

News

Tuhoe headquarters win greenest building award

Geoff Mercer
Maori affairs reporter

TE URU Taumatua – the new Tuhoe headquarters building – was declared New Zealand's greenest new building at last weekend's 2014 property industry awards.

The \$15 million building, the first in New Zealand designed and built to meet tough international Living Building Challenge criteria, was also the crowd favourite, according to the iwi's whairawa (infrastructure and resources) general manager, Te Hau Tutua.

"We received the loudest applause," he said.

"We knew no one at the awards but so many people approached us and congratulated us for what we'd done."

The building's architect, Ivan Mercep, who died on April 8 a month after the structure was opened, was honoured at the awards night, Mr Tutua said.

The building also won the special purpose property award but missed out on the 2014 overall supreme building award, won this year by ASB North Wharf, the bank's new headquarters.

Mr Tutua, Te Uru Taumatua chief executive Kirsti Luke and Te Komiti o Runga tribal authority chairman Patrick McGarvey accepted the award for the Taneatua building at a Property Council of New Zealand ceremony in front of 1000 guests in Auckland on Friday, June 6.

The building is designed to have no environmental impact, to be integrated into its surrounding landscape and to give back to the world around it.

It is orientated to capture light and warmth, and incorporates more than 200 solar electricity panels to supply its own power, with any surplus fed back into the grid.

The 125-kilowatt system charges batteries that can power essential services in the complex for 72 hours in the absence of sunshine, if necessary.



KAPAI WHARE: Te Uru Taumatua whairawa general manager Te Hau Tutua and communications manager Max Temara, standing in front of hand-made earth bricks incorporated into the building, with the green building and special purpose awards the Tuhoe headquarters, pictured below, won at last week's property industry awards.

Photo Geoff Mercer
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"We're outperforming our energy generation targets at the moment," Mr Tutua said.

The building also features a revolutionary, deep-piling foundation and a world-first seismic design using round logs and a post-tensioning system.

Community members helped make 5000 earth bricks for the building to help moderate its internal temperature and enable it to breathe (see photo).

A café, Moumou Kai, to be operated in-house, will open at the end of June.

Mr Tutua said there was a lot of interest in booking the building for functions. Several government agencies and a New Zealand architects' group had made approaches, organisers of the national Manu Korero speech competition had been

in touch and a Rotary group had made inquiries.

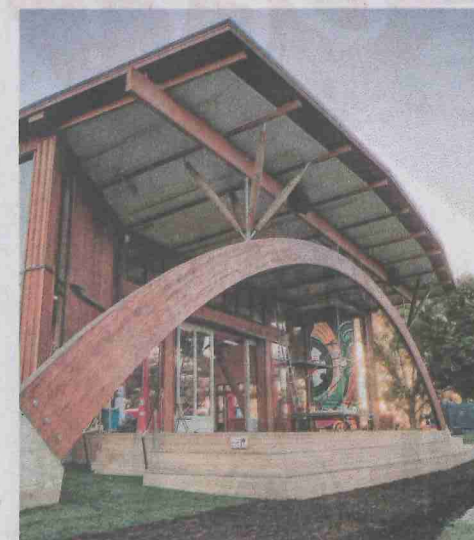
Mr Tutua said a wetland waste water system made the complex independent of Taneatua's waste water treatment plant.

"The treated effluent is coming out as pristine water."

Once construction documentation had been finalised and the café and all other operational aspects of the building were functioning, a 12-month trial would begin to demonstrate it met Living Building Challenge thresholds in terms of its environmental effects.

Mr Tutua said 30 to 50 people a day were calling in to view the headquarters.

"They are amazed that something can be built so beautifully and with so much thought for the environment."



Top Kiwi inspires Kawerau teens

TARAWERA High School students are being exposed to a range of inspiring speakers.

Recently the school's adolescent health and well-being class were visited by Dr Lance O'Sullivan, pictured at back, who was in Kawerau to support the opening of the new medical centre.

The 2013 New Zealander of the Year shared his journey in life with the students, from being expelled from two schools to his position today as a doctor/manager of his own practice in Kaitia and father of eight.

Deputy principal Julie Mees said Mr Sullivan was passionate

about his ability to positively influence young people not only through his health background but also his ability to promote leadership skill in young people.

"We shared a great afternoon, lots of questions, advice, and challenges were exchanged," she said.

"We were very appreciative of Lance taking time out of his busy schedule. He has promised to return to the high school again when he visits Kawerau."

Today students will hear from motorsport champion and road safety advocate Greg Murphy who will be at the school to promote safe driving. Photo supplied

Kawerau rail crossing low risk

THE area where a proposed rail extension would cross a main road into Kawerau was considered "low risk" in a recent survey of the area.

Kawerau District Council considered a report on economic development at the regulatory and services committee meeting on Tuesday.

Economic development officer Su Cammell said in the report the ALCAM survey was carried out to identify risks of a new rail crossing on State Highway 34.

It established a low level of risk and OPUS was completing and associated report with recommendations to mitigate risks which should be completed this month.

After the report was received the Industrial Symbiosis Kawerau Project would make a decision on whether to proceed with an application to NZTA for the crossing.

The proposed rail extension would branch off the current tracks and reach the Manukorihi industrial subdivision.