Newslink Case-notes for November 2023 prepared 23 October 2023.

~~~~~~

Legal Case-notes November 2023

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>

~~~~~~

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

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

- A High Court challenge by Auckland Council to a decision of an expert panel (convened under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020, which had granted consent to establishment of a retirement village on future urban zoned land at Riverhead, Auckland;
- Two decisions of the Environment Court relating to prospects for subdivision and development in the Lake Hayes area under proposed zoning changes by QLDC;
- The conclusion of an appeal against consent granted by QLDC to a subdivision of land near Lake Hayes;
- A further development on a case involving enforcement orders following demolition of a fence and excavation at the boundary between two properties at New Lynn, Auckland;
- A challenging matter arising from the issue of a certificate of compliance for a non-complying quarrying activity on a site near Lake Arapuni on the Waikato River.

~~~~~~

Log-in and download these summaries, earlier case summaries and other news items at: https://www.surveyors.org.nz/Article?Action=View&Article_id=23

CASE NOTES NOVEMBER 2023:

~~~~~~

Auckland Council v Matvin Group Ltd - [2023] NZHC 2481

***Keywords**: High Court; zoning; activity non complying; objectives and policies; retirement housing; rural*

This appeal challenged whether consent ought to be granted for a retirement village in the Future Urban Zone ("FUZ") of the Auckland Unitary Plan ("AUP") before the site had been rezoned for urban development. In March 2023, an expert panel ("the Panel") convened under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 ("FTA") had granted land use and subdivision consents to Matvin Group Ltd ("Matvin"), subject to conditions, for the proposed retirement village at Riverhead, Auckland. The 10 ha site would be developed with 422 residential units, 88 care beds and associated facilities, and a separate childcare facility and café. The site was presently zoned FUZ and used for growing strawberries. Auckland Council ("the council") now appealed the Panel's decision. This appeal was brought under sch 6, cl 44 of the FTA, which enabled appeals on questions of law only. The council was concerned that this non-complying activity was contrary to the objectives and policies of the AUP as they related to the FUZ. It essentially argued that this proposal was premature as the site had not yet been rezoned for urban development. It raised five specific questions of law.

The first question was whether the Panel erred in finding that the overall purpose of the FUZ was to preclude activities that may compromise future urban development. In support of the Panel's decision, Matvin essentially argued that activities that did not compromise future urban development could include non-rural activities. However, the Court agreed that the Panel had

erred. The Court agreed with the Environment Court's statements in *Albert Road Investments Ltd v Auckland Council* [2018] NZEnvC 102 that the FUZ allowed some tolerance for land development. However, objective H18.2(1) of the AUP allowed development in the FUZ *to achieve the objectives of the Rural - Rural Production Zone* until it had been rezoned. Non-rural development of FUZ land was not envisaged. The Court added that the zone description for the FUZ, which it saw as a synthesis of the relevant objectives and policies, was quite clear in stating that "[l]and may be used for a range of general rural activities but cannot be used for urban activities until the site is re-zoned for urban purposes". Other policies supported this position.

Following on from this finding, the Court had little difficulty in further finding that the Panel had also erred in finding that the proposal was not contrary to the objectives and policies of the AUP under s 104D(1)(b)(i) of the RMA 1991. It was common ground between the parties that the construction and operation of the facility would have moderate adverse effects and that the proposal was, therefore, unable to satisfy the first "minor effects" limb of the gateway test for non-complying activities in s 104D(1)(a). The Court therefore concluded that the large-scale proposal in this case both had more than a minor effect on the environment and was contrary to the objectives and policies of the FUZ.

The remaining errors of law alleged by the council were, however, answered in the negative. The third question was whether the Panel erred in finding that certain regional policy statement ("RPS") policies of "enabling" rezoning of FUZ land for urbanisation and "enabling" rural uses of FUZ land until it was rezoned were not offended by the proposal. The Court said these RPS policies were directed primarily at the council for its implementation, not landowners like Matvin. Matvin's proposal did not hinder these processes, so the Panel had not erred. The fourth question was whether the Panel erred by taking into account irrelevant matters in finding that granting consent would not give rise to precedent and plan integrity issues. This centred around the Panel's decision that this non-complying activity was distinguishable from the "generality of cases". The Court was not persuaded that the Panel had erred in any material way. It was open to the Panel to consider that the application was outside the generality of cases based on the application, reports and other information before it. Finally, the Court did not agree that the Panel erred by failing to take into account a relevant consideration, being whether the proposal was consistent with the purpose of the FTA of promoting employment urgently (in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic). The Panel had had information before it regarding the economic and employment benefits of the proposal. The Court observed that the FTA did not define the word "urgently". Further, the word "urgently" related to the verb "promote", not to the verb "provide". The Court considered that this proposal, which entailed an eight-year construction period, would urgently *promote* employment and would, in due course, provide employment. It also agreed that the fast-track consenting process itself urgently promoted employment.

