

Living building nearly ready

IT'S not every worksite where you can cool off in a lake like Waikaremoana and be back on the job minutes later.

A small army of tradesmen are starting to put away their tools, with Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana living building just weeks away from opening.

The landscapers are planting and contouring while builders, electricians, plumbers, tilers, roofers, and civil contractors are thinking about their next big job.

Locals have worked on the build, helping install the water tank and chipping in with the contractors along with Quality Roading Services Wairoa civil construction.

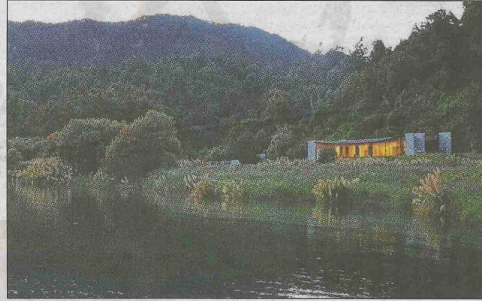
Hamilton plumbing contractor Denson Plumbing Ltd, director and site foreman, Russell Smith arrived in March after tendering for the job in January this year.

He says he has loved being at Waikaremoana.

"You don't normally spend time on the job looking at how wonderful it is."

The Hamilton-based plumber has travelled SH38 regularly when heading home, getting to know just about every farmyard animal along the route, from a family of pigs and piglets to geese and hopes to bring his family back to holiday at Waikaremoana Holiday Park.

"I was here from the beginning when there was



□ With an outlook over Lake Waikaremoana, the \$6 million "living" building for Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana will be opening next Friday. Director and site foreman Russell Smith, right, is hoping to return to the lake with his family to holiday early next year.

nothing here.

"When I first came to the site, I decided I wanted to come here and be part of the job and it has gone flawlessly."

During the build, the number of tradespeople on site has ranged from 10 to 50 people.

"All the guys get on and I feel honoured coming up here and being part of it."

Mr Smith spent two months studying the brand specific build where no PVC's or sealants with particular properties were allowed.

Instead it was copper piping. "Everybody working on the living building challenge had everything set down in stone."

He liked the idea that if they ever wanted to rip the building out of the ground, it could all be replanted without any plastic or contaminants left behind as if it had never been there.

The large group of tradies have become good friends.

"It's like a crew that could stay together for 20 years."

"You have got the opportunity to create something very special



for the country."

Te whare hou will be the second living building in New Zealand and Richard Gladden is project manager.

Te Urewera Board trustee and Waikaremoana Tribal Authority director, Lorna Taylor said there was a lot of consideration for the environment in the project and she was looking forward to its opening day with her daughter and project co-ordinator Oriwia Taylor.

Ms Taylor said it's real and it has been really exciting

planning the opening.

"It's been a pretty big year and everybody has come together like one big crew."

The new building is based at Home Bay and incorporates some of the timber from the recently demolished Aniwanuiwa visitor centre designed by the late John Scott.

The old visitor centre was closed around five years ago with DoC and other representatives operating from buildings in the Aniwanuiwa village.