

The Alexandra clock

Hey guess what?

The clock is electrically operated. The hands are cantilevered to withstand wind gusts of up to 130kph. The coaxial shafts to which the hands are attached are driven continuously through reduction gears by a 3/4 horsepower synchronous motor.

My two cents

One Alexandra resident noted that the clock put a dampener on the social life of the town's youth. There was never any chance of getting home late with an excuse of not having realised what the time was.

Telling the time in Alexandra is never a problem. There is an 11 m diameter landmark clock on the hillside there that has been ticking since midday on 14 December 1968.

The clock project was the initiative of the Alexandra Jaycees. After approaching firms throughout New Zealand in 1966 to submit designs and prices, a Dunedin firm of engineers, J & A P Scott (now Scott Technology), was given the task of designing and supplying the driving mechanism.

In April 1967 the Jaycees announced their plans to the Alexandra public. A full size mock-up was placed on the intended site for six weeks so the town's population could decide how they felt about it. A poll taken at the end of that period showed more than 90% of the people were in favour of the clock.

Work began in earnest in June 1968. Access to the site was achieved by erecting a 30.5m rail line down the face of the cliff. The clock is constructed of six vertical steel columns averaging 7.3m in length, supported in concrete foundations and fastened into the rock face with steel supports. Most of the steel and concrete used on the site, as well as the clock mechanism, which weighed 760kg, went down this rail before being winched into position.

150 ordinary torch bulbs set into the hands and markers to illuminate the clock mean that at night, the time can be read up to eight kilometres away.



Speeches at the 'opening' of the Alexandra clock



Positioning the clock

