

NEWS

December 2005

7	<p>ARC shy of playing Santa to the arts (New Zealand Herald Wayne Thompson)</p> <p>The matter of who should pay costs for organisations which are clearly regional, but often funded overwhelmingly by a single local authority, or a few local authorities has again surfaced. The Auckland regional Council focuses on cultural heritage and parks, rather than funding arts and cultural events and organisations. At present Auckland City Council appears to pay the lion's share of regional artistic practices, such as Auckland Philharmonia and Auckland Theatre Company. A few of the examples quoted include Auckland rescue helicopter trust, for which Franklin district Council gives \$2000, but others nothing, Water save Auckland reasonably evenly spread, but with North shore City Council and Rodney district Council giving nothing, Auckland War Memorial Museum a reasonable spread, New Zealand National Maritime Museum, with Auckland predominant plus Manukau Rodney North Shore and Papakura token amounts but Waitakere and Franklin nil, Star dome Observatory mostly Auckland funded, plus token amounts from other councils, Auckland Philharmonia massively backed by Auckland city, otherwise much smaller amounts, some quite token, Auckland Theatre Company funded only by Auckland, New Zealand opera, largely funded by Auckland and Manukau, Auckland Festival funded from the city, Surf lifesaving reasonably even funding, Auckland botanic Gardens funded by Auckland regional Council and Mt Smart Stadium also funded by Auckland regional Council. Note: the funding of regional organisations is a shambles; with some local authorities paying nothing and others paying only token amounts towards some of the many worthy regional organisations. The situation reflects poor governance and is often behind the calls made from time to time for local body reform and in some cases the call for a Super City.</p>
7	<p>Truce in sight for pylon war (New Zealand Herald Simon O'Rourke)</p> <p>Land owners in the path of the giant pylons are hopeful the proposal will be put off. A number of technically possible alternatives are being considered. Transpower has insisted that it needs the 400 kV line built by 2010. Note: Civic Trust Auckland considers the proposed line to be unsightly and opposes its construction through the Waikato and into South Auckland.</p>
8	<p>Keep left for motorway exit to Nelson Street (New Zealand Herald Arnold Pickmere)</p> <p>The new off ramp to Nelson Street will finally open next week. It allows exiting from the northbound motorway via the slow left lane. The dangerous exit being replaced was from the fast right-hand lane, one of many design errors of the spaghetti Junction complex, now finally overcome.</p>
13	<p>Deep pockets needed for city's wish list (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p> <p>A wish list of 36 projects For the next 10 years has been drawn up and the different projects prioritised. At present the top 10 include (in order of merit) tank farm development \$350 million, transport projects \$158 million, storm water improvements \$20 million, property purchases and development \$197 million, revised Eastern Highway \$800 million, other waterfront projects and \$85 million, Gulf island projects \$42 million, Marine events Centre and Otahuhu works \$38 million, closed-circuit television network and other safety projects \$25 million and Westhaven Marina open spaces \$20 million. The low ranking projects include outside the square \$650 million, the zoo conservation centre and New Zealand precinct \$22 million Otahuhu and Avondale swimming pools \$18 million and an arts precinct be kind Auckland town Hall \$40 million. Note: Civic trust Auckland is highly concerned over the two most expensive projects. The eastern corridor has been pared back to \$800 million from an estimated \$2 billion and presumably therefore cannot fulfil its original purpose. Civic trust Auckland objects to this proposed motorway on the grounds that it will destroy the natural features and environment of the Purewa Creek, Orakei basin and Hobson Bay areas. The other big item is expenditure on the tank farm. What is this money earmarked for and why is being proposed as a development by Auckland City Council, when it is the Regional Authority which is the owner of the land, subject to various leasehold interests?</p>
13	<p>Avondale motorway extension-city officers want Waterview route (New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley)</p> <p>Councillors are urged to back a \$1.15 billion motorway extension through Avondale to Waterview but want it kept largely out of sight of Oakley Creek. This contentious motorway extension is one of two alternatives, neither of which are fully satisfactory. The other option is much more expensive at \$1.55 billion, along the Rosebank peninsular, adjoining and taking in part of the waterfront of the Motu Manawa Marine reserve. Transit strongly favours the Waterview connection but Auckland City Council proposes to apply a string of conditions if this route is finally decided upon. This will be one of the biggest roading projects in Auckland in the last 50 years and has environmental and community impacts. Note: Civic trust Auckland is aware that completion of the motorway ring route is an important infrastructure aim. However, so too is the need for an urban rail route extending around from Penrose, via Onehunga to Avondale. As far as the motorway extension is concerned the Rosebank road route should be rejected out of hand, due to its effect on the adjoining Marine reserve. The alternative however is little better, as the Oakley Creek Valley is also well worthy of preservation.</p>
21	<p>Government tags \$450 million for Auckland rail (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman)</p>

	<p>Government has firmed up plans to spend between \$450 million and \$600 million, although the period over which that expenditure is to be made is unclear. Much-needed electrification is rejected in the meantime, as is a central city tunnel. The package allows double Tracking the Western Railway line, reconfiguring Newmarket Junction and a new rail link to Manukau city. The government proposes to build all new rail tracks and signal controls, leaving the region to pay for trains and station upgrades. The proposed Wiri station will involve a new 2 km branch from the main southern line at Wiri. Note: Civic trust Auckland is highly concerned that timely forward planning is not being undertaken. The case for immediate electrification would seem to have been well proven, long ago. There is also an excellent case for the proposed underground line, which should be planned for immediately, even though construction may be delayed until funds allow.</p>
19	<p>The Queen Street makeover begins (New Zealand Herald Rudman's city) The CBD upgrade continues following a shambolic beginning. First was the strangeness of automated tui feeders in Vulcan Lane. Then came Khartoum place and its memorial to suffragettes. This was followed by the Swanson Street pavement choice debacle. Finally, the Queen Street makeover itself, with its confusion over verandas and a planned destruction of foreign trees. Bernard Orsman in a separate article notes that the original proposal in March 2005 allowed \$23 million to complete a full Queen Street upgrade from customs Street to Karangahape road. This has now blown out to \$30 million for an upgrade from customs Street to Mayoral Dr, with a further \$4 million needed to complete works through to Karangahape road.</p>
28	<p>Queen Street chainsaw massacre (New Zealand Herald editorial) In a hard-hitting editorial, the current proposal over the quiet Christmas break to remove 20 trees from Queen Street is heavily criticised. A public uproar has followed this non-notified procedure, which runs totally against Council tree policy as it would otherwise effect typical citizens. Note: Letters and e-mails to the editor include the term chainsaw massacre. The debacle would carry on well into the new year under this name.</p>