



Boffa Miskell



### District plans under review

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Second-generation district plans are on the agenda for many councils, including Ashburton District Council.

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### Landscape award winners

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Boffa Miskell projects have been recognized with multiple awards, including the Supreme Award, by the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.

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### Innovation in planning recognised

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Creativity and innovation in two Boffa Miskell-led projects have earned top awards from the New Zealand Planning Institute.

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## Editorial: Integration of our planning services

I am delighted to have recently taken on the role of Boffa Miskell's Director:: Planning; joining Rachel de Lambert, Director:: Design and Stephen Fuller, Director:: Science and Technology. Our roles, as technical directors, will be to lead the design, planning and science/technology threads that are fundamental to Boffa Miskell's range of services, helping to strengthen each thread while ensuring they interweave smoothly across the company.

My role will be broad. It encompasses the quality and reputation of the work we undertake within our planning services; be it strategy development, policy analysis, plan writing and implementation, management plans, consenting services or environmental impact assessments – integrating these across the company.

A wide range of people within Boffa Miskell work together to provide our planning services. As well as our diverse planning skills, we bring expertise in landscape planning, ecology, urban design and digital technology. This breadth across the company is, I believe, a strength – it stimulates the integrative thinking required to understand that

no planning project exists in isolation. With this in mind, we need to work collaboratively alongside our clients and colleagues, towards planning solutions that are innovative and yet effective.

This newsletter shows some of the diverse ways in which we use our integrated planning skills. It also celebrates a number of awards that Boffa Miskell-led projects have recently received. We are proud to have been so highly recognised by our professional peers. At the same time, we challenge ourselves to continue to live up to these high standards, and to keep improving the quality and effectiveness of planning services to our clients.

**Sarah Dawson**, Director

## High voltage matters

The National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities (NES), which became effective in January 2010, are the first under the RMA to set a complete consenting framework applicable throughout the country.

The standards are a key part in giving effect to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (NPS) 2008, which is also given effect to through the consenting and designation process.

Boffa Miskell assisted Transpower and the Ministry for the Environment in developing the standards and in preparing guidance notes on NPS implementation for councils.

Robert Schofield, Boffa Miskell planner, says the project had to be very comprehensive to achieve the Ministry's objective of providing a consistent set of standards and consenting requirements across New Zealand.

"That meant developing a set of parameters and controls that would work in different contexts around the country. The rules had to make provision for maintenance and minor upgrading activities, taking into account the potential environmental effects within a wide variety of environmental settings."

In terms of plans and policy statements, local authorities are required to give effect to the NPS by March 2012. To assist local authorities, Boffa Miskell recently helped the Ministry for the Environment in a series of nationwide workshops on implementing the standards and the NPS.

**CONTACT: Robert Schofield** [robert.schofield@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:robert.schofield@boffamiskell.co.nz)

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COVER: St Patrick's Square, water feature detail (see more P4).

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by Sam Mahayni.

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If you wish to receive your copy electronically please email Dianne Skelton at [info@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:info@boffamiskell.co.nz)

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▲ The standards provide for maintenance and minor upgrading of transmission lines.



# District Plans: the Second Generation

▲ Management of the Canterbury Plains rural environment was an issue addressed in the proposed district plan.

The Ashburton District Plan Review was publicly notified in April 2010, marking another milestone in the emergence of New Zealand’s second generation district plans.

Boffa Miskell has managed the plan review project for the Ashburton District Council for more than two years, drawing on previous experience gained in guiding the preparation of the Wairarapa Combined District Plan which was one of the first second generation plans in the country (see ‘Top Planning Practice Awards’ P.8). Ken Gimblett, the Boffa Miskell planner who led the Ashburton project, says that experience helped with scoping and deciding how the review process would work.

“Second generation plans will inevitably be different from the first, due to the lessons learnt nationally and, of course, the changes dictated by the 2009 amendments to the Resource Management Act.”

## District issues

In Ashburton district many issues revolve around how to manage the rural hinterland to support the all-important farming economy and how to manage the growth and development of the district’s varied urban settlements. These activities are inherently bound up in managing water resources and the district’s unique natural features.

Urban design issues have been important, despite the district’s largely rural base.

