

Next Generation Project Consultative Group

Notes from the meeting held on Tuesday 9 October 2007, 7pm
Port Otago Limited Building, Port Chalmers.

In Attendance: Angela McErlane (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Bert Youngman (Otago Yacht Club),
Paul Robinson (Otago Yacht Club),
Bruce Hill (Dept of Conservation),
Dave O'Malley (Octa Associates Ltd),
David Redshaw (Southern Clams),
Hoani Langsbury (Otakou Runanga),
Jan Tucker (Port Chalmers Community Board),
Joan Conway (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
John Milburn (Monarch Wildlife Cruises),
John Perry (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Lincoln Coe (Port Otago),
Peter Brown (Port Otago),
Mark James (NIWA),
Martin Single (University of Canterbury),

Phil Mitchell (Mitchell Partnerships),
Roger Belton (Southern Clams),
Roy Innes (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Selva Selvarajah (Otago Regional Council),
Warren Lewis (Recreational Fishing)

Apologies: Bill Lloyd (Port Environment Liaison Committee), Geoff
Plunket (Port Otago), John Christie (Otago Chamber),
Stephen Walker (Harbour Cycle Network), Anne Cheng,
Paul Freeland & Annica Lindgren (Dunedin City Council),

1. Meeting Chair

In the absence of Geoff Plunket, Peter Brown offered to chair the meeting and this was accepted by those present.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda was circulated and confirmed for the meeting.

3. Confirmation of Notes from 18 September 2007 meeting

Jan Tucker noted she was not recorded as attending the last meeting when she had been an attendee. The notes were amended accordingly and with this correction, accepted as a true and accurate record of the last meeting.

4. Matters arising

The Terms of Reference (circulated prior to the meeting) were confirmed unanimously, noting that there is provision for these to be changed if the need arises.

5. PCG Chairperson

Peter Brown outlined progress on identifying a chair for the PCG since the last meeting. Approaches had been made to Neville Peat and Lindsay McLachlan but

both had declined due to other commitments. Bill Bayliss had not been approached because of a possible conflict due to his membership of the Port of Tauranga Board. Stephen Higgs was suggested as a possible candidate and after some discussion it was moved and seconded (Langsbury/Lewis) that he be approached. The meeting confirmed the resolution and Peter undertook to contact Stephen the following day.

UPDATE: Stephen has accepted the role and will commence as Chair at the 12 November meeting.

6. Identification of Issues

Peter then asked those in attendance to provide feedback on the information they had received to date from Port Otago and to raise issues they felt needed to be addressed as part of the project. He noted that the PCG had received two written submissions (from Southern Clams and the Otago Yacht Club – both attached) and he suggested that the meeting hear from those two groups first and then go around the room so everyone could have a chance to comment or raise issues. It was noted that if there was not time to hear all comments at this meeting, another meeting would be scheduled to accommodate this.

It was also noted that a matrix of issues raised and how they were to be addressed would be produced from this meeting and circulated to PCG members (this is attached).

(a) Southern Clams

Roger Belton advised that Southern Clams have been undertaking research to investigate commercial clam beds in Otago Harbour in terms of volumes, and risk management and environmental factors that might affect quality.

Roger noted that Southern Clams' interest is in clam beds that are only accessible by boat and of no (apparent) interest to other parties. Research to date indicates that the quality of Otago Harbour claims is better than Papanui or Blueskin Bay. Papanui Inlet is affected by the Lawyers Head discharge, which is unlikely to be improved by extending the Tahuna pipeline.

The Southern Clams submission notes that there will be an impact from dredging on the channels. This would compromise thousands of tonnes of clams, as the most productive clam beds are alongside the shipping channel.

A resource survey undertaken in the 1990s indicated a resource of 10,000 tonnes. Roger estimates that up to one third could be lost in dredging (due to side collapse). Dredging therefore comes at a significant commercial and environmental cost

Peter summarised the issues noted in Roger's paper as:

- Water quality
- Loss of beds
- Loss of habitat
- Volume of shipping

It was acknowledged that Roger raised legitimate issues. There is a need to identify the location and size of the beds so a technical assessment of the project's effects can be done.

