

news:



Pulling together Project Aqua

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Boffa Miskell NEWS
& PROJECT INFORMATION

winter²⁰⁰³



Editorial: Weaving together diverse disciplines

It is said that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This is the aim of the 'integrated service' we offer our clients – managing and integrating a wide range of specialist skills within one project.

For me, this is one of the most fulfilling aspects of working at Boffa Miskell – the interaction between our main planning, design and ecology disciplines. Increasingly, that interaction also extends to experts in other fields, as we take on the role of coordinating their input and bringing it all together for our clients.

Meridian Energy's Project Aqua, featured in this issue, is a good example of Boffa Miskell utilising its collective skills and knowledge to complete a range of tasks for a client. We were responsible for managing the overall compilation of the Assessment of Effects on the Environment for this major South Island hydro project – this included making assessments in our own disciplines, managing the assessments of many other sub-consultant experts and integrating this with the development of the client's proposal.

I believe this project has significantly benefited from our experience in working with a range of environmental disciplines, both within and outside of Boffa Miskell. This enabled us to understand how the various specialists' work interrelated, and certainly assisted in bringing together the many, varied and complex inputs to the assessment process.

This kind of role can not only improve our relationships with fellow experts but also strengthens the relationship with our client – bringing more to the project than may have been anticipated at the outset.

Ken Gimblett, Principal

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Quality Planning

New guidance notes have recently been added to the Quality Planning website, covering plan notification, managing submissions, and making decisions.

www.qualityplanning.org.nz was launched in 2001 as a joint effort between government agencies and professional bodies. It promotes best practice in plan preparation and management under the Resource Management Act, drawing upon practitioners' experiences to pool knowledge and learn from lessons learnt in the first decade of the Act.

Boffa Miskell has assisted by preparing the guidelines in a number of areas including policy framework, historic heritage and landscapes. The new guidance notes mentioned were prepared by Boffa Miskell planner Robert Schofield, and Robert is now working on guidelines for putting plans on-line, and on best practice for managing network utilities in road corridors.

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Talking with Landowners

Keeping land in production while protecting significant natural areas (SNAs) can go hand in hand, a Canterbury project shows.

Boffa Miskell ecologists from Christchurch are working with landowners and the Ashburton District Council to negotiate SNA designations. This allows the council to meet its obligation to identify these areas in its district plan, without the landowners feeling unduly restricted.

Contested SNAs were given temporary protection until the ecologists could assess the sites and talk to owners and interest groups. The team has found many cases are being resolved just through talking – explaining how the rules apply to farming operations or more accurately defining SNA boundaries with the landowner. In some instances, areas or activities necessary for farm management might be identified and excluded from the SNA rules.

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▼ Erewhon Station in Canterbury, one area where designation of significant natural areas is being negotiated.



Project Aqua: Assessing the Effects

Preparation for a major hydro-electric power scheme in North Otago has set Boffa Miskell a big challenge – the coordination of the biggest resource consent application ever lodged, in fact.

Boffa Miskell has been preparing an Assessment of Effects on the Environment (AEE) for Meridian Energy's proposed Project Aqua, on the lower Waitaki River.

Under the proposed scheme, water would be diverted from the river into a 60-kilometre canal on the south bank to power six hydro-electric power stations along the canal before being returned to the river.

The investigation work required for a scheme of this magnitude presents a huge coordination task, says Boffa Miskell planner Ken Gimblett. Meridian Energy has engaged more than 25 consultants to investigate the myriad aspects of the project – environment, engineering, economics and social implications for the Waitaki community – to name but a few.

"Compiling this information is a real test of our integration skills," says Ken. "We have to distill a huge amount of complex technical data but make sure it is still accurate and thorough."

