What the public thinks – where do we want to go with rural NZ in the 21st century?

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38% of NZers have done, do, or want to experience, this!

‘Wetting the appetite’

Most people do not want something like this!
Outline

• Some principles, assumptions, fallacies or questions?
• The approach and the biennial environmental perceptions surveys
  A. Priorities for the government and for individual New Zealanders
  B. Pressures, state and responses – focused on the rural environment
  C. What sustainability would achieve
• What NZers don’t want, and do want
• Conclusions and the challenge
Some principles, assumptions, fallacies or questions?

• Sustainability is the seat on a 3-legged stool – the economy, environment and society legs are all equally important
• There is only one bottom line – economic
• You can’t be green if you’re in the red
• You can only be green if you are in the black
• NZ’s ‘clean-green’ reputation is valuable and will only be maintained if we are proactive about sustainability.
Reading the minds of NZers – making sense of the research mass

- Multiple surveys related to this topic area, undertaken by or on behalf of central government depts, local authorities, by NGOs, by business groups, and many by researchers.
- Many are descriptive and few truly analytical.
- Amongst the best known, relevant, surveys, are:
  - The Lincoln University biennial survey on peoples’ perceptions of the NZ environment (5 surveys from 2000);
  - Environment Waikato’s now triennial surveys;
  - Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004): national vs individual preferences for environment, growth, education, etc.
The approach and the biennial environmental perceptions surveys
The biennial environmental perceptions surveys

- Assesses people’s perceptions of the state of the NZ environment – 11 natural resources, e.g., air, fisheries
- Built around the Pressure-State-Response (OECD) model
- Postal questionnaire
- 2,000 people aged 18 and over randomly selected from electoral roll
- Demographic variables include: age, gender, region, ethnicity, education, and employment sector
- Data analysed descriptively and, where applicable, the 2008 survey responses compared with 2006, 2004, 2002, 2000
Case studies

• Each survey asks an additional set of questions focused on one (and sometimes more) topic area:
  – 2000 natural hazards, and preparedness
  – 2002 coastal management and marine recreational fishing
  – 2004 freshwater management and recreational fishing
  – 2006 land transport and related externalities, priorities for NZers
  – 2008 conservation, recreation, freshwater

• We present general results from the 5 surveys and specific results from the 2004 and 2008 freshwater case studies.
A. Priorities for the government and for individual New Zealanders
Highest priority for the NZ government - 2006

- A strong economy
- A high quality health system
- A high quality education system
- A high quality environment
- A low crime rate
- A fair level of superannuation and income support
- A strong defence system
Priorities for NZ government - averaged

- Ordered average rankings, on a scale of 1 (highest priority) to 7 (lowest priority), are:
  - a high quality health system 2.29 = Highest priority
  - a high quality education system 2.67
  - a strong economy 3.14
  - a high quality environment 3.97
  - a low crime rate 4.43
  - a fair level of superannuation and income support 5.08
  - a strong defence system 6.17 = Lowest priority

- While a strong economy was the most commonly chosen top priority, when priority rankings are averaged the economy rates 3rd, with quality of the environment in 4th position.
Personal importance - 2006

The chart shows the percentage of respondents regarding the importance of various factors. The factors include:
- Crime prevention
- Level of economic growth
- Level of wages and salaries
- The public health system
- Quality of the natural environment
- Quality of education
- Quality of life

The factors are categorized into:
- Very unimportant
- Unimportant
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Important
- Very important

The chart indicates that quality of life is considered the most important factor, followed by the level of wages and salaries, and the public health system. Crime prevention is considered the least important.
Personal importance - averaged

- Average Likert scores, on a scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (very unimportant), ranked from top to bottom are listed below:
  - Quality of life 1.18 = Most important
  - Public health system 1.46
  - Quality of education 1.50
  - Quality of the natural environment 1.55
  - Crime prevention 1.60
  - Level of wages and salaries 1.85
  - Level of economic growth 1.89 = Least important

- As with the Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004), this survey shows that quality of life and quality of the natural environment are more important than either the level of wages and salaries, or the level of economic growth.
- Health and education outrank the environment.
## Personal importance (combined ‘very important’ and ‘important’ ratings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Growth and Innovation Advisory Board (2004)</th>
<th>This survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of education</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of natural environment</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The public health system</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of wages and salaries</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of economic growth</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NZ’s performance - 2006

- Quality of life
  - Very good: 10%
  - Good: 50%
  - Adequate: 35%
  - Bad: 5%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Level of economic growth
  - Very good: 6%
  - Good: 28%
  - Adequate: 40%
  - Bad: 26%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Level of wages and salaries
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
- The public health system
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Quality of the natural environment
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Quality of education
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Level of wages and salaries
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
- Crime prevention
  - Very good: 1%
  - Good: 16%
  - Adequate: 45%
  - Bad: 39%
  - Very bad: 0%
NZ’s performance - averaged

• Average Likert scores, on a scale of very good (1) to very bad (5), ranked from top to bottom, are listed below:

