

CCG Queenstown Presentation - Experiences in Dealing With COVID19 for Construction

Notebook: Work Presentations

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Author: Tom Pendreigh

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NOTES

Introduction

Thanks Gareth. I'd like to start with a quick recap on what has happened over the last few weeks since we last spoke. Local and national conversations have been orientated around the impact this pandemic may have on the physical and economic difficulties we face in the short and long term future. Recent news in the Queenstown Lakes District and the wider region suggests increases in unemployment and loss in revenue for a variety of stakeholders. There is no doubting the impacts this will have on our professional and personal lives.

However, I'd like to suggest we use this time to look forward and consider what opportunities we have available to us. This week we have moved from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3. With the construction sector soon to be up and running, our peers and colleagues out in the field, we can now look to turn the conversation to how we can utilize this situation to our advantage. Even in the last 24 hours we have seen signs of an invigorated workforce keen to get back into projects, which is proof of the eagerness there is to return to usual practise. QLDC has a \$170M annual plan and an additional \$68M submitted for potential 'Shovel Ready' projects. NZTA have committed \$90M to the Frankton Flats. Major investors such as Ngai Tahu, 94 Feet, Remarkables Park and Wayfare have expressed their interest in progressing private developments, there is a lot to get done. This is our opportunity to re-start our local economy, through engagement of our local engineering, design and construction firms.

Current Situation

From a design perspective, most of us are aware that teams have been working throughout level 4 at home, utilizing remote access design software and virtual project meetings. The move to level 3 will not offer a change in circumstances for most design consultancies. However, level 3 does provide a great opportunity to push for the data capture required to ensure designs can progress accurately. Field staff such as surveyors and geotechnical engineers can now undertake critical or essential work, albeit in a safe and controlled manner. Over the last week, we have been receiving additional training and guidance on how we can operate in the field as required. Playbooks and guidance documents have been developed by response teams in line with the Construction and Safety guidelines the government have released. Additional Health and Safety documentation will be required, as well as more accurate processes and practices by field staff and greater care and consideration to travel, sites and site workers. We have been upskilled in these measures but the message is still to limit visits and inspections to critical tasks only.

We can expect these processes to evolve in the coming weeks. Communication is, and will remain, one of the most vital tools we use as we pass through the Alert Levels. With shared goals and objectives, we could suggest this is a strong position for us to move forwards in together. By maintaining a collaborative approach, contributing to and developing processes and policies, we could see our region move forwards in a safe and strong manner. Collectives such as the Construction Clients Group will be excellent platforms for these discussions to take place and potentially allow for leadership and guidance to be imparted.

Pipeline

Our immediate workload is a main focus area for our industry. Looking to the medium and long term future, we have seen a positive movement to reinvigorate domestic tourism to get the industry running again. Clients, consultants and constructors all share this desire, although the approach maybe cautious to begin with, it should be a short term goal we strive to achieve. Local governments and private organisations have submitted their 'shovel ready' projects to central government. Designers, like the construction sector, are reviewing this information to ensure they are well aligned for opportunities that may be presented.

The majority of our peers are looking for pipeline security, and quickly. With this taking shape through potentially the same group of opportunities, it begs the question what procurement strategy should be followed? Speed to market will be important to release the proposed benefits. Considering this. can we take learning's from our experiences in CERA, SCIRT and NCTIR? Locally and nationally our regulatory systems will need streamlined to ensure inspections and approvals can be managed appropriately. Another topic of thought is how the private sector is going to restart and what will it look like? This sector is almost 4 times the larger than the government and local body industries and should be given due attention.

Future

Looking to the future, with shovel ready projects, a local government project stimulus and a potential private market ignition, there is reason to believe a new market can be formed in the coming months. How this may look nationally or regionally is unknown at this stage. As a result , we have an opportunity to look at new practises we can develop. Sustainable design and tourism were regularly discussed prior to COVID19, will we see these emerge as key initiative for the future? As our market adjusts there will be a need for employment and skills transfers between sectors. This will bring forward new ideas and concepts we should consider to outline and shape our future market and industries.

Lastly, the coming weeks and months will be a difficult road for many and we should look out for each other whatever way possible. From an industry perspective, we need to utilize the skills and knowledge our peers and colleagues have to ensure we evolve through this in as strong a position as possible. I welcome your comments and feedback to keep the discussion going in the interim. Thank you for your time.