



NOT FOR PROFIT

EMERALD BLUFFS, A NEW PRIVATE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT NEAR WANAKA, IS TAKING A UNIQUE AND COMMENDABLE APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

John May arrived in New Zealand from Germany 15 years ago. He was so taken by the beauty of the lake and the mountains around Wanaka he bought a section. Inspired to do more, to leave a legacy, he acquired some land in West Wanaka that was intended to be a 15-section housing development but had failed to meet strict environmental standards.

May disagreed that the area should be developed so intensively, and purchased that undeveloped land and an adjacent section two years later, a total of 85 hectares.

Since then, ecologists, landscape designers, architects, engineers and other experts have been employed to restore Emerald Bluffs to its original habitat and to create seven building platforms on their spectacular respective sites. Set up as a not-for-profit enterprise, any profits from the sales of the sites will be donated to environmental projects in the area through a charitable trust. Five of the seven house sites remain.

Spokesman Michael Rawlence told *World*, “This style of development, to my knowledge, is unprecedented in New Zealand. The commitment to the regeneration and protection of natural ecosystems, combined with the spectacular beauty of the area and the world-class infrastructure is a unique and exciting concept.

“John May’s passion for the local environment led to this project being undertaken. The process has thus far involved removal of weed species, creation of a wetland area and vast re-vegetation in native species – over 100,000 plants to date.

“This work, and a comprehensive pest control programme, has led to an increase of local birdlife. The New Zealand falcon, emblem of Emerald Bluffs and one of New Zealand’s most spectacular birds, now makes its home here”.

To complement the environmental work, a study in sustainable building design was undertaken. The result was the international award-winning C3 House design concept, a luxurious family home that achieves a net zero carbon footprint and satisfies design requirements within outstanding natural landscapes.

A management company has been formed to look after the entire site, its services, and infrastructure. “All the services, including power and water, are controlled from the centrally located base building to each building platform,” said Rawlence. “The base building also houses a large solar power system, which is connected to the grid.

“The infrastructure is world-class quality, but it is the tranquillity and the seclusion of the site within this stunning landscape that makes Emerald Bluffs truly special. Each house will be nestled amongst native bush and the glacially formed topography – totally hidden from public view and neighbouring houses. It is an example of how areas of natural beauty can be enhanced and protected through sensitive land use.” **W**

Emerald Bluffs is located 15 minutes from Wanaka off the Wanaka-Mt. Aspiring Road. www.emeraldbluffs.co.nz