A comment was made that there is currently no commercial harvesting of cockles as it is not a permitted activity. It was agreed that assessment needed to be done on the basis that harvesting could proceed.

It was noted that harvesting requires approval under the Fisheries Act, and because the cockles are a wild stock they were not covered by marine farming legislation or the RMA.

In response to a question on the impact of harvesting, Roger advised that they had researched harvesting methods and within one month there was no significant difference between harvested and unharvested substrate. It was not anticipated that there would be any effect on other recreational users (eg yachting).

It was asked why the water quality in Otago Harbour is better than Blueskin Bay. Roger advised that around Blueskin Bay there are a large number of septic tanks and steep bush areas creating run-off issues. The Otago Harbour catchment is small compared to the volume of water. Therefore there is a greater dilution factor. He noted that the middle clam banks are also farthest from land. There could be more contaminated areas closer to the harbour edge.

It was noted that the Tahuna discharge consent has been granted with stringent requirements including secondary treatment with UV radiation. The Otago Regional Council's Coastal Plan requires all discharges to meet Coastal Plan requirements by 2011.

It was also noted that it would be a good idea for Port Otago to sit down with Roger's team to ascertain exactly where the cockle beds were in relation to the proposed channel and the extent to which the two might be in conflict. This was thought desirable and any progress will be reported back to the next meeting.

(b) Otago Yacht Club

Referring to the Otago Yacht Club (OYC) submission Bert Youngman noted there was general support from the OYC for the Next Generation project as there was a benefit to the community in having a strong port. He went on to comment that there were a number of harbour management issues that needed to be raised, some of which were the responsibility of the ORC, not Port Otago. Currently, the responsibility for harbour works is unclear so it would be positive if POL could address some of these community issues as part of its investigations to identify project impacts on recreational users.

The OYC has proposed a forum independent of the PCG to focus on harbour issues. This forum would consist of recreational users and POL representatives and would meet annually to review harbour issues. POL could either take on resolution of issues itself or refer them, if appropriate, to the ORC for resolution.

Other issues raised by the OYC included:

- 1) Otago Harbour not having a harbour master and consequent safety issues
- 2) Draft risk assessment and when this would be shared with users
- 3) New operating rules on the channel
- 4) Services for visiting recreational vessels (wharves)

- 5) Studying the wakes from larger vessels (over various tide and water scenarios). Wakes are an issue in other areas. For example, the Careys Bay scrubbing area could be vulnerable to wakes.
- 6) Rock could be used to provide wave /wake protection in Deborah Bay.
- 7) There is a need to investigate the eastern channel situation. There was a suggestion that increased flows would affect velocities in the channel and there was also anecdotal evidence of accretion from the 70's dredging. This material could be used for beach nourishment.
- 8) Consideration of storage areas for containers to remove the risk of them being blown into the harbour

In discussion of the OYC submission, it was asked whether POL had a pollution response procedure. This was confirmed.

There was a suggestion that the channel shape might allow operation of smaller vessels outside the beacons.

It was agreed that it would be useful to understand which areas of the harbour are particularly used for recreation and where the areas of conflict existed. This would be useful baseline information and it would be good to sit down and mark up charts appropriately. The Port Company will meet with OYC representatives to discuss this further and report back progress to the next PCG meeting.

(c) Warren Lewis

Warren noted that the harbour is a wide and diverse fishery and there are concerns about disturbance to the harbour and the effect on fishing. The recreation value of the harbour is considerable. Historically the harbour is significant and it needs to be looked after. There are a large number of people involved in the harbour. Reference was made to a John Bell report (1998) on Otago Harbour which shows the diversity of species present. Special mention of salmon and the release of smolt into the harbour was made.

Warren also stated that maritime safety issues need to be resolved within the Harbour but that these were not necessarily linked to the Next Generation project.

Warren added that the PCG needed the services of a retired engineer to comment on effects. He suggested that Maurice Davis could assist due to his years of experience with Otago Harbour.