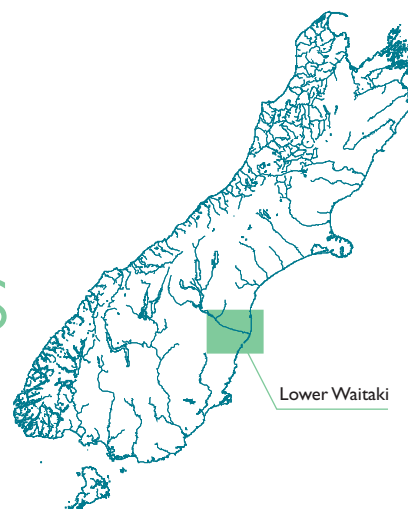
► The diverse landscape and communities of the lower Waitaki River are central to the planning Boffa Miskell has helped coordinate for Project Aqua.

►► Finding out about Project Aqua at an open day.

"We also have to bring the separate findings together and look at how they mesh together. To do this we have to work very closely with the other consultants and Meridian Energy, working alongside them on an ongoing basis."

Resource consent applications

Boffa Miskell has also been preparing all the necessary resource consent applications within a complex statutory framework: the lower Waitaki River forms a boundary between the Waitaki and Waimate districts and the Otago and Canterbury regions, so operational, proposed and transitional plans from four different territorial authorities have to be considered. These applications were lodged on May 14, 2003.



Listening to the community

The April 2001 announcement of Project Aqua kicked off two years of extensive public consultation, guided by Boffa Miskell.

"Meridian Energy is committed to thorough and ongoing consultation," Ken says, "and this means listening to a huge number of people – landowners, river users, tangata whenua, community groups and other interested parties."

"First, we had to make sure that people understood what the project involved. So Meridian Energy commissioned us to make a video showing a simulated fly-through of the entire site – this was ready for the public launch and proved a very effective communication tool."

Public meetings, open days, and meetings with groups and individuals were held throughout the two-year period to inform, update and, most importantly, listen to people's views and concerns. Discussions and negotiations with landowners and other affected parties also helped to resolve issues and assess different scheme options.

Boffa Miskell set up and managed a consultation database specifically designed to record and analyse 11,000 communications from 1,490 parties. In many cases, follow-up consultation was programmed to answer questions and discuss people's concerns.

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Community planning under the new Local Government Act

Good techniques that allow communities and councils to form plans together will become very important tools for local authorities as the Local Government Act 2002 comes into force.

Under the new Act, local authorities will have more discretion to determine their own purpose and priorities, provided they are responsive to the needs and demands of their communities of interest.

This article outlines a few community planning projects that Boffa Miskell has assisted with, either as the facilitator gathering community views, or as a coordinator helping to put the agreed objectives into action.

The Tahunanui Enhancement Study

In 2002 Boffa Miskell assisted Nelson City Council to consult with the Tahunanui community about its concerns and aspirations. The seaside suburb is a popular summer holiday destination, an important transport node and is subject to conflicting pressures. The community was actively involved in building a strategy to improve the area's liveability and environmental quality, with very positive outcomes for the council. Community buy-in to the plan, that will shift the focus of commercial activity in the area, is very high.

► Locals have been an integral part of planning the future of Nelson's beach suburb, Tahunanui.



A reserve management plan, covering the beach and park area known as Tahuna Sands, is now in development, using a similar process based around a community working group.

Tauranga Urban Intensification Study

In 2000 Tauranga District Council commissioned Boffa Miskell to gauge community aspirations and concerns about urban intensification and particularly its amenity effects. This involved the use of various survey techniques to examine community attitudes to current intensification trends. 'Visioning' and 'gaming' techniques, which require participants to grapple with and identify preferred growth options themselves, were also used to help the community visualise their ideal outcomes.

Boffa Miskell also prepared an urban design report and structure plan for Papamoa East, long identified as a future growth area for the fast-growing region. The plan illustrated the potential to achieve an attractive built environment including mixed use development, ample quality open space and retaining something of the area's former coastal duneland character – while achieving greater density.



▲ Tahunanui, Nelson.



