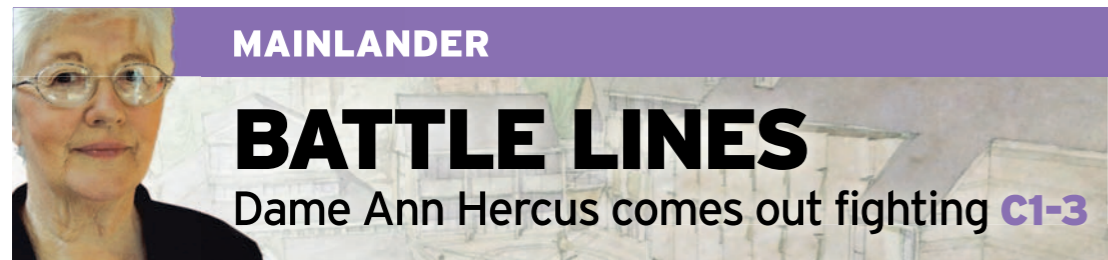


THE WEEKEND PRESS

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MAINLANDER

BATTLE LINES

Dame Ann Hercus comes out fighting **C1-3**

48 HOURS

BRIGHT STAR

Jane Campion's new film **E1**



WORLD

FATAL PROTEST

Plane flown into tax office **B1**



YOUR WEEKEND MAGAZINE

THE FINAL MUSTER

'NOTHING LASTS FOREVER OUT HERE'

ROUGH JUSTICE: WHO HELPS THE PRISON KIDS HEARTLAND: PIPONGIA PIE - MIKE CREAM

ECan faces the axe

Colin Espiner
Political editor

The future of Environment Canterbury (ECan) hangs in the balance as the Government considers axing the council and replacing it with a commission.

Local Government Minister Rodney Hide and Environment Minister Nick Smith will fly to Christchurch on Wednesday for a series of urgent meetings with local authorities and stakeholders over the fate of the embattled regional council, following a damning report on its performance.

The Government is considering taking the unprecedented step of dismissing ECan and replacing it with a commission until governance and management issues around the allocation of water rights in Canterbury are sorted out.

But Labour and the Greens are already gearing up to fight the move. They have accused the Government of deliberately undermining ECan in a bid to speed up water-hungry projects in Canterbury. The Greens are also questioning the impartiality of the chairman of the Government-ordered review of the council's performance, former National deputy prime minister Wyatt Creech.

The Creech Report, released yesterday, found ECan had botched the management of freshwater in Canterbury, impacting not only on the region but the national economy. It has recommended all water management be taken off the council permanently, and a Canterbury Regional Water Authority be established, governed by a board made up of government appointees. It would create and implement a new water plan for the region.

ECan should be disbanded and the council run by a commission for three years, until fresh elections in 2013.

That would mean Cantabrians would be denied a vote in their regional councilors in this year's local body elections.

The Creech Report says it

would be too difficult for the council itself to manage the transition to a separate water authority without creating problems of governance and accountability.

"Given the large gap between the region's needs and ECan's performance and capability, we think our recommendations are the only prudent course of action the Government can take," the authors say.

However, the Government is wavering over such a drastic step as removing the council. It would require a special act of Parliament, since neither Hide nor Smith have the legal power to do so.

It has established a high-powered Cabinet committee to consider the issue, comprising Smith, Hide, and Christchurch-based ministers Gerry Brownlee (economic development), David Carter (agriculture) and Kate Wilkinson (conservation).

Smith said no decisions had been made on whether to accept the report's recommendations, but managing Canterbury's water was a huge strategic issue for the Government.

"A tinker isn't going to get on top of the problem. Substantive change is required. It's not a matter of who might be the council or the chief executive or the other staff. There is a fundamental structural problem here that the Government has to get on top of and fix."

But Green Party co-leader Russel Norman said ECan was paying the price for standing up to the dairy industry and refusing water consents. "Everyone now has a clear message. If you stand up to protect water, you're going to be taken out."

Norman questioned Creech's suitability to chair the report into ECan. "Wyatt Creech is a director of Open Country Cheese, which has convictions for dirty dairying. So why put him in charge of a review of the regulator of the dairy industry?"