(d) Joan Conway

Joan noted that her particular interest related to the shoreline and how the land/shoreline might be affected by the project. This focus also encompassed transport issues.

(e) Angela McErlane

Angela raised roading (transportation) issues and the environment as being of particular importance to her.

(f) Jan Tucker

Jan raised the matter of how information gathered for and by the PCG was to be presented to the community. She noted it was essential to avoid misinformation. Joan added that it was important to keep the Otago Peninsula side of the harbour well-informed too.

The questions of how affected communities would be kept up to date and who people could contact with issues or get more information were raised. Peter advised that POL had considered communication issues and some initiatives being considered included:

- PCG Notes and updates on the website (including frequently asked questions)
- Media releases on major milestones
- An internet noticeboard

Lincoln noted that it may be possible to use the library and the Rothesay News as distribution channels.

It was agreed that a fundamental role of the PCG was to ensure that the wider community was well informed about the project. It was also agreed that a smaller group of volunteers (Jan Tucker, Angela McErlane, Joan Conway, Warren Lewis, Bert Youngman and David Redshaw) meet with the Port Otago team and report back to the next meeting.

(g) Roy Innes

Roy is a member of the Port Environment Liaison Committee and a member of the Port Chalmers Yacht Club. He noted that the PCYC wanted to work alongside the other community groups represented, and POL, to evaluate the

(h) John Milburn

John has spoken to wildlife operators on Otago Peninsula and they are generally supportive of the project as it is good for Dunedin and the community. There is a concern at the impact of dredging and disposal on ecology and wildlife. However there is a confidence that the resource consent conditions will control environmental effects.

Specific issues include:

- The effect deepening of the channel will have on tidal flow in terms of increasing velocity.
- The effect on accretion outside the channel and what will be the change in hydraulics. (John had noted recently that the harbour side of Taiaroa Head was silting up.

John also raised issues with maritime safety. He is happy with POL and harbour control but there are issues arising from the lack of a Harbourmaster. A busy harbour should have a harbour master.

There were also opportunities to improve the harbour for recreational uses with dredging (as part of the project dredging programme), including:

- Improving access to the Careys Bay pontoon wharf
- Back Beach wharf access
- Dredging the entrance to the Eastern channel

John noted that this forum (the PCG) very good for people to express their views.

John was asked if commercial use of Back Beach/Careys Bay facilities was envisaged. John said that from time to time he would like to be able to use these areas. The vast majority of use would be recreational but he would like an ability to use these facilities from time to time. He noted that Back Beach was used now when a cruise ship was in port.

(i) John Perry

John advised that, at this stage, he had nothing more to add to the comments that had been made already.

(j) Selva Selvarajah

Selva advised that his (ORC) interest is in the consent compliance process. Two issues to consider are dredging and disposal. He noted that there is a lot of material involved and there is a need to look at environmental effects. He also noted the need to consider monitoring of the consent and for this project there will be detailed ongoing monitoring required.

In response to a question about the consent process, Selva advised that what the Port wanted to do was a restricted coastal activity so the ultimate decision maker under the RMA was the Minister of Conservation. The Minister would nominate one representative to sit on the Regional Council hearings panel. Bruce noted that there is a pool of people with different skills that the Minister uses and the Otago Conservator's role would be to identify appointees and make a recommendation to the Minister.

In the event of any appeal this would be considered by the Environment Court, with Ministerial confirmation to follow. It would be a publicly notified consent and submission process.

(k) Carol Meikle

Carol noted she was a member of the Port Environment Liaison Committee who lived at Deborah Bay and was a commercial property owner in Port Chalmers. She had approached yacht owners and residents to discuss this project. They have concerns about the day to day management of harbour recreation, particularly Deborah Bay. DCC have been approached over parking but there has been no response.

There are concerns about developing other areas without parking. At Back Beach POL accommodated parking. However Careys Bay is not safe for parking. There was a need to encourage safe recreational areas (separate from commercial) and there is not enough parking at Careys Bay.

Harbour use is increasing but not accompanied by an increase in parking areas. Reclamation should be considered to provide this space.