▲ The impact of infill housing on open space and opportunities for youth were key issues for the Merivale Neighbourhood Plan.

Merivale Neighbourhood Plan

Tauranga District Council has also initiated a neighbourhood planning initiative to help established communities be proactive in planning their own neighbourhoods. Boffa Miskell facilitated this process in the suburb of Merivale – assisting the community to find out its issues and areas of interest. The project team found that informing the community about wider issues at the district level (such as growth pressures) was also important, particularly when it came to discussing neighbourhood aspirations and priorities.

The Merivale plan's desired outcomes aim to improve the quality in the physical and social setting, while the process has helped empower and support the community to be active in undertaking a number of the initiatives.

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dispatches continued...



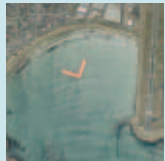
Matarangi Beach Estates – Coromandel

This Coromandel coastal development is about to begin building its second neighbourhood – the first residential development on the harbour side of the peninsula.

Boffa Miskell has helped the estates through a contested resource consent process. Features of the finalised plans include revegetation of the harbour edge, with no buildings within 40 metres of the water, and integration of the residential area with the recently expanded golf course and an artificial lake.

Maintaining the high quality of the environment has proved key to the development's progress. Construction is about to begin on the estates, which will contain up to 2000 homes.

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Lyall Bay Surf Reef

The number of quality surfing days at Lyall Bay in Wellington may swell up to 400 percent if a proposed artificial surf reef goes ahead. Artificial reefs are man-made structures placed in the marine environment to change and shape sea swells.

Boffa Miskell, along with ASR Ltd and Montgomery Watson Harza Ltd, was involved in preparing the resource consent application for the reef, on behalf the Lyall Bay Reef Charitable Trust – with financial help from Wellington City Council, amongst others.

Boffa Miskell managed the consultation through a liaison group of interested parties and beach users, public meetings, and an open day. A socio-economic and recreation assessment was also produced, based on a survey of existing beach activities and assessments of impacts of the reef on the community.

The resource consent application was lodged in April 2003.

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Counting fish helps councils sleep easy

Aquatic life can tell us a great deal about the health of our environments.

That is why Boffa Miskell ecologists are regularly migrating to streams, lakes and rivers gathering data for State of the Environment (SOE) monitoring programmes. This information assists local and regional councils to fulfill their SOE obligations under the Resource Management Act.

Monitoring freshwater habitats is a cost-effective way to assess trends in the state of the environment, says Boffa Miskell ecologist Eddie Sides.

“We can find out a great deal about the condition of catchments as a whole, and the cumulative effects of activities in them, by observing the health of fish, aquatic plant and invertebrate communities. These biological communities are very useful indicators of wider environmental quality.”

Waitakere monitoring

Fish populations are being used as the indicator for Waitakere City's SOE monitoring programme. Twenty-seven sites have been selected for annual surveys in a range of representative urban, rural and forest environments, including potential fish ‘trouble spots’ such as stormwater ponds and road culverts.

▼ The pollution-sensitive mayfly larvae, *Coloburiscus humeralis*, which captures food particles carried downstream by the stream current with its hairy forelegs.



◀ Wet feet are inevitable when collecting invertebrate samples.

The distribution of species – including rare and pest fish – has been mapped, sites of particular ecological value identified and management options recommended.

“The focus on fish has attracted public interest,” says Eddie, “and helped the council to promote the ecological values of streams.”

Northland monitoring

Aquatic macro-invertebrates, such as midges and mayflies, are the indicators in Boffa Miskell's monitoring programme for Northland Regional Council, now in its third year. A total of 23 rivers around Whangarei and throughout the Northland region are sampled twice-yearly. Results to date suggest that, while significant natural variations occur, the biological health of the rivers has remained relatively constant.

