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To the Mackenzie District Council in regard to the consultation document.
From Elaine Curin

I guess I am writing this with some trepidation of what is planned for Twizel. I see that there is to be an update of the market place and that there is going to be a certain amount of money toward upgrading the Twizel Events Centre, which by the way has been described as the Twizel Community Centre upgrade, in your document but because the actual Community centre does not have a gym, I presume this is referring to the Events centre.

I was speaking to Paul Hanagan recently about the way things have been done in the past. He assures me that there are plans to make changes to the way council goes about things, but then he went on to say that the people who advised council about putting a supermarket on the foreshore of Lake Tekapo are going to have a go at Twizel next. God forbid we have to endure such a lack of shortsightedness as well. It seems that the people who council have made responsible for extremely sensitive and in fact enormous decisions regarding upgrades, are stuck somewhere in the 60's or even further back than that.

Why can't we have designers or just practical people, who are aware of what will work in terms of energy sources, design factors and long term usage, have some say in the 'upgrades'?

Let's take some of the monstrosities we deal with in Twizel on a daily basis.

- **The public toilets:** I was a community board member when we had consultations with two architects. We chose one and voted on his particular design. It was practical, a relatively low cost building that offered everything that we needed in terms of public facilities. I went to Australia and while I was away, the other three community board members decided to not go with the design we had agreed upon but went with the current design. It is highly impractical. It has slats over one side of the roof that even if it is meant for a leisure area has no seating underneath. It is commented on in a disparaging way often and I have never heard anyone make a positive comment about them. In fact most people consider them laughable. The fittings have come loose in some of the cubicles. These will have to be replaced or upgraded soon.

It is not clear that there is a separate men's area so the remaining three toilets get booked out with males when buses come in, while the men's toilet remains free.

- **The Market Place:** The last upgrade resulted in 50 shades of grey concrete. It is such a hodge podge of work which looks amateurish, unprofessional and a mismatch of all types of concrete, stones, larger rocks and grassed areas that get worn down to dirt in summer. I guess the benchmark as to whether what we ended up with is acceptable, is to ask the question, 'Would you design your own yard, around your own house in this way?' I know the answer would be a resounding, no way! Did no-one know about colouring concrete? That you can polish coloured concrete and get a remarkable effect. That's if concrete was your first choice, which is what we ended up with. I also understand that the design of the market place is of a flag, which is best seen from above, as if one is flying over the market square. Not sure what the manager/designer of this particular project does on his nights in Twizel but I personally have not seen anyone fly over the market place to view the flag.
- **The brick walkways** that were laid in front of the small supermarket and other places around the market place.

These bricks when covered in ice in winter have caused many people to fall over, including myself, who spent a year in extreme pain because the person who organised this project didn't do their homework. Rough surface walkways had to be installed along the side of these bricks to enable people to negotiate them in winter. Why didn't the person in charge of this project find out what bricks would serve the purpose summer and winter. Did they think to ring Oslo city council and ask what they do? Did they not consider that if one puts bricks that have smooth surfaces down in the

main walkway area of an alpine environment that there might be some type of mishaps? Hello!!!

- The other thing about these particular bricks is that they are now cracking and have chips out of them. They will need to be replaced but if they were researched properly to start with, they would last for many years. Cobblestones, flagstones etc that have cars, trucks, horses and pedestrians, such as in London, last for decades. Is it because that to date Twizel has been the country cousin and so has been given the short end of the straw over and over or is it because of sheer incompetence.
- **The Twizel Events Centre**

This awful 'White Elephant' is a disgrace. Unthinkable to spend so much money on something that has no passive heating, no solar panels, doesn't face the correct direction for maximum sun, no grey water systems, has no access for the disabled to the auditorium, has no decent sound barriers between the conference room and the basketball court, is ugly in the extreme, has no redeeming architectural features and does not serve the Twizel community particularly well in it's design and layout. I personally think that adding to this disastrous building will just complement the eyesore further.

A friend of mine has a very large lodge. It is in an alpine environment. It has extremely high ceilings and has large plate glass windows. Due to designing it to capture as much passive heating as possible, even in the middle of winter, one would think there were heaters and underfloor heating on at full capacity. Is there anyone in the council who knows how to research these types of designs and ideas? Are we going to just get what we have always got?

- **Onsite manager** We have these signs around the place that says no buses or campervans in certain car parks but there is nobody policing this. We have free wifi from Spark at certain spots in the town but we don't provide any seating for people. It is all half pi and uncouth. We have the ability to create a successful revenue producing town and surrounds, but not with the management style to date.
- **Auditing council staff on performance.**

I would like to see proper auditing of council staff. Some of the things I have mentioned here are but a few of the things that over the last 20 years have just been 'done' with out any foresight or future vision. If I, as a former teacher, performed to such a low standard, I would not have continued to be employed. If a council staff member is given a task and the outcomes of that task are less than satisfactory, over and over, then there should be some type of ramification. It is not correct to allow Twizel to be the brunt of poor outcomes based on lack of ability to do the task to the highest possible standard. We are the future bread winner of the Mackenzie. Tekapo might hold that position at the present moment but there is no doubt that, in the future, Twizel will be the town that expands and consequently generates the badly needed income to keep the Mackenzie afloat. There are so many examples in Twizel of people who have researched to the nth degree and then produced exemplary structures and buildings with sustainable systems. These people have looked into these systems and put them into practise. Why is this beyond the means of council staff?

