



## Planning for Regeneration in the town of Oamaru

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper reports the preliminary findings of a research project underway in the township of Oamaru, North Otago. The study is one part of a research programme entitled Supporting Success in Regional Settlements funded by the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities: Ko ngā wā kāinga hei whakamāhorahora (BBHTC). The Supporting Success in Regional Settlements programme asks: how are local settlement regeneration initiatives working to improve the economic, social and environmental performance of regional towns in New Zealand? What drives success, and how can improvements be made and supported? Using primary and secondary data sources, our analysis in this paper provides a preliminary insight into Oamaru's past, present and future regeneration initiatives and the issues associated with their integration and resourcing. We conclude by emphasising the importance of careful planning, the effective integration of multiple regeneration activities, the harnessing of local energy and creativity, and sympathetic engagement with local residents to ensure that a widely acceptable vision for the town's future is adopted and implemented.*

*Keywords: planning; regeneration; Oamaru; Waitaki District; New Zealand*

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### 1. BACKGROUND

Researchers at Lincoln University have had a long-standing interest in planning issues for the Waitaki, South Island, New Zealand. This interest originates in the work of the Tussock Grasslands and Mountainlands Research Institute, and the leadership of past staff at Lincoln, including Professors Kevin O'Connor, John Hayward and Ken Ackley. Under the auspices of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, Lincoln produced a number of reports relating to the region. In an overview of this original research programme, and discussion of issues for regional planning, O'Connor and Ackley (1981) posited an

approach to planning that considers natural and social systems together, to identify the opportunities and limits of natural resources and the objectives of the people and communities who use them. More recent interest in the Waitaki is reflected in the work of the authors in relation to water management (Taylor, et al., 2015; Taylor & Mackay, 2016), hydro-electricity development and tourism (Mackay et al., 2017; Mackay, Wilson & Taylor, 2015; Taylor, Mackay & Perkins, 2016a, 2016b; Taylor, Perkins & Maynard, 2008; Wilson & Mackay, 2015), irrigation (McCrostie Little, et al., 1998) and outdoor recreation (Mackay, 2016; Mackay & Wilson, 2014).

In this paper we report the preliminary findings of new research underway in the township of Oamaru – the Waitaki’s main urban centre. The Supporting Success in Regional Settlements programme asks: how are local settlement regeneration initiatives working to improve the economic, social and environmental performance of regional towns in New Zealand? What drives success, and how can improvements be made and supported? The project is examining the role of the local council and other community leaders in achieving integration across a suite of local regeneration initiatives.

Regeneration, in broad terms, refers to “development that is taking place in cities and towns” (Tallon, 2013, p.4). Ruming (2018, p.3) notes that the impetus for regeneration activity is a “desire to reconfigure the form and operation of cities [and small towns and districts] in response to a series of social, economic and environmental challenges,” with the broad aim of strengthening the economy and improving the local quality of life. Ruming (2018) and Powe et al. (2015) note that regeneration is a multidimensional, complex and multi-scalar process, that involves the private sector and public agencies working together on area-wide improvements in an effort to halt local social, physical and/or economic decline and develop a more positive trajectory. While many regeneration initiatives have a strong property dimension – targeting the physical transformation of the built environment – regeneration projects can also draw on local cultural and environmental assets to improve places for residents, often in a series of steps (Powe, et al., 2015, p.177). Part of the picture therefore is cultural and built heritage revitalisation, ecological restoration, social entrepreneurship, events and community ventures. Ruming (2018, p.5) argues that, “regeneration projects (no matter what their size) should not be viewed in isolation, but collectively as drivers of city-wide [and we would argue District-wide] change.” This is important in the context of our work, given the diversity of regeneration activity evident in Oamaru.

