

SUBMISSION BY WAIKANAE COMMUNITY BOARD – LONG TERM PLAN

The Waikanae Community Board (“WCB”) is a creature of statute, taking its current constitution from the Local Government Act 2002. The Waikanae Board is established pursuant to s49 of that Act. Such a Board where established is for each community in accordance with schedule 6 of the Act.

Role of Community Boards

The WCB has legal mandate to make a submission in terms of section 52 of the Local Government Act 2002 and provides:

52 Role of community boards

The role of a community board is to—

- (a) represent, and act as an advocate for, the interests of its community; and*
- (b) consider and report on all matters referred to it by the territorial authority, or any matter of interest or concern to the community board; and*
- (c) maintain an overview of services provided by the territorial authority within the community; and*
- (d) prepare an annual submission to the territorial authority for expenditure within the community; and*
- (e) communicate with community organisations and special interest groups within the community; and*
- (f) undertake any other responsibilities that are delegated to it by the territorial authority.*

Water

The WCB has made previous submissions to the LTCCP and Annual Plan in relation to water. In those previous submissions the Board has endorsed the efforts of the Kapiti Coast District Council (“KCDC”) to find a sustainable and long term water solution for the Kapiti district. The WCB has supported a 400 litre per person per day consumption conservation goal.

In its submission to the 2010-2011 Annual Plan the Board supported a rates rebate for approved types of water conservation strategies such as rainwater tanks or suitable grey water recovery programmes.

The WCB has supported Council’s water augmentation policy prioritising the river recharge system and a commitment together with active steps to the long term construction of a dam to make better provision for long term water consumption increases. It was noted that these two options received widespread community support after a lengthy and some could indicate exhaustive consultation process. That saw substantial community buy-in to both the shorter term river recharge and the longer term dam projects.

The WCB however expresses its grave concern at what is seen in the community as a “U-turn” by Council with the adoption of water meters. A lengthy consultation on other water options has been severely truncated when it has come to the water meter

issue. Our Mayor is on record at the last election indicating that water meters will not be an issue for this district and are not on a Council agenda. No campaigning was undertaken in relation to water meters at the last election. Many in the community believe that a private and hidden agenda is now before them with decisions made on water meters, including the fitting of manifolds to a vast number of houses, making it objectively impossible for this Council or a subsequent one to change course to any other water system other than water meters.

It is acknowledged by the WCB that evidence has been placed before Council which indicates that where water meters have been installed there have been savings in water consumption. This fails to understand the fundamental difficulty that Kapiti faces. Our current water consent is the same one which has been in place throughout the life of the KCDC. Our population however has gone from a little under 20,000 people to a little over 55,000 while Kapiti continues to be the second fastest growing area in the country.

Water meters are seen by the Waikanae community as not providing “the necessary head room” which was a feature of the long term water strategy which had culminated in the river recharge and dam projects being accepted.

The WCB acknowledges that the KCDC has tried to reassure residents that the water supply will neither be a revenue gathering tool nor will it be privatised. Entrenching charges to standing orders in relation to water together with the provisions of the Local Government Act have been demonstrated by Council to show a clear intention to retain water in private ownership and to limit water pricing.

Fundamentally however the basis upon which water meters were first discussed has changed. That change was not signalled to the general public and has advanced substantially by stealth.

When water meters were first put on the table there was to be a clear allowance for every householder before a unit charge was levied. That system operates in a number of areas in New Zealand. The WCB urges Council to relook at the charging formula as there is currently no incentive in the pricing formula for people to keep below the notional consumption/conservation goal of 400 litres per person per day. Indeed, the current charging regime makes no penalty to excessive water users as their water charges are the same per unit delivered to the gate as moderate users.

The WCB again questions the costing as \$8 million for the provision of water meters in Waikanae, Paraparaumu and Raumati. It is difficult with the WCB and members of the public to reconcile this figure when previous figures for installation of water meters throughout the Kapiti area (even taking into account more modern meters) have been nearly double the current price provided by Council.

The WCB has previously submitted in relation to the proliferation of cross-lease properties and multiple unit dwellings in the Kapiti area. The cost of the provision of extra tobies and water mains to these properties or meters closer to the house is considered to be a substantial cost on Council. The WCB questions whether these

costs can be absorbed within the \$8 million budget currently allocated for the water meter project.

The other unknown issue totally in the background is the cost of reading water meters. The cost of maintaining them as well as manipulation in the unit price delivered to the user's gate. While the WCB acknowledges Council resolutions have been passed to ensure that water will be in a closed account and will not be used to subsidise other Council services, with the removal of the initial 400 litre per person per day conservation target as a trigger for unit charging there is a genuine fear in the community that unit prices for water will simply rise every year in an uncontrolled and ultimately unsustainable way.

The WCB acknowledges that Council has spent some time and gone to some considerable effort to provide charging charts for water meterage and usage. Rather than simply tying these to a delivery charge and unit cost at the gate they have been unduly complicated by tying them to the various Council options for the augmentation of water, be that the staged or partial river recharge, a total river recharge or the dam project. No doubt, Council has seen the information provided as helpful but feedback from the community is that it is confusing and technical and doesn't answer the fundamental question of what will the six monthly water bill be likely to be.

