

Lightweight kitset bridge so innovative

By Mike Barrington

Two Whangarei men have produced a bridge they plan to carry them over financial pitfalls into profit, with jobs for others along the way.

The pair — Kelly Wright and Steve Swann — have overseas interest in their lightweight kitset bridge so they are keeping the patented design under wraps with the hope buyers will soon be using the new structures to cross creeks and streams around the world.

The bridges, built over concrete arches, are classified class 1 and can carry 7.5-tonne axle loadings.

They can be assembled on site and are seen as an answer to increasing pressure for farmers to keep cattle out of waterways and prevent stock causing environmental damage.

Lightweight components can be delivered by helicopter when bridges are needed in inaccessible locations.

Wright and Swann have set up Clearwater Crossings Ltd to make the bridges in 12 sizes with arches spanning 3.1m to 7.2m and of different widths.

The concrete spans only the water, with compacted metal and wooden sides on top of the arch lengthening the bridge.

As a result, a bridge with a



QUICK ASSEMBLY: Steve Swann (left), and Kelly Wright on a 4.6m Clearwater Crossings bridge they have installed on John and Bev Manderson's property at Kauri.

PHOTO/JOHN STONE

4.6m arch is 9.5m long when installed for about \$26,500, and a 7.2m arch is 15m long and costs about \$45,000 installed.

Clearwater installed the first of its bridges at John and Bev Manderson's property at Kauri recently.

Ode to Clearwater

Kitset bridge designer Kelly Wright is also a poet. He composed. —

Ode to Clearwater

Who'd be a cocky
You'd hear 'em all say
Down at the yards
Every sale day
Boy's too smart
to take the farm over.
He's seen the old man
Having to hock off the
Landrover
The Boy's helped milk for
nothin'
All his young years
Time he shot through
The Mum's in tears
Now the drought
Has cut the income in half
Gotta sell a cow
For the price of a calf
However, that's nothing
compared
To this last screw
Fence off your creeks
Ya cows can't go through
Bugger me days
Shit's gunna fly
Cockles get grumpy
When they're forced to
comply

Remember back when
They went a bit crazy
'Cos the Greens wanted to tax
A fart from ol' Daisy

Who'd be a cocky
They've invested millions
Crossing the creeks
Gunna cost in the billions
Hang on a minute . . .
There's a new crowd in town
They've got the answer
You'd better sit down
Clearwater Crossings
Are the boys who understand
They can get you across
For just a few grand
Their technology's based
On an arch design
Roman arches have stood
For a bloody long time
Now with this arch
Set into the bank
It won't collapse when ya
Take over your tank
It's mighty robust and
Leaves the stream running
free
It spans the water
And it's approved by NRC
So eco friendly
Keeps the stream crystal and
rocky
Mmmm . . . maybe it ain't so
bad
being an old cow cocky

Northland Regional Council officials and others associated with the new venture were on site to see how rapidly the structure was assembled and fitted into position with the absence of heavy equipment,

usually associated with bridge building, resulting in little impact on the stream it spanned. Regional council familiarity with the Clearwater bridges is crucial as the company organises consents for bridges it installs.