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Legal Case-notes November 2021

Feedback Please! Any Feedback? Drop us a note!

We would appreciate comments and suggestions from members on content, format or information about cases that might be of interest to members as not all cases may have been reported in "Your Environment".

The Case-book Editor Roger Low can be contacted through the Survey & Spatial NZ National Office, or by e-mail, Roger Low<rlow@lowcom.co.nz>

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CASE LAW

Drach v Tasman District Council

[2021] NZ Env C 118 (Interim decision) and [2021] NZEnvC 132 (Final decision)

Summary – An appeal against grant of consent to subdivision of a Rural Residential zoned 2.1ha property near Mapua, Nelson. The consent had been granted by Tasman District Council, notwithstanding the existence of a consent notice registered as a condition of the previous subdivision in 1998 that precluded further subdivision of the property.

The appellants had been concerned that the cancellation of the consent notice on the subject land would create a precedent and as a result the other lots resulting from the 1998 subdivision would also be able to be subdivided.

The appellants had believed that the consent notice could not ever be changed or cancelled and thus the consent should have been refused.

The appeal was allowed but only to a limited extent, and the consent was confirmed subject to amended conditions including registration of new consent notice conditions. The existing consent notice will thus need to be cancelled from the titles of the two lots created and new consent notice conditions registered.

Commentary

The RMA in Sections 221(3) provides for change or cancellation of consent notices or consent notice conditions, and (3A) sets out the process and criteria required to do so.

Section 221(3) reads:

> *At any time after the deposit of the survey plan—*
>
> *(a) the owner may apply to a territorial authority to vary or cancel any condition specified in a consent notice:*
>
> *(b) the territorial authority may review any condition specified in a consent notice and vary or cancel the condition.*

It is however very important to note that such decisions relating to consent notices must be made in accordance with Section 221(3A) which reads:

> *(3A) Sections 88 to 121 and 127(4) to 132 apply, with all necessary modifications, in relation to an application made or review conducted under subsection (3).*

The court noted in its decision that the current circumstances were different from the situation applicable in 1998 (when the application was for a non-complying activity) and the objectives and policies of the current district plan now enabled such subdivision to be granted consent subject to appropriate criteria.

At the time the Council approves release of the Section 224 certificate for the new subdivision plan, the Council will need to issue a resolution under Section 221 cancelling the original consent notice, for registration concurrent with the deposit of the new plan of subdivision.

RHL.

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Summaries of cases from Thomson Reuter's "Your Environment".

This month we report on four court decisions covering diverse situations associated with subdivision, development and land use activities from around the country;

- The decision on a direct referral to the Environment Court for consent subdivide and develop land at Halswell, Christchurch for residential and commercial activities;
- The decision on an appeal against grant of consent to a non-complying subdivision and land use on rural zoned land at Bendigo, Central Otago;
- An appeal against an abatement notice issued by BOP Regional Council relating to a structure constructed in the coastal marine area at Te Puna, which had apparently been resolved by undertaking of a new survey;
- A decision on costs against Dunedin City Council which had tried to run a test case against property owners for clearing vegetation from their property in Mornington;

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https://www.surveyors.org.nz/Article?Action=View&Article_id=23

CASE NOTES NOVEMBER 2021:

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Woolworths New Zealand Ltd v Christchurch City Council _ [2021] NZEnvC 133

Keywords: resource consent; subdivision; activity non-complying; effect adverse; effect positive; conditions

This matter concerned an application for resource consents lodged with Christchurch City Council ("the council") by Woolworths New Zealand Ltd ("WNZ") on 16 January 2018. The application sought land use and subdivision consents for a residential and commercial mixed-use development of land at 201 Halswell Rd in North Halswell, Christchurch ("the proposal"). It came before the Environment Court in a direct referral process. Key elements of the proposal included: 10 large development lots for comprehensive residential development that were proposed to be further subdivided for residential development for over 250 dwellings, by way of a later application; the creation of two development lots for mixed use and commercial development in the northwest corner of the site; the enhancement and naturalisation of Days Drain extending along most of the northern boundary for a length of approximately 680 m; commercial and community activities with a gross floor area of 8,087 m²; and a two-storey apartment building.

The Court stated that for the purposes of its statutory assessment, the applications were to be bundled and considered as a non-complying activity overall. As such, it was required to consider whether either of the gateway tests in s 104D of the RMA could be met.

