



caring about you & your environment

Report 02.634

File: E/5/1/59

8 October 2002

[ENV Report 02.634 HB.slh]

Report to Environment Committee
from Councillor Hugh Barr

Resource Management Law Association Conference, Queenstown September 12 - 14

I attended this with Nigel Corry, for WRC. There were over 200 people, mainly District/City council employees, lawyers, consultants, government servants, tangata whenua, judges, entertainers and a small number of councillors.

1. WRC Highly Commended in Awards

WRC was one of 5 entrants for the RMLA's Award. We received one of two Highly Commended awards for our procedures for monitoring and enforcement of consents. Environment Waikato won for its proposed initiatives for improving stream water quality. We should all keep an eye out for how well their initiative succeeds.

2. Thought Provoking Addresses

- Associate Prof. **Barry Barton** (Waikato) reminding us of the legitimacy of planning, regulation and rules, for environmental management, and that private property rights have never been paramount over the environment in society.
- **Barry Carbon**, Secretary for the Environment: His desire to get started on creating a better framework for sustainable development - guidelines for quality of life, national standards etc.
- The **session on Aquaculture**: The "gold rush" for coastal sites has been fuelled by no rentals and no upper limits on size! There is a direct conflict with commercial and recreational fishing. The industry should move from expansive claims for large scale growth, to the need for a better knowledge base (it's coming but probably a lot to learn), to possibly, a productive and sustainable industry. In the outer Marlborough Sounds, the open spaces dolphins used most frequently were where people had bid for aquaculture sites. Sites are under the RMA, but management is under the Fisheries Act, a split that causes schizophrenia. Aquaculture creates economic growth in some regions now, has significant potential in favourable regions. Wellington?

- **Clive Geddes, new Mayor** of Queenstown Lakes DC: Clive replaced Warren Cooper last election. Only 13,000 ratepayers, and the landscape acknowledged by most as their greatest asset. Most citizens wanting to live there because of the landscape. Coping with 4% annual population growth, and associated infrastructure provision is a strain. He has started a study with the tourist industry of where the doubling of tourists in the next ten years will go. Some natural attractions e.g. Shotover Jet, are at capacity now.
- The Workshop on the **changing landscape of the Wakatipu Basin**: Infill luxury houses, two-acre blocks and hobby absentee overseas owners, and the demise of purposeful farming.
- **Rivers and Water Allocation Workshop**: NZ freshwater fishing is very much about river and stream habitat protection, to increase yield, compared with harvest management at sea. Flood control is still very much single objective management, ignoring wider management concerns. Water short Central Otago, with 150 years of conflict in water allocation (gold mining, irrigation, recreation, ecology, hydro) leads NZ in some ways e.g. water storage for irrigation.
- **Jim Guthrie** on how to **verify** indigenous peoples evidence.
- **Morgan Williams on NZ's Progress toward sustainability** since Rio: No National Policy Statements, no targets, no wonder little progress. The RMA hasn't helped sustainability. Neutral taxes on "bads" will encourage sustainable behaviour.

3. **Comments**

Little opportunity for dialog at the sessions. But useful opportunities to share views informally. A bit of a Jim Hopkins infotainment circus, but friendly and rewarding.

4. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) *receives the report; and*
- (2) *notes the contents.*

Report prepared by:

HUGH BARR
Councillor