

Tech Valley Public Meeting

SLIDE ONE

Acknowledgements

Thank you all for coming. It's great to see so many people here.

I'd like to acknowledge

- Chris Milne, Chair of the Tech Valley Working Group
- Charles Peterson
- David Miller from Vantage Consulting
- Any other Tech Valley members (see who shows up)
- Deputy Mayor David Bassett
- (other Councillors from Lower and Upper Hutt)
- (other VIPs that come on the night)

SLIDE TWO

Why are we here tonight?

I wanted to hold this meeting for three reasons

1. Raise awareness of "Technology Valley"
2. Start a discussion about what steps we need to take as a community to make the idea a reality;
3. And related to that, to drive the idea forward by getting a lot of the key actors into the room and generating some momentum and enthusiasm.

SLIDE THREE

What's going to happen tonight?

- I'm going to speak for a few minutes about why I'm interested in Technology Valley – what I think it means, a bit of history; why I think it's important; and some thoughts on next steps.

- Chris Milne is then going to speak about what's happening with Technology Valley, including the launch of a new Technology Valley organisation early next month.
- Kayne Horsham from Kaynemaile is going to speak about how his company's recent major break-through into the Australian market would not have been possible without the support of a large number of local manufacturing businesses.
- Deputy Mayor David Bassett is then going to speak briefly about the Council's role in Technology Valley;
- Finally Richard Perry from Callaghan is going to give us an update on the Gracefield Campus
- And then there'll be time for Q and A and a discussion.

There's tea and coffee at the back – please help yourselves.

Before we get underway, can I also say thanks to the Mind Lab for hosting us here tonight. This is just the second Mind Lab outside Auckland, and I think it's a real asset for the Hutt. It's a digital hub for kids and adults alike. I encourage you to check it out.

SLIDE FOUR

So what is Technology Valley?

Put simply, the idea of Technology Valley is the idea of the Hutt as a hub for companies, institutions and people based around science, technology, manufacturing and engineering.

It's fair to say that this is not a new concept.

SLIDE FIVE

Des Darby, formerly of GNS, sent me a news clipping a couple of weeks ago from the Hutt News in 1973. In it, the Mr R L Peace, the outgoing chair of the Lower Hutt Businessmen's Association urges people to brand the Hutt as "Science City".

The article notes that Crown Prince Akihito of Japan had the day before visited the Taita Soil Bureau; and the Duke of Edinburgh had visited the DSIR at Gracefield.

The 1966 An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, edited by A. H. McLintock, noted:

“The major Wellington units of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research now in Lower Hutt, including the Dominion Laboratory, the Dominion Physical Laboratory, Geological Survey, Soil Bureau, and Institute of Nuclear Sciences. The city has an important part in New Zealand's research work.”

SLIDE SIX

These days we have much to be proud of in the Hutt.

We're the home of Callaghan Innovation, WelTec; GNS Science; the Open Polytechnic. We have acclaimed Victoria University institutes like the Ferrier and Robinson Institutes based out here.

MBIE estimates are that there are over 4500 people across more than 1,000 Upper and Lower Hutt businesses employed full-time in the high-tech sector.

The sector generates \$500 million in GDP already.

The Hutt Valley has the fourth largest number of people in NZ employed in medium high-tech manufacturing.

Why is Technology Valley important?

So why is Technology Valley important?

I'm passionate about it because it means economic development and economic growth for the Hutt. It means good jobs for Hutt residents in a flourishing business sector. It means good salaries for families to provide for their loved ones. It means rates for our Councils for civic projects, parks and community centres.

In short, Technology Valley is all about building a vibrant valley, where people want to live. Where people want to bring up a family. A place that people can be proud of.

So that's why I'm interested in Technology Valley. That's why I've organised this meeting tonight, and that's why I'm a proud advocate for the idea inside the Parliament and inside the government.

Raising Awareness

The first reason I've organised tonight is to get more people talking about "Technology Valley" and raise awareness of the concept.