» To A4



Private viewing: Alistair Knewstubb and Cyrilla Eade, both 16, study a Toss Woollaston painting on the art-packed Real Art Roadshow truck trailer, below right, which is visiting Linwood College. Photo: JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON

Trucks take art to hundreds of schools

Tina Law

A Wanaka philanthropist has gathered up her extensive collection of New Zealand art and is taking it on the road to every secondary school in the country.

Fiona Campbell has spent millions of dollars of her own money creating the Real Art Roadshow. She has kitted out two custom-made trucks worth \$460,000 each with pieces of art created by a variety of well-known Kiwi artists including Toss Woollaston, Shane Cotton and Ralph Hotere.

Campbell, a graphic designer who has worked in various Wellington art galleries, was an early investor in Trade Me and became "extremely wealthy" overnight after selling her shares in the online auction site.

"Although I live comfortably, I don't get off on spending money on myself. There's only so many pairs of shoes a woman needs and then it gets boring," Campbell said.

After seeing a shortage of real art available to New Zealand teenagers because their schools were isolated either physically or



Art enthusiast: Fiona Campbell when she launched a book on the Real Art Roadshow last year.

culturally from art galleries, Campbell decided to take art to the schools free.

She hired two art curators and bought more than 100 pieces of art, ranging from paintings, sculpture and photographs specifically for the project.

"It's just a lot easier buying the art, then I'm the only one who'll shed tears if anything goes



wrong with it."

Campbell would not say how much money she spent on art, but said it was "lots".

She had gained hugely from the project after seeing students' enthusiasm.

The roadshow would visit all the country's 694 secondary schools over four years and has already visited about 245. The trucks would be spending the

next seven weeks in Christchurch before touring the rest of the South Island throughout the year.

The truck drivers live in a separate compartment on board to keep an eye on the art.

More than 350 Linwood College students visited the roadshow this week, including year 13 student Alistair Knewstubb, 16, who said he had

never been to a gallery where there were so many different types of art.

He said it was interesting to see the techniques used by the artists.

Linwood College art department head Ross Marwick said the roadshow had huge benefits for the students because they were often forced to rely on a photograph or reproduction.

Youths admit driver slaying

Keith Lynch and NZPA

Two youths have admitted murder and manslaughter charges over the death of a Christchurch taxi driver.

In the High Court at Christchurch yesterday, Justice Lester Chisholm lifted name suppression on Shannon David Boyes-Warren, who has been under Youth Court jurisdiction.

Boyes-Warren pleaded guilty to assaulting taxi driver Abdulrahman Ikhtiari with intent to rob him and murdering him.

Randell Legion Wiremu Brown, now 20, admitted the assault with intent to rob and a charge of manslaughter. The manslaughter charge alleges that he killed Ikhtiari in the course of an unlawful act.

Ikhtiari, a 39-year-old father of five, was a refugee who had brought his family to New Zealand from Afghanistan.

The Crown told the court both had previous convictions, but it did not seek preventive detention. Crown prosecutor Mark Zarifeh said that about midnight on December 5, 2008, the youths were in the central city after drinking alcohol.

When they ran out of money, they took Ikhtiari's taxi to go to Boyes-Warren's home to get more. They then asked Ikhtiari to drive them back to the city.

In Worcester St, Boyes-Warren asked the driver to stop. He got out of the taxi, opened the driver's door, produced a knife and demanded money, Zarifeh said.

A struggle then began between Boyes-Warren and Ikhtiari, while Brown reached over from the back seat and grabbed the driver around the head and chest, pinning him to the driver's seat.

During the struggle, Boyes-Warren stabbed the driver several times.

He then stabbed Ikhtiari in the left side of the chest, penetrating his heart.

Ikhtiari tried to chase Boyes-Warren.

He got as far as the middle of the road before returning to the taxi where he collapsed and died.

Justice Chisholm remanded the pair in custody for sentencing on March 10.

New Zealand Taxi Federation executive director Tim Reddish said the guilty plea would be a relief for Ikhtiari's family.