

Submission re. Port Otago Limited Applications to Extend the open pile wharf at Boiler Point  
and to construct a Public Fishing jetty also at Boiler Point.  
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My name is Phil Murphy. I am a registered nurse. I have lived in Careys Bay since 1977, and in my current dwelling since 1985. I speak on behalf of myself and my wife.

Port Otago Limited have indicated their intention to extend the existing open pile wharf at the side of the reclamation at Boiler point to create facilities to dock and operate the new generation of container ships in Port Chalmers, and to create a 30 metre long Fishing Jetty on the tip of Boiler Point.

We are concerned that Port Otago Limited should want to moor and load and unload container ships at Boiler point, but since this is the function of a working port it is difficult to see how one might sensibly argue against Port Otago Limited doing what they do within the environment of their port. Given that, our main concerns are the noise likely to be generated by this proposed shift of activity which will likely impinge on the lives of my wife and myself and the lives of others in Careys Bay. We are also vigorously opposed to the proposed recreational fishers wharf on the tip of Boiler Point.

It is not possible to operate a port silently. It is possible though to keep a port quiet when there is no ship in port, particularly at night. I find it unnecessary for Port Otago Limited to be moving empty containers about on Boiler Point at midnight on a Sunday (or any night for that matter) when there is no ship in port. This has happened and I have complained about the noise in such circumstances on at least 2 occasions in the last couple of years.

If container ships are to be moored and worked at Boiler Point I believe a significant change in our quality of life would result.

Our submission in objection to the Port Otago Limited's current applications relates specifically to noise generation and the construction of the proposed fishing jetty at Boiler Point, and for you to fully understand our objection it is necessary to relate some of the events surrounding Port Otago Limited's last major expansion in the 1990's

I was very involved in the objections to Port Otago Limited's planning applications at that time.

First though, I think it is necessary for you to understand the differing requirements associated with empty and full containers.

Empty containers are moved and stacked with forklifts which are not powerful enough to carry full containers. Empty containers are moved quickly and much more nimbly with a forklift than with a straddle carrier. Empty containers are stacked side by side, called block stacking, and they can be stacked 5 high with less space being required to store them this way.

Forklift operators can put containers down quietly if they take care, take a little time. If they are in a hurry and they drop it, or put it down too quickly, a tremendous boom results. It only has to be dropped an inch. "The empty kettle makes the most noise" Some forklift operators take pride in the operation of their machines and can move containers around efficiently and put them down quietly while it would seem others operators don't care.

Full containers require to be stacked end on enabling straddle carriers to get between the rows. Given this it is easy to see just how much actual cargo the port handles. There would seem to be generally 2 to 3 empties to every full one.

Boiler Point was reclaimed following a lengthy planning process between 1988 and 1991. No doubt Port Otago Limited will be able to tell us how that particular reclamation had been on their books for some years previous to 1988, indeed I have seen plans that were produced by the old Otago Harbour Board in the 1930s which show proposed reclamation of not only all of Careys Bay but also Deborah Bay.

What didn't go unnoticed in 1988 though was that the planning applications were made as soon as the Resource Management act came on the horizon along with a review of the District Plan and a general restructuring of the entire local body system.

The areas concerned in the 1988-91 process are referred to in the Port Companies Assessment of "Environmental Effects" on the plan "...Port development...." specifically items 12, 13, 16 and 17. I want to briefly cover these to explain why Port Otago Limited's current applications to which we object, should be declined.

When I first arrived in Careys Bay, Simms Engineering occupied Boiler Point, and the Container terminal could not be seen from Careys Bay. In 1988 when Port Otago Limited made public its intention to reclaim at Boiler Point, they did so, they claimed, because of the foreseen increase in the logging trade and a projected increase in container traffic through the container terminal. This trade, they said, necessitated a significant increase of wharf space at Back Beach, including the cutting of Observation Point in order to get the rail line around so that fewer log trucks would be needed on State highway 88. Indeed there were so many logs coming on stream, peaking in about 2005 as I recall, that as much wharf space as they could possibly get was required.

This also meant that the woodchip pile would have to be moved and for this purpose a new reclamation at Boiler Point would be required along with the demolition of Simms Engineering and the cargo handling shed on the Beach Street wharf. Also to go was the Port Calmers Yacht Club clubrooms and as I recall the Back Beach slipway.

When it was pointed out that woodchips would blow into the harbour if they were stockpiled at boiler point Port Otago Limited initially denied that they blew around at all.

When a resident suggested that Port Otago Limited come and look in her gutterings to see for themselves how far the woodchips blew, they did so, but then declared they would need the Boiler Point reclamation anyway for the storage of containers. Indeed such was the expected increase in container traffic that they would need as much space as they could get.

Interesting that suddenly the area desperately needed for woodchips became an area desperately needed for containers. But wait...there was more.. AND there was going to be no room for buildings.

It was noted at that time that frequently most of the containers on the terminal were empty. However Port Otago limited insisted that the short term storage of empties was a valid function of a port. How long is short term remains a moot point.

Eventually noise became the overriding factor in all of Port Otago Limited's applications and the Boiler Point reclamation was reduced to about half the size originally applied for.

Now, in 2011 I have not seen a log on a train for years, probably 15 years or more. I am aware that logs are currently being stockpiled in Ravensbourne but they won't be getting on any train because there is no siding there to allow that to happen. There is a vast building on the back beach reclamation, indeed one doesn't fully appreciate the size of it until it is viewed from Portobello on the other side of the harbour, and another on Boiler Point where Simms once was. The log trade did not increase as predicted. The Yacht Club is still there on the end of the new reclamation and the woodchip pile remains at Beach Street. and empty containers are still being stored on the container wharf and at Boiler Point despite the fact that in Lyttleton (in which Port Otago Limited has a significant shareholding) and Auckland large numbers are stored off the terminal. Indeed Port Otago Limited have facilities for the storage of empties at both Ravensbourne, at the old tannery site in Sawyers Bay and in town.