The Court considered the actual and potential effects of the proposal. The Court noted a number of positive effects that were agreed to arise from the proposal, including: an increase in housing supply and choice for Christchurch; the introduction of commercial activities to meet the proximate residential catchments to North Halswell, and provide associated positive economic effects in terms of the social and economic wellbeing of the south west-catchment; the introduction of community activities, such as a medical facility, childcare centre, and public open spaces; and the internalisation of Days Drain on the site and naturalisation of a significant section of the network. Many of the actual or potential adverse effects of the proposal were agreed between WNZ and the council to be no more than minor. Outstanding "effects-based" issues as between the council and WNZ related to: the effects associated with the alignment of, and method of providing for a "green corridor", and whether it provided a strong connection to the main street in an adjoining development; and the amenity and activation impact of the absence of buildings facing Road A which would moderate the effects of the car park.

Having considered the relevant issues, the Court made findings that each of the gateway tests in s 104D were met. Accordingly, the Court had a discretion to grant consent in terms of s 104B, having considered all relevant s 104 matters. The Court stated that the proposal was consistent

with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2020; all other higher order instruments were adequately reflected in the district plan; and there was no need for any separate analysis of the proposal against pt 2 matters. The Court stated it was able to, and did account for the positive effects of the proposal it had identified.

The Court stated it had been presented with a comprehensive set of proposed conditions and a set of updated plans included as an appendix to the closing submissions for WNZ and had duly considered them. Having considered all relevant matters, it found that the proposal satisfied all relevant RMA requirements, and the proposal was granted resource consent subject to the conditions attached as Appendix A to the decision. Costs were reserved.

Decision Date 30 September 2021 _ Your Environment 1 October 2021

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Canyon Vineyard Ltd v Central Otago District Council _ [2021] NZEnvC 136

Keywords: resource consent; subdivision; visual impact; activity non-complying

This decision concerned an appeal against a decision of the Central Otago District Council ("the council") granting subdivision and land use consent for land at the south of Bendigo Loop Rd at Bendigo, and owned by Bendigo Station Ltd ("BSL"). BSL's application was opposed by the appellant, Canyon Vineyard Ltd ("CVL"). CVL was the owner of adjoining land. CVL's site contained a restaurant, wine tasting facility, a function centre, and cinema building. CVL sought that land use consent for dwellings on Lots 4, and 8-11 also be declined. After the appeal was filed, further revisions were made to BSL's application.

The Court noted that the site was zoned Rural Resource Area ("RRA") in the Central Otago Operative District Plan ("the plan"). As the requirements of the RRA were not met, the subdivision consent application defaulted to non-complying activity status which was the proposal's overall activity status. As a non-complying activity, the restrictions in s 104D of the RMA applied.

The Court stated the Joint Statement of Facts and Issues stated the issues on appeal to be: (a) the visual impact of Lots 8-11 when viewed from CVL's property and the visual impact of Lot 4 when viewed from the public road and historic schoolhouse premises; (b) whether, in light of those issues, subdivision and land use consents should be granted in relation to Lots 4 and 8-11, and, if so, on what conditions.

The Court accepted evidence that the proposal would have adverse effects on the environment (in this case, visual effects) that were no more than minor thus meeting the first of the s 104D gateway tests. The Court further found that the proposal was not contrary to relevant objectives of the plan in the sense of being repugnant to or antagonistic to them.

The Court noted that since the council's decision was made, amendments made to the proposal had reduced the visual effects of the dwellings proposed for Lots 8- 11 on CVL. The Court held that the consents for BSL's proposal could be granted, albeit for a slightly amended proposal.

The appeal was declined and resource consents were granted to BSL in respect of its amended proposal. BSL and the council were directed to confer and then file and serve a set of draft final conditions by 22 September 2021, together with the relevant plans referred to in those conditions. CVL could file and serve comments, if any, on the draft final conditions by 1 October 2021. Costs were reserved.

Decision Date 5 October 2021 _ Your Environment 6 October 2021

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Jones v Bay of Plenty Regional Council _ [2021] NZEnvC 139

Keywords: abatement notice; coastal marine area

J Jones ("J") appealed an abatement notice issued by Bay of Plenty Regional Council ("the council"). The notice was in relation to a retaining wall built by J on or adjacent to his property at 19 Waipa Rd, Te Puna ("the property"). The council issued the notice on the basis that the wall was an unauthorised seawall structure in the coastal marine area. The appeal sought the removal of the notice on the basis that the retaining wall was within the boundary of the property. Following a series of reporting memoranda and survey work to determine the boundary of the coastal marine area in relation to the property, a joint memorandum was filed on 10 September 2021 seeking an amendment to the notice. The parties advised that following that amendment, the appeal would be discontinued.

