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Standing Strong

West Auckland's Stronghold Group has firmly established itself as a leader in the Māori and Pasifika business landscape...

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Frontier Estate - a place to build a life

► Virginia Wright

When they purchased a 100-acre block of former farmland on the outskirts of Te Awamutu in 2017, father and son developers Lyall and Steven Green wanted to create something more than a cluster of new houses.

They knew the site, with its proximity to the town centre and expansive views across the valley, had the potential to develop into a true community and they set about the development accordingly, planning from the outset to provide the full range of services traditionally needed by what will eventually number between 400 and 450 houses.

Now with the first of three stages of the Frontier Estate development complete and a fourth on the market, and 100 homes already built, their vision is taking shape.

A second branch of the Te Awamutu Medical Centre is close to being operational in the Commercial Hub, along with a pharmacy. Provisions have been made for offices, a daycare centre, a supermarket and cafe along with other typical services such as a hairdresser and a nail salon. Their long-term hopes for the development are that people will enjoy building a life out there, and one that suits their individual needs.

"We've historically avoided selling bulk-lots sections to group-home builders – our preference has always been individuals and families. That way they can secure where they want to live, then find a builder that fits their own personal style. We've seen about 20 different builders so far," Steven says.

The earthworks needed to shape the land, lay out the roading system, form the building platforms complete with retaining walls, and prepare the wetland and gully system for stormwater management took two years, and involved moving 500,000 cubic metres of clay.

While the site is on town supply for drinking water and sewage, the need to properly plan for stormwater, given the increasing number of severe weather events, provided the opportunity to do something special at the same time.

During the design phase they chose the pond system rather than a soggy field, knowing they could add to the appeal of the subdivision, while also adding to its ecology, and future-proofing for big storms.

"We have two treatment ponds for cleaning up all the run-off from the sites, and then a larger storm-management pond, which is designed to flood out in the big storms and basically hold the water until such time as it can safely go down the Mangapiko Stream that runs through Te Awamutu," explains Steven.

So far, they have planted around half of the 26,000 natives planned to work in tandem with their habitats.

"In the wetlands we're planting grasses and flaxes and cabbage trees with the occasional Kahikatea, and in the gully it's more native forest planting like kauri and rimu," says Steven.



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The planting will continue as more stages are released. Complementing this bountiful habitat for native birds is the community orchard, with pears, plums, apples, lemons and mandarins growing for residents alongside the playground, which is already a popular weekend favourite for Te Awamutu residents.

The discovery of a number of natural springs when they were working the site means the plantings should be safe, even in a serious drought.

As the Frontier Estate community continues to grow and thrive, it looks set to achieve the legacy that Steven and his father hoped for, to be a place where families, young couples, older retirees and everyone in between can settle and enjoy everything it has to offer.



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