

BRCT submission on the Draft Annual Plan 2016-17



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The Chief Executive Officer
Dunedin City Council
PO Box 5045
Dunedin

Submission on the Dunedin City Council's *Draft Annual Plan 2014-2015*.

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We, Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, wish to speak to our submission, on the morning of Wednesday the 4th of May if possible.

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1 Overview

Thank you for this opportunity to submit to the Dunedin City Council ***Draft Annual Plan 2016-2017***.

The Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust (BRCT) is a registered charity and has been creating climate solutions since 2008. The Trust is governed by a voluntary board with representation from the Blueskin settlements around Blueskin Bay and has **Jeanette Fitzsimons** as patron. Our Waitati office has two full-time staff, one part-time volunteer administrator, four Home Performance Advisors, two associates, and many community volunteers and pro bono specialists all contributing time and skills on our range of projects, services and expertise. Approximately 383 subscribe to our email newsletters and in social media we have 333 Facebook 'likes' and 254 followers on Twitter.

While we have appreciated being able to go over the Annual Plan in detail in past years, we understand that Council is now required to be focused on the changes from the LTP for the year concerned and that only significant or material differences are up for scrutiny and comment. We have therefore restrained our submission to these areas.

We support the City vision ("Dunedin is one of the world's great small cities") and seek to encourage the improvements in process and services already underway at Council. We support greater partnership with community and closer collaboration between Council and community in all strategic areas, but particularly on climate change issues. We wish to underline the importance we place on taking effective action, based on best and up-to-date science. We seek a more meaningful demonstration from Council towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and this should start with the setting of a zero carbon target via the Environment Strategy. And we offer partnership opportunities to hasten the low carbon pathway that the City has embarked upon through the Compact of Mayors.

We, the Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust, wish to speak to our submission, on the morning of Wednesday the 4th of May if possible.

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2 Our opinion on the proposed changes

2.1 *Economic Development*

We endorse the increase in funding for the implementation of the City **Energy Plan** and for building **Food resilience**. These things are critical to making our city *'one of the world's great small cities'*, and in our opinion, work on *'saving costs and taking advantage of economic opportunities through energy-efficiency improvements and reducing the city's carbon footprint'*, along with supporting *'initiatives that help all Dunedin people have access to healthy, sustainably produced food'* are all things that will make Dunedin an attractive place to live and visit, and deserve the greatest support, as these are real, substantive areas of work which will yield positive results.

Our suggestions:

- Reduce GigCity planned spend by \$50,000 (to a reduced increase of \$200, 000)
- Reduce City Marketing planned spend by \$50,000 (to a reduced increase of \$250, 000)
- Maintain major events planned development spend at \$100, 000 (to hopefully increase use of the stadium and reduce the debt burden on th city)
- Increase Energy Plan delivery by \$100, 000 (an increase on planned increase in spending to bring it to \$200, 000)
- Maintain Food resilience planned increase in spend for 2016/17 at \$40, 000.

2.2 *Supporting the Community*

As a charitable organisation that provides a range of services for the Dunedin community, we understand the challenge of meeting the growing environmental and social needs of our residents fully. Fuel poverty, generalised poverty, combined with increased hazard as a result of climate change, and general degradation of our environment and ecosystems are things that all need urgent attention. We work hard to address these issues, working on a 'not for loss' basis and depend heavily on grants and community donations to do our work.

Therefore we **support the proposed funding for community groups**, as we understand that we are not the only charitable organisation that struggles to meet the growing needs of our community while working with inadequate resources and within a closing window of opportunity.