As the Panel had made two material errors, the appeal was allowed. The Panel's decision was quashed and the application for consent was referred back to the Panel for reconsideration. The council was entitled to costs.

Decision date 6 September 2023 – Your Environment 21 September 2023

~~~~~~

Feeley v Queenstown Lakes District Council - [2023] NZEnvC 189

***Keywords**: district plan proposed; zoning; rural residential; subdivision; amenity values; landscape protection*

This appeal involved consideration of the most appropriate zoning outcome for the appellants' property under the proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan ("PDP"). The appellants owned 6.2 ha of land on the outskirts of Arrowtown, at the junction of Arrowtown-Lake Hayes and McDonnell Roads. In both the notified and decisions versions of the PDP, the site was to be included in the new Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone ("WBRAZ"). It was included within Landscape Character Unit ("LCU") number 23, and was ascribed a "high" capacity to absorb additional development (compared to "moderate" for the balance of LCU 23). In their appeal, the appellants now sought as amended relief Lifestyle Precinct ("Precinct") sub-zoning with some bespoke provisions, including an exemption from the usual 75m setback rule for the first 250 m of the McDonnell Road frontage from the junction. The Precinct sub-zone within the WBRAZ entailed a more permissive regime for rural lifestyle development. While Queenstown Lakes District Council ("the council") now supported this amended relief, several s 274 parties representing residents and the community were in
~~~~~~

opposition. They raised concerns about density, urban sprawl, degradation of landscape, and loss of views and outlook.

The key PDP policies in this matter included those to ensure that development maintained or enhanced the landscape character and visual amenity values of LCUs, as well as maintaining or enhancing those values in the WBRAZ, including the Precinct. The Court made preliminary observations during the proceedings, which it then finally confirmed in its decision, that the relief sought, with some refinements, was the most appropriate zoning option. The Court agreed with the landscape and planning experts for the council and appellants, who supported this option as being more appropriate than the status quo option of WBRAZ zoning. The site had capacity to accommodate development to a greater extent than was anticipated for the WBRAZ generally and similar to what was anticipated for the Precinct sub-zone.

Regarding the s 274 parties, the Court acknowledged that some would experience further loss, rather than maintenance or enhancement, of their amenity values and the qualities of the environment. However, these also had to be considered "from a broader community perspective of what the PDP seeks to achieve". The Court noted that community aspirations were reflected in the PDP's objectives and policies, which were now settled and beyond dispute. The Court found that the expectations of some residents as to the development potential for the site did not reflect the intentions of the PDP.

In relation to the number of dwellings, the Court was satisfied that the evidence showed that the site had capacity for six dwellings in total (including two existing dwellings). However, the evidence was not so precise to suggest this must be a rigid limit. Anything above six dwelling sites would need to be carefully tested against the PDP's objectives and policies, and the Court therefore agreed that exceedance of six dwelling sites should be a non-complying activity.

Regarding setback treatment along McDonnell Road, the Court noted that the minimum setback was usually 75 m in the Precinct (and 20 m in the WBRAZ). The restricted discretionary activity classification signalled that the PDP anticipated that it would sometimes be acceptable to allow for reduced setbacks. The landscape experts agreed that a concession could be made here, and the Court agreed that a "staggered" setback of between 20 and 50 m (requiring some building platforms to be closer to the road than others) would help maintain amenity values for local residents and help to differentiate the site from the more urban development on the Arrowtown side of the road. The 75 m setback would apply beyond the 250 m stretch of road, which had advantages for an attractive rock outcrop further along the road. These findings also favoured a choice of Precinct over WBRAZ zoning because the 20 m setback rule in the WBRAZ was not well suited to this location.

