

New town born on Tauranga's doorstep



TAURIKO TOWN: The Lakes development will bring 7000 people into the area.

PICTURE: JIMMY JOE

\$400m development rivals all others in NZ history

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A TOWN is being born on Tauranga's doorstep rivaling any other single development in New Zealand's history.

Called The Lakes, houses are springing up on what had been quiet valley and hillside pastures transformed by massive earthworks into the contours of a new town.

Opening up the land for development was preceded by the country's biggest private planning change — only later matched in size by the planned new town north of Christchurch, Pegasus.

At first, confusion surrounded the actual location of the The Lakes because the earthworks ran into the neighbouring industrial and commercial estate being developed on the Tauriko side of the stream running through the valley.

But a surge of house building, together with construction of the \$44m bypass that will sweep up to join Pyes Pa

THE LAKES

- Value: \$400 million
- Land area: 254 hectares
- Sections: 2081
- Estimated completion: Seven years
- Lakes: About 20
- Stages: 9
- Sales to date: 407 sections
- Sold out: Stage one (375 sections)

definition to it.

Graham Lee, of development company Grasshopper Properties, hopes that by 2014, The Lakes will be well on the way to reaching its predicted population of 7000, with subdivisions winding all the way up to Pyes Pa Rd.

It will be so large that a block of land

school. Centrepiece of The Lakes will be the only real lake, covering 10 hectares and suitable for most small boats without a motor.

Mr Lee said the lake was primarily an amenity for residents and was much bigger than needed to fulfil its storm-water function.

The thousands of truckloads of soil excavated to create The Lakes and the neighbouring Tauriko Business Estate is providing the foundations for the 4.5km bypass — saving \$10 million.

The bypass is being funded 50/50 by Transit and the Tauranga City Council, with the first 400 metres from the Route K roundabout to The Lakes roundabout built by Grasshopper for \$7 million.

When the bypass opens in three years it will remove at least 1700 vehicles a day from the increasingly residential Tauranga end of Pyes Pa Rd.

The council was counting on the bypass to slow the debt burden which continues to accumulate against the loss-

took off in the new residential and commercial estates, it was hoped to turn the tide on the debt which currently totals about \$48m.

Construction of The Lakes and its neighbouring commercial estate and major shopping centre fits the live/work/play scenario of Western Bay's urban development bible, SmartGrowth. SmartGrowth seeks to limit the development of suburbs far removed from workplaces.

Sports grounds to service The Lakes and the rest of Pyes Pa West are planned to be built on the 71-hectare council-owned farm 2km up Pyes Pa Rd.

Mr Lee said Grasshopper was about to crank up marketing of the 358-section second stage of The Lakes. Thirty-two sections had sold since November.

He was aiming to begin marketing stage three by the middle of next year.

Asked how the slowdown in Tauranga's property market had affected sales, Mr Lee replied: "We don't think it is too bad ... things have certainly