  – Quality of life 2.07 = Best performance
  – **Quality of the natural environment** 2.35
  – Quality of education 2.57
  – Level of economic growth 2.92
  – Performance in the public health system 3.15
  – Level of wages and salaries 3.17
  – Crime prevention 3.50 = Worst performance

• Only crime prevention performance was considered overall to be less than adequate, with quality of the natural environment and quality of life both considered ‘good’.
B. Pressures, states and responses – focused on the rural environment
Pressures: Most important environmental issue in NZ and World - 2006

- Pollution (unspecified)
- Transport
- Sustainable management of resources
- Urban sprawl/urban environment
- Global warming/climate change
- Environmental education
- Protecting environment/keeping NZ clean/green
- Disposal of refuse/waste
- Introduced pests/weeds/diseases
- Wildlife/natural environment
- Water pollution
- Air pollution/air quality
- Other

Percent of respondents

NZ
WORLD
Pressures: Main causes of damage to water: 2000-2008

- Urban development
- Household waste and emissions
- Pests and weeds
- Dumping of solid waste
- Industrial activities
- Hazardous chemicals
- Farming
- Sewage and storm water

Percent

- 2000
- 2002
- 2004
- 2006
- 2008
Pressures: Causes of damage to water in rivers and lakes (ethnic differences) - 2006
### State: of the NZ environment 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural environment compared to other developed countries</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ natural environment</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native bush and forests</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal waters and beaches</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native land and freshwater plants and animals</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soils</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundwater</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine fisheries</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers and lakes</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State: ‘Small lowland streams in my region have high water quality’ (2004 cf 2008)
Response: Small lowland streams in my region are well managed (2004 cf 2008)
Response: ‘Small lowland streams in my region are well managed’ - 2004

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Percent of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Resource based</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Non angler</th>
<th>Angler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don't know, %

- Total sample
- Northern
- Central
- Southern
- Resource based
- Other
- Non angler
- Angler

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Percent of respondents

- -40
- -20
- 0
- 20
- 40
- 60
Response: WTP $20 per year in additional rates for 10 years to pay for lowland stream enhancement work
Response: Open-ended comments re WTP proposal

Those **supportive or strongly supportive** of a $20 rate increase said:
- ‘Small price to pay for the common good’ (43% of 484 responses) followed by:
- ‘Good to pass onto future generations’,
- ‘To clean up the water’, and
- ‘Better than cleaning it up later’.

Those **opposed or strongly opposed** said:
- ‘rates are too high already’ (23% of 484 responses),
- ‘industry or farmers should pay for this, not ratepayers’
- ‘no proof projects are being done efficiently’ and
- ‘on a low income’
C. What sustainability would achieve
Achieving environmental sustainability in NZ would ...

- Reduce climate change impacts: 8% disagree, 3% neither disagree nor agree, 5% agree, 6% strongly agree.
- Enhance NZ's clean green image: 3% disagree, 6% neither disagree nor agree, 5% agree, 3% strongly agree.
- Reduce pressure on limited resources: 6% disagree, 6% neither disagree nor agree, 8% agree, 3% strongly agree.
- Ensure access to recreational resources: 5% disagree, 5% neither disagree nor agree, 3% agree, 7% strongly agree.
- Lower living costs: 8% disagree, 8% neither disagree nor agree, 3% agree, 7% strongly agree.
- Improve quality of life: 3% disagree, 3% neither disagree nor agree, 3% agree, 7% strongly agree.
- Enhance NZ's clean green image: 7% disagree, 7% neither disagree nor agree, 8% agree, 8% strongly agree.
Achieving environmental sustainability in NZ would, on average …

- Average Likert scores, on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), ranked from top to bottom, are listed below:
  - Enhance NZ's clean green image 1.65 = Most likely
  - Improve quality of life 1.94
  - Ensure access to recreational resources 2.04
  - Reduce pressure on limited resources 2.08
  - Enhance economic growth 2.30
  - Reduce climate change impacts 2.33
  - Lower living costs 2.94 = Least likely

- Even for lower living costs, the lowest ranked of these implications, the average response remains positive.
Overall ...
What NZers don’t want, and do want

• Don’ts:
  – Don’t let development wreck rivers, streams, lakes, etc.

• Concerns:
  – Farming is increasingly a cause of damage to the environment
  – People worried about water, pollution, etc

• Priorities:
  – Quality of life & environment more important than economic growth

• Do’s:
  – People willing to pay for improvements/ mitigation
  – Look after natural resources, including freshwater, biodiversity, etc

• Implications:
  – Rural land development/intensification needs to occur with sustainability as a focus, and not afterwards as a quick fix solution
Conclusions

• No overall vision of the future for rural NZ – surveys have not provided a united visualisation of the opportunities.
• We do know that there is growing concern among middle and upper NZ, Maori and anglers, about farming, water pollution, etc.
• We can infer from some of this work, that more effort needs to go into proactive efforts at protecting the environment that run in sync with development, and are not patch up jobs afterwards.
• A challenge then - how to match policy and political responses to the level of public concern about the future of the rural landscape and its component parts, and turn these concerns into proactive sustainable development policy.