

Presentation to LRCA AGM 4th January 2009

Mr. Chairman, guests and members of the Lake Rotoiti Community Association, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I am sure most, if not all, of you will have received a copy of the Society's December newsletter and you will have read the Community Board item which gives a brief overview of the activities of the Board in 2008. (If you didn't get a copy of the newsletter, some spare copies were available at the Happy Angler, the Okere Falls Store, Emery's Store and the Rotoma Store). In the interests of time, I don't intend to revisit these past activities, but rather to look at some of the challenges of the coming year and how the Board can be of assistance to you in getting your voice heard where it matters.

Rating Issues

Rotorua District Council has been wrestling with a review of its rating system for some years now and after last year's major consultation exercise and the large number of submissions received, I believe we are getting close to an improved system that will be generally acceptable to the Lakes Community. Councillor Charles Sturt and Corporate Services Director Jean-Paul Gaston are with us today and will speak to us shortly on RDC's revised rating proposal.

Still on rating issues, I understand that Environment Bay of Plenty is revisiting its Lakes Restoration Rate proposals. While the dollars are not large (currently \$86 for lakeside residents), EBOP has acknowledged that the present rate (now in its third year) is a 'stopgap' measure at best. It is to be hoped that past strong representations to EBOP by the Rotorua Combined Lakes Ratepayers Assn., (of which this Society is a member) will be listened to. I am sure we are all delighted with the \$72M subsidy announced last year by the Clark Government but at the same time we should not forget that this is at best a 50% subsidy with the balance to come from the community.

With roughly half the \$145M cleanup costs going into lakeside wastewater schemes, details of which are already well known, it remains for EBOP to fund around \$35M from the community as its share of the balance. The residential community is currently paying 79% of the Lakes Restoration rate, yet contributes only 8% to the pollution. With the lakes community at the same time spending multi thousand dollar sums on lakeside wastewater schemes based on the polluter pays principal, it is to be hoped that EBOP will arrive at a rating formula that is fair to all.

WasteWater

RDC continues to progress with the installation of lakeside sewerage schemes on a timeline that is known to all. A number of you will have already

had detailed site visits and we can expect work to commence in the not too distant future. I understand that a low pressure grinder pump system will be used which offers considerable cost savings to alternative systems, particularly in difficult terrain.

A similar LPGP system has recently been commissioned at Lake Rotorua's Hinemoa Point and the Community Board arranged a site visit to observe the pumps in operation. My observations indicate that the system is efficient, unobtrusive, quiet and generally quite impressive. While the Hinemoa Point scheme is still in its early days, all the residents I spoke to who were using the system were very satisfied.

Waste Minimisation

In 2008 the Government passed a Waste Minimisation Act with the aim of reducing waste and encouraging the reuse, recycling, and recovery of waste and diverted material.

The Community Board has considered these issues as they affect the Community, held discussions with ratepayer groups on its Bus Tour, received submissions from interested residents and groups at its Community Forums, undertaken an extensive survey of residents in the Community, discussed matters raised with Council staff, and reported its recommendations to Council's Waste Minimisation Sub Committee at an extraordinary meeting in late December.

In recognition and in accordance with the Act, the Board has resolved that:

- The present system of waste collection and the transfer stations are working well;
- The cost to users and ratepayers of the present system appears to provide value for money and is considerably below that in other areas of New Zealand;
- The Board supports any initiative that will result in the establishment of a transfer station at Rotoma, Rotoehu or eastern Rotoiti;

It is of concern that there is no transfer station in this area but the fact remains that the various proposals put forward by RDC have been rejected for one reason or another. These proposals including I believe two under the Resource Management Act, have cost us a large amount of money and Council has resolved to take no further action on this matter until the Community itself can come up with a suitable site that will not attract objections and that can be expected to proceed.

I understand the community at Lake Rotoma is currently seeking local support for a proposed site and it is to be hoped that this will be successful.

- The Board does not support any proposal for an annual inorganic kerbside collection;

Recent experience in Waitakere has highlighted some of the problems associated with these collections with rubbish being 'picked over' and spread around by interested people, and added to by non-residents and even commercial operators. Recent photo's in the New Zealand Herald demonstrated the widely spread mess that can result, and which could possibly be worse in our area with non-residents potentially putting rubbish out some days before a scheduled collection.

On the positive side, the Community at Lake Okareka recently organised a private collection through I understand Waste Management, who provided a skip bin one morning and picked it up again the same afternoon giving residents the opportunity to dispose of their inorganic (and probably other) waste throughout the day. This sort of activity can be timed to meet an identified need and will not result in a plusage on all rates for a regular and ongoing arrangement with Council.

