

BEFORE THE WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARINGS COMMITTEE

In the Matter of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the Matter of Proposed Plan Change 86B (Whangarei District Plan).

STATEMENT OF DANIEL JOHNSTON

Dated this 24 July 2017

My name is Daniel Johnston. I have been a landowner and resident in Austin Road since March 1983.

I supported Plan Change 86B (PC86B) in my submission as Whangarei is in desperate need of more suitable land for subdivision and housing.

I am not in favour of the proposed Chapter 47 'Road Transport Rules' 47.2.12 as it stands, as this was not part of PC86B that I supported. I will give my reasons first and then talk directly to 47.2.12.

There is an ever increasing demand for sections and housing in the Whangarei District. This is evidenced by the rapid uptake of sections and building at Totara Park Subdivision in Kamo/Tikipunga. The very limited availability of building sites in Maunu and the almost immediate take up of these when available is also evidence of same.

One needs to only talk to Real Estate Agents to understand the unsatisfied demand. I have lived in the Maunu area for nearly 40 years and, over the last decade, I have regularly received requests as to what sections there are available in Maunu.

A large part of the demand is from Aucklanders wishing to relocate to the regions. I have been told anecdotally that over 50% of purchases in Totara Park are from Auckland.

Auckland has long suffered from a shortage of building stock and sections. If the regions (including Whangarei) can satisfy the demand for Aucklanders who wish to relocate, this will help alleviate the problem. It is not Whangarei's job to do this, but is an added benefit to NZ of allowing development in Whangarei.

Roading from Auckland to Northland/Whangarei is currently being improved dramatically with the Warkworth and Wellsford extensions and the four-laning from Whangarei to Ruakaka, all planned at present to be completed in 5 years as I understand. This will only serve to increase demand for homes in Whangarei.

It is therefore absolutely essential that PC86B be approved and that no unnecessary impediments be put in its way.

47.2.12 will act directly as an impediment. For a start it is ambiguous, does not provide certainty and places requirements on land subdividers over which they have no control.

- a) What does 47.2.12(a) mean? Does it mean that you can subdivide an existing lot into 2 under PC86B? Or does it mean that a subdivision of a lot into 2 is a restricted discretionary activity?
- b) What does "a well connected street and transport network" mean?
- c) How can a subdivider be responsible for provision of Public Transport? Surely this is the responsibility of the WDC?

47.2.12 will only serve as an unnecessary impediment to subdivision and may well result in owners not pursuing what WDC wants to occur with PC86B, ie subdivision of land to allow the city to grow in a controlled manner. It will most certainly add costs unnecessarily and therefore make sections less affordable.

I can speak specifically about Austin Road as I have been a resident here for 34 years. The land is flat and 100% suitable for building on. The road is, at present, having a footpath constructed on one side. The traffic problems that existed at the primary school on the corner have been fixed with the provision of off-street parking, a roundabout, and widening. The entranceway onto and from SH14 has been addressed with feeder lanes onto Austin Road from East and West of the State Highway, allowing for the free flow of traffic on SH14. There is a feeder lane on Austin Road ensuring left and right turning traffic onto SH14 is efficient and well managed.

In all, everything necessary has already been completed. On SH14 itself the problem by the Hospital has been addressed with the provision of traffic lights. The journey into the CBD took me 10 minutes last Tuesday, leaving home at 7.35am! Surely this indicates that no traffic issues exist or will arise from PC86B. The installation of traffic lights on the intersection of SH14 and SH1 was completed a few years ago and works perfectly. Maunu and Dargaville residents who use SH14 to get to Whangarei have two alternative routes already, via Cemetery Road and Kaigoose Valley.

All in all, the district is adequately served for the rezoning of L3 on Austin Road. This must be allowed to happen in an efficient manner without unnecessary delays caused by 47.2.12.

It is the job of WDC and Transit NZ to recognize demand in advance of it happening and to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate this demand so that growth can occur "where it is in the interests of citizens" and the district. It is not their role to stifle and restrict this growth.

I submit that 47.2.12 is entirely unnecessary and should be removed from PC86B or, at the very least, written so that there is certainty and that subdividers/developers are not responsible for things beyond their control.