The Court agreed with a planning expert that the description of LCU 23 should be amended to more accurately reflect the values that needed to be maintained or enhanced. This included amendments to recognise the matter of ensuring that "residential development is constrained within defensible boundaries and does not sprawl westwards" and of "reinforcing a robust and defensible edge to Arrowtown". The Court also agreed that the capacity rating for the site should be changed from "high" to "moderate-high". The appeal was allowed in part. The council was directed to prepare updated provisions for the Court's approval. Provisionally, costs were to lie where they fell.

View the case on New Westlaw

Decision date 6 September 2023 – Your Environment 25 September 2023

~~~~~~

Donaldson v Queenstown Lakes District Council - [2023] NZEnvC 190

***Keywords**: district plan proposed; zoning; rural residential; subdivision; amenity values; landscape protection*

This appeal involved consideration of the most appropriate zoning outcome for the appellant's property under the proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan ("PDP"). The appellant, R Donaldson ("D"), owned 21.6 ha of rural land on an elevated plateau of the Wharehuanui Hills. In the notified
~~~~~~

version of the PDP, the site was to be included in the Lifestyle Precinct ("Precinct") sub-zone of the new Wakatipu Basin Rural Amenity Zone ("WBRAZ"). It was included within Landscape Character Unit ("LCU") number 6, and was ascribed a "high" capacity to absorb additional development. In the decisions version, the site was removed from the Precinct sub-zone and zoned simply as WBRAZ, which entailed a less permissive regime for rural lifestyle development. The capability rating for absorbing development for a portion of LCU 6 that included the site was also revised to "low". In his appeal, D's requested relief was twofold; reversion to Precinct sub-zoning but with bespoke provisions (including a structure plan for subdivision and development of the site); and a return to a "high" rating for absorbing development for this part of LCU 6. Several s 274 parties preferred that the site maintain WBRAZ zoning and that the development absorption rating be left as "low".

The key PDP policies in this matter included those to ensure that development maintained or enhanced the landscape character and visual amenity values of LCUs, as well as maintaining or enhancing those values in the WBRAZ, including the Precinct. In evaluating zoning options, the issues were therefore primarily as to landscape and planning, in particular as to what landscape capability the site had to absorb additional development. Other relevant matters included amenity values, qualities of the environment for neighbouring properties, and potential consequences for water quality and ecology, especially in the Lake Hayes catchment. The Court found that the "low" capacity rating for the site was not reasonable or accurate. The Court instead ascribed a "moderate" rating. It found that a structure plan approach could assist to maintain visual amenity values and landscape character by making intelligent use of the site's undulations and contours. It agreed that there was a risk of "development creep" from the nearby Millbrook Resort village-type residential area, which was a limiting factor. As it was important to ensure clear visual separation between the site and Millbrook from distant public viewpoints so as to maintain the landscape character of LCU 6, there needed to be further refinement in framing policies and intentions in support of a restricted discretionary/non-complying activity regime for subdivision.

The Court therefore determined that neither the originally notified Precinct zoning nor the decisions version WBRAZ zoning was appropriate. During the proceedings, the Court reached a provisional view that D's relief option (Precinct zoning with modification, notably including the structure plan) was most appropriate, but that it required refinement. Further expert conferencing was undertaken and a package of provisions was recommended by the planners. These recommendations were then supported by D and Queenstown Lakes District Council ("the council") but challenged by some s 274 parties.

In finally determining that modified Precinct zoning was most appropriate, the Court addressed the concerns of some s 274 parties that the revised structure plan did not achieve a predominantly rural outlook from important viewing points. The Court acknowledged that there would be some loss of amenity values currently enjoyed by some residents. However, a zoning option was not inappropriate if it failed to maintain all amenity values. Rather, it was "a more strategic level focus" that was to be applied, by reference to what was the most appropriate outcome for achieving the PDP's objectives and intentions. While the status quo option (WBRAZ zoning) would maintain some amenity values for some residents to a greater extent, that was only one factor and not a dominant one. The Court also had to consider community-scale amenity values. Further, the changes proposed were not out of keeping with what a resident of Millbrook Resort could realistically expect; it was not realistic to bank on D's site remaining unchanged as a semi-rural vista. Change was anticipated in the WBRAZ, bearing in mind the zone purpose statement's acknowledgement of "... while providing for rural living and other activities". The Court was also satisfied that the structure plan approach offered more assurance than WBRAZ zoning that the water quality outcomes envisaged by relevant PDP objectives and policies would be achieved.