The WCB continues to take issue with the notion that water meters will be a tool which will allow KCDC to adequately detect leaks on private property. Leak detection has been an ongoing effort by KCDC, its staff and its specialists for some time. The vast majority of those leaks have so far been within the reticulation system itself. The WCB believes that first and foremost, before water metering is further considered, there needs to be a robust plan to update the infrastructure with an emphasis on leak detection. This should be the major driver for savings and conservation.

The WCB urges Council to prioritise the replacement of the asbestos cement pipes which make up a majority of the piping network for most of the older areas in the water reticulation system. While new subdivisions do not generally have the problem, much of the submains in Waikanae are asbestos cement pipes which are now prone to leak and rupture. The WCB considers that a robust infrastructure and delivery system is likely to save far more water and be a far better conservation system than the current water meter option.

Mahara Gallery

The WCB continues to support the Mahara Gallery as the district-wide gallery for Kapiti. The WCB is pleased to support the KCDC in its endorsement of the Mahara Gallery and the district-wide gallery for our district. The WCB is proud to have led the process in galvanising all stakeholders behind the Mahara Gallery in its pre-eminent position as the district-wide gallery.

The WCB understands the need for Council to prioritise the five major projects that councillors have worked hard to itemise as the priorities for their spending for the foreseeable future. The district-wide gallery however should not be lost sight of as Council has been able to find write-offs and substantial underwriting for other

sporting projects within the community. The WCB expresses its concern at the substantial and seemingly unrestrained cost blow outs for the Aquatic Centre and the huge cost of the augmented and upgraded civil building. Much of these increases in costs, if they had been contained, would have seen the Mahara Gallery extension undertaken immediately.

The WCB understands the need to put the Waikanae Library upgrade back into the funding budgets at its original year but expresses the desire that Council ensures that any upgrade to the Library provides for linkage to an enhanced Mahara Gallery now or in the future.

Open Spaces, Parks and Reserves

The WCB continues to be actively involved in reserve management plans for a number of substantial open spaces, parks and reserves in the Waikanae area.

It is noted with concern that the WCB has sought the Pharazyn management plan to be put out for public comment and re-evaluation due to substantial concerns with the way the current plan is being interpreted. That requirement has simply been placed on the backburner. It is an important issue and needs to be dealt with well before the spectre of excess soil and peat from the expressway is used to change the fundamental shape and character of the current ponds, and assist with the unacceptable wilderness option currently being advanced against the wishes of the local community.

In relation to Waikanae Park, the WCB considers that the upgrade to the toilet blocks and changing areas is too far out in the funding process. The Board would support the postponement of the seating proposal and the use of the monies allocated for that purpose to be redirected into the enhancement of the changing facilities at Waikanae Park under the recreation centre. The WCB notes that it has already expended \$80,000 from the capital improvement fund on this building which is a district-wide asset.

The WCB is entirely supportive of Council's purchase of 35 hectares of land ("the Howarth Land") immediately south of the Waikanae River and adjoining State Highway 1.

Access to this land however is crucial for sports fields to be created on this land. It is noted by the WCB that Transpower's transmission lines traverse part of this land. The WCB along with KCDC has actively lobbied Transpower to underground these lines as the current requirements of Transpower will make it difficult for a number of activities formerly undertaken under transmission lines to carry on.

Access to the Howarth land is an issue. If a further footbridge (for example at the end of Maple Lane) were to be put in place, there will be substantial parking and resident disruption during peak times of use. Once the current State Highway has become a local road there may be options for access from that road without crossing the rail corridor that will provide convenient vehicle access for Waikanae residents to the new sports fields and sporting facilities to be developed over time.

The WCB supports the development in a staged way from the region-wide parks and reserves budget for the development of the Howarth land.

Local Outcome Statements

The WCB supports local outcome statements being undertaken for the remaining communities without them, namely Te Horo and Waikanae Beach. Some of the completed outcome statements will, in the Board's view, need to be refreshed and revisited in light of the expressway. The desire for Reikorangi residents to be involved with their own community outcome statements and processes needs to be advanced by Council.

Recycling

Prior to November 2010 the Waikanae recycling centre located at the former refuge collection centre was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Without any consultation staff have intervened to lock the gate and restrict access to those times when greenwaste is being recycled. The reduction in service has been ameliorated somewhat by the unlocking of the gate each day, however the level of service is still well below 50% of what it was prior to the unilateral actions taken in November 2010.

The service outcomes for the Waikanae community have not reflected this loss of service but the WCB is pleased to see and supports Council's plans to continue the recycling and greenwaste at the former Waikanae refuge collection centre.

When the Waikanae tip was prematurely closed it was agreed with the community that there would be a recycling centre and greenwaste site in Waikanae. That fundamental agreement should not be gone back on now and the WCB is therefore pleased to see that Council endorses the need for proper recycling and greenwaste collection with the Waikanae community. The WCB acknowledges with appreciation the steps that Council has taken to protect that very necessary recycling and greenwaste service for this community.

M F Scott
Chairman
Waikanae Community Board