

BUILDING BETTER
HOMES, TOWNS
AND CITIES

Ko ngā wā kāinga hei
whakamāhorahora

CYCLES IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Impacts of cycle trails and the A20 in the Waitaki Valley



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Regenerating Small Towns

- Our research, part of the *Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge*, is investigating the economic diversification of small towns and settlements
- Case studies are underway in Ashburton, South Canterbury and the Waitaki District
- Part of the mission is to interpret and support local efforts to make these places more attractive in which to live, visit, work and do business.
- In the Waitaki, our focus is on tourism-led regeneration initiatives, including the Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail



Economic cycles in the Waitaki

Cycles are common in resource dependent economies, from:

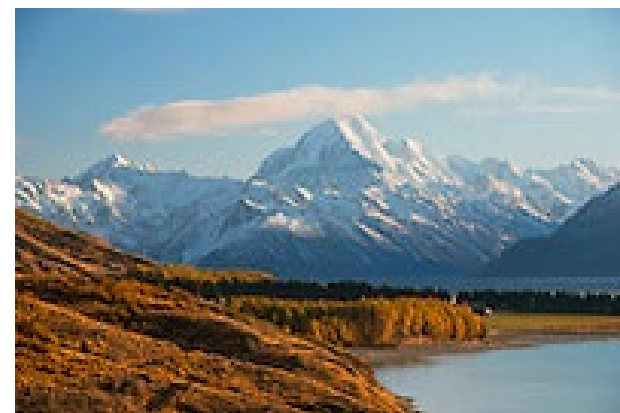
- Natural factors – e.g., climate, hydrology, drought, pests ...
- Commodities – e.g., wool, milk ...
- Construction and wind-down – e.g., hydro
- Policy changes – e.g., land-tenure review
- Visitor sector



Introducing the Multi-functional 'Waitaki Valley'

In response to resource cycles and constraints the Waitaki Valley has diversified considerably over the last 60 years, from extensive dryland sheep farming to a combination of productive and consumptive activities including:

- intensive irrigated (dairy) farming
- hydro-electricity generation
- viticulture
- salmon farming
- heritage conservation
- outdoor recreation
- domestic and international tourism



The Multi-functional Waitaki Valley



Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail (A2O)

- Descends from Aoraki Mount Cook, down the Waitaki Valley to Oamaru
- Officially part of the national cycle way
- The proposal originated in the efforts of an enthusiastic local group to achieve positive impacts on small towns, local businesses and employment
- Now a partnership between central government, two territorial authorities, DoC and communities/businesses for planning and development
- Seen by many as a device for economic diversification and rural revitalisation



Oamaru (Effects)

Impetus for businesses and local entrepreneurship



Oamaru (Effects)

Impetus to heritage conservation, ecotourism and waterfront



Duntroon (Effects)

Impetus to heritage conservation, local accommodation



The A20 – Additional observations

- Stakeholders recognise positive effects and that a sustainable future depends on the ability of the area to integrate multiple tourism initiatives and opportunities
- There is a lot happening: UNESCO Geopark, Heritage Precinct, Waterfront masterplan, accommodation developments, events and festivals...
- Burgeoning visitor numbers will test the capacity of infrastructure and the environment, including heritage resources



Unintended Effects – some predictions

- Host resistance to developments that are out of step with the social environment - potential loss of a sense of place built around unique geology, landscape and heritage resources
- Stress on small businesses and farms from health and safety issues (cyclists v farm activity)
- Difficulties finding time for multiple activities/jobs, time to host
- Difficulties finding suitable workers and managers



Lessons for proposed trails

- Cycle trails boost economic activity and local jobs
- Seasonality is an issue – cycling is an outdoor activity!
- People ‘hubbing’ these longer trails (e.g., from Twizel) or doing the trail in stages, or as a local activity – the effect of e-bikes
- It’s all about amenity values – need to plan, protect/enhance (includes heritage)

THANK YOU!

Question time