The Court noted that the application to amend the abatement notice was not opposed by any party. The parties had agreed by consent to the amendment and had advised that this agreement resolved the appeal in its entirety. In light of this, the Court accordingly made an order amending the notice under s 279(1)(b), resolving the matter by consent. Costs were to lie where they fell.

Decision Date 7 October 2021 _ Your Environment 8 October 2021

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Dunedin City Council v Ross _ [2021] NZEnvC 134

Keywords: costs

This decision on costs followed *Dunedin City Council v Ross* [2020] NZEnvC 212, where the Court declined an application by Dunedin City Council ("the council") for enforcement orders against S and M Ross ("the respondents") concerning a large undeveloped property owned by the respondents at 123 Mornington Rd, Dunedin. The respondents sought indemnity costs against the council, totalling $50,044. This amount represented their legal and expert witness costs. The council opposed the application.

The Court stated that where a council brings an unsuccessful application for enforcement orders costs are more likely to be awarded in favour of the respondent, as the respondent is in a position where it must defend its position. Having failed in its application it was reasonable for the council to expect that it would then have to meet an application for costs.

The council argued that the application for enforcement orders carried a number of the hallmarks of a test case, because the Court was called on to consider and determine how to apply a key rule governing indigenous vegetation clearance within the various urban overlay areas across the district. The Court found, however, that the council officers should have recognised the unworkability of the rule and not run an enforcement proceeding as a test case. Seeking a declaration would have been a more appropriate approach.

The Court found that an award of costs against the council was warranted. The Court found that the council's case was without substance; that the council took a technical and unmeritorious position; and that the council failed to explore the possibility of settlement. The Court found that this was a *Bielby*-type case because an application for enforcement orders should not have been used as a test case. Nevertheless, the Court found the award should be at 50 per cent of the costs claimed because the respondents were not blameless concerning the dispute that erupted, the Court having found on the evidence that the respondents had taken a cavalier attitude to district plan matters at the outset of the proceeding before their lawyers started asking pertinent questions of the council. The respondents were awarded costs of $23,000 against the council.

Decision Date 30 September 2021 _ Your Environment 1 October 2021

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The above brief summaries are extracted from "Alert 24 - Your Environment" published by Thomson Reuters and are reprinted with permission. They are intended to draw attention to decisions that may be of interest to members. Please consult the complete decisions for a full understanding of the subject matter.

Should you wish to obtain a copy of the decision please phone Thomson Reuters Customer Care on 0800 10 60 60 or by email to judgments@thomsonreuters.co.nz.

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This month's cases were selected by Roger Low, rlow@lowcom.co.nz, and Hazim Ali, hazim.ali@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

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Amendments to LINZ fees

Cadastral Survey (Fees) Amendment Regulations 2021 (LI 2021/276)

These regulations, which come into force on 01/02/2022, amend the *Cadastral Survey (Fees) Regulations 2003*.

These regulations—

- increase survey fees by 57% on average:

- remove the fee for a cadastral survey dataset that is resubmitted after being requisitioned:
- include an amendment that recognises that the fees specified in the regulations include components of both operational processing costs and costs of provision and maintenance of associated facilities, including electronic facilities:
- link the fees for boundary reinstatements directly to the *Cadastral Survey Rules 2021*:
- include a transitional and savings provision to continue the pre-01/02/2022 fee payable for a cadastral survey dataset that places a boundary mark and does not create a parcel until 25/02/2022.

Land Transfer Amendment Regulations 2021 (LI 2021/275)

These regulations, which come into force on 01/02/2022, amend the *Land Transfer Regulations 2018*.

These regulations—

- increase the electronic search fee from $5 to $6 and the manual search fee from $15 to $25:
- increase title fees by 13% on average:
- remove some redundant fees, merge fees for receiving and registering instruments, and update the description of other fees:
- include an amendment that recognises that the fees and charges specified in the regulations include components of both operational processing costs and costs of provision and maintenance of associated facilities, including electronic facilities.

Land Information New Zealand (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulations 2021 (LI 2021/274)

These regulations amend the *Land Information New Zealand (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2003*. Except for the changes in regulation 5(1) and (2), these regulations come into force on 01/02/2022. Those other changes (which relate to the removal of licence fees and a change to wording of the item relating to the digital certificate fee) come into force on 01/11/2021.