Given all of this it becomes apparent that one needs to be very cautious when dealing with Port Otago Limited. It becomes apparent that frequently what they say they will do doesn't actually happen and what they say they won't do they do do. Some suspicion and scepticism is a healthy thing to retain. And please don't forget the secret agenda.

From our home we have a view of Harbour Cone above the ridge on which the cemetery lies. More recently however we get a competing view of the newer, bigger container cranes. This is another example of the Ports intrusion into Careys Bay. It is not only coming around the corner it is coming over the top as well! I believe this has been dubbed Port creep.

Some residents who argued long and hard to have Port Otago Limited mitigate their noise problems now have double glazing so that it is at least quiet inside their homes, but enjoyment of their garden is limited. However many residents when faced with obstacles created by Port Otago limited found it all too difficult to contend with so just continue to cope with the erosion of their peace and quiet or, in some cases, have left the district because of this. In this respect Port Otago Limited's behaviour can only be considered despicable.

The current application to deepen the turning basin and the channel allowing the larger container ships to berth is beyond belief. I am aware that the original proposal has been scaled back and the \$65million Dollar (\$65,000,000.00) price tag has been significantly reduced. To complete noise mitigation for troubled residents would take a tiny fraction of the total cost and would buy a lot of goodwill.

I wonder just how much trade Otago and Southland actually do generate to require the existing facility. If the business of empty container storage is removed from the equation, it becomes very obvious to any who care to look that the current facility is entirely adequate. As I have stated previously, Auckland and Lyttleton both store empty containers away from their container terminals. I know Port Otago Limited have the facilities to do this at both Sawyers Bay, Ravensbourne and at sites near the upper harbour where Port Otago Limited have significant land holdings.

Much is made of cruise liner berthing. A cruise ship takes up a container berth when ever there are 2 cruise ships in port or when a bulk carrier is at the Beach street wharf loading woodchips or logs. This does not happen very often, and I'm sure Port Otago Limited would be happy to provide actual figures. Given there are about 70 cruise ship visits expected next season there would seem to be maybe 10 occasions when 2 are in port at the same time.

Given the fickle nature of the cruise ship trade it just might not be trendy to visit Port Chalmers in a few years and visits may well decline. If Port Otago limited are certain of the cruise ship trade they should be urged to build a dedicated cruise ship berth which could easily be developed on the Back Beach wharf, an area just waiting for development, and create a real gateway to Otago. This would remove the complaints by visitors that they were left standing about in the rain. I believe a proposal of this nature would take a relatively small area, generate little opposition and garner much support.

The 30metre fishing Jetty projecting into the harbour at Boiler Point is the hidden agenda, but a poorly veiled one.

We see the "Fishing Jetty" as no more than a sop to the public.... that some how Port Otago Limited is doing something for the public for nothing!

Given that Port Otago Limited is a for profit organisation it would be likely that nothing is given for nothing.

I note that Port Otago Limited states in their application that the jetty may not be constructed precisely as stated, some design alterations may be necessary. It is easy to build strength into any contract once approval to build is obtained. How long before a larger structure is built behind it. and having the public excluded is a relatively simple matter.

How much is Port Otago Limited spending so that a few recreational fishers can catch a salmon? Given the reputation of Port Otago Limited and its predecessor, The Otago Harbour Board, this plan is simply a blatant attempt at a foot in the door and for that reason should be dumped immediately. Let them declare their true intentions. There are countless places for recreational fishers to fish around Otago harbour already.

If this part of the application were declined then the Port company would have the funds required to resolve outstanding double glazing projects left over from their last expansions 20 years ago.

We object to any Port expansion that is going to result in increased noise generated by port activity. We both enjoy the activity of the shipping on the harbour. The Cruise ships, the tugs working with the large container ships, the bulk carriers that service the timber trade and the fertiliser factory....The list goes on. Many have been photographed. We live in Careys bay and know that we are lucky that we don't currently have a problem with the noise generated by the port except when empty containers are being dropped on Boiler Point in the middle of the night as mentioned earlier. But we are aware that quieter machinery is available which can make the port quieter all the time.

If ships are to be worked on Boiler Point and no improvement in noise generation occurs, we foresee a time when the pleasure currently taken from our garden, which is quite large and in which a lot of our time is spent, will be seriously eroded.

What we would like to see happen is for nothing to change other than the moving of empty containers on Boiler Point in the middle of the night to cease.

But that is unlikely and the arrival of the new larger breed of container ship is probably inevitable. To accommodate these however we would like to see the Back Beach wharf developed to accommodate Cruise ships so that the container terminal can be used exclusively for containers as it was intended.

(The roll on roll off trade that was meant to arrive but didn't could also go on the log wharf if it does arrive. All it would take would be a demolition of part of the enormous building on the log wharf at Back Beach. Let's remember that that excavation and reclamation was required "solely for the log trade," "there will be no room for buildings").

Failing that we ask that-

1. The application for the fishing jetty proposed for the end of Boiler Point be declined. It is unnecessary. Recreational fishers will still continue with their pastime anyway. The intention for this to be developed at a later date is just too blatantly obvious.
2. That in any case sensible and enforceable noise restrictions are established by an independent body and suitable and enforceable penalties are established should Port Otago Limited exceed noise limits.
3. Before any approval is given Port Togo Limited resolves all outstanding double glazing claims.

Finally we would ask this committee to give no weight at all to shipping companies endorsing Port Otago Limited's plans. Of course they will, even if they never use the port again, after all it is going to cost them nothing and it will possibly increase their profits. They have nothing to lose.

Thank You