I think the stark reality is that while lots of people in both Councils and maybe the Chamber of Commerce know a lot about just what fantastic companies and institutions we have here in the Hutt, that's probably not shared by the general public.

Few people in the Hutt, I would venture to guess, would know the facts I mentioned just before.

I've been privileged enough to visit many Hutt Valley tech companies in the past couple of years – and gone to a few BNZ Tech Series BA5s as well – a great initiative.

What's amazing to me is that many people around the Hutt don't know about these companies.

Let me take you on a bit of a tiki tour around the Hutt Valley and all the great companies we have.

SLIDE SEVEN

Let's start in Alicetown with Tekron, a global leader in providing high precision GPS and atomic clock time keeping technologies. Designed in Alicetown, manufactured overseas and used all around the world.

SLIDE EIGHT

Keep heading down Victoria St and hang a right and we'll eventually get to Sanpro in Fitzherbert St in Petone. SanPro manufactures machines that make parts for car and motorbike mufflers.

SLIDE NINE

They supply the world's biggest car manufacturers like Nissan, BMW, Mercedes Benz, Renault, Audi, Kia, Nissan and Harley Davidson. That famous Harley roar starts right here in Petone.

SLIDE TEN

Just a few doors away is Kaynemaile. Kayne Horsham was a designer for The Lord of the Rings and had to make chainmail. His innovative and unique design was so successful it's now become Kaynemaile – a polymer seamless mesh that you can find around the world in offices and in hotels – everywhere from South Korea to Dubai to a huge Westfield mall in Brisbane. Look at the Kaynemaile Facebook page for photos of the stunning product being used in a wide variety of settings.

SLIDE ELEVEN

Now let's drive down the Esplanade to NZ Tube Mills in Seaview. Formerly known as Southward Engineering, these days it is the sole manufacturer of Eco Trellis for vineyards – interchangeable steel strainer systems, posts and clipping systems, all of which replaces traditional timber. It won two awards at the recent Australian Wine Industry Suppliers of the Year Awards.

SLIDE TWELVE

Now let's head to the Gracefield Innovation Quarter, based around Callaghan Innovation. There are so many great companies here, like Robinson Seismic, designers of seismic base isolation technology;

Glycosyn – world leaders in carbohydrate chemistry with clients all around the world; and

SLIDE THIRTEEN

HTS-110 - global innovators in the design and manufacture of cryogen-free electromagnetic products using high temperature superconducting wire.

SLIDE FOURTEEN

Heading up the eastern side of the Valley we eventually get to Woolyarns in Taita. In 1945 it started life as a basic wool spinning factory and these days it produces world class top quality knitwear, carpet yarns, and hand knitting yarns.

SLIDE FIFTEEN

They are Australasia's biggest producer of yarn from possums - blended with merino or cashmere. Innovation is a key focus.

SLIDE SIXTEEN

Just around the corner is Pertronic Industries, which designs and manufactures fire alarm systems for New Zealand and international customers. It's a TIN 100 company. In fact I asked David Percy, the CEO, to speak tonight but he's in Australia at the moment, as he is often these days because the business is doing so well.

SLIDE SEVENTEEN

Just a stone's throw away is Fraser Engineering which manufactures fire engines for 90 percent of the NZ market as well as many Australian states and all around the Pacific. It has probably the biggest production line of fire engines in the world.

SLIDE EIGHTEEN

Keep heading up the Valley and you'll find Strictly Savvy, a cool new company run by a couple of Mums in Upper Hutt that provide

tailored virtual assistants from their home base in Upper Hutt. Their assistants can do admin, website creation, event management, and much more.

SLIDE NINETEEN

Finally, in the middle of Upper Hutt you find a winner from last year's Technology Valley Awards – Dry Living, an innovative company making home ventilation systems, including filters and heat exchangers.

So that's a quick tiki tour around the Valley. There are many companies I could have mentioned but haven't.

