

Ōpōtiki Transformation

On location Briefing for Officials – March 28, 2012

An on-location briefing and discussion was convened by Collaboration Bay of Plenty (CoBoP), along with Whakatōhea Maori Trust Board and Ōpōtiki District Council. The fifty participants included officials from eighteen Ministries and government agencies, five units of local government, three tertiaries, local Iwi and Opotiki District Council representatives. Presentations made to the briefing are all available at “ Opotiki Transformation” <http://www.cobop.govt.nz/CoBoPResources/EconomicDevelopment.aspx>.



Collaboration Bay of Plenty (CoBoP) (see www.cobop.govt.nz) supports community-led initiatives which aspire to increase prosperity and wellbeing. The network has been involved alongside Ōpōtiki efforts for some years.

Whakatōhea Iwi, the majority shareholders of Eastern Seafarms Ltd, are leading the development and commercialisation of a nationally and regionally significant marine farm. It is a cornerstone of the Bay of Connections Regional Aquaculture Strategy. Whakatōhea shared progress on the current commercial trials for mussels at the marine farm site, and indicate the anticipated scale and timing of the development.

With strong local endorsement, Ōpōtiki District Council is leading the Ōpōtiki Harbour development. This will enable marine farm produce to be processed locally, and the creation of new jobs and related benefits. Ōpōtiki District Council updated participants on both the planning for the Harbour Development, and the outcomes of a Social Impact Assessment based on the draft commercial business plan for the Marine Farm.

These briefings were strongly supplemented by two other presentations. One focussed on the Bay of Connections Regional Aquaculture Strategy. The other was made the Bay of Plenty’s Inaugural Chair in Marine Sciences, Professor Chris Battershill (Waikato University). He briefed the meeting on emerging commercial futures for aquaculture, and the prime position which the region is in.

Focussed discussion followed, with an emphasis on identifying points of leverage, where better outcomes and faster progress will require interagency attention. CoBoP Chair Rob Williams (CE Taupo District Council) concluded with a strong set of closing comments. He emphasised how critical a strong business case will be and the importance of every agency putting its best work in to support this. He identified common barriers, and solutions to those; and he endorsed the high level of collective energy and desire for community progress held by public service agencies in the region.



Whakatōhea Maori Trust Board