Regarding subdivision, the Court found that this should be restricted discretionary (rather than controlled) and non-complying, given the sensitivities involved. While it was confident that sensitive design could allow for up to 15 houses under the proposed structure plan, the council needed capacity to ensure that intended outcomes were delivered through consenting processes. The Court also made several refinements to the bespoke provisions for the structure plan area.
The appeal was allowed in part. The council was directed to prepare updated provisions to give effect to the Court's findings. Costs were reserved but applications were not encouraged.

Decision date 6 September 2023 – Your Environment 26 September 2023

View the case on New Westlaw

~~~~~~

Brial v Queenstown Lakes District Council - [2023] NZEnvC 193

Keywords: resource consent; subdivision; conditions

This matter related to earlier decisions of the Court concerning an appeal against the granting of consent for a two-lot subdivision in the Wakatipu Basin. The appeal had been declined, except insofar as necessary to modify consent conditions as proposed by the applicants (see *Brial v Queenstown Lakes District Council* [2023] NZEnvC 57). The parties had now provided the final version of the consent with updated conditions. The Court was satisfied that conditions were appropriate and reflected the amendments confirmed by the Court's preceding decisions. Consent was granted subject to the amended conditions.

Decision date 8 September 2023 – Your Environment 27 September 2023

(See previous report in Newslink June 2023.)

~~~~~~

Wason v Two Kooner Properties Ltd [2023] NZEnvC 194

Keywords: enforcement order; fencing; bond

This decision recorded the Court's reasons for making enforcement orders against Two Kooner Properties Ltd ("TKP") in July 2023 (see *Wason v Two Kooner Properties Ltd* [2023] NZEnvC 149). TKP was completing a six-lot land development that shared a common boundary with land owned by A Wason and G Hall ("the applicants"). The applicants had applied for orders seeking that TKP be required to address adverse effects arising from TKP's failure to undertake earthworks along that boundary in accordance with its resource consent. TKP acknowledged the failure and a joint witness statement of the parties' respective experts agreed that this failure was likely to have caused damage to the applicants' property. The experts agreed that the only practical way to prevent further damage was to construct a bored cast in-situ wall. TKP agreed to complete the works and pay the costs of the applicants' civil engineer. On that basis, the Court accepted that the enforcement orders requiring installation of the wall were reasonable to make. However, two issues remained in dispute.

The first matter was whether a bond of $75,000 should be required from TKP in order to secure performance. The Court agreed with the applicants that this was appropriate because TKP's project was nearing completion and there was a real prospect TKP could be wound up, leaving the applicants without an effective remedy against TKP. This development was the sole property owned by TKP. The applicants had also expressed concern about TKP's willingness to comply with the orders. TKP submitted that it did not have financial capacity to pay the bond and was having difficulty obtaining finance, but the Court noted that there was no evidence before the Court to support that claim. The Court also noted a previous decision of the Court that the constrained financial position of a party was not relevant to the reasonableness of requiring a performance bond. Regarding the amount of the bond, the engineer's costs estimate of $75,000 had also recorded that escalating costs of labour and materials meant there was a risk this estimate could be exceeded. However, the applicants acknowledged that an uplift would raise fairness issues and were content for the bond to be $75,000. The second unresolved matter concerned costs sought by the applicants under both s 314(1)(d) and s 285 of the RMA 1991. However, the Court would address those costs issues in a further decision. The Court made the enforcement orders, including the requirement for a $75,000 bond. Costs were reserved.

Decision date **–** 8 September 2023 – Your Environment 2 October 2023

(See previous report in Newslink case-notes October 2023.)

~~~~~~

Raukawa Charitable Trust v South Waikato District Council - [2023] NZHC 2534

Keywords: High Court; judicial review; certificate of compliance; existing use; interpretation

This application for judicial review examined whether the 1999 issue of a certificate of compliance was lawfully issued by South Waikato District Council ("the council"). The certificate was issued in respect of quarrying activities that had taken place at a site since mid-last century. The district plan did not permit the activity and there was no resource consent allowing it. Section 139A of the RMA 1991, which currently allows consent authorities to issue existing use certificates, had not yet been
~~~~~~

enacted at the time of issue of the certificate in 1999. The certificate was issued under s 139 as it then stood, which provided that "[w]here a plan describes any activity as a permitted activity, or the activity could be lawfully carried out without a resource consent", the consent authority could issue a certificate "that a particular proposal or activity complies with the plan". Raukawa Charitable Trust, as authority for Raukawa iwi, now sought judicial review of the council's 1999 decision.

