

THE 2004 NEW ZEALAND POST MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
ENTRY – QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

Chief Executive Duncan Field  
THE NEW ZEALAND POST COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AWARD

**OPTIONS 2020**



**1. Why did we do this project and how did it further the Council's vision and strategic direction?**

In 2001 the Queenstown Lakes District was a community under immense pressure, intrinsically linked to growth. The Council recognised the urgent need to engage the community and undertook workshops throughout the district, taking a workshop road show of localised and global issues to each of our smaller communities over a period of two years. The workshops were completed this year with over 1300 members of our community taking part. The workshops told us the outcomes desired by our community but the Council recognised that was only the first step. We needed to decide how we would address these goals and bed that information into our future strategic planning, and so it could dovetail neatly into our first Council Community Plan, adopted in June. The project was named Options 2020.

It followed four simple steps.

1. The Council extended growth rates 20 years into the future to give us a clear picture of where the trends would lead us.
2. We drew out the main consequences of that growth.
3. We assembled a set of growth management tools that were possible under New Zealand legislation, to deal with the consequences.
4. We developed a strong communication strategy and took this information to the community to get feedback on what set of tools would work best in meeting the community outcomes developed in the earlier workshops.

The result is a clear and sturdy set of choices that will guide this community strategically into the future.

**2. How did we employ effective project management techniques?**

There was limited budget for this project, therefore the project was managed jointly by two key Council staff members, each bringing a very different perception to Options 2020. Our strategy and planning manager sourced and coordinated the collation and development of the necessary information and projections. The Council was able to use the same consultant that had been contracted for the earlier 2020 workshop process. This was a logical and financially beneficial choice. The main focus on this project was

to lead the Council and the community to a robust set of growth related consequences and options. Our communications manager developed a strategy to re-engage a community grappling with the new era of consultation and the “not another workshop” syndrome. Both managers worked together towards a message that was easily understood, engaging, comprehensive and non-selective. The timeframe, which included set deadlines and communication strategy milestones, was formally tabled at a full Council meeting. This placed the process into the public arena for full scrutiny and accountability. The project was further subject to regular intensive review on three levels: within the core team; with the chief executive and mayor; and finally with the elected members. This system kept the project on time and on budget.



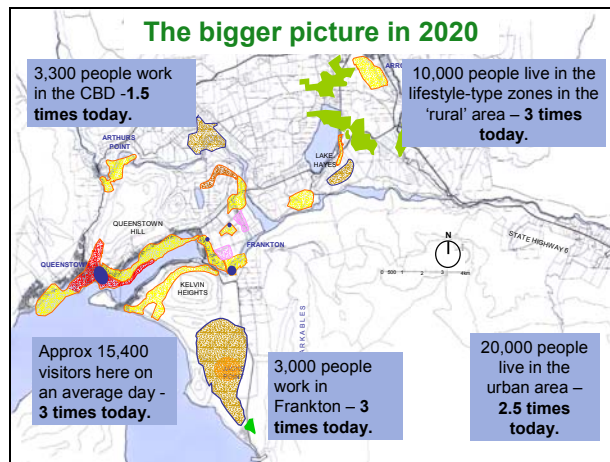
Options 2020 Power Point

**3.How did we encourage a participatory approach in communicating with and getting buy-in from stakeholders associated with the project?**

The Council developed some powerful key phrases during the project, designed to catch the attention of our community and draw them into the process (see below). A strong and engaging look was created that, due to the success and positivity of the campaign has since been further incorporated to flow through to link Options 2020 into the Council Community Plan documents. The imagery was deliberately unique and a complete step away from previous Council campaigns to promote the idea that this was something new for the community to take a fresh look at. It focused on the concept that we hold our future in our hands and that we must in turn have a future to hand down to future generations. (see appendix) The Council undertook its most comprehensive and unique communications strategy to date, with minimal expenditure. We brought together original members of community steering committees for briefings to assist in disseminating information into the community. We developed a simple resource kit and distributed it to every community group and organisation in our listings. In addition copies of the kit were distributed to senior high school students in Queenstown and Wanaka. Presentations were given to Community Association meetings and senior high school students. Brochures, individualised for Wanaka and Queenstown, were distributed to every household in the district and sent to every out of town ratepayer. A special edition of the Council’s newsletter Scuttlebutt was created to reflect the campaign on the front cover and distributed widely. All information was placed on the Council website. A radio campaign was undertaken and a series of media releases and media opportunities were planned and successfully executed. Finally a striking poster was designed and placed in supermarkets, schools, clubrooms, retail outlets and shops.

The workshops were set in order to create options for different members of the community with both weekday evening workshops and Saturday morning workshops. The workshops were deliberately kept to a maximum of two hours, with a further hour of general discussion allowed for on the Saturday mornings. It should be noted that the entire campaign was developed 'in-house' by the Council's communications manager.

- **62,000 reasons to find out more**
- **six hours for 16 years**
- **could your children afford to live here?**



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#### 4. How was our project innovative and original?

The Queenstown Lakes District is entirely unique. It is the fastest growing district in New Zealand. Our community had told us they wanted this district to retain its beauty, and be a diverse place for all people of all ages and incomes. They also told us they wanted the Council to control growth. This included the opinion that the Council should stop growth. The Council was also dealing with the issue that our landscapes are our economy. Some major decisions, several resulting in variations to the district plan, needed to be undertaken. It was critical that the growth option study and the subsequent Options 2020 project received full community backing. Therefore the project had to push new boundaries in terms of projections, growth related consequences and consultation. Limitations on the project included a tight time frame, workshop burn out, community derision on the subject of growth and limited Council resources. It utilised and harnessed the community's high interest in the issues surrounding growth and took it on an information journey starting with Community Plans. It focused on interpreting the information into digestible, comprehensive and engaging material. This in turn created a sense in the community that the Council was on the 'right track', that the district strategic future was 'in hand'. It was innovative in that the forum was also used to double check the community outcomes and relate this back to a very real project; the choices surrounding growth management.

### 5. Were the results successful?

At the beginning of each of the workshop sessions it was clear that the opinion of the community was diverse and somewhat divided. But the community came and in stronger numbers than anticipated. The attendees also reflected diverse ages and backgrounds, which in turn reflected a good result from a diverse communication strategy. From a community relationship perspective each session ended with rousing and united applause. The result is that volume four of the Council Community Plan has been dedicated to growth forecasting, developed through the growth options study process and resulting directly from the Options 2020 project. The plan itself is underpinned by the analysis produced. The Council has received positive community feedback as a result of the project and this was reflected in a highly receptive response to the Council Community Plan.



Options 2020 power point

### 6. Did we do the right thing?

There is no question that the resource invested into this project has paid huge dividends for the Council and the Community. Not only did the project bring critical community buy-in for some major strategic decisions but it also created a new positivity in Council/Community relations.



**SUPPORTING APPENDIX**

- 1. Options 2020 brochure.**
- 2. Scuttlebutt**
- 3. Resource Kit Cover**
- 4. Council Community Plan Cover**