

MEDIA RELEASE
December 2009
Opotiki District Council

OPOTIKI WATER PARK DEVELOPMENT

An example of a community which does not have a lot of resources pulling together and optimising its strengths and togetherness.

Three months ago, the Opotiki Water Park was just an idea. Now it's a reality - one that is attracting use by dozens of local and visiting children on a daily basis, especially when the summer sun is blazing, as it has been in recent weeks.

The water park development concept emanated from on-going difficulties between children using the Opotiki wharf and boaties trying to retrieve and launch their craft in that locality, and the desire to replace the mega mudslide with another major feature.

Opotiki District Council chief executive Vaughan Payne says one of the strengths of the region is the water, both in the multitude of rivers and the coastline.

"Local kids have always enjoyed playing in our local rivers. This particular stretch of water is popular because it is close to town and being tidal, it's constantly changing. There is a two to three metre change in the water level at that locality."

Once the decision was made (late October) to decommission the mega mudslide, due to long-term land tenure uncertainties and operational issues, the call went out to get the new water park built - and opened before Christmas!

Three different approvals were required, in relation to the RMA, Building Act and building structures in a flood zone. In three weeks concept and design plans were developed and consents applied for. Then materials were ordered, construction undertaken and the water park commissioned.

Environment Bay of Plenty came to the party, with rapid processing of its consent, and by undertaking the river protection works which had not been scheduled until 2010.

Construction took just six days, with a huge effort from everyone involved – Waiotahi Contractors, Multiskilled Builders, Hayes Engineering, and Tracks Concrete.

Mayor John Forbes, deputy Mayor Selby Fisher and Councillor Barry Howe christened the new water park two days before Christmas, by launching themselves off the swings and straight into the Otara River.

The new water park consists of six components - two swimming jetties, two swings, a set of steps to allow users to get out of the river, slides and a pontoon in the middle of the river.

Vaughan says one of the successes of the water park has been that it is over deep water - two metres plus. The kids just love this.

“This project is an example of the ability of rural towns to get things done with a minimum of fuss, while complying with all the requirements in every way,” the Council CE says.

“With goodwill and a big effort from everyone involved, we have taken this project from concept to completion in exactly two months. We have just got on and made it happen, and all without ending up in the Environment Court.

“Environment Bay of Plenty and all contractors and staff have gone the extra mile because they knew we wanted it in place before Christmas. It’s been a pretty amazing effort all round.

“We have turned an idea into a reality, with no consultants. All the design work and project management has been done in-house. We’ve just utilised the resources that exist in a community such as ours.”

The total cost of the water park is expected to come in at around \$30,000 and the Opotiki District Council is looking at further enhancements in future years, building on the strong relationship that has always existed between its community and the major waterways in its area.

For further information contact:-

Vaughan Payne, Chief Executive, Opotiki District Council
Phone 07 315 3030