These regulations—

- increase the electronic search fee from $5 to $6 and the manual search fee from $15 to $25:
- increase the fee for lodging plans that are not cadastral survey datasets from $223 to $260:
- remove licence fees:
- include an amendment that recognises that the fees specified in the regulations include components of both operational processing costs and costs of provision and maintenance of associated facilities, including electronic facilities.

New legislation to help owners of Maori freehold land

Gisborne Herald reports that new legislation, the Local Government (Rating of Whenua Maori) Amendment Act 2021, looks set to help owners of Maori freehold land use, develop and live on their whenua. Key changes in the Act are —

1. Provides chief executives with the power to remove rate arrears if satisfied that the rates are uncollectable or if a previous owner is deceased.

2. Makes most unused Maori freehold land non-rateable.

3. Provides a statutory rates remission process for Maori land under development.

4. Allows multiple Maori land blocks from a parent block to be treated as one for rating purposes if they are used jointly as a single unit.

5. Allows councils to create separate rating areas on request so individual houses on Maori freehold land can be rated separately.

Read the full story here.

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Other News Items for November 2021

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National Housing statement – 2021

Labour, National announce sweeping housing density law, three-storey homes without consent

Stuff report, 19th October 2021, see the following links:

https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/300433304/labour-national-announce-sweeping-housing-density-law-threestorey-homes-without-consent

https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2021/0083/latest/whole.html?search=ts_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_resource+management_resel_25_y&p=1#LMS566131

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Supreme Court dismisses seabed mining company's appeal

Stuff reports that the Supreme Court has unanimously rejected an appeal by Trans-Tasman Resources, which could have allowed for a mining operation off the South Taranaki coast. The decision on whether mining can go ahead will now be sent back to the Environmental Protection Authority's decision-making committee. Read the full story here.

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Timaru DC votes to leave Local Government New Zealand over water reform concerns

Stuff reports Timaru District councillors have voted unanimously to end the council's membership from Local Government New Zealand, as they felt the organisation had not done enough to advocate for councils concerned about the Government's Three Waters reform. Read the full story here.

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Record high for consents for houses

Stuff reports that Stats NZ says consents were issued for 4490 homes in August, up from the previous record of 4310, which was achieved in June. Townhouses are dominating the growth with 1869 townhouses approved in August. Read the full story here.

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Ex-Tasman DC staff and mayor to be interviewed over dam project

Stuff reports former Tasman District Council chief executive Lindsay McKenzie and former mayor Richard Kempthorne are among 11 people to be interviewed as part of an independent investigation into the quality of advice and background information provided to the council up to and including the final decision in 2018 to proceed with the controversial Waimea dam project. Read the full story here.

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Proposal for Southland ratepayers to pay $8k for dust fix

Stuff reports Southland District Council has proposed a subsidy programme where a ratepayer who wants a 150-metre semi-permanent road seal will pay at least $8000, for a seal which costs about $15,000 to $17,000 in total. New rules in the Environment Southland Water and Land Plan mean people cannot use to oil to keep dust from gravel roads at bay. Read the full story here.

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Landlords angry at tax loophole for social housing

Stuff reports that a surprise exemption from interest deductibility rules for landlords with properties used for social housing has angered some investors who claim it will tip the scales against working families. Property investor Nick Gentle said this looked like a “colossal bribe” from the government to get investors to lease their properties for social housing. “My tax bill is projected to increase by $50,000 under the new rules, so does this mean I can bypass that if I don’t renew the agreements of the students who live in the properties and hand the keys over to Link People instead?” Read the full story here.
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Tribunal directs land be returned, as 'remedy for prejudices suffered'

Gisborne Herald reports that 7000 hectares of forest land are to be returned to Māori ownership in redress for "devastating" treaty breaches by the Crown, nearly 30 years after a claim for the land was first lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal. The tribunal's interim recommendation is for the Crown to return to Māori ownership those parts of the Mangatū Crown forest land which lie in the north of the Tūranganui a Kiwa district, together with monetary compensation. Read the full story here.

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Consent approved for $200m Cromwell development

Otago Daily Times reports that a $200 million Cromwell housing and commercial development will break new ground and provide at least 300 new houses. Stage two of Wooing Tree Estate has been approved under the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act, with the decision formalised by the Environmental Protection Agency mid-week. The 25ha development is on the site of former vineyard and its total value would be more than $200 million, once the subdivision, dwellings and retail/hospitality buildings were complete. Read the full story here.