Programme manager, Boffa Miskell ecologist Dave Slaven, says SOE monitoring is all about establishing trends. “It has to be long-term so we can recognise natural fluctuations and the effects of major events like floods, and learn to distinguish when ecosystems are stressed by other non-natural (man-made) causes. We can also assess whether systems are deteriorating, maintaining an equilibrium or improving and identify the probable underlying causes (good and bad) for these trends.”

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▲ Back at the lab, Amy Bazely identifies and counts the aquatic invertebrates in a field sample.



City Gateways

A city's image is communicated by far more than an eye-catching welcome sign or symbol.

People arrive and depart along transport corridors. What they see on that journey influences their perception of a city. "This means the whole journey in and out needs to be considered when you seek to improve the way a city welcomes people," says Nada Stanish, Boffa Miskell landscape architect.

This is the guiding principle in two city gateways projects Boffa Miskell recently completed for Wellington City and Wanganui District Councils. The Wellington gateways encompass the entire urban motorway and the CBD-airport link, while in Wanganui, the three main routes in and out of the central city are all treated as gateways.

New perspectives on the familiar

Both gateway designs used familiar elements from the existing landscape to express local identity in new ways.

For Wanganui's southern gateway, bold poplar planting has been proposed as a way of connecting the horticultural character of the urban fringe with the city.

In Wellington, the designers have proposed to line the Ngauranga Gorge with hedges contained by farm materials – No.8 wire, stone gabions and chain-link – to create a 'living fence' in a confined, tough, industrial landscape.

Lighting is another way familiar objects can be shown 'in a different light': light and shadow effects, projected on to the undersides of overhead bridges near Wellington's CBD will emphasise their sculptural quality and create a distinct night-time experience.

◀ Stencilled shadows on Wellington's underbridges will dramatise the process of wild and built places encroaching on each other in the city.

A sequence of experience

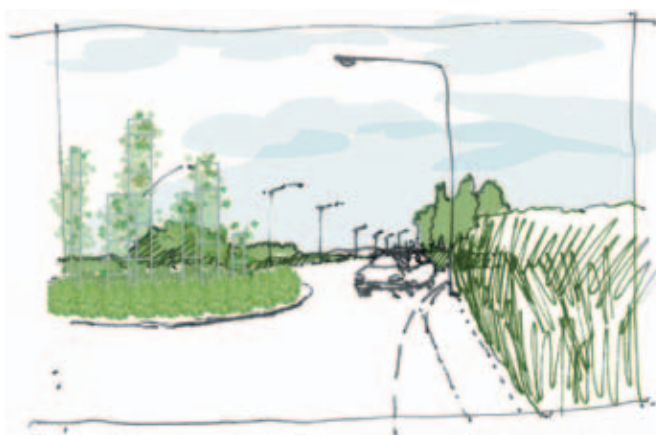
"Gateway routes often pass through bland areas on city outskirts," Nada says. "We wanted to make these gateway journeys more interesting and memorable, by emphasising their visual and spatial character."

For instance, Wellington's northern motorway will gain a bold sequence of feature planting that will register with motorists traveling at speed. This will create different spatial effects and will include eye-catching directional planting at key interchanges.

Sculptures have been recommended for key focal points, like roundabouts: "These places are traffic-dominated and often uninteresting," says landscape architect Bron Bennetts who worked on the Wanganui project. "But they are ideal sites for reflecting the local arts culture."

Both councils will begin implementing the gateways improvements this year.

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▲ A new roundabout with sculptural structures and bold planting is proposed as a memorable focal point at Wanganui's Wikitoria Road.