“There’s much greater recognition of urban design now, including its relevance in small and medium-sized towns,” Ken says. “Second generation plans are likely to reflect that.”

Boffa Miskell had earlier led an urban planning project, in which the district’s communities looked ahead and visualised the way they wanted their towns and villages to develop (see *Boffa Miskell NEWS 12*). The resulting development plans have fed usefully into the district plan review.

## New ways to communicate

Gone are the days of purely paper-based district plans; electronic versions are now provided online by most district councils. Yet, those online versions are frequently little more than a series of separate and unlinked chapters.

Boffa Miskell took this to the next level by designing the whole Ashburton document for interactive use, linking custom-designed mapping and graphics as well as the text so that users can easily navigate their way between inter-related sections.

## Approaches to plan reviews

Many district councils will be contemplating their own district plan reviews; a possibly daunting prospect for those with limited resources.

Boffa Miskell planner, Robert Schofield, says full plan reviews are not the only option, and he has advised councils about various other ways of tackling plan reviews.

“Rolling reviews are a real option for councils with limited resources. They can choose to review particular issues or sections of their plans, for instance, and a series of these can be implemented over a period of years within available budgets.”

**CONTACT: Ken Gimblett [ken.gimblett@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:ken.gimblett@boffamiskell.co.nz)**

## ▼ Analysis of existing land uses informed provisions for future development of the district’s settlements.



# Landscape award winners

Boffa Miskell has won the George Malcolm Supreme Award and twelve further awards in the 2010 New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects' 2010 Resene Pride of Place Awards.

The biannual awards, which recognise the best examples of landscape architecture in New Zealand attracted a record 127 entries.

## St Patrick's Square – Supreme Award Winner

- NZILA George Malcolm Supreme Award
- Gold Award, Landscape Design - Rural/Park/Recreational Category

St. Patrick's Square, home to St. Patrick's Cathedral, is a much-loved open space in Auckland's central business district. In 2007, Auckland City Council engaged Boffa Miskell to design and supervise the implementation of a major upgrade of the square, which was completed in 2009.

The judges described the project as “superb”, commenting that the dominating presence of the church had been skillfully handled with paving that “grounded the church and connected it into the square, giving the church breathing space and respect.” They also noted that water had provided a “unifying design element” and the spatial arrangement had provided for all users, with clearly defined circulation routes.

Tania Loveridge, Auckland City Council Project Manager, says the council is thrilled with the results.

“Feedback from St Patrick's Cathedral on the number of people enjoying the site is testament to how the square's popularity has grown since the upgrade. The design has created something special and it's great for this to have been recognised with the award.

“The success of the project has really been achieved through excellent relationships. By taking a partnering approach, and by working to a common vision, we were able to deliver a fantastic project. The Boffa Miskell design team was a key part of that partnering and always held a clear design vision for the project. They often challenged us as clients, but were also willing to listen, and we think this allowed for the project outcomes we sought to be achieved.”

Boffa Miskell landscape architect, John Potter, who led the design team, says the Auckland City Council, as the client, played a major role in the project's success.

“The Council had a very clear vision of the potential of St Patrick's Square to function as an ‘urban oasis’ within the CBD, and they facilitated and encouraged collaborative working relationships between the project team, contractor and stakeholders to fully deliver on this vision.”

**CONTACT: John Potter**  
[john.potter@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:john.potter@boffamiskell.co.nz)