The Court said it appeared that a practice had developed among councils by which pre-existing lawful uses of land contravening subsequent district plan rules were granted certificates of compliance under s 139. In *Duncan v Dunedin City Council* (2004) 10 ELRNZ 315, this Court had observed that s 139 could not be relied upon to issue a certificate for an existing use (which then led to the enactment of s 139A in 2005). In these proceedings, the contractor and quarry operator argued that Duncan had been wrongly decided. However, the Court disagreed. The Court did not read s 139 as referring to "any" use of land that could lawfully be carried out without a resource consent. Rather, s 139 had referred only to activities "described in a plan". Its reference to "or the activity could be lawfully carried out without a resource consent" did not extend to existing uses under s 10; it appeared to be superfluous, but guarded against the possibility that compliance with a rule in a plan could be achieved without resource consent in respect of something other than permitted activities. The Court concluded that the council's issue of the certificate had been unlawful.

Regarding relief, the contractor and quarry operator argued that the certificate should not be set aside as they had relied on it since 1999 to obtain insurance, secure loans and provide business assurance. However, the Court followed the Court of Appeal's statements in *Vipassana Foundation Charitable Trust Board v Auckland Council* [2019] NZCA 100 to find that relief should be granted unless there were "extremely strong reasons" to decline it. Here, the council's issue of the certificate was not done either on readily apparent grounds or with the great care required of a council in its role as certifier. Since 2005, it had also been open to the contractor and quarry owner to seek an existing use certificate under s 139A. Ultimately, any immunity from challenge to the quarrying operations obtained from the certificate could only be "as good as the existing use right on which they [relied]". Therefore, any uncertainty in the right's application to present operations did not offer "extremely strong reasons" to refuse relief. If the certificate conferred something that the existing use right did not, maintaining the certificate would arguably give the holder an improper advantage. Conversely, even without the certificate, the holder would continue to have the benefit of their existing use right. The certificate of compliance was set aside. The Court's preliminary view was that costs should lie where they fell.

Decision date 11 September 2023 - Your Environment 28 September 2023

~~~~~~

~~~~~~

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

~~~~~~
~~~~~~

OTHER NEWS ITEMS

~~~~~~

Beehive: North Island Regions to receive further flood resilience funding boost

The Government has approved new funding to boost resilience and greatly reduce the risk of major flood damage across Waikato, Thames-Coromandel, Manawatu-Whanganui, and Wairarapa.

The $11.2 million from the $100m funding announced as part of Budget 2023 will go towards practical flood protection infrastructure like stop banks as well as other local measures that can protect communities from flooding.

"I've seen first hand the damage that was caused to these regions, and in my own electorate of Wairarapa. The communities and local councils worked incredibly hard to get back on their feet, but we need to help councils prepare for future risks with locally led solutions," Kieran McAnulty said.

Funding will go towards projects such as early warning systems and resilient communications which are important tools for protecting communities from flood risk.

Please click on the link for full statement Media release

~~~~~~

Beehive: Clean Car Discount driving electrified vehicle uptake

Latest data confirms that the Clean Car Discount is driving a big increase in electrified vehicle uptake and is making a real contribution to our climate goals, Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said today.

"In September we passed the 150,000 milestone, with 156,000 rebates paid to EV and hybrid customers since July 2021, when the scheme started.

"Electrified vehicles now make up more than half of all new vehicles and used imports registered in New Zealand. The upsurge has been kick-started by the Clean Car Discount, and the climate benefits are all too clear: average emissions from newly-registered vehicles have dropped by nearly 33 per cent since July 2021.