Our findings are focused on three sets of initiatives. The first cluster is *local* in nature

and has proved fundamental to providing the initial momentum of regeneration in Oamaru. These initiatives are associated with planning and implementing regeneration of the Victorian heritage precinct of Oamaru’s stone buildings in the harbour area and along the main street. This set also includes the eco-tourist attraction of the blue-penguin colony and visitor centre, and more recently a number of other initiatives in the waterfront area. The second set of initiatives is linked to the Alps to Ocean (A<sub>2</sub>O) cycle trail, which starts at Aoraki-Mt Cook, connects two districts and transverses the Waitaki catchment, ending in Oamaru. The A<sub>2</sub>O is *national* in scope in that it is based around a cycle trail planned and implemented as part of the National Cycleway Project Nga Haerenga – The New Zealand Cycle Trail (Bell, 2018; Pawson & the Biological Economies Team, 2018). Despite this, it was initiated and organised by local groups and the Waitaki District Council, with input from Department of Conservation, Meridian Energy and local businesses. The third set of initiatives is broadly involved with the GeoPark proposal led by the Waitaki District Council in conjunction with partners such as Ngāi Tahu and UNESCO. The GeoPark began as a local initiative, progressed to a district initiative and has in the last year expanded to a global reach initiative with the recent selection of the Waitaki GeoPark as the single New Zealand proposal being put forward for formal recognition by UNESCO.

This paper provides preliminary analysis and reflection on results obtained from field research into these sets of initiatives to date. We provide initial observations about the role of strategic planning and particularly the role of the district councils in the regeneration of towns such as Oamaru. We argue that an essential element to success in regional regeneration is the ability to mobilise local resources and external inputs in an integrated strategic approach that can include a number of different planning instruments. We also observe that it is important to build local capacity in regeneration in a way that encourages multiple leaders and organisations.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in the Oamaru case study utilises the combined approaches of realist evaluation and social assessment. Realist evaluation is a theory-driven method that, “identifies and refines explanations of programme effectiveness” (Pawson and Manzano-Santaella, 2012). The approach asks essential questions about what works and why, and for whom. Social assessment is an approach that combines iterative cycles of data gathering, synthesis, deduction and induction to identify and manage the impacts of a plan, programme or project (Taylor et al., 2004). Both social assessment and realist evaluation are eclectic in terms of theory and sources of data, or mixed methods.

The approach to the Oamaru case study therefore combines an evaluative dimension in terms of what makes regeneration successful and an assessment dimension in terms of understanding the impacts of regeneration on people and communities. It is intended that together these dimensions will build knowledge to use in the case study community and in other places interested in similar development tracks.

The combined approach places a heavy emphasis on qualitative data in order to build depth of understanding in the field context. Sources of data for the case study have included primary and secondary data. Primary data that is qualitative is obtained through field research using in-depth interviews and participant observation. At the point of writing this working paper, 22 interviews have been undertaken. A number of interviews were recorded and transcribed for detailed review along with written field notes and observations. Secondary, qualitative data has included historical records, documentary research, reports and studies and media coverage in sources such as the Oamaru Mail and Otago Daily Times. Secondary, quantitative data are also used in the study, including census data, economic and employment data and GIS maps. These sources have helped to build a social profile of the town and district.

The starting point for this research was to map and characterise the range of

regeneration initiatives in Oamaru, and the periods over which they developed. The key stakeholders in each initiative were also identified. As a result of this scoping analysis and the input from key stakeholders, we were able to identify initiatives to examine in more detail. Scoping also identified the central themes of integration of regeneration and sustainable development.

The research emphasises the co-production of knowledge, which facilitates and empowers the input of all participants into the research and pays particular attention to the contribution of local knowledge (Djenontin & Meadow, 2018). We acknowledge here the ready involvement of the Mayor, Council members, Council staff, business operators and community leaders in this research and in sharing information with us. These people represent a range of interests across hospitality and tourism, economic development, heritage conservation, planning and environmental management. In the final stage of the research we plan to undertake further field research and analysis and to work with the Council in holding a workshop or symposium to discuss and elaborate further the results. The research was reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

## 3. THE POPULATION AND ECONOMY OF OAMARU AND WAITAKI DISTRICT

Oamaru is the main urban centre of the Waitaki District and services the surrounding rural hinterland (Figure 1). The District extends inland from the mouth of the Waitaki River, up the Waitaki River Valley, through Ohau to the top of the Ahuriri River Valley. It reaches south along the east coast beyond Palmerston to Flag Swamp. There are also valley townships at Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Duntroon and Ngapara, and a number of smaller settlements.

