



R E P O R T	TO	PLANNING & FINANCE COMMITTEE
	FROM	Marina van Steenberg, Supervisor- Resource Management Services
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	SUBJECT	PLANNING CONFERENCE

The 2004 Planning Conference was held in Invercargill from 5th to 7th May.

The theme of the Conference was: "The World and our Oyster". This was described more fully as: "New Zealand as a Country and Southland in particular contains many special environments, which can be seen as 'pearls' within our environment "the oyster". The conference explored the sub themes of working together, RMA issues and planning for the future.

The keynote speakers were Dr Michael Tobias and Rod Oram.

Dr Tobias focused on New Zealand's "clean green" image and whether this is a myth or reality, focusing on matters such as habitat and biodiversity conservation, animal rights, energy sustainability, human quality of life, respect for indigenous culture, legal protections for the environment and planning protocols for future generations. In his view the "clean green" image is a myth. As an example he stated that while farming of animals may be more natural in New Zealand than in some overseas areas it should really not happen at all.

Mr Oram discussed New Zealand and global economics, business trends and economic development policy. He also spoke on entrepreneurship and innovation, technology trends and issues such as globalization, sustainable development, genetic modification, corporate governance and ethical investment.

Workshop sessions occupied the Friday of the Conference, with a range of topics covered including the Long Term Council Community Plans, Managing land use and its effects on water quality, Current RMA issues, Tourism, Iwi Issues and the Relationship between Central and Local Government.

The mobile workshops on Thursday offered a range of destinations and issues to consider.

The Invercargill and Bluff workshop looked at an example of how big industry address national and local planning issues (Tiwai Aluminium smelter), the challenges faced by Bluff Community from significant social and economic changes, the responses to the development pressures in the Otatara suburb of Invercargill which is situated on a unique dune system containing remnants of nationally significant totara – matai forest and the wealth of heritage buildings in the city itself.

The Queenstown workshop considered the changes being experienced by the rural communities of the Southland Plains and issues of effluent disposal (sewage) in those communities, and the immense pressure for development in the Queenstown and Frankton area.

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