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$14.6 m redevelopment of Nelson Slipway

Stuff reports that Nelson Slipway is due to be renovated in a $14.6 million project, with plans for a new travel lift, hardstand area, and waste treatment facility to be built in 2022. Funding for the project would come from Port Nelson and the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Read the full story here.

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'Whānau have not forgotten': Māori landowners fight racist legacy

Stuff reports that just 12 square kilometres remains of Māori land under customary title - prior to European settlement all land was customary title. In total, just over 1.4 million hectares or roughly 5 per cent of New Zealand's total land area remains Māori land. An average Māori land block with a trust is 1 square kilometre (100 hectares) and has 213 beneficial owners, according to the Māori Land Court - having multiple owners can be a challenge when it comes to decision-making, and can dilute the economic return. Read the full story here.

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Six months after eviction day, one man remains in Matatā's red zone

Stuff reports that six months on from eviction day, one man still refuses to budge from Matatā's red zone. Earlier this year the prolonged fight between residents and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council ended, with the council's controversial managed retreat process coming out the victor, forcing residents out of the path of a potential debris flow. A nationally unprecedented rule change under the Resource Management Act snuffed out the existing land use rights of anyone remaining, making them squatters on their own land. Greg Fahey remains the sole remaining resident, having refused the buyout offer. Read the full story here.

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Kāinga Ora awards first contract to build prefab transitional homes

Stuff reports that Builtsmart has been given the first contract in Kāinga Ora's plan to build more state and transitional houses using off-site manufacture. The company will build 51 three and four-bedroom homes at its facility in Huntly, which will be transported by trucks to new sites. Read the full story here.

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A new one-stop hub for developers and homeowners

Stuff reports that Harcourts JK Realty Group have created a one-stop hub designed to meet the needs of a range of developers in different stages, while supporting homeowners who are interested in being matched with developers for their property sale. Development Projects Ltd was seen as needed by owner/operator David Findlay as the property market has so drastically changed over recent years. "We have never seen so many development properties and adjoining neighbours' properties sell together. Along with the desperate shortage of housing
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stock, the perfect storm has been created whereby developers are actively seeking and purchasing larger sites with confidence", Findlay says. Read the full story here.

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Landlord ordered to pay compensation after son used chainsaw and floodlight to 'intimidate' tenant

Stuff reports that a Hawkes Bay landlord has been ordered to pay her tenant compensation following significant intimidation by the landlord's son. The son lived in a property in front of the unit lived in by the tenant. The tenant told the Tenancy Tribunal that he would turn spotlights on her windows, rev motorcycles, and use chainsaws late at night to intimidate her. The tribunal ordered compensation on the basis the landlord had failed to prevent her son interfering with the tenant's right to peace and quiet. Read the full story here.

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Funding for West Coast conservation projects

Stuff reports that Conservation Minister Kiri Allan has announced $9 million in funding for four projects including whitebait habitat restoration and weed eradication in Westland. The funding will provide for 45 new jobs and help sustain 100 more. Read the full story here.

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Christchurch's cardboard cathedral to be permanent

Stuff reports that Christchurch's cardboard cathedral has become a permanent fixture for the city after the Anglican church was granted consent to keep the building. The Transitional Cathedral was built under emergency legislation as a temporary replacement for the earthquake-wrecked Christ Church Cathedral. Read the full story here.

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Former tobacco factory stubbed out, as new development gets a step closer

Stuff reports that demolition of Petone's century-old Imperial Tobacco factory is almost complete. The last parts of the industrial building were knocked down on Saturday, leaving a final building frame next to mounds of rubble. The 2.25 hectare site was bought by developers Richard Burrell and Craig Stewart, who are splitting the site between a housing development and a business park. Developer Stewart said the demolition was complex because of the scale. He is building 95 townhouses across about 60 per cent of the site, while Burrell is marketing the 85-unit business park with various sizes of warehouse, office and retail options. Read the full story here.

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Trustees named to govern Around the Mountains Cycle Trail

Otago Daily Times reports that inaugural trustees have been appointed to govern the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail. "They include legal and governance experience, a local farmer whose property boundary is the cycle trail and a cycle trail operator who provides bike hire, transport and bike tours," says trail manager Susan Mackenzie. Under the trust structure the council retains ownership of the asset and all associated intellectual property, together with responsibility for asset management and maintenance. Read the full story here.