Four of Ngāi Tahu’s 18 Papatipu Rūnanga uphold the mana of their people over the land, the sea and the natural resources of the Waitaki District (WDC, 2018a). They are: Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki. The District has a number of sites



Figure 1: Oamaru from South Hill. Photo H. Evans, 2018.

The population of Oamaru (Table 1) has grown modestly in recent years, with a sub-national estimate of 13,800 in 2017, indicating this trend goes past the 2013 census year and is a reversal of preceding years. Previously, Oamaru lost population over a difficult economic period through to 2006. It is notable that all the townships in the Waitaki valley, Omarama (-3.3%), Otematata (-23.5%), Kurow (-19.6%) and Duntroon (-25.6%), lost population in the period 2001-2013. In contrast, the irrigated river plains gained population due to the influence of dairy farming (Taylor et al., 2015). The loss of population in the valley townships gives them a keen interest in future development of the district as a whole, and the town of Oamaru in particular, where valley people have strong social ties and obtain many services.

Table 1: Changes in Usually Resident Population of Oamaru 1996 -2013

Census Year	Oamaru		Waitaki District		New Zealand	
	Number	% change	Number	% change	Number	% change over 5 years
1996	13,419		21,573	-	3,617,547	-
2001	12,696	-5.4	20,088	-6.9	3,736,560	3.3
2006	12,681	-0.1	20,223	0.7	4,027,320	7.8
2013	13,044	2.9	20,826	3.0	4,242,048	

Source: Statistics New Zealand for nine area units that make up Oamaru

of cultural significance, including wāhi tapu, nohoanga and places for mahinga kai.

In addition to concerns about achieving a viable total population, economic development initiatives are influenced by the particular demography of the area. One factor mentioned frequently in field research is the ageing population and the need to attract a greater range of people to the town to maintain its vigour. At the same time, we observed and were told a number of stories about “retired” people shifting to Oamaru for the “cheaper” housing, whilst starting new enterprises or featuring in new community groups. These incomers are an essential part of the regeneration that is taking place.

The Waitaki District has experienced an increase in median age, notably above the South Island and NZ projected median ages but this is projected to level off from 2020. Median age is consistently increasing over time in Oamaru, with a median age of 38.2 (in 1996), up 7.6 years by 2013 to 45.8. This suggests a consistent upward (ageing) trajectory for this area until at least 2020. The proportion of the population of Oamaru over 65 will reach one quarter of the population by 2023 and approximately one-third (28.6%) by 2043 on current projections.

Another feature mentioned in the field research is the increasing cultural diversity of the town and district. Interviews and local media noted the large number of people

identifying as Tongans who were attracted to the town in recent years. At the 2013 census, 85.7% of the Waitaki population were European, 6.1% were Māori, 2.9% were Asian and just 2.3% were Pacific peoples. This indicates on a national level the population was far from diverse. However, recent school roll data on ethnicity indicate high proportions of Pacific people at some Oamaru schools- 7.6% (282 students) of students in the District, with the majority of these being Tongan. This suggests the 2018 census will show an increase in the proportion of Pacific people.

To understand the influx of migrant workers to the District in recent years, it is important to understand that the district as a whole, and the town of Oamaru, are especially reliant on the fortunes of the primary sector and rural servicing, manufacturing (particularly food processing and textiles), alongside wholesale and retail trade, hospitality, business, social, and personal services.

The agricultural sector in the Oamaru area generates economic wealth and employment as the largest productive sector. This is shown in the economic profile developed for the case study. Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services sectors account for about one-fifth of all GDP. A common refrain amongst respondents reflecting on the economy is the positive effect of the meat processing plant at Pukeuri – and the negative effect any reduction of this plant would have on the economy. This Alliance plant is the largest employer in the district. A large fire in 2006 required major repairs and refit of the plant and a further upgrade was recently proposed, suggesting its future is secure in the meantime.

