

## Press Release



# The Northern Action Group Incorporated

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On Monday (September 14th) NAG's committee had its first meeting with the newly appointed Chairman of the Local Government Commission (LGC), Sir Wira Gardiner and his senior advisor Sarah Polaschek in Warkworth.

The meeting was informal in nature as well as being very amicable and the committee came away with the impression that a good rapport has been established.

Sir Wira explained the process and assured us that they were very aware that the issue of examining our local governance had become protracted. They now intend to proceed expeditiously but with great care as they wanted to avoid any repeat of the recent High Court action.

Ms Polaschek then explained that having made the decision to assess our proposal the Commission now first needed to determine what constitutes the 'affected area' for the assessment and whether there is sufficient support for reorganisation in that area. The LGC view is that "affected area" has different meanings for different parts of the Act.

The phrase 'affected area' has a statutorily defined meaning with four detailed criteria. Two clearly do not apply to our proposal and, of the remaining two, one (as used to decide to assess our application) means clearly just North Rodney.

The other one (which the LGC thinks applies in the assessment) requires that for an area in a district to be declared an 'affected area' it must be shown that the 'operational scale, scope or capability' of the remaining area (in this case the area of Auckland Council (AC) apart from North Rodney) will be 'materially' affected by North Rodney's separation.

NAG argues that the definition is the same for both stages of the assessment process and that North Rodney is too small a part of the region anyway for its separation to have a 'material' effect. The Commission has therefore asked Auckland Council for information to show the effect on AC of North Rodney's separation.

Although the Commission is now waiting for AC's response they assured us that they will not tolerate undue delay so we should learn the outcome of this argument shortly (at least before the end of October).

The Commission has also assured us of transparency and that we will see AC's submissions and consequently have an opportunity to make any comments before a decision is made.

Bill Townson  
Chair - Northern Action Group Inc.

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