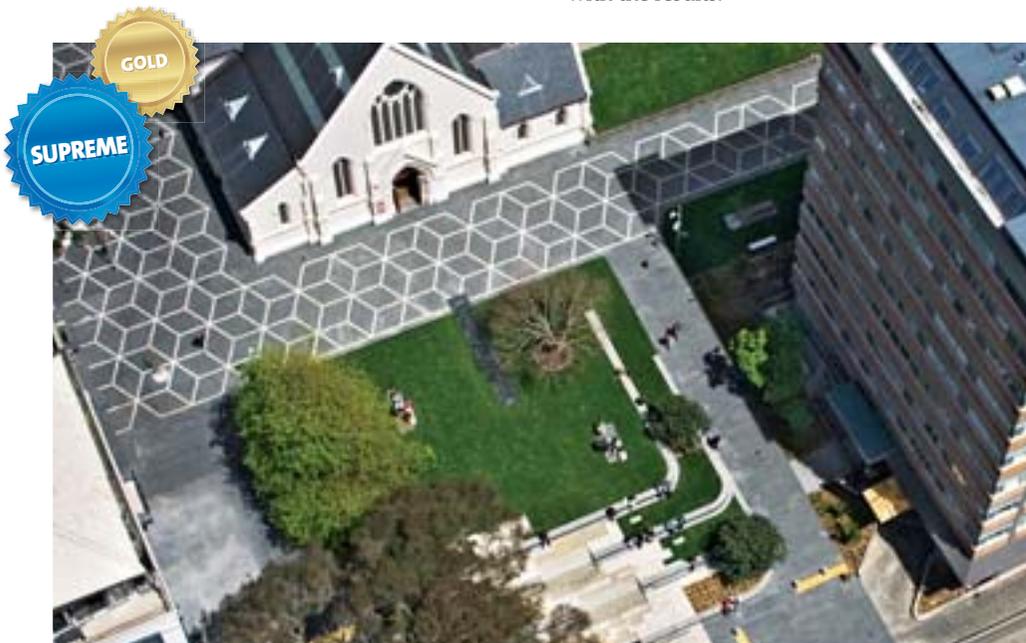
## ARC Stormwater Management Guidelines and Integration of Low Impact Design

- Gold Award, Landscape Planning – Communication & Promotion Category
- Sustainability Award of Excellence

Boffa Miskell produced the Guideline GDo1, *Landscape and Ecology Values for Stormwater Management* and Technical Report TR2009/083, *The Integration of Low Impact Design, Urban Design and Urban Form* for the Auckland Regional Council, as part of the update to the council's suite of technical documents on stormwater management. Both publications advocate the use of natural systems and processes in urban development to manage stormwater and erosion.

The judges commended the thorough research and considered the guidelines “to exemplify clarity of presentation and technical merit.”

**CONTACT: Mark Lewis**  
[mark.lewis@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:mark.lewis@boffamiskell.co.nz)





### St John's College Library Entrance

- Gold Award, Landscape Design – Commercial/Industrial/Institutional Design Category

Boffa Miskell has carried out a series of design and redevelopment projects for the St John's Theological College in Auckland over a number of years; most recently, redesigning the entrance area to the John Kinder Library, which was being refurbished by Xsite Architects. The design brief required the new entrance to better reflect the library's

important role within the college, to include outdoor seating for library users and to work with the library architects to ensure the design was complementary to the refurbishment.

The judges described the project as “a skilful and mature solution” which ensured “good connectivity” with “natural linkages to the required seating and contemplative spaces” and “exceptionally well handled” paving.

**CONTACT: Sarah Collins**  
sarah.collins@boffamiskell.co.nz



### The Ring : Public Space Armatures for a 21st Century Auckland

- Silver Award, Landscape Design – Visionary Landscapes Category

This visionary concept was developed by Boffa Miskell landscape architect and urban designer, Stuart Houghton, as his thesis for his Master in Architecture in Urban Design at the UCL Bartlett School of Architecture in London. Stuart, who will return to New Zealand in August 2010 received a Boffa Miskell Study Award to assist with his studies.

‘The Ring’ would replace the existing motorways with a ring of public space around central Auckland, based on restored gully systems, that would support structural transformation of the city.

The judges described it as “an original, creative and entirely believable solution to the potentialities of a future urban landscape not dominated by cars.”

**CONTACT: Stuart Houghton**  
stuart.houghton@boffamiskell.co.nz



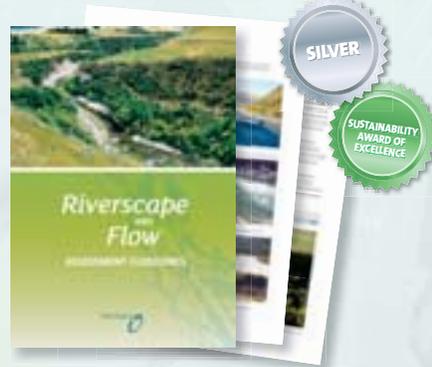
### Christchurch Central City Lanes Design Guide

- Silver Award Landscape Planning – Landscape Planning & Environmental Studies Category

Through its Central City Revitalisation Strategy and its Lanes Plan, the Christchurch City Council had recognised the potential for enriching and enlivening its central city by developing the CBD's network of 'back door' service lanes. Boffa Miskell helped guide the Plan's implementation through the production of the design guide.

