

## NELSON MAIL

# Global college eyes Nelson

By TRACY NEAL - Nelson | Friday, 06 June 2008

**Nelson is being eyed as a possible location for a \$74 million international college in a global network of 13 other colleges, of which former South African president Nelson Mandela is honorary international president.**

New Zealand United World Colleges Trust chairman Tony Baldwin confirmed that Nelson is among a small list of New Zealand regions being considered for a United World College and campus development, which would educate and house up to 250 students.

Also in the running are Canterbury, Hawke's Bay, Taupo and the Coromandel, after doubts were cast over the planned original site in Queenstown.

Nelson Deputy Mayor Rachel Reese said today she had held some preliminary discussions with Mr Baldwin and the council viewed the concept as a "fantastic opportunity for the region", which included Tasman and Marlborough.

"If we were to be short-listed, we would also contact Marlborough, as a top-of-the-south approach is the best way to provide support for a college like this," Cr Reese said.

At this early stage, the council had offered planning advice on possible sites, and would meet the trust to provide an overview of locations, she said.

United World Colleges runs a demanding two-year academic programme ending with the International Baccalaureate exam, which is recognised by the world's most prestigious universities.

Each year, more than 1200 students aged 16 to 19, from more than 134 countries, are selected and awarded a two-year scholarship to attend one of the colleges. They are selected on personal merit, irrespective of race, religion, politics and the ability to pay.

Mr Baldwin, a law, public policy and strategy consultant who lives in the Nelson region, said Queenstown had been the preferred site for a New Zealand college, partly because it was the home of project director John Hilhorst.

However, restrictive covenants had forced the trust to look at alternatives.

"We came to the conclusion that we'd be hard-pressed to get the consents needed. It's a terrific site but very near a World Heritage Park, and we can't spend years and millions of dollars going through the Environment Court.

"We haven't ruled it out, but we need to look at other options," said Mr Baldwin, who as a Nelson College student was himself short-listed to attend a United World College.

He said the New Zealand development, earmarked to set a new environmental standard in its design, included the college and campus where students and teachers would live.

It would cost about \$74 million to build, would employ 55 people and have annual running costs of \$7 million.

The college would require considerable fundraising efforts, with help from New Zealand and global philanthropists.

“New Zealand is held in strong regard by people around the world, and it has a very positive profile,” Mr Baldwin said.

A key element in the choice of a site was what the community could offer, he said. The development would bring “significant economic benefit” to a region, but more important were the social and cultural spin-offs.

“The interaction of students in the community is vital. Students are selected for their abilities, and a core part of the programme is service to the community,” Mr Baldwin said.

Cr Reese said the college's emphasis on service to the arts, environment and community aligned well with what the Nelson region offered.

#### UNITED WORLD COLLEGES:

- UWC was founded in 1962, from the ideas of German educationalist Kurt Hahn.
- There are 12 colleges around the world, with a 13th opening soon in the Netherlands. Others are in Britain, Norway, Italy, Bosnia, Swaziland, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada, the United States, Costa Rica and Venezuela.
- The registered charitable NZ UWC Trust was formed on October 25, 2006, with former prime minister Jim Bolger as founder patron.

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