

Submitter: Neil Pluck

Goal 1:

We have concern around there being no options for locals to retire in Rakaia with the lack of any retirement units. As we have had, and currently still do, have many local Rakaia people that would prefer to retire and down size within Rakaia but no longer have the need, or ability, to look after a bigger section and home, and do not want to move out of our township but have to as a result of having nowhere to move into within the town. I think this should be on the list of things to be aware of as it is most likely a district wide issue for our smaller towns with our district demographics.

Goal 2:

1) We support the objective of supporting business owners and employees to be skilled, adaptable and capable, however we are observing that there are a lot of small businesses in the district where the owners have reached retirement age with limited options for business succession, or selling the business, and we are concerned what will happen to these businesses that could be forced to close or be taken out of the district. Most of our businesses use other local businesses to support them in some way and this causes a huge problem when an important supplier to a business closes, or moves out.

2) I think we should look into a specialist centre of Irrigation, as our district is the capital of irrigation in NZ and there is plenty of knowledge to be shared and money to be made from an Irrigation Poly Tec, or the like, and I feel the same goes for Specialty Seeds production. I am thinking a small version of Lincoln College in Ashburton district.

3) I think Council is doing a good job of looking into Economic development and looking out for things with regards to Business, but I would like to see another Enterprise agency in place Ashburton district. I think the Agency should be independent of Council, Council should partly fund but not be in control of it, as it is not councils job to be spending rate payers money on employing people, holding events, meetings, lobbying Govt (maybe even themselves (local Govt)), other entities and finding info about Ashburton district businesses or cheer leading business for our District. Council has a part to play in all of this as Council is part of making sure we have a good, thriving, economically stable, well to do local economy., But Ashburton business should be in control of this Economic agency, including Tourism group, Not Council!

Councils roll is to look after the proper functioning of important infrastructure and future proof this infrastructure and growth of our district (and Ashburton Council does a very good job of this), not get bogged down and have to employ extra staff and processes to do what businesses and groups should be doing, and are capable of doing, for themselves.

Council should support these things, but not lose focus of what council is charged with doing.

Goal 3:

We would like to ensure Rakaia is included in this plan as Rakaia is the main gateway into the Ashburton District. We are very proud of, and very grateful for, the finished product of our beautiful Salmon and Public Loos site and know this now sets a fantastic standard for our visitors to notice and expect of Ashburton district as they travel about, and we are sure they will look at this site, and others around our district, and think that this is clearly a district, and people, that are proud of their area and themselves.

But we would like to suggest that a feasibility study and group, or committee, be formed to explore the opportunity of a cycle trail, starting in Rakaia (or Ashburton) and linking to Methven along the Rakaia river terrace and RDR and Ashburton river stop banks. Some work has been done on this in previous years and we believe there is still some funding held at the ADC for this purpose. Cycle trails are very popular, and we believe this would bring new visitors and income to our district and will positively impact our whole district. We feel that Ashburton district is lagging behind on this product and has a huge amount of infrastructure already in place that only needs a few mods and extensions to have an outstanding, unique to NZ, braided river trail working all year round for our greater good and enjoyment. And as with other trails around NZ, many smaller trails and things branch off the main trail once it is in place.

This group (or committee) of people could be put together to investigate, and ultimately get the project done, with support of Council maybe via consents etc but maybe also council supplies a single staff member to help out with work that would bog down the volunteer committee. Ashburton district is very very good at this Volunteer group and professional entity working together for a clearly established outcome.

Thank you for hearing me out. Regards Neil Pluck.