The judges considered it “a comprehensive report with extensive analytical content that promotes good urban design and connectivity through design guidelines and a prioritisation plan.”

**CONTACT: Tim Church**  
tim.church@boffamiskell.co.nz



### Riverscape and Flow Assessment Guide

- Silver Award, Landscape Planning – Research Category

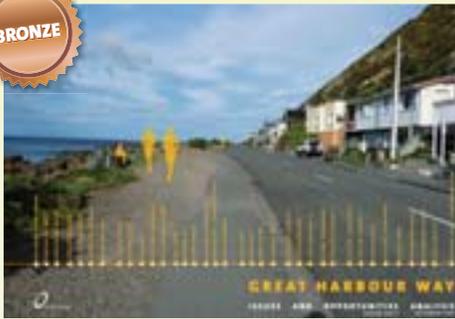
- Sustainability Award of Excellence

Boffa Miskell was subcontracted by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) to address the issue of river flow perceptions and landscape as part of a FRST-funded research programme called the 'Water Allocation and Protection of Instream Values'. The guidelines, which were prepared to assist those assessing river landscapes, are the final output from the landscape component of this research project.

The judges considered it to be a “highly relevant and topical” project that will be a “useful tool for landscape architects”. They noted its “strong specialist and technical merit”.

Boffa Miskell landscape planners, Yvonne Pfluger and Allan Rackham, and co-author NIWA ecologist, Scott Larned, published an article about the project in the international Journal of Landscape Ecology, Planning and Design, *Landscape and Urban Planning* in March (Vol 95, Issues 1-2). The journal aims to draw attention to the interrelated nature of problems posed by nature and human use of land, and emphasises ecological understanding and a multi-disciplinary approach to analysis, planning and design.

**CONTACT: Yvonne Pfluger**  
yvonne.pfluger@boffamiskell.co.nz



### The Great Harbour Way – Te Aranui o Poneke

- Bronze Award, Landscape Planning – Landscape Planning & Environmental Studies Category

Boffa Miskell was engaged by the Great Harbour Way Coalition to prepare this foundation study for developing a continuous 67-kilometre shared cycle and pedestrian route around the coastline of Wellington Harbour, Te Whanganui a Tara; – a complex task, given its location on a mostly narrow coastal strip, next to existing road and rail corridors, on land administered by numerous agencies.

The study included the development of a vision and objectives, an analysis of the planning and environmental framework, and analysis of issues and opportunities along the route.

It was, in the judges’ opinion, “a topical project that effectively coordinated the planning of a cycle and walkway route for a disparate group of clients through a variety of districts and terrain.”

**CONTACT: Boyden Evans**  
boyden.evans@boffamiskell.co.nz



### Bayside Stormwater Reserve

- Bronze Award, Landscape Design – Rural/ Park/Recreational Category

North Shore City Council engaged Boffa Miskell to prepare concepts and construction documentation to transform a concrete channel and degraded detention pond at Bayside Reserve into a naturalised stream channel and stormwater wetland. The project outcomes included improved stormwater management, enhanced landscape, ecology, and recreational values, and ongoing community support for downstream restoration activities on private land.

The judges considered it a “good solid design”.

**CONTACT: Mark Lewis**  
mark.lewis@boffamiskell.co.nz



### Tupare: Taranaki Regional Gardens Project

- Bronze Award, Landscape Design – Rural/ Park/Recreational Category

Since 2003, Boffa Miskell has assisted the Taranaki Regional Council with developing and implementing a comprehensive restoration and redevelopment strategy for Tupare, one of the heritage Taranaki Gardens. Boffa Miskell has worked collaboratively with the council on an ongoing basis, contributing project management, landscape planning, technical assessment, and conceptual and detailed design expertise.

The judges said it was great to see a landscape architect involved in a project of this nature. They considered the interventions they observed were “very good and well considered” and noted that “to respect the history and just slip in that simple layer, that adds without detracting, is good.”

