



The Northern Action Group Incorporated

June Newsletter

Dear Member/Supporter,

Donations and Support

Many thanks again to those who have donated during the past year! NAG is all voluntary and does not ask for an annual membership fee so your generosity with donations helps us meet our basic costs of billboard and advertising- materials and basic services.

Getting better governance for Rodney within AC and a better deal for Rodney ratepayers is a constant challenge, one actively pursued by our Rodney Local Board (RLB) and Councillor (who your rates pay for), and which we support. However, in the current AC environment of:

consultation - you say what you like and we (AC) feel free to agree or ignore you and make up our own minds, and;

communication – we (AC) tell you what a great job we are doing for you 😊

its easy to say “why bother”. But that just perpetuates the unsatisfactory status quo, so NAG is your voice for change for the better. Your donations and support help us make our voice heard – and thanks to inflation your donation will never be worth more than it is now!

Donations to NAGs Bank Account ASB WW **12 3095 0233547 00** **Comments** to northernactiongroup@gmail.com

...also if you want to be more active with NAG, please let me know. We need more voices and diversity on our committee.

Save these Dates!

NAG AGM – Monday 27 June 7.30 p.m. Totara Park Retirement Village Hall, 5 Melwood Drive, Warkworth. Topic “A Better Rodney”

Mayoral Candidates Meeting – Thursday 18 August, 7.00 p.m. Warkworth Town Hall.

T: 09 422 6347

W: www.nag.org.nz

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What's Happened?

Presentation to RLB

With Covid delays preventing face-to-face Local Board meetings, NAG finally got to make a deputation to the local Board on Wednesday 16 March.



(click on the picture or [here](#) to go to the presentation)

That gave us a chance to advocate that the RLB should push AC harder for fair Regional Fuel Tax (RFT) use and more money for Rodney's roads, oppose the Mayor's Climate Action Targeted Rate (CATR) proposal, oppose any shift from "PAYT" domestic waste collection to a rates funded system, and support opposition to the Government's 3 waters proposal.

Unfortunately, the majority Rodney First ticket on the RLB believes that agreeing with everything the Mayor proposes is the only way to get more funding for Rodney. (Along with Councillor Greg Sayers we disagree and believe representatives should represent and stand up for those who vote for them).

(In AC's own survey only 31% of Rodney votes supported the CATR. Clearly with 40% of AC's land and most of its farmed and forest areas, Rodney already does more than other local board areas to offset urban emissions, and rates that help plant trees in the city do nothing for Rodney ratepayers).

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Some of us have also made personal submissions on these topics but once again our rates are likely to increase to benefit the urban majority.

RLB members did show some positive feeling for our suggested ways to help coordinate the concerns and inputs from community groups across Rodney. We believe having rural and coastal community groups working alongside urban groups (such as OneWarkworth) will help promote a coordinated and focused District effort for AC to recognize Rodney differences and needs. This is needed to overcome the growing urban/rural and other identitarian divides in our communities (reflected in transport policies and facilities provision for example) and work against those who prefer to promote division and conflict between and amongst community groups.

The proposal to “ring-fence” some of our rates payments for an increased budget allocation for unsealed road improvement got some traction with the independent and rural members and a motion to that effect was proposed to the April meeting.

Again this was rejected by the Rodney First majority who dismissed the recommendation and simply repeated the RLB’s standing “request” for more roading funding – something that will be seen only in the context of the review of Regional transport planning i.e. not this year and in competition with funding for major urban transport proposals.

Unless the people change in this year’s elections we can see where that is going....

Block or Ticket Voting

It's bad enough that the RLB area suffers from the tyranny of the majority of Auckland Councillors who represent urban population areas, but even worse when local board members, whose job is to advocate for their communities, get dominated by members who represent policies, or those of a “ticket”, as a priority over the interests of those who elected them.

A recent example all this can be seen in the publicity regarding the responses of the Mayors of Upper Hutt and lower Hutt respectively to the Government’s 3 waters proposal. While it is clear that a majority of New Zealanders oppose the proposal, as does the Upper Hutt Mayor, the Lower Hutt Mayor signed up to a labour policies ticket which obliges him to support Labour Government policies, even though his own ratepayers are against the three waters proposal. (<https://www.facebook.com/CrChrisMilne/posts/449582570510412>)

In Rodney, the Rodney First ticket has urban centric policies most evident in transport - with the allocation of Targeted Transport Rate funds to public transport and footpaths which service our small urban communities. This disadvantages our rural ratepayers (who represent more than half Rodney’s ratepayers) by ignoring the need to improve Rodney’s rural and unsealed roads.

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The answer is to elect only independent candidates who will represent those who elect them.

If you are a NAG support you likely think that way anyway, so if you want truly democratic outcomes, remember we get who we vote for and lets campaign for independent members only.

Stop 3 waters

We continue to support the campaign to stop the 3 waters proposal. You can see what we have to say on our [website](#) and our Billboards.

As a member of the Water Users Group on your behalf, we encourage you all to keep up with the developments on the Court case and its constitutional implications. See their [website](#) or Facebook page and support them personally.



(click on the image or [here](#))

Billboard Campaign

Feedback we get is that these are having an impact and people do see them so we will carry on!

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Meetings

AGM

Coming up on the 27th June. We look forward to hearing from our local Councillor and Local MPs! Greg Sayers and Chris Penk will be there. Marja Lubeck is unfortunately overseas but will let us have some comments beforehand. It will be certain to be worth attending!

See you there!

Our Committee needs more new blood and diversity, so if you interested in helping us chart our path forward, please contact me before the meeting.

Mayoral Candidates meeting

Thursday 18 August, 7.00 p.m. Warkworth Town Hall.

The place to start change in AC is at the top! So it really matters who we choose as our next mayor, and its vital that you vote.

We have confirmed who we think are the top 5 candidates are for the position and you will get a chance to hear them say what they will do for Rodney if you come to the meeting.

Fight the Tip

Michelle Carmichael and her team are doing a great job as we head into the appeal hearing. This will be a lengthy process and we are unlikely to see a result this year. If the consent is confirmed, there is an appeal stage, so still a lot of water to flow down the undisturbed Hoteo yet!

Private Members Bill

Chris Penk and I have been busy so this has not progressed much since I last commented on it, but it is not forgotten. With the Government's ideas on Local Government offering little prospect for much needed real devolution and localism at our level, this proposal is needed now to get some traction before the general elections next year.

You can ask questions and hear more at our AGM meeting, so please join us!

Yours sincerely

Bill Foster
Chairman
Northern Action Group Inc.

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