

05 March 2014

Re: APA Architects

This letter sets out Grow Rotorua's experience of working with APA Architects. Grow Rotorua Ltd (GRL) is a CCO of Rotorua District Council and whose purpose is to identify economic growth opportunities and attract investment and jobs into the district.

A key project for GRL is to facilitate establishment of a Lakes Freshwater Centre in Rotorua. This Centre builds on the \$235m allocated to cleaning up Rotorua lakes and is a significant growth and branding opportunity for Rotorua, Te Arawa, the region and New Zealand.

The vision for the Centre is that it would be an iconic attraction that included science research, showcasing the lakes, education, consultancy, testing laboratories, cafe and conference venue. There is also a significant opportunity for the Centre to assist CBD revitalisation and lakefront objectives and most importantly as a physical expression of Te Arawa mana and achievements.

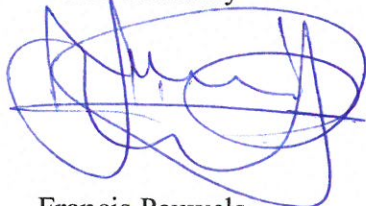
GRL engaged APA because we needed a concept building design that could address all those elements and of itself excite a diverse group of stakeholders to engage in realising the vision. This group includes Waikato University, Waiariki Polytechnic, Scion, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, RDC, Te Arawa Lakes Trust and Ministry for the Environment.

APA captured all those diverse elements perfectly and created a video with fly-through graphics and sound overlay which has impressed all the stakeholders and raised the potential of what the Centre could be. APA has a unique skill in being able to tap into the cultural and historical significance of the people and purpose of the Centre. Further they translated that understanding into a conceptual design which has not been seen before in New Zealand.

The design included all the elements requested above and spaces were created which address those diverse requirements including laboratories, café, displays, aquarium, teaching and conference room. Strong consideration was given through the concept phase as to functionality for purpose, build-ability and the construction drawings phase. We particularly wanted an emphasis on Maori culture and history, local timber/stone materials and relationship with its prime purpose – clean lakes.

I would thoroughly recommend APA as clever 'outside the square' thinkers who in this case were absolutely on target with what was hoped for. The result speaks to Rotorua, the lakes, Maori culture, innovative contemporary NZ design, use of timber and synergies with surroundings. It will be an Icon all Rotorua can be proud of.

Yours sincerely



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