison.

As well as visiting the site at Milburn the Corrections Minister, the Hon. Paul Swain, also stopped by Dunedin Prison recently. (See story on front page). The Minister (right) is seen here talking with Site Manager, Mike Anderson.



Conditions in Notice of Requirement

The Notice of Requirement contains a section on proposed conditions. The conditions are based on recommendations made by independent specialists to mitigate the potential environmental effects of the prison.

As a result of the hearing it is likely that the conditions will be altered.

In broad terms the proposed conditions cover the following areas:

Traffic	Upgrading Narrowdale Road and its intersection with SH1 and managing traffic during the construction period.
Landscaping	Undertaking and maintaining landscaping to lessen the visibility of the facility.
Noise	Limiting noise levels according to the District Plan and other relevant guidelines.
Archaeological or cultural artefacts	Contacting relevant parties and ceasing work if archaeological or cultural artefacts are exposed during site works.
Community liaison	Establishing and co-ordinating a community liaison group.

Did you see the light?

Milburn residents have been keen to see what potential impact prison security lights would have on the night sky. This is difficult to simulate in isolation from the associated buildings and for health and safety reasons it was not possible to set a light up on the site.

We did, however, set up a sample bulkhead light at Taylor Park in Milton. You may have seen it over the winter months. It gave some indication of the level of brightness from a single bulkhead lamp which uses a 70-watt bulb. The light has since been dismantled.

Facility design moves ahead

We are continuing to work on the design of the facility. While this is at a cost to the Department if planning approval is not given, such work is necessary to ensure the prison could open in mid 2006 should the designation be confirmed.

A revised Indicative Concept Site Plan that closely follows the plan attached to the Notice of Requirement will be available at the designation hearing.

The design phase has now moved to developing specific details for the buildings, fences and associated activities such as security surveillance, food preparation and laundry services. Options for energy and water conservation are being analysed.

Computer modelling is being used to assist decision making and priority is being given to incorporating the best features from work to date on other regional facilities. We are also consulting with those who have an interest in the prison's health and cultural facilities.

Project costs so far

In recent months people have expressed an interest in the costs of developing the new corrections facility so far. These are shown below:

Otago Region Corrections Facility	
August 2001- 2003	
External consultancy services:	Other costs:
Site selection, acquisition and assessment processes	Consultation and communications
Site designation and resource consents	Administration
Legal advice	Staffing and project management
Engineering, design and architecture	Sundry expenses e.g. venue hire
<i>Total cost:</i> \$1,414,759	<i>Total cost:</i> \$390,419

Landscaping

Some residents and landowners in and around Milburn with possible views of the proposed facility have discussed mitigation options with the Department's landscape consultant.

The Department recently arranged for planting adjacent to the boundary of a neighbouring property. Further planting will be undertaken should the facility proceed.

Contact us

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, change your contact details or be removed from the database, please contact us on freephone 0800 263 880.

Letters and comments are welcome.

Freepost 86 786
Regional Prisons Programme
Department of Corrections
Private Box 1206
Wellington