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Our suggestions:

- We agree with all the planned spend totalling an increase in \$210, 000
- We seek a waiver of Demolition Consent and Building Consent fees for our ClimateSafeHouse project, which is a pilot project involving the design and build of a relocatable home to provide a model of how we can manage our housing issues and adapt in changing times and is taking place between 2016 and 2018.
- We seek a partial waiver of Resource Consent fees related to our charitable company's Resource Consent application to build a community wind farm at Blueskin Bay. We seek a waiver of fees over and above \$1300, with the exception of expert consultant costs which have been borne by Council (i.e. peer review Ecological Assessment and peer review Acoustics Assessment)

2.3 Looking after the environment

The climate is changing, and the updated science demonstrates that we are now very likely to be faced with an environment that is more challenging than has been expressed in the most extreme IPCC modelling, and much faster. We congratulate the Council for wishing to accelerate the work to address these risks, but we are concerned that what is proposed is too little and too conservative, given the scale of the risk to our city and our residents. There is no room for complacency, and there is a moral imperative to take notice of the science and act to mitigate and adapt to our changing environment. We have been provided with LIDAR data on the Blueskin area by the Otago Regional Council and are preparing sea-level rise scenario mapping to help our community understand the risks we face and we seek partnerships with any organisations, whether local government, other NGOs, business, industry or central government to both mitigate emissions through actions such as building renewable generation, insulating homes, and reducing use of fossil fuels, and adapting to our changing environment, through preparing to retreat from the high hazard zones. Our ClimateSafeHouse project is a pilot project involving the design and build of a relocatable home to provide a model of how we can manage our housing issues and adapt in changing times, and we are very happy to have early stage partners such as the Otago Polytechnic committing time and materials to the project. Projects such as these, as well as our proposed Blueskin wind development, which is predicted to reduce city greenhouse gas emissions by 966 tonnes per annum, are critical to maintaining a liveable environment, and need greater attention.

Our suggestions:

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- We support the planned spend of \$150,000 for implementation of Te Ao Tūroa and seek that Council ensures Te Ao Tūroa/Dunedin's Environment Strategy contains a goal of becoming a Zero carbon city, and an objective of Dunedin becoming a **carbon neutral city by 2050**.
- Boost the one-off budget of \$100,000 in 2016/17 for ground water and sea-level rise planning to \$300,000 in 2016/17 and increase it year on year.
- South Dunedin is built on a sandy isthmus connecting the peninsula to the mainland, and drained coastal swamp. The science of climate change cannot give us a definitive answer on height of sea-level rise, but has made it clear that after 11,000 years of climate stability, coastlines are now changing and the period of climate stability has ended. We expect sea-levels to rise by 50cm by 2050 and potentially well over 1 metre by 2100. We question therefore whether the proposed funding of \$100,000 for further investigation into the medium term protection options for Ocean Beach is a good use of resources. We propose banking this \$100,000 instead, for use in a managed retreat fund, while seeking partner funding from central government.
- We support additional funding of \$75,000 to do initial analysis on other parts of the Dunedin coastline at risk and we encourage a closer working relationship with the Otago Regional Council and propose Council work closely with us on these issues.

2.4 A change in scope

We support the new approach of building cycleways to a higher standard. We strongly support cycleways but we do have concerns about spending money in areas that do not have strong community support and that will become coastal wetlands in coming decades. Like the Council, we seek more safe, quality cycleways in the city and particularly incorporating rural parts of the city.

Our suggestions:

- We agree with the change in scope
- We have previously encouraged Council to trial 'participatory budgeting' and believe the cycleway project would be the ideal candidate for such a trial.

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2.5 A change in timing

We support the change in timing for the two transport projects in the \$37 million Central City Plan to allow more time for planning and community engagement, and to align better with planned construction work and NZTA funding.

Our suggestions:

- We support the change in timing.

2.6 Spending priorities

Climate change is the defining issue of our times. The way we respond to our changing climate now will dictate not only the environmental conditions now and in the future, but also social wellbeing, biodiversity, and all economic activity.

Our suggestions:

- Ensure progress is maintained on implementing the **Energy Plan**, **Supporting the community** and **Looking after the environment**, and in particular, ensuring that Te Ao Tūroa/Dunedin's Environment Strategy contains a goal of becoming a Zero carbon city, and an objective of Dunedin becoming a carbon neutral city by 2050.
- Any savings or surplus should be used to hasten Council action on climate change. We particularly encourage spending that both mitigates climate change impacts as well as enabling adaptation, such as our ClimateSafeHouse project and our proposed Blueskin Wind development.

3 Additional information

We will supply additional information at the formal presentation of our submission.