Since I started organising this meeting I've had lots of people coming up to me asking what Technology Valley is all about. People are curious. They're interested in the concept. I'm really pleased by that and I hope that tonight is just the start of the process of telling the story of Tech Valley in the wider community.

Our Potential

We've got huge potential in the Hutt to build on our existing strengths.

We have superb institutions and great companies, as I've already mentioned.

We have plenty of zoned commercial and industrial land.

We have good primary and secondary schools.

We have great transport links – which are set to get better with Petone to Grenada and hopefully the Cross Valley Link. Transmission Gully and Highway 58 improvements will open up the northern part of the valley like never before.

We have good public transport connections.

And I need to put a plug in for the government as well. As a party and as a government we're hugely supportive of innovation and research and development. Spending in the area is up 70% since 2008. Our proportion of business R and D as a percentage of GDP is growing. We have an extensive work programme, which I won't go into here, to further grow innovation in our economy. Just today Steven Joyce announced \$15 million to support the commercialisation of new tech in NZ.

Finally, I think we have community support as well. So let's make it happen.

SLIDE TWENTY

So what do we need to do to create Technology Valley?

Before I close and hand over to Chris, I just want to mention a few things I think we need to do to make Tech Valley happen.

SLIDE TWENTY ONE

First, we need to "tell our story" as compellingly as possible. Let's get better at communicating what a special place we have here – the companies and institutions here already, and the ones we want to attract.

Let's get more people thinking and talking about the Hutt as "Tech Valley."

And I don't just mean more people around the Hutt. I mean people in Wellington. People in Auckland. People overseas.

We need a great website. We need to be on social media; Facebook; Twitter. We need a plan to make that happen; and coordination between all the various players. No doubt Chris will tell us what progress is being made in these areas.

SLIDE TWENTY TWO

Second, we need to realise we're all in this together. Technology Valley isn't going to happen through any individual, company, tertiary institution or Council action alone, or through central government action, or with a few people pushing the idea, or a few businesses. It's only going to happen with all stakeholders working together, and with strong community support.

That's partly what tonight is all about and the reason why we definitely need things like the Hutt STEMM Festival coming up in June. I know a couple of Rotary clubs are doing some interesting things with young people and science. Let's bring them into the loop. Let's collaborate and innovate.

SLIDE TWENTY THREE

Third, we need champions in the community. Our community leaders have to stand up proudly for the cause of Technology Valley; and stand up for innovation, science, and research. I'm going to do it – my challenge to you in the audience is to join me.

SLIDE TWENTY FOUR

Fourth, let's celebrate our successes. The Technology Valley awards started last year are a good start. I was proud to have got the Prime Minister to present the inaugural awards last year. Let's build on that good foundation.

SLIDE TWENTY FIVE

Fifth, we need to get our young people interested in and thinking about science, technology, and the STEM subjects. We need young people in the Hutt growing up and dreaming of careers at great Hutt companies or institutions. So we need more initiatives like the GNS Science Day when students spend a day at GNS. We need more businesses opening their doors to primary school students and teachers.

We need more things like the Hutt Science kits and more projects that the government is funding through the “Unlocking Curious Minds” fund, which is part of the National Science Challenges.

SLIDE TWENTY SIX

Sixth, we’ve got to think about how we get companies to come and set up in the Hutt – either existing ones or new start-ups. Let’s think hard about how we get companies to relocate from elsewhere in New Zealand to the Hutt Valley. Let’s have a conversation about how the Hutt community can best nurture start-up companies. Some will fail; but some will become the Xeros of tomorrow.

And let’s go for international investment as well. Up in Taita is Aviat Networks. They chose here. Let’s work out why that was; and how we can get more of them here. Let’s work with NZ Trade and Enterprise and develop a compelling pitch to investors.

SLIDE TWENTY SEVEN

Finally, let’s be ambitious. The term “Think Big” is a dirty phrase these days. But we need to set our sights high and be ambitious. We’ve got a great opportunity to build the type of community that encourages science and technology, that builds and nurtures great companies, and that creates great jobs for Hutt residents and their families.