**CONTACT: Steve Dunn**  
steve.dunn@boffamiskell.co.nz



### New Zealand Memorial Park

- Bronze Award, Landscape Design – Visionary Landscapes Category

‘Pukehau + lines of connection + memory’ was an entry in a competition run by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, in association with the Wellington City Council, for the design of a memorial park fronting the National War Museum and the Carillon in Wellington. The form of the proposed park, around the two axes, was developed in response to the contextual city relationships and landform.

The judges commented that the design “responds to and reflects the biophysical, historical and cultural elements inherent in the site and its surrounds in a contemporary manner and creates a new urban place for celebration and veneration.”

**CONTACT: Michael Hawes**  
michael.hawes@boffamiskell.co.nz



## The Piha Café

After four years of controversy, a new café opened in November 2009 in the beachside community of Piha, famed for its surf and wild coastline west of the Waitakere Ranges.

Replacing a former telephone exchange building, The Piha Café was granted resource consent as a non-complying activity within its residential zoning, following an appeal to the Environment Court.

Peter Kensington, Boffa Miskell landscape architect, assessed the landscape and visual effects of the proposal for the café owners, presented expert evidence and provided landscape design advice.

“The low-key, rugged character of the Piha settlement is enormously important to the local community and to visitors,” Peter says. “The café owners recognised that sense of place and we worked together, with architect Nick Dalton, to achieve a design that would be appropriate in the setting.”

Part-owner Andy Higgs, himself a local, says, “It fits in so well that people almost miss it!”

**CONTACT: Peter Kensington**  
peter.kensington@boffamiskell.co.nz

# Sponsorships and conferences

Every year Boffa Miskell supports, through participation and sponsorship, events that promote understanding or enhancement of the environment. This year has been no exception.

**NZ Wind Energy Association Conference; March, Palmerston North.** Boffa Miskell ecologist, **Stephen Fuller**, gave a paper entitled ‘Radar-assisted assessment of potential avian mortality at the proposed Taharoa Wind Farm’ and landscape architect **Frank Boffa** participated in a panel discussion on finding the balance between flexibility and certainty in resource consenting, relative to landscape-related issues.

**‘Landscape<sup>10</sup>: The Power of Landscape’, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects conference; April, Wellington.** Boffa Miskell sponsored the opening public lecture by New Zealand film director, Vincent Ward and Boffa Miskell landscape architect, **John Potter**,

presented a paper entitled ‘Civilised Streets, Civilised Cities’ about shared street design.

**Australia and New Zealand Young Planner ‘Raising the Bar’ conference; April, Christchurch.** Landscape architect **Frank Boffa** presented an overview of landscape assessment and landscape planning in New Zealand entitled ‘Landscape Assessment – Managing Landscape Change’ and suggested ways in which planners and landscape architects might work better together.

**National Wetland Restoration Symposium and ‘Stormwater 2010’, Water NZ: The New Zealand Water and Wastes Association conference; March & May, Rotorua.** Boffa Miskell was a sponsor of both events where Boffa Miskell landscape architect and ecologist, **Mark Lewis**, spoke about Boffa Miskell’s award-winning work for the Auckland Regional Council on integrating landscape and ecology values into stormwater management (see P.4).

## Landscape architect from the UK



Rebecca Hughes, a Fellow of the UK Landscape Institute, has joined Boffa Miskell from the United Kingdom. Specialising in landscape planning, Rebecca has worked for more than 25 years in environmental design, landscape assessment and landscape management,

including managing the national programme of landscape character assessment for all the land area of Scotland.

Rebecca says the landscape planning issues she has seen in New Zealand are similar to those in Scotland, such as how to manage the landscape and visual effects of wind farm development.

“New Zealand’s RMA is obviously different from Scotland’s legislative framework and both are evolving. However, there’s the same need for strategic landscape policy, as well as consistent approaches to landscape assessment.”

Rebecca finds the landscape character approach useful for both assessment of effects and landscape evaluation as it creates a comprehensive foundation for all communities of interest.

“All landscapes mean something to somebody; it’s not just about the jewels in the crown. Character assessment provides an extremely workable foundation for guiding landscape management.”

