TRC Tourism Team Key take outs for STC 2024

Day one

Keynotes and Central Otago welcome

- Trails are important to visitors and locals alike.
- "Everything hurts past 60!" Mayor Tim Cadogan
- Manage the expectations of visitors in terms of level, weather and infrastructure
- Importance of story telling in a trail perspective and share the content
- The ethos of how to think not what to think – Mark Inglis
- Disability should never define a life
- There is a power in working with local communities and commercial partnerships in trails. It brings positive outcomes into communities in terms of economics and healthy relationships creating multiple benefits for all.

Cristine Angus 7 observations

1. We are on trend with walking and cycling in Australia and New Zealand
2. The COVID effect has contributed to growth
3. The morning after has shown a decline in use for domestic tourism during 21-23
4. The fundamentals are strong despite current headwinds – negative = cost of living, discretionary income lowered and competition – positive = low impact, impact on mental health and a focus on accessibility
5. Opportunity is significant both environmentally and that cycling and walking experiences increase the attractiveness of liveability for potential residents.
6. Forget build it they will come
7. Consider personalisation and differentiation.

Session One – Creating Trail Destinations

- Put strategy first
- Money talks – destinations need to maintain revenue to evolve and grow
- Build the right brand strategy for the trail and determine differentiation
- Ensure to knock it out of the park with killer content
- Evergreen content is key, what is your icon? – trail content stays relevant for a significant time
- Its not set and forget, you need to sweat equity and customer focus
- Put heart at everything you do
- Focus on delivering foundational experience needs and absolute wants to address visitor primary motivations
- It takes time to get things aligned and to undertake planning
- Invest in stakeholder management
- Create a clear plan to attract funding and to manage push back
- Remember processes are there to assist us in achieving an outcome
- Testing a great idea needs to be proven to work

Session Two – Trails with the community in mind

- 1 in 4 have a disability in Aotearoa
- The desire is there but there is a gap in recreational activities that are fully accessible
- The importance of understanding what barriers are there and what option are available
- The three keys to success are clear vision, benchmarking and profitability

Summary of Day 1 and words and theme pulled out

- The word cloud = INSPIRE TRUST DELIVER MEASURE CONTENT (OWN IT AND DELIVER IT)
- UNDERSTANDING YOUR POINT OF DIFFERENCE
- COMMUNITY
- PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT
- TELL THE STORY
- VISITOR/COMMUNITY FATIGUE

Day two

Session Three – Bringing our Landscapes Alive

- Storymapp provides new ways for delivering visitor experiences on trails including lower cost options. Augmented reality for taking visitors back in time on that exact spot. Links to online for additional info and experiences
- There is great importance in connecting with local communities along the trail in their traditional way – through kava!
- Indigenous Ways – sharing how trails support the landscape and environment, through the relationships and narratives of Traditional Owners
- Trails are the local culture of a community, we must protect and pass them on to future generations as we found them
- Three workstreams exist for cultural development of trails – Framework (purposeful engagement), Truth telling and workforce development

Day three

Session Three – Bringing our Landscapes Alive cont…

TAC iwi partnerships and visitor management

- Identified the key problems on the TAC – waste, congestion, visitor behaviour, lack of cultural presence
- Presented Management Objectives based on Manaakitanga and Kaitiakitanga – protecting people and place
- Park Management Plan to manage impacts. Starting with implementing what can be done within the statutory framework, then look at by-laws, then the big investment.
- Phase 1 includes a booking system and a visitor fee $3pp, establishing carrying capacity across the 4 wellbeing pillars, setting up a stakeholder reference group, concessionaire cultural training

Key point – want to establish a new normal

Visitor Management and Australia's Great Walks

- States all competing, cluttered market
- Diversity is a huge part of the experience
- Managing demand – bookings systems, summer only
- Is 'build it and they will come' changing to... set and forget, lack of maintenance for tracks limits longevity and sustainability/resilience of the track

Concurrent Session One – Construction and Maintenance Techniques and Innovations

- Over 470,000 people participate in Mountain biking in Australia that has more than doubled in 6 years.
- More people seeking skill development and as a result ore coaching businesses on trail.
- Trail building needs to support on trail instruction with pull outs, sessionable areas, loops or off shoots and exit points.
- 3 steps to trails as a destination include working with the location, knowing your market, planning and funding
- Cater to the growth in e bikes, more people want jumps and to feel the flow and technical x country trails are a dying art
- Build trails in progression with optional chicken lines
  Consider balancing natural and machine made trail enhancing natural features
- Rules are now getting broken with more trails being built as lifted and tilted trail in mild slopes.
- Lake Dunstan Trail keys to success include using s small highly experience design and construction team allowed for significant innovation. Micro manage each stage to ensure vision is achieved and never lose sight of the goal

