

## Next Generation Project Consultative Group

Notes from the meeting held on Monday 8 December 2008, 7pm  
Port Otago Limited Building, Port Chalmers.

In Attendance: Artie Heineman (Port Chas Fishermen's Co-op),  
Bert Youngman (Otago Yacht Club)  
Bill Lloyd (Port Environment Liaison Committee),  
Bruce Hill (DOC)  
Cheryl Adams (Blueskin Road resident),  
Chris Hepburn (East Otago Taiapure Management Committee)  
David O'Malley (Octa Associates Ltd),  
David Bradshaw (Southern Clams Ltd)  
Graeme Burns (Harrington Point Community Society),  
Irene Scurr (Otago Peninsula Community Board),  
Jan Tucker (Chalmers Community Board),  
John Milburn (Monarch Wildlife Cruises)  
John Perry (Port Environment Liaison Committee),  
Lincoln Coe (Port Otago),  
Mark James (NIWA),  
Nicola Reeves (South Coast Boardriders),  
Peter Brown (Port Otago),  
Robert Watt,  
Selva Selvarajah (Otago Regional Council)  
Stephen Higgs (in the Chair)  
Steven Little (Port Chas Fishermen's Co-op),  
Terry Broad (Huirapa Runanga)  
Trevor Johnson (Chalmers Community Board),  
Warren Lewis (Recreational Fishing)

Apologies: Geoff Plunket (Port Otago), Phil Mitchell, Roger Belton (Southern Clams), Brendan Flack (East Otago Taiapure Management Committee), Carol Meikle (Port Environment Liaison Committee), Graeme Carse (Quarry Beach Surf Boards), Neil McDonald (Port Chas Fishermen's Co-op), Keith Probert (University of Otago), Hoani Langsbury (Otakou Runanga)

### 1. Welcome/Introductions

Stephen opened the meeting and commented that there had been a considerable amount of work completed since the last meeting. An update of contact details was requested (a list for members to update was circulated).

### 2. Apologies

The apologies for the meeting were confirmed.

### 3. Confirmation of Agenda

The agenda, which had been circulated with the notes of the previous meeting, was confirmed.

### 4. Confirmation of Notes from 25 August 2008 meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of 25 August 2008 were accepted.

### 5. Matters arising

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

## **6. Update on meetings since 25 August 2008**

Lincoln advised that he and Peter Brown had met with the Cockle Group at the Ministry of Fisheries offices. Lincoln had made a presentation to the group and then the key issue of discussion was the harbour cockle resource. Some interest was expressed at the meeting at the outcome of Assessment of Environmental Effects.

John Milburn asked about the maitaitai and whether it was an issue relevant to this project. Lincoln confirmed that this POL considered it a separate matter.

## **7. Reports available**

Lincoln outlined the executive summaries that had been prepared on five reports so far and these were circulated at the meeting. These summaries and the full reports would be placed on the Next Generation website for people to read and download. If members of the PCG wanted POL to print copies of the reports this would be done and a list to request this was made available at the meeting.

### **7.1 Bird foraging/roosting**

Lincoln said that the bird foraging and roosting report considers bird behaviours over a tidal cycle plus the effects of a number of ship movements. Mark said that the Ornithological Society provided additional information on roosting behaviour which has been included in the report. This report also addressed DOC's comments in respect to bird feeding behaviour over a tidal cycle.

### **7.2 Offshore ecology/Fisheries**

Steve Little queried the offshore ecology report and asked if there had been a study on fish life and species. Lincoln referred to the fisheries report completed by Rick Boyd, saying that it was preliminary only with further consultation with customary users and fishery operators to be undertaken. Steve Little noted there would need to be some work completed on the effects on fish species. Mark said Rick's report covers species types and pulls together information that has been published.

Steve White said trawl data should be available as fishermen will have filled out their logs so this information will be accessible. Mark responded that some information from fishermen was available.

John Milburn referred to unusual things happening along coast, including up to 70% of yellow eyed penguin chicks dying, possibly because of renal failure from hot conditions. Spotted shags at Taiaroa Head have also abandoned their chicks. This could be a result of discharge from Dunedin's sewerage outfall, but John noted that "Mother Nature" is a big player and perhaps more of an impact than other, human, interventions. Apart from sewage these recent events are not related to man-made activities.

### **7.3 Traffic assessment**

Lincoln referred to the traffic assessment report. This report has already been made available to Port Environment Committee, Chalmers Community Board, DCC and NZTA. This was an independent review of the capacity of SH88. This report comments on a number of safety issues, such as cycleways and footpaths.

Stephen asked for any comments on the summaries and process so far. Bert Youngman said there appeared to be quite a few reports to be completed and he asked if the consent would now be lodged later than the end of 2008. Stephen said this matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

Steve Little asked whether there is to be any further research on fisheries, and, in particular, research on the effect on people trying to make a living. Lincoln and Mark repeated that the fisheries report is preliminary and the intention is to meet with fisheries people and discuss these issues.

A copy of this presentation is attached to these notes and will be made available on the website.

## **8. Presentations on Project Progress**

### **8.1 In-harbour ecology (Mark James NIWA)**

A copy of this presentation is attached to these notes and will be made available on the website.

A series of questions followed the presentation. David Bradshaw asked how big the grab sample used in the survey was. Mark said they were approximately 20cm x 20cm. He added that the grab sampling was also supplemented by photos.