Carol also suggested that POL could store sand (rather than disposing of it at sea) as it has a commercial / beneficial use potential.

The other issue raised by Carol was heavy traffic, both at Port Chalmers and also through Dunedin. She felt POL needed to take a leading role to look at resolving transport issues (to accommodate heavy traffic).

In summary, Carol's issues related to:

- Parking

- Transport
- Storage areas of sand
- Reclamation

(l) David Redshaw

David asked whether other similar studies on effects had been done at other ports. Phil and Martin advised that there had been and although this was helpful in identifying generic issues, such studies were usually site specific. Answers from other ports were unlikely to be applicable to Otago Harbour and there was a need for a specific Otago Harbour solution.

(m) Bruce Hill

Bruce stated that issues in both the upper and lower harbour had to be considered. The harbour has habitats for seals through to sea grass and mitigating of effects was required. The Aramoana ecological area needed particular attention. Also, disposal of the dredged material had potential adverse effects. The sea off the coast is also a habitat and it is important to avoid adverse effects there too. Bruce advised that DOC would like to meet with POL to discuss specific issues.

The potential impact of the project on the albatross colony was also raised as something that may need to be considered. The adverse effects of lighting from night dredging would have to be considered.

(n) Hoani Langsbury

Hoani noted that the harbour is a statutory claim area for Ngai Tahu and has been used as a food resource and means of transport. He was concerned that the project did not impact on the quality of the resource. It was important not to reduce the food stock and dredging could have a significant impact on the fishery.

With regard to the dredge disposal area, there was a need to consider death of bivalves and other species that will occur in 25m of water. Harvesting of these bivalves during (or before) dredging needed to be considered.

It was noted that this level of harvesting would require a permit from the Minister of Fisheries. There was comment that the volume of cockles potentially affected by dredging was being overstated. Roger responded that he had surveyed the harbour and identified the extent of the resource. Up to 10,000 tonnes could be affected but more detailed study would be required. The Aramoana area has around 15,000 tonnes alone. He noted that widening of the channel would cause slumping which would impact on shellfish.

Hoani also raised the issue of erosion at Te Ruaone Beach. Changes in the channel could change the harbour in flushing time and there could be more retention of noxious materials.

Generally, Hoani said he had the same concerns as DOC and that there was a need to understand the issues before the project started.

Phil acknowledged that the cockle issue had to be evaluated and Lincoln confirmed that he and Mark James were meeting with the Ministry of Fisheries the following day.

(o) **Paul Robinson**

Paul (also from the OYC) had an interest in the Harbour as a recreational resource. His interest relates to the entire harbour so the hydraulic effects on the upper harbour are important to consider. He was also interested in mitigation of effects.

7. General Business

Bert Youngman asked if a bibliography of all the research done on Otago Harbour could be made available to the PCG members. Phil Mitchell confirmed that this was being prepared (see previous minutes) and would be circulated as soon as it was ready.

David Redshaw asked about the height of larger vessels. Lincoln advised that they would be higher than vessels currently calling at Port Chalmers but that Port Otago did not yet have detailed ship specifications.

8. Next Steps

It was noted that this has been a useful meeting and that there were some issues that could now be. These included:

- Identifying recreation uses and cockle beds
- Measuring contamination and tidal flows
- Developing a draft communications plan

A number of people had raised issues about specific areas and it was agreed that there was also a need to liaise with people individually to identify concerns and report these back to the meeting. Also there was a need to provide an opportunity for input from people who had been unable to attend this meeting.

The next step was to integrate all these issues into a "game plan" for addressing the environmental issues associated with dredging and dredged material disposal. As discussed at the previous meeting, Martin Single and Mark James would assist with this and the technical people now needed to scope the work and report back to the next meeting of the PCG. Any information available would be circulated ahead of the meeting so people had a chance to evaluate it.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting was set for 13 November at 7.00pm – Port Otago Promotions Room.

Please note this has subsequently been changed to 12 November, 7.00pm (in the Port Otago Promotions Room).

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.