Concurrent Session Two – Planning and Governance

Planning and Governance concurrent session

- Benefits of events – promotion of trail, entity, region; wellbeing of community
- Runners happy to pay, Mountain bikers are not!
- Cash cow is 21kms
- Charge a participant fee
- Need an event policy
- Simple small governance team of people who Need to be involved
- Genuine deliberate partnerships with iwi
- Wider reference group
- Build it and they will come...BUT will they come back?
- Need to attract beginners and convert new riders
- Not all trail concepts are good. Need to be honest
- Success is when private investment follows trail development
- A thousand cups of tea – the key to success
- Community is the beating heart of the trail, Success is the strong and lasting connection to community
- Need right people on the board – skills not just representation

Key points from panel session:

- Never too early to engage local communities
- And close the loop to keep them informed

Panel Session Four – Regenerative Tourism and Trail Gradings

Dave Hockly - Benefits of regenerative tourism using Qtown example

- Attract high-value visitors
- Business owners want more margin – sell regen as better for their business by using data
- Make visitors aware of Qtown's regen mission
- Money they spend stays local, don't annoy the locals etc

Simon Noble – Trail gradings and standards

- 3 standards
- Not all grading platforms are consistent- they disagree over grading for a track
- Average track in NZ is one grade harder than grading says – has huge implications, injuries etc
- Higher grading = lower injuries?
- Should there be separate standards/scales for Mountain biking and Off-road cycling?
- Need to talk about this as a group

Open Workshop – Building resiliency in trails white board content

- Success stories of regional strategies – horror stories
- Maintenance – Innovate model
- Trail builder – apprentices/trainees/trainers
- Nurture our operators – maintain experience
- Building with weather event in mind
- Unifying the standards – 30 by 30 – trails contribute
- Integration of tree planning trail enabling
- Enable TW/ to storytelling and integration
- Compliance Lizard Management
- Work with Govt agencies
- How do trails fit into Fast tract act
- How to collect/ use data/consistent strategic approach
- Where to find info
- Good example of paperwork
- Infrastructure to support visitors
- Collaboration
- Partnerships
- Organised sport to outdoor recreation
- Optimal network?
- Movement @ end of build to maintenance, maturing
- Coordination of trails in PI – Fiji
- Centralised space 4 info – TRC?
- Fiscal Constraint
- Future visitor network
- Decarbonising contribution

Some Gems from audience:

- Importance of story
- Vision without action is a daydream – Action without vision is a nightmare
- Facing the same way on the waka
- When is enough? Trails, visitors
- Measure, measure, measure.

Comments on building resilient trails in relation to environmental factors

Resilient Trails

- Planning

- Building

- Using/Maintaining

Social

- Market Diversity

- Value to the community – opportunity for coin engagement

- Tell the stay

- Knowing + creating value

- Catering to all

- The social license maintain PSL

Cultural

- Get the local context of things

- Talk to the rights

- Natural materials – reasonable with Andy doing the hard stuff

- Significance of trials to heals comms and access to country

Environmental

- Allow for longevity and plan for sustainable processes and materials

- Tree planting days

- Reclaim lands – should build?

Economic

- Feasibility to inform govt/agencies/funding

- Availability of builders

- Funding for maintenance

- Incur $ due to climate change, water events and cost of materials

- Revenue Stream

Opportunity – current trends v future trends

- Feasibility

- Collaboration

- Integrated network/user focused

- Template/guidance to create a business case

- Alternative materials

- Training standards four builders

- Procurement tender bind – weight value you've getting

- Maintenance models – asset management principals' collective approach to contracts – economies of scale

- Spatial plans/LTP/A Plans/local govt

- Resilient materials

- Biodiversity space/operators

Challenge

- $ for feasibility

- Location-suitable

- Community acceptance – type of use

- Higher cost of materials

- Certification of the builder career pathways of the builder training

- Proposal process

- Educating local community on visitor benefit

- Skill base