John Milburn observed that, in NE conditions, the harbour gets very dirty, so the biota must be well adapted to dealing with big changes in turbidity. Mark agreed, saying the species have adapted to considerable variation in sediment conditions, particularly in shallow areas. John Milburn also noted that when the Leith is in flood the harbour becomes particularly turbid.

Bert asked about the deep sessile communities and whether they were in areas where there is no maintenance dredging. Mark said these communities are quite patchy and are in deeper areas of the channel. These communities will also be well-used to the effects of maintenance dredging. Lincoln said there are sections of the channel that are not often dredged as they are naturally deep, and they would not need to be dredged for Next Generation either.

Bert said that it appeared that the underlying assumption was that any sediment plumes would not go through the islands, but that in a recent conversation, Brian Parvo commented that the study should have extended to the upper harbour. Mark said that the material in the upper harbour is much finer. There have been other studies undertaken and there is a reasonable amount of information on the biota.

Bert asked whether the species in the Harbour are common or rare. Mark said that the communities are common ones found throughout New Zealand in these types of harbour.

Terry Broad asked about gaps in the sampling areas and suggested some areas had not had a great number of samples taken. Mark replied that these sample points were determined from the photo survey. Samples were then taken to confirm the habitat characterisation. Terry also questioned the apparent gap in samples around site B2. Mark said that the sample coverage was designed to cover the different types of communities. And he would check what other work had been completed in this area.

Terry referred to habitat types and asked why there were only six discussed in Mark's presentation. Mark advised that the habitat had been grouped into 11 types. Six is a consolidation of the full habitat characterisation detailed in the report.

John Milburn said it was quite a comprehensive study and gave a good understanding of the habitats and diversity of species in the harbour. Terry said the study didn't adequately identify the differences in habitat and what the impact of changing the habitat through dredging might be. Mark said that species are spread throughout the harbour. The distribution diagram shows the habitat types and not the species distribution. It has been found that the communities are mobile and would be expected to quickly recolonise areas. Mark said having this information now enables an assessment of effects on these communities to be determined.

Graeme Burns said that the comment was made during the presentation that seagrasses are an important food source. Te Rauone Beach has had extensive erosion and the flounders have disappeared, along with seagrasses and low water ponds. Where have the flounders gone? Mark said seagrasses have declined in many areas along the coast. It is not known why this has occurred. These seagrasses are good habitats and breeding grounds for a number of species.

Warren Lewis said he has been discussing reduction in flounder numbers with Fisheries staff. This inshore fishery is in serious decline. Mark said that the situation is very complex and a number of natural cycles, with climate change, are all influences.

David Bradshaw asked whether the sampling points for the harbour study were randomly selected. Mark said they were and were selected to try and pick up different habitat types. Within an area the sites were chosen using random stratified sampling.

Stephen advised that an executive summary of this report would be available at the next meeting. Lincoln said the intention was to issue the report ahead of the next meeting.

## **9. Other reports being prepared/2009 Programme**

Lincoln proposed to consider agenda items 9 and 10 together and referred to the report summary sheet provided at the beginning of the meeting. The intention is to put copies of all reports on the website.

Lincoln commented that the incomplete reports were all reasonably well advanced with the plan being to finalise a number of them before the next meeting. If this was not possible, executive summaries would be made available.

Lincoln said that the hydrodynamic modelling has taken longer than expected. However the intention is to complete the remaining work within the first quarter of next year.

John Milburn asked when POL anticipated lodging the resource consent. Lincoln said that would be done after the reports and consultation is completed.

Bert referred to the possible merger with Lyttelton and whether this would have any affect on this project. Lincoln said that his brief was "business as usual". The merger talks are continuing with an update to be provided in March 2009.

Mark concluded this section of the meeting by saying he was keen to see Rob Bell's information and to understand the expected sediment plumes. This work was needed for the Assessment of Environmental Effects.

## **10. General Business**

A question was asked about the number of disposal sites that had been considered. Lincoln said that several were being considered, with the focus now on disposal sites east of the original proposed location.

A question was raised about removal of hard rock as it would be a concern if this material was dumped off shore. It was noted that blasting and removal of rock would be a considerable disturbance and would destroy fish life in the blast area. Lincoln said that disposal of rock other than offshore is being considered. A reef is still a consideration and one suggestion is to bring material onshore (to repair the mole). POL has also talked to Blackhead Quarry but it will be difficult to use the rock commercially.

It was asked whether POL should survey and identify sites with the least adverse effects, rather than select a dump site and then measure the effects. Lincoln said that the offshore report considered the whole of the offshore area so it was possible to establish degree of flexibility around disposal sites. Bathymetric surveying was completed before looking into specific disposal areas. Wave and current buoys had provided information on the whole area.

Mark confirmed that selection of disposal sites had been an iterative process. Investigations had started with a constraints map. The work done gave good descriptions of benthic organisms so, with currents and other information, an area could be selected with least impact.

Sediment disposal and its possible impact on surf breaks, especially at Aramoana, was raised. Lincoln advised that the intention would be to locate any disposal area so that the material doesn't go back into Blueskin Bay. A common theme with all possible sites was to

avoid material going back onshore. Mark added that the wave analysis will consider effect of the disposal mounds on wave patterns.

Stephen noted that there was still some consultation on issues, such as fishing, to occur.

#### **11. Next Meeting**

A tentative date of 23rd February 2009 was set for the next PCG meeting. This will be confirmed at the beginning of February.

Stephen thanked members for their attendance and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

#### **12. Closure**

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.