

2 June 2009

## **COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS CAN DRIVE SUPERCITY CHANGE**

- **Mayor outraged at short time for submissions on Auckland Supercity Bill**
- **“Speak out now to save local democracy” says Mayor Penrose**

“This is not good enough!” Papakura Mayor Calum Penrose says he is outraged at how little time has been set aside for submissions into the second part of the legislation that will create the Auckland Supercity.

The second Bill sets up the structure of the new Council and establishes its functions, powers, duties and membership and sets out the power of the Local Government Commission to determine the names and boundaries of the wards and local boards, the number of local boards and number of members.

It also establishes the powers of the new Transition Agency to reorganise water services for the region and carves up Franklin District between the Auckland Supercity and the Waikato.

Public submissions are now open and close on June 26.

“People in our community are angry and frustrated about the speed at which this change is being pushed through and about their inability to be heard by the politicians who are promoting it. Our message to the community is simple: make your submission now, and make it count. There won’t be another chance.”

Silence equals assent: Mr Penrose says the community can still help save local democracy by making strong submissions on the legislation that will set up the Auckland Supercity.

“Get your thoughts on paper, and have your say. We had more than a thousand people turn out to our public meeting about this, and more than a hundred travelled into Auckland to be part of last week’s march for democracy. Now we are highlighting the next step, and the most important. Without strong submissions against the Government’s proposal we stand to lose so much.”

Mr Penrose recommends people also send their thoughts to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Local Government. He said the Council would be making its own detailed submissions at every opportunity, and would also offer assistance with making effective submissions to any local people who need it.

“Other Councils are expecting between 500 and 1000 submissions will come from their communities. I reckon Papakura will easily top that – the support from our people so far has been amazing and there is real concern about what is being foisted on us.”

Local people, he said, were asking what it would take to get the Government to listen to their concerns.

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“The march up Great South Road, and the commitment of those who came with us into the city to march up Queen Street, sent the Government a message. It would be wrong to think the job is done. Even the Prime Minister said he did not think the hikoī would change anything. So now we need to make our voices heard through formal submissions to the select committee,” he said.

The Government’s Supercity proposal raises more questions than it answers, Mr Penrose says.

“For example, what happens with leaky buildings? The Transition Agency isn’t taking on that issue, but the new Supercity is going to have to deal with it and it’s going to be a multi-million dollar burden for taxpayers across the region. Papakura has very few leaky buildings – is it fair that ratepayers here subsidise the cost of resolving these issues in other parts of Auckland?”

A Supercity based in the centre of Auckland is also likely to centralise its purchasing of materials and services, leaving many smaller locally-based businesses unable to compete on price or volume.

“The downstream effect of this is going to be felt by communities like Papakura in many ways. A Supercity isn’t likely to be interested in maintaining small to medium-sized local contracts for services or materials. It will take its own decisions about how to maintain essential infrastructure, and where to base staff who will be responsible for these functions. Will it even be possible to pay your rates in person here in Papakura if you wish to do so? I suspect not. In fact the many effects of this change will continue to ripple through our community for years after the Supercity is introduced.”

In the end, Mr Penrose says, the loss of democracy under a Supercity means places like Papakura will be marginalised and ignored, with political power concentrated in central Auckland and spending likewise focussed on a few suppliers of services and materials.

“All these things mean it is absolutely critical that people make the effort to have their say through the select committee submissions process. For those who need help, we will certainly offer assistance in making those submissions.”

-End-

Note from the Parliamentary web site on the submission process and the purpose of the Bill:

## Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill

Public submissions are now being invited on the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill.

**The closing date for submissions is Friday, 26 June 2009. No extensions to this deadline will be granted.**

The bill provides for the governance structure of the Auckland Council, including the high level framework (structure, functions, powers, duties and membership), and the powers and functions for the Local Government Commission to

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determine the names and boundaries of the wards and local boards, the number of local boards and number of members, and to develop a reorganisation scheme for the division of the Franklin District, and its council, between the Auckland Council and the Waikato District Council. It also proposes amendments to two local government Acts to allow remuneration, allowances and expenses payable to be determined by the Remuneration Authority, and for the Auckland Transition Agency to approve a process for, and oversee, the planning and management of the integration of Auckland's water supply and wastewater services by Watercare Services Limited.

The bill is available for download from the `Related documents` panel. Print copies can be ordered online from Bennetts Government Bookshops.

The committee requests that submissions address specifically the matters raised in the bill, as it will not be considering any other issues. Submissions can either be emailed to [AGL@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:AGL@parliament.govt.nz) or mailed in paper form. If you send your submission via email please do not also send paper copies. Two copies are required of submissions sent in paper form.

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