Hospitality and associated retail activity, such as specialised shops, provide an important element of economic diversification and is also attracting amenity migrants. Oamaru is well-known for its precinct of neoclassical buildings, built with locally quarried stone that attract international and domestic visitors. The nearby harbour is recognised as a site of national significance by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and is home to the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony. In addition, the valley itself is increasingly a

visitor attraction as a result of the A<sub>2</sub>O cycle trail.

Respondents commented on the availability and relative attraction of the price of property in Oamaru and district. However, it was also pointed out that homes with a view of the harbour and a sunny aspect commanded higher prices. There was a low incidence of home ownership in Oamaru in the 2013 census, with 48 per cent of dwellings being owned or partly owned (cf. 57% Waitaki District, 51% New Zealand) and another 11 per cent held by a family trust (cf. 14% Waitaki District, 12% New Zealand). The incidence of rental occupation most likely reflects the presence of low-income families and newcomers to the town. At the time of our research a local valuer whom we interviewed described the situation with respect to commercial property as a “boom”, adding that he had “not seen anything like it in 20 years of practice”. Some new-build growth is in the Council-owned Business Park at the northern end of Oamaru. Away from the Park, further south, commercial property expansion is associated with the growth of particular industries in the town (e.g., home improvement retailing and cheese manufacturing). Many businesses own their buildings rather than rent from commercial investors. At the southern end of the town lies the heritage precinct where adaptive repurposing is commonplace along with proposals for new hotels.

#### **4. REGENERATION INITIATIVES**

Taylor et al. (2008) have previously emphasised the importance of longitudinal research when considering the Waitaki Valley, especially when trying to understand planning for land and water, and for the economic development of the smaller settlements and towns. For this research looking at ways of supporting regional settlements, it is important to understand that regeneration initiatives in Oamaru have a back history to the challenging period the district went through in the 1980s as neo-liberal economic restructuring took effect (Fitzgerald and Taylor, 1989; Taylor et al., 2008). In addition, the area went through successive severe

droughts in the late 1980s. By 1989, the Council for Social Services in Oamaru had commissioned The Centre for Resource Management at Lincoln University to provide a report on social issues in the town, in recognition of the difficulties faced by the population at that time (Fitzgerald and Taylor, 1989). Questions of economic regeneration were then high on the agenda for the town's leaders as a response to high unemployment, and amongst initiatives suggested as a way to stimulate employment was the preservation and use of the town's heritage buildings to build greater visitor activity.

By taking a longitudinal perspective on regeneration it is useful to consider the efforts of the local community and central government to develop irrigation on the

Waitaki Plains. The scheme was developed in the 1970s and commissioned in 1976, replacing small areas of irrigation and the stock race network. It takes water from the Waitaki at Borton's Pond and delivers it to the lower plains out to the coast. The irrigated area is used primarily for dairy farming today (Figure 2). By converting small, dryland farms to irrigation the project was a major force for land use change and economic development in the district from the late 1970s with the advent of dairy farming (McCrostie Little et al., 1998). This strong economic boost was vital in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the dryland farms of the district, largely in sheep and beef, struggled with the combined effects of successive droughts and the loss of farm subsidies.



*Figure 2: Dairy farming in the Waitaki Valley. Photo: H. Evans, 2018*

The Ministry of Works and Development drove early irrigation development in the mode of centralised resource planning that predominated at the time and was familiar in the area due to successive hydro dam projects. It is important to note that when central government divested from irrigation projects in the late 1980s, the investors moved their interests to the newly formed Lower Waitaki Irrigation Company which included farmers, the Waitaki District Council and the Pukeuri meat works who were all eager to shift scheme

ownership into local control (McCrostie Little et al., 1998).

