

Community Update – 8 December 2016

Sustainable Glenorchy has been very busy over the last few months working to ensure the community end up with a wastewater management framework that works for everyone and branching out beyond wastewater management to airport issues. Here's an update from us.....

Membership goes from strength to strength

We are hugely encouraged by the support we're getting from Glenorchy residents. We've just reached our first target of 50 members. We welcome our newest members and invite anyone who would like to find out more about Sustainable Glenorchy and what we do to contact Trish Fraser, Secretary sustainableglenorchy@gmail.com

Wastewater update

We recently hosted Andrew Dakers, an independent expert in small scale waste water treatment systems from Christchurch, who we had invited to visit Glenorchy with a view to providing us with independent advice as to options for wastewater management in Glenorchy.

Andrew spent a couple of days in the township and has followed this up with contact with Council engineers and a review of previous reports. As an impartial outside observer, Andrews initial thoughts are:-

1. There needs to be clarification, from Council to the community, as to what the actual drivers are for an upgrade of wastewater services in Glenorchy. Are these drivers real-risk related? For example, there is no evidence of risk from nitrogen from domestic wastewater produced by the community.
2. That there are some viable fixes eg for Humboldt Park and commercial premises that wouldn't require a whole town scheme.
3. With the current definition of dwelling equivalent (750L/day), Council's connecting fee mean residential ratepayers will be subsidising commercial properties. Based on Stats NZ the average occupancy per household is about 2.51 which corresponds to about 452L/day per dwelling.
4. The full range of alternative options, particularly STEP/STEG configurations don't appear to have been fully considered by Council, or if they have, adequately communicated to the community. This is essential, given that the community is paying and especially given the high risks posed to infrastructure by natural (eg earthquake) hazards in our area.

It was great to hear from someone who has seen and designed many niche wastewater treatment solutions. One suggestion was that it may be worth considering planting coppiced willows on a disposal field as the amount of land required could be significantly reduced. There may also be added benefits of a resource for eg basket/ furniture making or chipping for fuel.

Community self-help for septic tank owners

To ensure we improve management of septic tanks in the short to medium term, whatever the outcome of Council's plans for a town scheme, Sustainable Glenorchy has drawn up an action plan. Based on the premise that it's good to be able to get advice from someone that just wants to get a better outcome and not sell you something, Sustainable Glenorchy is going to:-

- put together a septic tank record sheet for householders - this will include provision for a sketch plan of the tank, vents and lid as well as any known construction details and inspection or maintenance / pump out records. We will be happy to help anyone in the community fill these out.
- produce a simple one-sided guide for home owners to display to help ensure their family and/or guests can do their bit to maintain the smooth operation of a septic tank. Many people from urban areas aren't aware of just what can affect a septic tank. There will be a Mandarin version available.
- offer the opportunity, for a token fee, to have the condition of existing tanks assessed. A number of members of the executive committee have been trained in how to do this.

Sustainable Glenorchy submits on airstrip plan

Just when the community thought it'd ensured operational arrangements around the airstrip were sorted QLDC, for reasons that no one can explain, decided to include the option of using the Glenorchy airstrip as part of a district-wide air service arrangement. We only discovered this at the last minute as it was part of consultation around Wanaka Airport! Confused? Yes, we were too and even QLDC's CEO can't explain why the suggestion was the second of two questions in its online consultation exercise.

Sustainable Glenorchy has submitted to Council arguing against the inclusion of Glenorchy as part of a district-wide air service. Our concern is that governance under Queenstown Airport Corporation will require reconsideration of the Glenorchy Airstrip Reserve Management Plan, which gives the community and current users of the Airstrip considerable influence over how the airstrip is used and developed. In line with the Community Plan, we want the community to continue to have a strong voice with regards to how this area develops.

Thanks Glenorchy for your support over the last year. We wish you a merry Xmas and happy New Year and look forward to working with you in 2017!

Kind regards from all of us

Sustainable Glenorchy

