

## Three Christchurch's in 30 Years: Roger Blakeley's plan for Auckland

By Michael Botur of NZ Planning Institute

***“The scale of our challenge is like building three Christchurch's over the next 30 years. An extra one million people living in Auckland by 2040 is the size of three Christchurch's.”***

Dr Roger Blakeley helped write the Resource Management Act, making him fairly qualified to be Auckland's Chief Planning Officer. Blakeley's previous careers also include CEO of Porirua City Council 2000-2010, CEO of the Department of Internal Affairs, 1995-2000, and Secretary for the Environment 1986-1995.

Called 'the man at the heart of the 30 year plan' by the NZ Herald when he was posted to the supercity in 2010, Dr Roger Blakeley knows the city well enough to give the cornerstone speech at Back to The Future 2015. He'll preview a video of what he calls a “spectacular 3D visualisation of downtown Auckland, done by Ian Taylor of Animation Research, who did the graphics for our Americas Cup.” Tenders for a business case for Digital Auckland will open soon, Blakeley says.

At Back To the Future 2015, 175 years of Auckland planning will be covered in Dr Blakeley's speech. It all begins with Ngati Whatua interacting with Governor Hobson in the Bay of Islands, negotiating the sale of Auckland to the crown. “Then I'm showing the first Auckland plan, designed by Felton Matthew [our first Surveyor General] showing radial streets around Albert Park.

Dr Blakeley will then look at political leaders who have helped shape Auckland. “I'm tracking through Sir John Logan Campbell, Dove Meyer Robinson, who stopped the discharge of raw sewerage in Waitemata harbour, and Dame Cath Tizard who created Aotea Centre, right through to Len Brown's vision that Auckland will be the world's most liveable city with world class city rail link.”

The speech concludes with an evaluation of the 30 year plan expanding Auckland, tidying up supercity integration and building capacity for an extra million Aucklanders by 2040.

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The big project requires big coordination – hence the 3D Digital Auckland Commons project, for which tenders may be announced by Dr Blakeley.

“Water, roading or electricity supply, all those things should be able to locate in a digital commons all of their proposed infrastructure,” Dr Blakeley says. The purpose: reducing wastage through simply sharing information in an incredibly interactive map.

“At the moment you get this ridiculous situation where an infrastructure provider doesn’t share information about digging up roads, leading to wastefulness.”

“A digital commons would mean you could plan ahead “

“We’re creating a 3D digital model of Auckland which will be useful in the process of planning. From volcanic cones to just a house, all those things could be provided online through digital means. We’re currently doing a business case on preparation of digital Auckland. We’ll start on the waterfront and gradually develop it across Auckland.”

He told the *Herald* in 2010 Auckland cannot keep spreading outwards indefinitely, and instead needs to improve the quality of urban intensification.

There is no reason, Dr Blakeley said, why Auckland cannot follow cities such as Paris, with low-cost, high-quality medium-density housing. Efficiency is what it’s all about.

“Large houses on large sections might have been needed years ago, but now might not be.” Subdividing large sections might be a good way to even out houses populated inefficiently.

Tickets and registration for keynote speeches and workshops by Dr Roger Blakeley and a host of international planning experts are [available here – with earlybird rates set to run out soon](#).