

## **SUBMISSION TO THE WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT LONG TERM COMMUNITY PLAN 2009 - 2019**

We are pleased to see that the Whangarei District Council is making every effort to hold rate increases at realistic levels. We support the proposed increase of 3% for residential and lifestyle properties based on average land value, 3% increase for rural properties based on average land values and the 3% increase for commercial and industrial properties based on average land values.

This is an improvement on the previous 9% increases on average for all rateable properties in the Whangarei district.

The Whangarei District Council's rates in 2008 averaged \$1,480 per rateable property compared to the Far North \$1,637 average over all rateable properties, Rodney district \$1,954 average per rateable property and Auckland \$2,276 average per rateable property. Kaipara district averaged in 2008 \$1,021 per rateable property.

### **Council Debt**

We support Council's policy of keeping public debt at no more than \$130 million and we support Council's capital expenditure programme proposal for the next 10 years of the LTCCP.

### **Sewerage Option 4**

Improvements to Council's Sewerage system must be given high priority. Farmers of New Zealand are against the Whangarei District Council's application for Resource Consent to continue discharging sewage into the Whangarei harbour and its estuaries.

Farmers of New Zealand support the introduction of Option 4 and we support the Whangarei District Council funding \$30 million on improving its current sewerage infrastructure with the objective of reducing spills from Council's sewerage network as soon as possible. We support a coordinated approach by all Northland district councils and the Northland Regional Council seeking the appropriate Government funding to address Northland's sewerage problems as an issue of regional importance and urgency in an endeavour to clean up Northland's waterways and to ensure a viable marine farm industry.

### **Rubbish Disposal**

Farmers of New Zealand support a user pay system for the disposal of rubbish with the objective being that partnerships with private enterprise to deal of the issue of rubbish be continually investigated.

### **Regulatory Services and Resource Consents**

We support the Whangarei District Council and the Northland Regional Council's initiative to build a complex between Forum North and the NRC Building to form a one-stop shop and the supplying of Regulatory services and resource consent services. We believe that this will be a successful initiative and we support the Whangarei

District Council and the Northland Regional Council in soliciting the cooperation of the Far North District Council and Kaipara District Council in addressing the issue of duplication of services throughout the three Northland district councils and the NRC.

### **Roading Transportation**

We support the Whangarei District Council's key new roading projects to improve traffic flow in particular where State Highway 1 goes through Whangarei city, the new Harbour crossing link to Pohe Island and the reduction of traffic congestion around the central business district.

### **Multi-purpose Events Centre and Hundertwasser Centre**

Farmers of New Zealand support the revised plan and reductions made in an endeavour to establish an affordable multi-purpose Events Centre at Okara Park at a cost of \$16 million and we support the Hundertwasser Centre only on the basis that external funding is used and not ratepayer funds. This centre being the old Northland Regional Council building should be retained for the benefit of the ratepayers rather than sold off to private enterprise.

### **Finance**

Farmers of New Zealand expresses its confidence in the Whangarei District Council's Finance committee led by Councillor Warwick Syers, Accountant. Their approach to future financial planning gives ratepayers confidence, at the same time having in place the necessary controls to ensure value for ratepayers' dollars spent.

### **Future Northland Local Government Structure**

Farmers of New Zealand supports Northland district and Regional Councils conducting a review of Northland Local Government governance. We believe that it is better for Northland to try and control what it wants rather than having central government deciding what is best for Northland. The current cities' structure within Auckland, regardless of their views have had the decision made for them by central government. We support Northland local government reform on the basis that there must be substantive savings in bureaucracy, compliance and local government ratepayer service delivery.

### **Rodney / Wellsford district**

Farmers of New Zealand have been approached by our members in the Northern Rodney area to petition the National Government requesting that Northern Rodney ratepayers be given the opportunity to decide by referenda as to whether they wish to be part of the Auckland Super City or join the Kaipara district and become part of the Northland region. Our members believe that it makes no sense in particular for the Kaipara Harbour to be governed by the Northland Regional Council and the new Auckland Super City council. Our Northern Rodney members have stated very clearly that they believe that the logical boundary could be at the top of the Dome Valley extending out

### **District and Regional Plans**

Farmers of New Zealand supports one district and regional plan for Northland. We also support a common linkage and compatibility of all data systems, Regulatory standards and costs including Engineering standards.

### **Regional Roothing Funding**

Farmers of New Zealand support a regional approach when dealing with central government over funding for urban and rural roading systems throughout Northland.

### **Future Reviews of Whangarei District Council District Plan**

We wish to notify Council that we are waiting with great interest to see what the Whangarei District Council will propose in any future review of the Whangarei District Plan. The special areas that we will be monitoring are whether there are any changes to Council's current Significant Landscapes policy and any proposals in regards to future land use through rezoning of land.

We will not support any proposals that impinge on the rights of private property owners and we reaffirm our policy that Significant Landscapes should be agreed to on a regional basis along with the Northland Regional Council and we remind Whangarei District councillors that they should not overlook the fact that the Whangarei District Plan must fit in with the Regional Council's District Plan. It is our understanding that the Northland Regional Council is carrying out a full review of all of its plans in the near future.

We also believe that if the Whangarei District Council was to interfere with the rights of private property owners, that it should be prepared to financially compensate those property owners and also should budget sufficient monies to protect the general ratepayer from any pending litigation that private property owners may take against the Whangarei district council.

Any future review of the Whangarei District Plan should only include amendments that take in environmental law changes. We wish to remind the Whangarei District Council that we only have to look at what happened in the Far North district and the Whangarei district when ratepayers revolted against those Council's planners who showed a total disregard to the rights of private property owners through lack of consultation when reviewing their district Plans.

We wish to be heard at Council's planned submissions hearings.

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