Associated with milk production is the opportunity for processing. The Whitestone Cheese factory was established by a farming family in 1989 in response to the rural downturn. The factory now employs over 50 staff and includes a viewing room, cheese delicatessen and shop combining cheese production with a visitor sector that has an emerging food focus. Otherwise, milk is largely driven north for processing however, very

recently in 2016, a dairy factory was built at Glenavy just out of the district.. It is owned by a leading global dairy company, Yili, who confirm plans to expand the factory with a further \$400m investment. More than 70 jobs have been created by stage one of their operations (Oceania Dairy, online).

Further local investment in irrigation in the North Otago downlands was led by the North Otago Irrigation Company (NOIC) with Waitaki District Council actively involved. The first stage was completed in 2006. Stage 1 provided 10,000 ha of irrigation and added \$49 million to the North Otago economy. It created 274 new jobs according to an economic survey (The Agribusiness Group, 2010). Stage 2 of a further 10,000 ha got sufficient backing to proceed in 2018. Our respondents commented on the importance of these schemes and associated intensification of agriculture to the economy of Oamaru.

In terms of local effort to diversify the economy and develop Oamaru as a destination, the heritage precinct and harbour are the focal point (Figure 3). Interest in the heritage buildings of Oamaru coalesced with the 1987 feasibility study into the redevelopment of Oamaru's Harbour and Tyne Streets now known as Oamaru's Victorian Precinct. It was the original commercial and business district of Oamaru and served as the

base for trade through the port of Oamaru (The Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust, online). The feasibility study signalled a change in attitude to an area previously seen as "derelict" to a place with heritage values and a site for regeneration activity. With a dominant position at the entrance to the harbourside precinct, the Criterion Hotel gained Historic Places Trust registration in 1987 (Figure 4). Restoration of the hotel became a flagship development in the historic area as the Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust refurbished the building (Warren and Taylor, 2001). It was operating as commercial premises by July 1999 and changed ownership in 2012 (Criterion Hotel, online). The hotel anchored commercial opportunities in the precinct along with businesses such as the book binders and booksellers, Slightly Foxed. The heritage precinct is largely themed Victorian, with names used for the area including 'Victorian town' and 'Victorian Oamaru'. Most recently it has been named, 'the Oamaru Victorian Precinct', with the website being <https://www.victorianoamaru.co.nz/>. Further attempts at creating place identity for Oamaru are evident in the use of such names as, 'Culture Waitaki', 'Whitestone Trust' and 'Steampunk Oamaru'. The latter was created in 2011 and occupies an old granary building in the Victorian precinct.



Figure 3: Oamaru Victorian [Heritage] Precinct - Photo: H. Evans, 2018



Figure 4: Criterion Hotel - Photo: H. Evans, 2018

The Oamaru Blue Penguin colony opened in 1992 as a result of the restoration of roosting and breeding areas adjacent to the harbour in the early 1990s. The facility has expanded over time with public viewing areas, information displays, research facilities and a shop. It is now a premier attraction in Oamaru, with an added benefit of encouraging people to stay overnight in order to enjoy the evening viewing of penguins returning from the sea at dusk. The facility is run by Tourism Waitaki, the regional tourism organisation, and had 70,000 visitors in 2016 and managed a significant redevelopment in 2017 (MacLean, 2017).

With an emerging awareness of the interlinked potential of the historic precinct and harbour area, additional initiatives have taken place over time. This includes the establishment of a café/restaurant close to the penguin colony and upgrades to the historic sheds. One of these sheds is now a craft workshop. Other features of the harbour include the upgraded main wharf and the Victorian Sumpter Wharf that is in a state of disrepair, but is now home to a shag colony. This colony hosts both the spotted shag and the rare Otago shag, the latter being known to breed on the wharf. A recent addition to the heritage area is an interactive information centre and museum called Whitestone City. Like the penguin colony, it is run by Tourism Waitaki.

Working to a master plan for the area, the Council have moved to link the harbour area directly to the heritage precinct with a new road link and footbridge over the rail lines.

