

Six month report card for Council

It's six months since the Local Body Elections and only four months since the Southland Regional Development Strategy was launched. **MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT** reports on key decisions made by his new Council to get things moving quickly.

It seems only a short time ago that I was swearing in my new Council for the 2016-2019 term but six months have absolutely flown by, so it seems timely to do a six month report card on how we've done.

On Election Day, voters' desire for change and new representatives came through loud and clear, with four new Councillors and more women on Council than ever before. While we lost some experienced Councillors, our new Council has come into the job with a variety of backgrounds and talents, new ideas, a willingness to learn and a desire to achieve results, which I think have stood us in good stead.

Only seven weeks after the new Council was elected, the Southland Regional Development Strategy was launched publicly on 30 November – and our Council was there in force to support it.

In early March, we formally adopted the recommendations of the Southland Regional Development Strategy Action Plan and have been working systematically to progress the Southland Regional Development Strategy in more than a dozen areas.

Working alongside Council's own staff, is Venture Southland, our economic development and tourism agency. Invercargill City Council is the largest funder of Venture Southland, contributing \$1.7 million every year; and we've been putting Venture to good use in supporting us with our regional development projects.

Here is a list of progress the Invercargill City Council has made on the Southland Regional Development Strategy to date:

1. Funding Commitment – In the 2017/18 Annual Plan, Council is proposing to set aside \$500,000 to pay for Regional Development projects in Invercargill City. I would love to see our partners, Southland District Council, Gore District Council and Environment Southland, do the same.

2. CBD Art Gallery – Public consultation on an Art Gallery is already under way and Council in October 2016 committed \$50,000 from the General Reserve Fund, upon the understanding that it was a project as part of the Southland Regional Develop-

ment Strategy. At the Council meeting last week, Council approved a further \$70,000 from the 2017/18 Annual Budget to fund a Public Art Strategy Development.

3. Inner City Development - Council has appointed a City Centre Co-ordinator, who has already provided a wide variety of initiatives and events in the inner city. These have included: Trick or Treating, Gingerbread Competition, Scavenger Hunt, Christmas Market, City Centre News, plus working and communicating with businesses and retailers in the CBD.

4. Retail Strategy – Council engaged First Retail Group to work with CBD stakeholders and Council in producing a Retail Strategy for the CBD. This was formally adopted at the Council Meeting last week.

5. Anderson House – Council has initiated a Feasibility Study into the future of Anderson House to look at how this unique property can best be preserved and benefit the city.

6. Temporary Invercargill Public Art Gallery – Council has been involved in establishing a temporary exhibition site to make the city's art collections accessible to the public.

7. Kakaporium and Tuatara Facility in Queens Park – a project feasibility study is already under way for this potentially major attraction.

8. Sister City Tourism - Invercargill has a 24 year relationship with Kumagaya, Japan and an almost two year relationship with Suqian, China. The Chinese sister city relationship is identified as having significant tourism potential. Tourism is one of the key areas of potential identified in the Southland Regional Development Strategy.

9. Digitising Records – Council has a project under way digitising all property files, as part of the 'ease of doing business' concept under the Southland Regional Development Strategy.

10. Heritage Painting Incentive - Council has a painting incentive in place for those owners of classified heritage buildings in the CBD who want to paint them in heritage colours.



POSITIVE PROGRESS: Mayor Tim Shadbolt is pleased with the progress made by the Invercargill City Council on projects that support the Southland Regional Development Strategy.

12. Gap-Filler Workshops - A series of Gap-Filler Workshops, which help people to revitalise urban spaces, were held in Invercargill for the first time in late March.

13. Campervan Strategy – Council and Venture Southland are starting work on a Campervan Strategy for Invercargill.

14. Library Redevelopment – After wide-ranging and thorough consultation, Council in January approved redevelopment of the Invercargill Public Library, which is a crucial anchor in Invercargill's CBD.

Council has been criticised in the media – and I think unfairly – for being “slow” in

our work on Southland Regional Development Strategy projects.

We are not slow but as stewards of rate-payers' money we are cautious, careful and democratic – and rightly so.

All in all, I think this list of Council's progress on the Southland Regional Development Strategy is comprehensive and encouraging. It shows the commitment all of us around the Council table, our staff and Venture Southland have in playing our part and making a solid contribution to a sustainable, strong community and economy for Southland.



My Invercargill online tool available on website

MY Invercargill can be used on any device connected to the internet, such as a smart phone, PC, or tablet. It allows people to lodge a request for service, view their previous requests, or make a Council-related payment. More initiatives are being developed and will be brought on line in the future.

Council Customer Services Team Leader Phil Rhodes said My Invercargill provided people with a

fast and efficient way to get in touch with Council.

Payment types currently available include: rates, infringements, animals, re-registration of dogs and debtors. The My Requests section is a user's personal record of requests submitted to Council through My Invercargill.

More details, including terms and conditions are available on the Council website, www.icc.govt.nz.

The address for the new tool is www.myinvercargill.nz/ which can be saved to PC desktops or to the home screen of a smartphone or tablet.

While requests can be lodged 24/7, Council staff monitor My Invercargill from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

For urgent requests, such as a dog attack, people are advised to phone the 24-hour number (03) 211 1777.

City Centre Retail Strategy adopted

COUNCIL'S Retail Strategy, which will help to strengthen the attractiveness of Invercargill and its city centre, has been adopted at this month's Council meeting and planning is under way for projects to start over the next few months.

Council's City Centre Co-ordinator, Kari Graber, said the Strategy, which was produced by Wellington business, First Retail Group, identified four key pillars to address in the City: Attraction, Experience, Place, and Performance.

"The Strategy combines planned city centre developments, past reports and the recommendations from the Southland Regional Development Strategy, to create definable actions for a stronger economy and socially vibrant city centre.

"Two workshops were held in February, 2017, with over 100 key stakeholders in attendance, including property owners, business owners and industry representatives. The workshops provided an opportunity to get first-hand understanding of issues and concerns from attendees. These workshops also provided an opportunity to build a collaborative working relationship between Council and key stakeholders in the city centre," Ms Graber said.

First Retail Group Managing Director, Chris Wilkinson, said the Strategy was far-reaching and explored all aspects of the City's appeal, relevance and potential. "Invercargill is a city poised for significant regeneration with a number of pivotal proj-



PLANNING UNDER WAY: Council's City Centre Co-ordinator, Kari Graber, with First Retail Group's Project Lead, Lorraine Nicolson.

ects about to get under way. The strategy helps determine how these developments can add value to the existing offer, but also help welcome new audiences to the city centre.

"We were delighted with the high level of feedback and participation from stakeholders, which greatly helped shape the Strategy and outcomes necessary for a successful CBD," Mr Wilkinson said.



Council meetings

Notice is hereby given of the following meetings:

District Licensing
Wednesday, 26 April, 10am

Bluff Community Board
Monday, 1 May, 7pm

Community Services
Monday, 8 May, 7pm

Regulatory Services
Tuesday, 9 May, 4pm

Infrastructure and Services Committee
Monday, 15 May, 4pm

Finance and Policy
Tuesday, 16 May, 4pm

Events Committee
Thursday, 18 May, 9am

Council
Tuesday, 23 May, 4pm

The above meetings will be held in the Council Chambers / Committee Room, First Floor, Civic Administration Building, 101 Esk Street, Invercargill, except for the Bluff Community Board meeting, which will be held at the Bluff Municipal Chambers, Gore Street, Bluff.

- www.icc.govt.nz



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