**CONTACT: Rebecca Hughes** rebecca.hughes@boffamiskell.co.nz



## Overseas connections

### Hydropower guidelines for Vietnamese rivers

Our sustainability advisor, Pene Burns, is the ‘international environmental specialist’ assisting a team of Vietnamese environmental specialists to write national guidelines on environmental impact assessment and operational management of hydropower schemes.

The client, the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade, is planning to develop several hundred hydropower schemes of less than 30MW in size over the next 20 years. The World Bank is assisting with funding the guidelines in order to improve the environmental outcomes of the proposed developments.

Boffa Miskell planner Rochelle Hardy and ecologist Vaughan Keesing are assisting Pene with preparing the guidelines and reviewing the work of the Vietnamese team. The guidelines should be published and in use in Vietnam by the end of 2010.

**CONTACT: Pene Burns** pene.burns@boffamiskell.co.nz

# Top planning practice awards recognise innovation

Two Boffa Miskell-led projects, the *Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan* and the *Christchurch Central City Residential Capacity Study*, respectively won the Nancy Northcroft Planning Practice Award and a planning practice 'Highly Commended' recognition in the New Zealand Planning Institute's 2010 awards.

Boffa Miskell shared the awards with its council clients, the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils and the Christchurch City Council.

## The Wairarapa Combined District Plan

The Nancy Northcroft Award is the Institute's highest award for excellence in planning practice and recognises "outstanding creativity and innovation". The judges said the *Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan* "demonstrates an outstanding achievement by the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils in effectively working together to prepare a single planning document to provide an integrated management framework."

Boffa Miskell has assisted the three councils since 2004 to prepare and implement the combined plan, which is now operative except for provisions relating to one outstanding appeal.

Robert Schofield, Boffa Miskell planner who has led the project, says sustained collaboration underpinned the project's success. "Despite elections part way through, all the three councils maintained their commitment to work together at both the political and officer levels. A high level of trust and open-mindedness also enabled innovation in a number of ways, including the way with which the community was consulted over contentious issues."

## Christchurch Central City Residential Capacity Study

In commending the *Christchurch Central City Residential Capacity Study*, the judges noted that "one of the greatest challenges for planning in New Zealand is understanding and visualising the implications of District Plan rules in the built environment."

They found the study to have demonstrated "a unique, creative and innovative planning tool, assisting to provide for better planning processes and the promotion of sustainable management and effective urban design."

The tool that Boffa Miskell developed was a computer model, which enables planners and urban designers to test, and visualise in 3-D, various development scenarios in Christchurch's central city, taking into account planning rules and development probability factors. The Christchurch City Council is using the model for a range of applications including developing new planning rules and better informing discussion about long-term development needs.

## CONTACTS:

(Wairarapa project) Robert Schofield [robert.schofield@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:robert.schofield@boffamiskell.co.nz)  
(Christchurch project) Stephanie Styles [stephanie.styles@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:stephanie.styles@boffamiskell.co.nz)



▲ Issues addressed in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan included managing rural land uses.

▼ GIS was used to create 3-D scenario models of the central city in the Christchurch residential capacity project.



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WEBSITE: [www.boffamiskell.co.nz](http://www.boffamiskell.co.nz)

EMAIL: [info@boffamiskell.co.nz](mailto:info@boffamiskell.co.nz)

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## AUCKLAND

Level 3, IBM Centre,  
82 Wyndham Street,  
AUCKLAND 1010  
PO Box 91 250, AUCKLAND 1142  
PH: 09-358-2526  
FAX: 09-359-5300

## TAURANGA

Level 2, 116 on Cameron,  
cnr Cameron Road and Wharf Street,  
TAURANGA 3110  
PO Box 13 373, TAURANGA 3141  
PH: 07-571-5511  
FAX: 07-571-3333

## WELLINGTON

Level 9, 190 Willis Street,  
WELLINGTON 6011  
PO Box 11 340, WELLINGTON 6142  
PH: 04-385-9315  
FAX: 04-384-3089

## CHRISTCHURCH

Level 6, Brannigans Building,  
86 Gloucester Street,  
CHRISTCHURCH 8011  
PO Box 110, CHRISTCHURCH 8140  
PH: 03-366-8891  
FAX: 03-365-7539