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NORTH OTAGO & REGIONS 19



PHOTO: VIVIENNE PATERSON

Shasta Koch, of Dunedin, dressed as a pukeko, plants a podocarp on the grounds of the Clutha District Council yesterday.

Protesters plant trees at council

By Vivienne Paterson

Environmental protesters descended on the Clutha District Council headquarters yesterday and planted 21 podocarp trees.

The protesters, about 15 in all, were there to bring attention to the district council's issuing of a non-notified consent to Les Dunn Ltd to fell native trees in the Catlins.

Clutha District Council chief executive Ciaran Keogh said as far as he was concerned the council was

Balclutha

"the fall guy, the patsy" in the whole issue.

He said the council issued the non-notified consent because it was the only way it could manage the situation. The Government, its agencies and environmental groups had failed to support the council.

The environmentalists, led by Hendrik Koch, of the Dunedin Environmental Centre, maintained their assertions that the council could

have stopped logging in the Catlins by implementing conditions in its own district plan.

The environmentalists and council staff agreed, however, that a meeting of all interested parties, could be helpful. The council is to consider organising such a meeting.

As for the trees planted yesterday, Mr Keogh said he was happy for them to remain on the council's grounds, although any which ended up posing visibility problems for motorists later could be moved "to a good home".

Thanks to the efforts of Bill King the Tautuku-Fleming catchment is the only one remaining with forest from headwaters to sea. *KDM*

