

Next Generation Project Consultative Group

Notes from the meeting held on Monday 11 February 2008, 7pm
Port Otago Limited Building, Port Chalmers.

In Attendance: Stephen Higgs (Chair),
Allan Sutherland (Port Otago),
Angela McErlane (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Bill Lloyd (Port Environment Liaison Committee)
Bruce Hill (DOC)
Cheryl Adams (Blueskin Road resident),
David O'Malley (Octa Associates Ltd),
Geoff Plunket (Port Otago),
Graeme Burns (Harrington Point Community Society),
John Perry ((Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Lincoln Coe (Port Otago),
Mark James (NIWA),
Martin Single (Shore Processes and Management Ltd),
Nicola Bould (Harbour Cycle Network),
Phil Mitchell (Mitchell Partnerships),
Rob Bell (NIWA),
Roy Innes (Port Environment Liaison Committee),
Selva Selvarajah (Otago Regional Council)
Tom De Pelsemaeker (Harwood Resident),
Vern Hall (Otago Yacht Club),
Warren Lewis (Recreational Fishing/boating)

Apologies: John Milburn (Monarch Wildlife Cruises), Bruce Ritchie (Huirapa Runanga), Stephen Walker (Harbour Cycle Network), Bert Youngman (Otago Yacht Club), John Christie (Otago Chamber of Commerce), Lox Kellas (Peninsula Community Board) Peter Brown (Port Otago), Jan Tucker (Chalmers Community Board), Joan Conway (Port Environment Liaison Committee), Hoani Langsbury (Otakou Runanga).

1. Welcome/Introductions

Stephen Higgs welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited new members to introduce themselves. Allan Sutherland (Port Otago) and Vern Hall (Otago Yacht Club) were introduced to the PCG. Bill Lloyd reminded PCG members he had attended the first meetings of the PCG but had been absent in recent months.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) was confirmed

3. Confirmation of Notes from 17 December 2007 meeting

A question was raised regarding the correct name for the group represented by Lox Kellas. Although Lox is active in local coast guard activities, he was actually representing the Otago Peninsula Community Board at the meeting. Subject to this alteration, the notes of the last meeting were accepted and confirmed.

4. Matters arising

It was agreed to discuss any matters not dealt with in subsequent agenda items at the end of the meeting.

5. Rob Bell Presentation

Stephen introduced Rob Bell and noted that Rob has been involved in oceanography for 27 years. Copies of Rob's report were available at the meeting and will be posted on the project website. (A copy of the presentation is attached to these notes. For those not at the meeting a copy of Rob's report is also attached)

The summary of Rob's presentation is that current hydrological modelling indicates very little impact of a deeper channel on tide duration, phase and height. A higher-resolution calibrated model will confirm this. In terms of a disposal site, preliminary indications are that disposal in 26 metres of water does not disperse into Blueskin Bay and is likely to drift in a north to north-easterly direction. Storm waves would be required to mobilise bottom sediments. The next stage in this study is to develop an offshore/shelf model calibrated with field measurements.

Martin advised that the output from Rob's work (presented tonight) would be integrated with the ecology issues.

The assumptions related to tide range were questioned as any problems that have occurred around the harbour have been as a result of extreme events. Rob advised that the model runs undertaken assumed both zero and 20 knot wind speeds, with the zero wind speed being the most significant as wind tends to push the water around more. When asked if it be possible to use the model to assess the impact of a storm surge Rob said that it would be possible. Lincoln said that the difference between the existing and a deeper channel is the key issue to consider.

It was suggested that if there were any detailed questions, that these could be discussed at the next meeting after all PCG members had had time to consider the report more fully. It was asked whether the model included the widened channel dimensions. Rob confirmed that the wider channel and batter slopes were included in the model.

6. Feedback on December Presentations

Stephen asked for questions or feedback on the reports (Ecology – Mark James and Coastal Processes – Martin Single) presented to the 17 December meeting. Tom de Pelsemaeker asked about possible mitigation measures, noting that these were not covered in either of the reports. Martin Single replied that any mitigation measures would be determined once effects were better understood. Phil Mitchell pointed out that the reports were to identify what is known so that issues could be put in context and information gaps identified.

Bruce Hill (DOC) tabled comments on the two presentations. (These comments are attached to the notes.) Bruce said DOC's specific areas of interest were the salt water marsh and their role as an advocate under the Conservation Act. The DOC paper identifies where some further work is required. Stephen suggested that POL should discuss these matters directly with DOC and reported back to the Group at the next meeting. This was agreed.

Graeme Burns commented that the reports contained a lot of detail and he congratulated the authors whilst noting that most information was based on previous studies.

7. Communications update

A story had featured in the Otago Daily Times in January on the two scientific reports received in December. Stephen Higgs had recently been interviewed by the Otago Daily Times on his role as chairman of the PCG. The meeting was advised that the project website was very close to going live after some frustrating delays.

8. Updated Programme

Lincoln advised that forward programme was dependent on Rob's and Martin's field work. The critical element of that work relates to the wave measurement equipment to calibrate the model. POL is keen to deploy wave buoys to obtain filled data including currents.

Resource consent will need to be obtained from the ORC but it is expected this will be done on a non-notified basis. The PCG was asked for comment on deploying these buoys. Everyone agreed to proceeding with this.

Rob Bell will also proceed with building an offshore computer model.

Mark James said that an initial habitat survey is proposed. Transects with photos will be used to scope further studies. These will identify extent of habitats such as sea grasses and cockles. A more thorough survey will be undertaken in March/April.

Mark advised that Rick Boyd is consulting with Fisheries and Lincoln said he had also been speaking to commercial fishing groups. Mark said a further visit to Fisheries is planned. Warren noted that MOF data is out of date and that he would like to be involved in future discussions in this area.

Lincoln noted that the overall project aim is to complete the "science" by the middle of this year. A draft consent application is targeted for the September quarter. A concern about the timeframe, in respect to establishing fishery habitats, was raised. It was agreed that these monthly meetings should continue.

9. General Business

Mark James requested more feedback on the reports presented so far from PCG members. He stated this was useful in refining the scope of future studies. Warren Lewis asked for the group to be kept informed on commercial shellfish and customary fishing aspirations in the harbour. There were no other items of general business raised.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for 31 March, 2008 at 7.00pm – Port Otago Promotions Room.

11. Closure

Stephen closed the meeting at 8.10pm.