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Leaking windows in Kāinga Ora house cause distress

Stuff reports that Karol and Lacey Dell's Kāinga Ora home in Greymouth has issues with leaking when it rains and the couple fear they'll end up sick if they can't move from their cold and damp home. Kāinga Ora acknowledges the windows leak "a small amount of water" but says the house is partly insulated and is scheduled to be upgraded by the end of the year. A social worker wrote to Kāinga Ora saying there had been issues with the condition of the house since the Dells moved in. Read the full story here.

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Council works with developer on new $1 million playground

Stuff reports that Matamata-Piako District Council is working with a developer on a $1 million destination playground at Lockerbie Estate in Morrinsville. When complete, the Lockerbie Estate development will have 800 homes. Read the full story here.
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Kāinga Ora plans to build thousands of prefabricated homes

Stuff reports that Kāinga Ora to build thousands of prefabricated homes for transitional housing. A goal of the project was to boost New Zealand's domestic off-site manufactured capacity and capability, but many will be constructed abroad and shipped over as ready-built, weathertight one and two-bedroom homes. Read the full story here.

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Unknown private covenant causes problems with pohutukawa

Northern Advocate reports that the landowner at the centre of a storm over a partly cut down pōhutukawa at Ahipara says he wouldn't have bought the property in the first place if he had known its significance. Dr Cecil Williams bought the property with the intention of building a house on it. Half of a very old pohutukawa was dying and falling sideways so Williams cut that half out, to save the rest of the tree and make room for a home. He had confirmed, both via phone and in writing, that the tree was not on the council's list of notable trees. However, it transpired that it was the subject of a private covenant. Read the full story here.

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Government launches shared home ownership scheme

Stuff reports that the Government is launching a “shared ownership” scheme to help lower income families into homes. The First Home Partner scheme would be run by Kāinga Ora. Through the scheme Kāinga Ora would take an equity share in a property to assist first home buyers who could service a mortgage, but need help raising their deposit. “Decades of under-investment in housing and infrastructure has pushed homeownership out of reach for too many families,” Housing Minister Megan Woods said. Read the full story here.

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Homestead at heart of squatter squabble to be made available for community use

Stuff reports that an historic homestead, on a 29-hectare reserve near Halcombe in Manawatū, which has been the focus of a squatter’s legal challenge, is to be made availablefor community groups and schools to property had been the subject of a legal dispute since squatters occupied it in July, claiming it had been abandoned by the council. The occupiers cited an archaic law in a bid for the land, but legal experts said the claim had no merit in New Zealand law. Read the full story here.

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Mapping of West Coast SNAs to go ahead despite objections

Radio NZ reports that professional planners working on the combined plan have been warning for months that by law the councils cannot avoid identifying and protecting significant natural areas (SNAs). But the planners sought a legal opinion after the committee previously refused to accept research it had commissioned, when a desktop study showed 25 percent of private land in the region would be classed as SNA. Most of the SNAs are areas of remnant native podocarp forest on lowland farms. The opinion from prominent law firm Wynn Williams was unequivocal: the new plan must include SNAs, and they must be identified using the criteria set out in the West Coast's own regional policy statement. Read the full story here.

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Proposed South Auckland development aims to minimise car use

Stuff reports that developers wish to build "Sunfield", a new suburb for South Auckland close to Papakura – which minimises car use. The 5000 homes in the proposed development would not have driveways or garages. Read the full story here.

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Leader appointed for Dunedin hospital fast-track panel

The Otago Daily Times reports that former Environment Court head judge Laurie Newhook will head an independent panel appointed to decide if the new Dunedin Hospital will receive fast-track consent. The $1.47 billion hospital project has been given approval to apply for an accelerated planning process. Read the full story here.

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Auckland Council still faces $200 m bill for leaky buildings

The New Zealand Herald reports that Auckland Council still faces $200 million of leaky and defective building claims. This number covers active cases which are still going through the resolution process. Read the full story here.

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Interest in Southern Green Hydrogen project

The *Otago Daily Times* reports that following Meridian Energy and Contact Energy calling for registrations of interest to become involved in the Southern Green Hydrogen project, they have received 80 registrations of interest. The majority were from international parties in Asia, Europe and Australia. Read the full story here.

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Dunedin trials electric bus

Stuff reports that a month-long trial of the Enviroline 35-seater electric bus, which is made in New Zealand by Global Bus Ventures, has begun in Dunedin. Otago Regional Council will collect feedback from passengers during the trial. Read the full story here.

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