- The disposal of noxious weeds should be encouraged at transfer stations;
- RDC branded rubbish bags should be accepted free of charge at transfer stations during normal opening hours providing a reasonable amount of recycling is undertaken at the same time;
- Recycling bins should be placed at various locations within the Community but there needs to be adequate supervision to prevent abuse;
- The Board would support an initiative to vary the opening hours of individual transfer stations in accord with the wishes of an affected community.

Since the Board deliberated on these issues, a further idea has been floated to cease delivering the perceived 'free' RDC branded rubbish bags to ratepayers each year. The Board has not discussed or formed an opinion on this issue and notes that at this stage, it is an idea that has been floated for discussion.

Karen to background??
Show of hands?

RDC's Waste Minimisation Sub-Committee will report back to Council by the end of March and in time for its recommendations to be included in its 2009/10 annual plan and the 2009/19 ten year plan. Further submissions on any of these issues including the annual delivery of rubbish bags can be made to these proposals during the annual plan process in March/April.

Signage

There have been discussions recently regarding the apparently random nature of signage that has been placed at various locations around our lakes by our various authorities. In an effort to tidy this up, Council has been working on a kiosk type design for signage that may eventually be used at appropriate locations within the Community.

I am pleased to advise that the first kiosk sign has recently been erected at the landing ramp at Lake Okareka. I personally haven't seen it yet but I understand it's looking pretty good. If you have an opinion on signage, I would invite you to visit Lake Okareka, check the new sign out, and let's know your thoughts.

Okere Falls Control Gates

In October 1982 gates were installed at Okere Falls in order to control the level of Lake Rotoiti. Since that time they have generally been successful in maintaining the lake level within an operational range of 150 mm (or roughly six inches). This has provided a number of benefits including reduced flooding and access to jetties and boat sheds.

In June 2010 the consent for these control gates (and the Ohau Channel weir) are due to expire and EBOP is expected to make a consent application for the continued operation of these structures in late 2009.

It is important to recognise that there are strongly held conflicting views about the continuing operation of the Okere Falls control gates and, with a clearly signalled request already received that the gates should be removed, there can be no presumption that the gates will remain. An additional complicating issue is that at the time the control gates were installed in 1982, a considerable amount of rock was removed to facilitate construction. Removal of the gates accordingly has the potential to leave the Lake's outlet permanently altered from its original contour, the results of which we can only speculate on at this point in time.

To my mind this situation has the potential to become an issue of major concern and may well occupy the minds of this Society and the residents of Lake Rotoiti over the next year or so. I don't believe any of us can afford to leave this issue to just take its course. If this issue is of concern to you, I believe you will each need to make your views known in an appropriate way and at the appropriate time.

Bus Trip

Following the successful bus trip of the Lakes Community over two days in June last year, the Community Board plans to repeat the tour this year. Passengers on the bus will include Community Board members, a number of councillors and council officers as appropriate.

The purpose of the trip is for Council to come to you in very a practical way to look at your concerns and discuss your issues and possible solutions with you and/or your group on site. The Board will follow up as appropriate with RDC or other relevant authority to seek satisfaction.

If you, or your local community would like to meet the bus tour at a place of your choosing, please contact the committee of this Society, myself or any member of the Community Board so we can make the necessary arrangements.

The bus plans to visit Rotoiti, Rotoehu and Rotoma on March 12th this year, and will visit the communities of Tarawera and Okareka two days earlier on March 10th. We look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you on the 12th March.

Community Board Meetings

The Board will hold eight meetings throughout the year with the first meeting scheduled for 7.00 pm on Thursday the 12th February at the Lake Rotoma Fire Station hall. Subsequent meetings will alternate between Rotorua District Council and various locations within the Community. A meeting will be held at Lake Rotoiti (probably the Duxton hotel) at 7.00 pm on Thursday the 6th August.

All Board meetings will commence with a community forum which is an opportunity for you to come along and discuss any issues you may have with the Board. The procedure at the community forums' is pretty informal and provides you with an opportunity to come along and have your say. There are generally councillors and Council officers in attendance and your concerns will at the least be passed on to Council and relevant committees for their consideration.

All Board meetings are public meetings and you are welcome to attend and speak at the forum of any meeting. You do not need to wait until the Board next meets in your area.

If you would like to be heard at one of our forums or be met on our bus trip, please let us know beforehand. We can't do much to help with your problem unless we know about it. We invite you to take the opportunity to talk to us.

Thankyou

Questions