Please click on the link for full statement Media release

~~~~~~

EU will do 'as much as possible' to drive out fossil fuels, climate chief says

MADRID, Oct 9 (Reuters) - The European Union will do all it can to halt fossil fuel use as part of its "ambitious" position at the upcoming COP28 climate summit despite some differences among EU countries, the bloc's new climate chief Wopke Hoekstra said on Monday.

"Our ambition is indeed to do as much as possible, also in terms of driving out fossil fuels," Hoekstra told journalists after a meeting with Spain's acting Energy Minister Teresa Ribera.

The European Union's own green agenda is facing growing political resistance from governments and lawmakers concerned about the cost of the proposals for voters.

European Parliament elections will be held next year as citizens throughout the bloc are facing cost of living pressures.

"Our goal will be one of ambition for the COP, from every single aspect: mitigation, adaptation, renewables," Hoekstra said, even though "if you zoom out and look at the 27 member states, you might see differences."

Hoekstra declined to give details on the EU negotiating mandate for the COP28.

"In our view there is no alternative to driving out fossil fuel asap," he said. "The saying is that it takes two to tango. In this case, it takes almost 200."

Spain, which holds the European Union's rotating presidency, has been pushing for an international coalition at the upcoming summit to back the 2015 Paris deal's target to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Asked about his pledge to push for the EU to slash net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% by 2040, Hoekstra said the target is "a stretch, but at the same time it is doable."
~~~~~~

"A clear target for 2040 also gives businesses and people predictability," he added.

~~~~~~

Wellington City Council looks to reduce town hall costs

Radio New Zealand reports that in a bid to offset a multimillion-dollar blowout to redevelop Wellington's Town Hall, Wellington City Council is considering carrying out the project along with the redevelopment of a neighbouring building, the Municipal Office Building.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

Environment commissioner writes to farming groups over methane emissions claims

Radio New Zealand reports that the environment commissioner, Simon Upton, has written to three farming groups, accusing them of wrongly claiming they had new science on methane emissions. Two of the groups have responded, saying they think there might have been a misunderstanding.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

Significant Natural Areas identified in Mid Canterbury

The New Zealand Herald reports that five landowners have already been contacted by Ashburton District Council as Significant Natural Areas (SNA) are identified in Mid Canterbury. The council started a survey earlier this year of existing areas of significant nature conservation value that could be deemed SNA.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

Wellington fire highlights problems with abandoned heritage buildings

1News reports that Historic Places Wellington is calling for action on abandoned buildings following the recent fire at Toomath's building in central Wellington. The protected heritage building, which had been unoccupied for years, had been the subject of a legal battle between the owner and Wellington City Council concerning its strengthening and restoration. Historic Places Wellington said the fire was an avoidable situation and described such abandoned buildings as a "handbrake" on development. Mayor Tory Whanau says she would like to see councils have "more levers to pull" to achieve progress on vacant heritage buildings, suggesting higher tax rates for their owners and fast-tracked consenting processes.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

Marine reserves announcement upsets recreational fishers

Stuff reports that some recreational fishers say they are outraged by six new marine reserves off the South Island's southeast coast, claiming a lack of consultation and improper timing.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

MBIE: EV charging strategy released

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has announced that the Government has launched the electric vehicle charging strategy: 'Charging our future: National electric vehicle charging strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand'.

The strategy was developed by Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport with support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and outlines the Government's long-term strategic vision for a national electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure that can support a growing EV fleet, while helping New Zealand meet its climate commitments.

The Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) sets New Zealand's commitment to increase zero-emission vehicles to 30%t of the light vehicle fleet and reduce emissions from freight transport by 35% by 2035.

- Please click on the link to read the full statement Media release

~~~~~~

$503m Scott Base redevelopment project stalls amid contract dispute

RNZ reports that the $503 million upgrade of Scott Base, New Zealand's 66-year-old research station in Antarctica, has stalled following a breakdown in negotiations between the Government institute Antarctica New Zealand and the main building contractor Leighs Construction. Antarctica New Zealand said in a statement it was exploring other options for the upgrade.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

New Zealand's top greenhouse gas emitters for 2023

Radio New Zealand reports that the Environmental Protection Authority has revealed the country's biggest emitters in coal, gas, petrol and farming. Fonterra has taken out the top spot for the third year running, followed by the three biggest petrol retailers.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

New x-ray tech helping council make tree removal decisions

RNZ reports that new x-ray technology called "Tomo" is helping the Marlborough District Council decide which large poplar trees along the Taylor River should be removed. The tomograph's x-ray works by detecting decay and cavities in standing trees, and measuring trunk density, making removal decisions more accurate than in the past.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~

Christchurch council says water safe to drink despite non-compliance

RNZ reports that the Christchurch City Council has said its water supply to 168,000 people is safe to drink despite not having protection against protozoa and other parasites. Taumata Arowai sent notices to the 26 non-compliant councils, including Christchurch, after a recent cryptosporidium outbreak in Queenstown sickened 65 people.

Read the full story here.

~~~~~~
~~~~~~