- It seems we are stuck with: **Council motto:** We will always do what we've always done, and you will always get what you've always got.
- I am writing this because we need to change the way things are done. In all aspects of upgrading. If the people who thought putting a supermarket on the foreshore of Lake Tekapo was a good idea are going to be having a say in how to make Twizel more attractive then all I can say is we are stuck with the former adage of always doing what we have always done.
- **Attracting people to Twizel:** Paul Hanagan told me that the council are spending money getting 'consultants' to advise the best way to get people to come into Twizel. It is interesting that even though this conversation has been happening over the last 20 years, the outcomes are still the same. Twizel is off the main road, it does not have a highway running through it, (thank goodness), it would be impractical in terms of outlay to redesign the main road and so the 'experts' get hired to tell us these basic facts in 100 page documents that come at considerable cost. Have we now got another group to tell us the same thing???

Why is it not being approached from another angle? Why is council not spending money on some form of outward notifications, advertising, overseas links to major travel publicity organisations, inflight magazines on all major airplanes etc to get people to come to Twizel, in fact to the Mackenzie.

- Did I hear a disparaging chuckle there as you read this? Let me outline how we are seen by some tour operators and give you a couple of recent examples. We are seen and this could be the major point of selling the town to the world as, 'The gateway to Mt Cook.'

Mt Cook has a worldwide reputation. Small villages across the globe in places like China and Germany know about Mt Cook. It is already world renowned. What other advertising point would you need if you were looking at how to improve money revenue into the district. It doesn't get any better than; **Mt Cook 'The Jewel in the Mackenzie Crown.' The Lofty and Majestic Mt Cook, yours for a day.'** The slogans are endless. The Mackenzie council already have everything here. Twizel does not need to change, the way in which things are viewed and considered does. As long as we have people who are inward looking when 'managing' us, we will keep on getting what we have always had. Expenditure with not much to show for it.

- I have spoken to a few bus tour operators who have started bringing their overseas clients to Twizel. In the direct words of one from China, "We can stay at the Mackenzie Country Hotel for 2 nights, for the same price as 1 night in Tekapo. We are closer to Mt Cook and we can drive to Tekapo as well. It is much better for our clients." I have had similar remarks made to me. I have also had tour guides tell me that they prefer Twizel and Mt Cook for star gazing than in Tekapo.

Star gazing Like having a special promotion handed to you on a plate. Advertising all over the world about our dark sky reserve is like a precious gem. How are we going to get them to come? Should be the question being asked.

- Twizel needs someone to start promoting it from the top. The MDC must start realising that the money is out there, it is just a matter of getting people to spend it in the Mackenzie. China, India, Malaysia, Australia and parts of Europe are the markets that are bringing a large amount of revenue into the country at the moment. Is the MDC promoting the Mackenzie in these countries or is it all just up to chance? We can direct the future of the Mackenzie Basin if we begin to look at the opportunities available. The future of Twizel could be assured if we had better people overseeing it and managing it.
- One only need go online and put into Google, articles such as these, both of which have very good guidelines for small town change particularly the first one. The second is interesting but not so relevant due to our small population base.

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/essential_smart_growth_fixes_rural_0.pdf

or

<http://www.urbangateway.org/news/10-cities-have-reinvented-themselves->

Misleading and outdated information

- My concerns are that those people managing Twizel might consider that the information they are receiving is sustainable and practical but in reality it is not. Due to it not ever having been implemented or just being given some fanciful middle man speak. It is easy to be convinced when one hears or reads about a solution that looks and sounds good but unless it is actually researched thoroughly or seen in a working environment it can end up being a bad investment. I use again the example of the red bricks in the market place. It would have been so easy to find out from some other alpine town or city what durable and appropriate product they have always used. Then sourcing an equivalent in New Zealand or even going overseas to purchase. Doing the groundwork to produce a long lasting product. A

few days on the internet and the phone. Samples sent etc. Instead, we have an inferior product that doesn't function and never will, as well as the cost of buying, laying, creating new walkways to overcome the product deficiency and very soon, the additional cost of removing them all and laying another lot of walkway bricks or whatever is going to be chosen. I would like to know what this whole exercise has actually cost. Please don't keep letting the same people make the same mistakes over and over.

Being smart with Tourism

- Another area of concern is the way our tourism is being managed. There are many possibilities for improvements in how tourism is managed in the Mackenzie but one example that I see are, the huge numbers of people going into the walks at Mt Cook. At the moment these people are generally on their own with maybe their own bus tour guide, who may or may not have a great deal of knowledge of the flora and fauna, or the geological nature of the area. They wander along and of course enjoy being in the environment but how much more of an experience it would be if there was someone there, a guide to explain some of the wonders of our alpine environment. Stories from the mountains. This is what people would take with them. The personal touch. An experience where they had the ability to ask questions, to learn and to enjoy in a different way than the; on the bus, off the bus, walk half a kilometre, take a hundred photos, walk back to the bus, on the bus, on to the next thing. We could be making what we have into an exciting wonderland of knowledge and experience. It is obvious there is a need to control numbers in the National Park and other sensitive areas that will in the future become damaged if the volume of people is not managed.

The Future

Please can we stop shooting ourselves in the foot and start looking at how we can have real working documents that produce long lasting solutions.

The potential is here, the landscape is here, the mountains and the lakes are here, the infrastructure needs a bit of help, the population is friendly, smart, helpful and most of them are trying to make a bit of money. The world is full of people who would like to come here. This is the time for the MDC to start making smart choices. To start creating a future which can be sustainable and money making at the same time.