

Better for business in the south

Bringing together the OSEA and the OCC

Q & As

What is the timeframe for the proposed merger?

The boards of OCC and OSEA have developed an outline of the process they propose to follow, which is subject to member approval. You can find a copy of this document is attached

What happens to OSEA and OCC services over this timeframe?

OCC and OSEA have delivered valuable, complementary services and support for their respective members for well over a century. OSEA has more than 1000 members and OCC has just under 1000.

The boards of OCC and OSEA are committed to retaining the services currently delivered by OCC and OSEA across Otago (and Southland in the case of OSEA), so members can be assured that both organisations will continue to provide services as they currently do until the merger is complete.

The matrix of services currently offered by OSEA and OCC needs to be considered, areas of overlap identified, and opportunities to adapt or introduce new services also identified. Any future changes to services will be done in consultation with and based on feedback from members.

Ultimately, members will be able to access more products, services and local and national advocacy as a result of this merger.

No changes to the existing relationships between the OCC and the three other local Chambers in Otago are expected as a result of this proposal.

What about membership fees?

There are no changes to member charges planned for the merged entity until at least 30 June 2021. Where members belong to both organisations and previously paid two annual membership fees, they will only be charged one fee. It will be the responsibility of the transitional board to determine the fair and appropriate membership fee schedule to be levied from 2021.

Any new members that will join after 22 October 2020 will do so at the joint membership offering.

What will the new unified organisation be called?

The name of the merged entity will be Business South. However, the constitution of the new entity retains the names “Otago Chamber of Commerce” and “Otago Southland Employers’ Association” so both the OCC and OSEA names may be used as appropriate, depending on the situation. You will therefore still see the name of your organisation, either OCC or OSEA, used in the future.

Where will the new unified organisation be based?

In the longer term it will be important to bring staff and operations for the merged entity together under the same roof, but no decision has been made about where this might be.

It is envisaged that OSEA will continue to have a premise in Invercargill.

How will this impact the other Chambers in the Otago/Southland region?

As the regional hub for the Chambers of Commerce, Business South (Otago Chamber of Commerce) will continue to support the interests of the Southland, Queenstown and Wanaka Chambers of Commerce.

The merged entity will continue to deliver export documentation services including “certificates of origin” and FTA services to all businesses in the wider region in partnership with the Southland Chamber of Commerce.

We have a positive, collaborative working relationship with all other chambers around the region as we jointly strive to further the interests of members across the Otago/Southland region.

Are any staffing changes planned as a consequence of the merger?

The new single unified organisation will have one Chief Executive who will be responsible for leading and building Business South.

Apart from the need for that key role, no decisions have been made about the new unified organisation’s structure or staffing. Therefore all staff roles, other than the two CEOs, will continue on current terms and conditions at the time of the merger process commencing, subject to member approval.

The merger process will include a consideration of the optimal structure and roles for the new organisation, but this work will be undertaken over the course of the merger process time and not until the Chief Executive role has been filled, the appointee has had the opportunity to review the new organisation’s staffing needs and any potential growth opportunities the larger, combined membership may bring.

The merger proposal is in no way a reflection on the performance of either the OSEA or OCC. It is a response, in a rapidly changing and increasingly challenging business environment, aimed at ensuring the long term sustainability of the services currently provided by two organisations and enabling them to be enhanced.

What has the process been?

The Boards signed an MOU and convened a sub-committee that worked through the process with legal support and considered the business imperatives, benefits and risks of the proposal. After the sub-committee completed this work the Boards of each organisation approved the proposal to merge and agreed to take the proposal to their respective members.

What happens next?

There will be a Special General Meeting for members of both organisations to vote on the proposal. The first meeting will be on 21 September for OSEA and 30 September for OCC. Under the terms of its constitution OSEA requires a second meeting which will be held on 21 October.

The members of both organisations must vote by majority for the proposal to proceed.

On 9 October 2020, following second meeting for OSEA members, we will notify members of both organisations of the result by email and on our websites.

If members do not agree with this proposal then the merger will not proceed and it will be business as usual.

If members agree with this merger what will the Board look like?

For the first 12 months of operations OCC and OSEA, along with the new entity Business South, will be governed by an interim, single board which will act as a transition board. The transition board will be established if member approval for the merger has been confirmed. An equal number of directors from both OSEA and OCC will form the inaugural/transition board of Business South and assume governance responsibility for both OSEA and OCC. Each organisation's board will be responsible for selecting the individuals they wish to serve on the transition board.

In the following year the Board of eight will be elected by members. The Board can appoint up to a further three board members should they wish to add extra expertise and regional representation.

How do I get more information?

We welcome your feedback, please email or phone the Presidents or Chief Executives at OSEA or OCC:

OSEA:
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