

LAND USE OPTIMISATION WORKSHOP

Points brought up by the presenters:

- The international airport is a major driver for opening up the Rotorua District to holiday home developments by high end Australian investors. This has been the case in Queenstown.
- Developers need to be on-side with the local community. The three failed attempts at developing the Crater Lake Farm demonstrates this point.
- Rule 11 has a major impact on development opportunities. Activities that produce lower nutrient input are likely to have an advantage.
- Thinking outside the square (e.g. growing truffles or adopting the 'heard home' cattle or dairy management technique¹).
- Wealth creation needs to be from the land up.
- Avoid grazing on steep land.
- It needs to be recognised that adverse effects from 'bad' land use is an issue shared by all (e.g. both townies and farmers).
- Provision of infrastructure (e.g. the eastern sewer pipeline) will drive development as Council will encourage the use of this infrastructure to help pay for it (economies of scale).
- The fact that Maori land can't be subdivided and sold as fee hold land is a major barrier.
- There needs to be innovative use of the geothermal resource. For example, Bepu Japan have a power station which provides power to a resort nearby and the warm water from the power station is used to farm crocodiles.
- Investment will come from rethinking land use.
- Tourism can be a major driver of land optimisation. For example, we should be developing a Great Walk around the lakes with lodges along the way.
- The OCTOPUS land use modelling system is a good general tool for land optimisation.

¹ Where a heard is kept in a facility where effluent can be 100% controlled as opposed to grazing stock.

Comments made by participants

- Entrenched views are a barrier.
- We need one Vision and it needs to be consistent.
- Our community is too poor.
- Council's need to take an incremental approach to infrastructure funding. Significant rate rises over a short period (as is currently happening) will stifle development, not promote it.
- We need a flexible District Plan
- Compliance costs are a barrier.
- "Unlocking the value of Maori land" - There are large tracks of unused Maori land. Assuming free holding will never happen, there needs to be a formula that allows the Maori owners to offer the land to investors in a way that makes the deal attractive to them. There is an example where this works – Cornwall Park.
- There needs to be more participation in the District Plan review process.
- We need to change the mindset that says "as long as it doesn't cost me anything I'll support it".
- People need to move out of their comfort zone.
- We should be looking at case studies where other areas around the world have achieved what we are trying to do.