



OTAGO SCOTTISH HERITAGE COUNCIL

Welcome to the May 2023 edition of the OSHC newsletter.

Edited by Dene Mackenzie

Sophie Barker, fighting the good fight



The new hospital is top of mind for Cr Sophie Barker Photo: Stephen Jaquier

Dunedin City deputy mayor Cr Sophie Barker remains determined to do all she can to get Dunedin the best hospital possible, and the fight remains far from over.

Addressing the Otago Scottish Heritage May meeting, Cr Barker outlined the wins, losses, and remaining goals in her determination to see a world-class hospital fit for purpose constructed in the city.

“We want the hospital to be fit for purpose for the next 40 years. We don’t want what happened in Invercargill. When they opened the hospital, it was already too small.”

The wins, Cr Barker told the meeting, included \$10 million clinical value being put back into the project, six out of seven clinicians' list addressed, the MRI scanner reinstated, 1000m of shelved workspace returned, no more design cuts, monthly engagement with the DCC and a warm shelf for a PET scanner. The pressure remained on the Government review for a PET scanner to provide equitable access for Dunedin, pathology space and mental health services for older people.

The unmet goals included the fight for two operating theatres in the region, a St Andrew St public overbridge, urban design of the hospital and an Otago-Southland health delivery model, she said.

"It started off as a shell game, we couldn't figure what was going on. It took a long time to figure out what was missing."

Cr Barker said the council was lucky to have clinicians talk the councillors through the project and explain what was going on. The disadvantage was being put on the back foot by the health professionals turning up to talk to councillors and trying to bamboozle them with science.

It appeared the Government was going back on its promises. Everyone knew building projects "blew out" and the hospital was going to be no different. Some of the reasons for cuts made no sense. Suggestions had been made the Dunedin Hospital could outsource some services.

"That is ridiculous if we can do it ourselves," she said.

The review from the Government on whether Dunedin would have a PET scanner was worrying.

Reviews could go on for ever and if space was cut now, it could affect service in the future. There was a suggestion the PET scanners would stay in private hands, and Cr Barker questioned why Dunedin could not be the first public-funded facility to have a scanner.

After being told the two operating theatres "were not happening", the council decided to put together a plan which could see one theatre in Dunedin and one in Invercargill.

Patients were coming to Dunedin for their operations. Establishing a theatre in Invercargill would take the pressure off staff, patients, and space, she said.

"That sucks, but it sucks less than being left with only one theatre in the South."

It was still unclear what the council was fighting for because of a large bureaucratic machine "looking down" on the council.

"We must keep doing the best job we can. If the Government is re-elected, we keep the pressure on. A lot of the trust has gone.

"We now have to put ourselves in the position to advocate for the city.



The original plan . . . Worth fighting for. Image: Te Whatu Ora Southern.

Royal Connections: Historian John Stinson delves into the 1954 visit to Dunedin by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh



Photo: ODT files

In December 1953, the Otago Scottish Council received some important information regarding the impending Royal visit early in the New Year. The President Mr Oliver reported that the mayor had informed him that he would receive an invitation to the Royal Ball and to the reception to be held in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

At the Council Meeting held on February 4, 1954, the President spoke on the Royal visit and made mention of the Pipe Bands and the Highland Dancers at the Sports Meeting. Mention was also made of Pipe Majors Fraser and Robinson piping the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh into the Town Hall for the reception. Letters would be sent to both Pipe Majors. The President also mentioned it had come to his notice that several people had stated he had a hand in securing invitations for the Royal visit a fact he denied stating that it was not until the Monday that he received notice from the Town Hall informing him that he would be presented at the reception on Tuesday.

At the reception the President took the opportunity to enjoy a long talk with the Queen and the Duke on both the Council and Scottish organisations in general. The President was congratulated on both his informative report and on meeting the Queen.

The President also attended the Royal Ball where the Dunedin Burns Club staged two Scottish Country Dances which were much appreciated by guests including Lady Pamela Mountbatten.

The President was accorded a vote of thanks for his fine representation of the Council at the Royal Reception.

Gaelic Lesson

Unfortunately, Alison Thornton was not at our last OSHC meeting, and we did not have a Gaelic lesson. I use a LearnGaelic.scot website to read and listen to Gaelic. And I will never be able to converse, it is interesting thinking how my ancestors would have communicated.

Hi a charaid,
Ciamar a tha cùisean leat fhèin?

Hi Pal
How are things with you?

Ta I fliuch

It is wet!

Mid-Winter Hogmanay.

The Combined Clans & Societies Group Otago will hold a mid-winter Hogmanay on June 24, 2023, at St Peter's Church, Hillside Rd. Further details will be made available soon, but participants can be guaranteed a great night out with good food, chat and entertainment. If you need further information, contact me on denem@xtra.co.nz.



That's all for this month. A shorter newsletter. However, I hope it is one you enjoy.

Our next meeting is on June 7, 7pm in the Athenaeum Library, the Octagon. No guest speaker has been confirmed, at this stage. An agenda will be sent out May 30.

Dene Mackenzie