Te Pio Kawe

Senior Cultural Advisor,
TAURANGA

Ko te Atua te kaihangā o ngā mea katoa
Nana i hanga te Rangi me te Whenua
Me nga taonga katoa kei waenga i a raua.
Ko Ranginui ki runga
Ko Papatuanuku ki raro
Na raua i heke mai ngā tamariki,
ara ngā Atua me o ratou tāonga hei whawha mā te tangata.
Toi te Kupu
Toi te Whenua
Toi te Mana
Ko hononga o te ira Atua me te ira tangata
Ki te kore he whenua o te tangata,
Kahore a ia e ki ia he tangata
ka ngaro te Mana
E kore e kore kore rawa e
Whawhai tonu matou ake ake tonu atu.
Papaki tu ana nga tai ki Mauao
I whakanukunukuhia
I whakanekenekehia
I whiutia a Wahinerua ki tai
ki te tai wiwi ki te tai wawa
kei te whaiāo ki te ao marama
Tihei Mauriora

The above introduction and proverbs are statements of respect and acknowledgement to our creator and to Tauranga Moana my turangawaewae (home).

Te Pio was born and raised in Tauranga and has strong iwi affiliations to Ngati Ranginui (Tauranga Moana) and Ngati Rereahu, Ngati Maniapoto (Te Kuiti) from his mother and Nga Puhi (Te Taitokerau) through his father.

He is currently providing advice to tangata whenua on the Western Bay of Plenty sub-regional growth strategy called 'SmartGrowth'. This involves the three local territorial authorities and tangata whenua of the sub-region. He came to Boffa Miskell with a wide range of skills and experience in working on whanau and hapu development projects, specialising in papakainga housing and marae/hapu management projects.

Pio is strongly committed to the participation, development and achievement of team protocols, objectives and goals.

No reira ma te Atua hei manaki hei tiaki koutou katoa.

Profiles

Tara Ross-Watt

Marine Ecologist, AUCKLAND

Tara joined Boffa Miskell in 2002, having decided five years before to make a career of his life-long interest in the undersea world. Appalled by the effects human activities were having on our seas, he studied marine sciences and resource management while working under contract for the University of Auckland, Department of Conservation and NIWA.

His work at Boffa Miskell includes estuarine and coastal assessments of effects, sensitivity studies, baseline surveys and monitoring.

As well as managing coastal projects, Tara has widened Boffa Miskell's field of research with his experience using Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) that relay video images to the surface from sites beyond the depth and time limits of conventional divers. The mini-submarines make possible cost-effective inspection of potentially hazardous underwater environments for such purposes as coastal development, aquaculture, waste outfalls, port activities, oil and gas development, and scientific research.



◀ Tara Ross-Watt with a mini-sub, one of the tools of his trade.



Peter Whiting

Senior Landscape Architect, AUCKLAND

We welcome Peter Whiting back to Boffa Miskell after two years in the United Kingdom, where he worked with two prominent landscape architecture practices. Peter was Project Landscape Architect for the Imperial Wharf project on the Thames – the largest, mixed residential-commercial development in the UK at the time.

Peter first joined Boffa Miskell in 1998, from a background in the construction industry, including architectural draughting and project management. He worked on such Boffa Miskell projects as Omaha Beach, Waihi Town Centre and Premier Park, Hillsborough. This earlier experience, together with his overseas work, means that Peter has a solid understanding of construction methods, materials and finishes. He also has a strong interest in ecological projects and skills in achieving 'green' engineering solutions.



Richard Turner

Planner, TAURANGA

Richard joined Boffa Miskell in February 2002, having previously

worked for TrustPower, one of New Zealand's largest corporate entities. Richard has considerable experience preparing and coordinating resource consent applications for infrastructure projects and land use developments.

He has a particular interest in hydroelectric power developments, and in working with corporate clients to ensure that the Resource Management Act does not create unnecessary impediments for business.

He also has experience in preparing and presenting submissions on statutory planning documents for corporate clients, involving a number of territorial authorities throughout New Zealand.



