

Keeping *in* contact

☕ *New hydro on the Clutha? Ideas and opportunities*

You can visit the new website at www.contactenergy.co.nz/clutha



☕ *Our hydro man, Neil Gillespie, taking in the view above the Clyde Dam.*



New Zealand will need new electricity generation projects to keep up with increasing demand over the next 10, 20, 30 years and beyond. With concern increasing about the impact of climate change, electricity will need to be generated without releasing more greenhouse gases into the environment.

Where are the best clean energy projects to power our economy, our lifestyles and our futures? Contact is developing a wide range of generation projects, including wind, geothermal and natural gas-fired power stations. But we believe New Zealand will also need more hydro generation and, in August last year, we announced that we were reviewing plans that the company inherited for four hydro developments on the Clutha.

In April, we launched a new website detailing each of these options, and invited Clutha communities to review these plans and provide feedback on them. We believe the Clutha contains some of the best future hydro options in New Zealand, and we want to hear from local communities about how one option might be developed to benefit the region and the country.

This discussion we are now holding is a brand new approach that we believe will help us better understand these projects and the opportunities that come with them.

There's no doubt that any hydro development on the Clutha will represent massive investment in the region and will lead to ongoing benefits for local communities. The scale of the up-front investment will be in the range of between \$300 million and \$1.5 billion.

Our challenge is to discuss these projects with local communities and identify how any one of them could be developed so as to maximise the benefits to Clutha communities and to make the project a genuine community asset.

This could be through developing a project hand-in-hand with a local irrigation scheme for local vineyards and

farmers; developing tourism, recreation and sporting facilities around a possible reservoir; upgrading local services; developing lake-side residential developments; or supporting and developing local walking and cycling projects. The potential for one of these projects to really kick-start more tourism, growth and investment in the region is unlimited – what are the other ideas and options? We want you to tell us.

There's no question that any development will also have impacts, and these vary a great deal across each of the projects. Again, the challenge is to fully understand the impacts and then work out how we can minimise and mitigate them to try and deliver a positive project for people and the environment.

We've decided to investigate these Clutha options at least in part because the river is already home to two iconic large-scale hydro dams at Clyde and Roxburgh, and our preference is to avoid altering the country's remaining virgin rivers.

We're at the beginning of a long process, and there's no rush. We hope to be able to identify a preferred development option in 2010 and, from there, begin a more focused consultation around that option.

Since we launched the new website we've received a lot of feedback – a large amount of which has been positive and constructive. There has also been a reasonable level of other views that enable us to better understand the issues important to local communities. It's important that we continue to hear the full range of views from across the entire community. Please check out our website and send us your thoughts.

I'm passionate about Central Otago and its people, and I'm passionate about hydro energy. Pioneering decisions made as far back as 100 years ago have provided the country with hydro-based electricity systems that are the envy of the rest of the world. These hydro projects have provided the clean energy to power our economy and our way of life for over a century.

Carefully developed, and with a strong commitment to local communities and the natural environment, new hydro development can again provide a boost to our country and our region.

To visit the new website, go to www.contactenergy.co.nz/clutha, or if you would like to speak or meet with us, please email us at cluthahydro@contactenergy.co.nz or contact our Hydro Project Manager Neil Gillespie on 0800 66 33 35. ☺

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