Development close to the harbour and wharf now includes a new café, children's playground, refurbished public toilets and Waitaki Bike Skills Park. Close to the heritage area, a craft brewery/tavern has opened which attracts many locals and visitors. The linked heritage/harbour precinct area is also the preferred location for a number of events and festivals, including activities associated with the Steampunk NZ Festival Weekend, Harbour Street Jazz & Blues Festival, Network Waitaki Victorian Fete, and Victorian Heritage Celebrations.

The A<sub>2</sub>O is a cycling and walking trail that is a national scale initiative, which initially arose from the efforts of a small local group enthusiastic about developing such a trail. The proposal was developed in 2009 leading to the cycleway being fully developed though to Oamaru (the ocean). The cycle way is 300km long, starts at Aoraki-Mt Cook National park and descends 780m through the Mackenzie Basin and Waitaki Valley to Oamaru. While this was a local initiative it importantly received funding from the National Cycle Trail Project (Bell, 2018; Wilson, 2016) and was also supported by the involvement of Waitaki District Council through project management and dealing with issues such as property access over private farm land.

The A<sub>2</sub>O traverses part of the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark, another important regeneration initiative located in the District. This initiative is the innovation of a group of volunteers associated with the Vanished World Fossil Centre— a community organisation



located in the small settlement of Duntroon which lies 30 minutes from Oamaru (Figure 5). The Centre was created in 2000 by a group of land owners in Duntroon with assistance from the Geology Department of Otago University (WDC, 2018b). Since then it has operated as an interactive fossil display gallery and geology education centre, while also overseeing the 'Vanished World Trail'. This trail showcases sites of local geological significance in the vicinity of Duntroon. It also sits behind the Waitaki Whitestone Geopark brand, however this initiative is now in the process of upscaling via an official bid for UNESCO Global Geopark accreditation. This process involves Waitaki District Council working alongside Ngāi Tahu,

Vanished World Incorporated, Tourism New Zealand, the University of Otago, the North Otago Museum, Tourism Waitaki, Environment Canterbury, the Waitaki Tourism Association, the Otago Museum, and the Department of Conservation. Waitaki District Council (2018c) state, "the UNESCO Global Geopark network celebrates earth heritage and promotes sustainable local economic development through geotourism. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses geological heritage in connection to an area's cultural identity to give the people who live there a sense of pride, generate new sources of revenue and safeguard geological treasures". The proposal will include a global geopark management plan.



Figure 5: Vanished World Fossil Centre, Duntroon. Photo: H. Evans, 2018

## 5. ISSUES IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING REGENERATION

In considering the research questions and evaluating the effects and success factors in the regeneration of Oamaru, our findings are supported by previous research (Powe et al., 2015) which identifies social capital and community capacity are important to consider if regeneration initiatives are to reflect fully the local context and empower local actors. Waitaki District displays strong social capital with a broad range of social service and

community organisations to support the lifestyles of its residents. A multicultural council of ethnic groups provides services for incoming workers and their families such as the Tongans who are employed by the meat processing plant at Pukeuri, and the Filipinos who work on dairy farms in the District. In total there are around 450 organisations in the District including social service and health providers, pre-school educators, community groups, churches, sports clubs and other recreational clubs. Many of these organisations are based in Oamaru.

Past approaches to regeneration projects were mostly focused on the heritage precinct. These involved a series of small steps which were largely community driven initiatives by heritage organisations, volunteers and small businesses all taking advantage of the opportunities created by the increasing numbers of visitors, while also serving locals. When reviewed for factors of success over time it is possible to identify a number of factors, with no single factor or one specific project on which regeneration hinges. Rather, there has been investment in place over time, as resources and energy in the community and Council allowed. Certainly, the limited resources of the Council need to be directed carefully to support a range of developments.

Strategic planning has played an important part in the regeneration process. The harbour area development strategy was completed in 2011 and built on previous studies such as the harbourside study undertaken in 2007. The strategy is flexible and staged and provides a framework for a series of investments by the Council and others with the objective of improving the harbour area as a destination.