Recent staff appointments

AUCKLAND

Aimee Redknapp
PLANNER

Andree Johnstone
WORD PROCESSOR/
SECRETARY

Cathy Hall
ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Deborah Harris
WORD PROCESSOR/
SECRETARY

Michelle Lense
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT/
CAD TECHNICIAN

Nick Williamson
SENIOR PLANNER

Sophie Burt
ARCHITECT/
URBAN DESIGN INTERN

Vanessa Le Grande Jacob
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Wendy Schollum
RECEPTIONIST

TAURANGA

Pam Flentge
PERSONAL ASSISTANT

WELLINGTON

Sarah Poff
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

CHRISTCHURCH

Andrew Purves
SENIOR PLANNER

Blair Walker
ACCOUNTANT

Simon Fenwick
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Nicky Black
RECEPTIONIST/
ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Urban Design Update



Prestigious appointment

Doug Leighton has been appointed to Auckland City's new Urban Design Panel. The five-member advisory panel, representing several professions,

has been set up to consider central city development proposals and help achieve high quality urban design in the central business district.

Doug is also teaching in the urban design studio of Unitec's School of Architecture, following a similar teaching role in the School of Landscape Architecture last spring.

■ ■ ■ ■ Urbanism
■ ■ ■ ■ down under
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## Urbanism Down Under conference

Boffa Miskell sponsored the public participation strand of this conference, which took place in Auckland in March this year. Over 400 delegates from New Zealand and overseas shared and debated ideas about transforming cities into livable and economically sustainable environments.

## Urban Design Forum

Doug Leighton, Rebecca Skidmore and Marc Bailly are amongst those who helped set up the Urban Design Forum New Zealand last year. The forum has been set up to encourage people interested in urban design to share and debate ideas, and advocate on urban design issues.

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# Smales Farm Office Park

Takapuna's last family farm has a novel crop – it now grows business premises instead of beef cattle. Boffa Miskell has helped the Smales family to keep their 12.4 hectare property in production, by transforming it into New Zealand's premier business park.

The design team, made up of Architecture Warren and Mahoney and Boffa Miskell, was commissioned in 1996, when the Smales realised a new approach was needed if they were to remain viable in the face of encroaching urbanisation. The designers together created a master plan for an office park of distinction, with Boffa Miskell responsible for the landscape design.

Boffa Miskell project manager John Goodwin says the key characteristic of the landscape design is the high quality of the open spaces in the park. Informal green space around the perimeter gives way to a formal, structured character in the interior. This formality is reinforced by the strong, gridded roading pattern, which intersects near the centre of the site at a 'circus' (or roundabout), which houses a major garden and water feature. Colourful annual bedding displays are also used to create the manicured, 'park-like' feel.

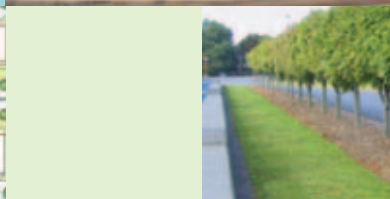
John says the comprehensive landscape design helped district plan requirements to be favourably interpreted: building is allowed 6 metres higher over 10 percent of the site and the required area of 'landscaped open space' has been reduced from 30 percent to 20 percent. Yet, nearly half of the developed site is in open space, including footpaths, seating areas, water features, gardens and lawn areas.

A third of the site has been developed to date, with TelstraClear and TranzRail occupying the site's two existing signature buildings as anchor tenants. The balance of the 12.4 hectares is retained in grazing awaiting future development.

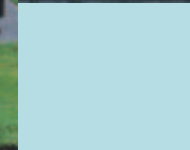
Implementation has stuck closely to the original design philosophy and detailed plans. This, combined with the client's continued commitment to ongoing management, has helped make the business park into the "superior environment" the Smales dreamed of. Refinement continues, as with the recent review and planning of additional planting to reduce the effects of localised high winds caused by the curved surfaces of the TelstraClear building.

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► Additional planting around the TelstraClear building is planned to ameliorate localised wind turbulence.



► Water features enclosed by pleached trees accentuate a main site axis.



▲ Bedding displays and fountains are typical of the formal landscape design at Smales Farm.

**BOFFA MISKELL**  
planning • design • ecology

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