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National Recognition for Northland Dev. Strategy

Friday, 11 June 2004, 5:45 pm

Press Release:

Media Statement – For Immediate Release

11 am - 11 June 2004

National Recognition for Northland Regional Development Strategy

The regional development strategy “Northland Forward Together – Kokiri Ngatahi Taitokerau” has won a New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) Project Award.

This project was one of the largest and most ambitious planning projects undertaken in the history of Northland in terms of its ability to engage with Northlanders and to develop the region on a sustainable basis.

The award citation presented by Bob Parker at the NZPI annual awards in Invercargill is as follows:

“The NZPI Project Award recognises excellence and the economic strategy prepared by APR Consultants Ltd for the Northland Regional Development Steering Group establishes an excellent framework of sustainable development for the economic development of the Northland Region.

The processes involved in preparing the strategy included the partnering between three district councils and the regional council and the engagement of the community. The NZPI Awards Committee considers that the strategy will lead to real economic and social change in Northland and wishes to congratulate all participants.”

Brian Roberts, CEO of Enterprise Northland said, “The formulation of the strategy provided a clear direction for the economic development of Northland Region”. He added, “that the framework created by the strategy through the clear actions and the formulation of industry sector groups provided a basis for Northland to accelerate economic growth and for Northlanders to make a real difference to the growth and prosperity of New Zealand.”

Deryck Shaw, director of APR Consultants Ltd (APR) who project managed the strategy process and formulation of the strategy document said, “Working on the strategy with the team from APR and the people of Northland was an honour and a privilege. The national recognition given to the project has validated the processes that were used. It also recognises the investment made by many people in the region who gave up their time to be involved in the project as well as the mandate given for the implementation of many of the strategy’s action plans,” he added.

Project Background

The regional development strategy “Northland Forward Together – Kokiri Ngatahi Taitokerau” was completed and launched in late 2001. The project involved more than 2,000 Northlanders who completed survey forms, participated in think tanks, made submissions, telephoned, spoke to project

facilitators at the Northland Field Days, or in the towns and communities in Northland, or who sent in emails. This reflected a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process.

Other key elements of the strategy included:

1. The project brought together the three district councils and the regional council as well as central government and Maori representatives. In addition the public had an opportunity to “have their say” through questionnaires (50,000) which were delivered to every household in the region. Facilitators were also stationed on the streets of Whangarei, Kaikohe, Russell, Paihia, Kaitaia, Dargaville and a stand at the Northland Field Days, and brochures (10,000) were distributed throughout Northland.
2. There was little economic and social information available about the region, so a background document was constructed as a resource and to provide empirical and qualitative information to guide the formation of the strategy. This background document was sent to every school, public library, government department, local council, iwi, economic development agency, major business, business organisation and other related organisations in the region.
3. Sustainable management and development underpinned the formulation of the strategy, including the need to rebrand the region (now Northland Naturally).
4. The project was signed off by all councils, iwi, government departments and other key organisations in the region and was completed on time and within budget.
5. Completion of the project has now led to the annual “Northland State of the Region Summit” where key people from business, community, council as well as Maori, national politicians and policy makers review the state of the region and progress in relation to the strategy.

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