There is no doubt that in terms of investment in place, the success of the heritage area has continued to build on the investment and persistence of heritage enthusiasts, the Council and businesses in the heritage buildings and waterfront area. If there is one anchor over time it has been the penguin colony attraction that brings visitors into the harbour area on a daily basis. Substantial investments in heritage and the restoration of particular buildings is also vital to give a sense of progress in the face of the common difficulties of restoration work (cost, expertise, regulation).

It is from a diverse base of activities more clearly defined initiatives have emerged, such as more recently the A<sub>2</sub>O and the GeoPark proposal. The advantage of these newer initiatives is that they provide the potential for community groups and individual businesses to work off and around them, adding to visitor attractions and services over time and as capacity allows.

Scaling up of regeneration initiatives means community leaders, planners and local

government will increasingly need to address issues of investment, capacity and skills, the integration of activities, and the sustainability of development. It is important that the different types of initiatives attract the necessary investment of capital, knowledge and experience of private sector investors. Examples of this can be seen in a group of local farmers investing in the refurbishment of the old Duntroon pub, as well as necessary visitor facilities at that point on the cycle trail, and current efforts by the Council to attract investors to build a new waterfront hotel.

Along with the increase in scale of initiatives, the pace of change has also increased. This tests the adaptive capacity of the area and raises the likelihood of host resistance. There is already some tension between old and new ways, between directive leadership and planning and bottom-up community involvement, and over what developments are appropriate for the physical and social environment. Resistance to change often reflects the perception that people are losing their strong sense of place and, along with that loss, there is a perception that long-established and strongly protected density of acquaintanceship and social relations is threatened.

Naming of the heritage and waterfront area for the purposes of promoting the town and particular sites is a particular dimension of these tensions. Current multiple naming of this area reflects the ad hoc nature of different initiatives over time, each with their own particular leadership, energy and organisation. On the other hand, this multifaceted approach has served to capture and maximise a diverse base of entrepreneurship, organisational capacity and volunteerism.

There is also tension between the potential development of heritage and downtown areas that potentially works against the opportunities for craft people and heritage enthusiasts who have made place's vibrant and maintain a sense of creative possibility. If planning and public investment is effective it will work to accommodate both sets of interests. Planning is necessary to give strategic direction and agreed rules about what can happen, but it also needs to maintain

and further create character while preserving and enhancing existing features.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS: LESSONS FOR REGENERATION

In conclusion, we note that this paper is a provisional and early report on the research. We will undertake further research and analysis and work through the results with stakeholders in Waitaki.

As an initial observation, we note that plans are important. They provide strategy and guidance, especially when there is a strong underpinning of community input, such as in council planning. Formal plans include the District Plan, Long Term Plan and Annual Plan, along with master planning exercises. An important preliminary finding is the importance of integration across the strategies and plans, especially when dealing with a large number of heritage buildings and projects. The Council plays an important part in this integration along with community leaders and private investors. Formal plans are also important. They confirm the Treaty partnership with Māori, who have a long cultural, environmental and economic interest in the Waitaki valley and coastline and are potential investors in new developments such as visitor facilities.

We have also considered our findings in relation to a literature review undertaken for the research (Johnston et al., forthcoming). The following three points merge ideas from the field research in Oamaru together with the available literature on regeneration and can be applied in Oamaru and elsewhere. The multi-faceted approach identified in Oamaru is likely to bring further success in the long term. In particular there are four key aspects that work together, retail growth and hospitality, housing and residential growth aiming for repopulation and suitable for a greater number of older residents, growth of the rural-service centres and rural processing, and the provision of further visitor attractions, accommodation and services in an integrated package.

Key factors in success include: amenity and attractiveness; heritage, and convenient location and natural features; with proximity to a range of attractions and transport

corridors; and the capacity to plan and implement regeneration. A range of organisations and leadership broadens the base of local capacity, along with a proactive local council. Influential local people or pressure groups, political will, contributions from central government, planning and governance arrangements are also all important.

Finally, planners must address the inexorability of demography. This includes the need to plan for cycles of decline and growth evident in resource communities and changes in demographics such as an ageing population, as well as an increasing cultural diversity in the population.

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