



The Northern Action Group Incorporated

Christmas Newsletter: December 2022

Dear Member/Supporter,

Christmas has come around again and I have held off the Newsletter to give us time to see the possible outcomes from the November local body elections.

Well! Wayne Brown for Mayor! Whether you love him or hate him he is facing up to the realities of funding and delivering Auckland's basic operations and development needs. These were obscured by the last two mayors under a smokescreen of Communications stories about ideologies and achievements, visions of emergencies and crises, iconic dreams and promises; and supported by consultants and studies. Growth was funded on rate rises, increased borrowings and Government help and ratepayers were stuck with a general feeling of wasteful spending, lack of value for money, high council overheads, and a general failure to perform and implement projects and basics efficiently and effectively.

We have repeatedly said the current AC structure is not fit for purpose, but it can be made to work better!

Wayne's approach and platform has seen him elected by a significant margin of Auckland voters. The same can be said for our Rodney area where Councillor Sayers has been re-elected again despite competition, and where the pro-rural and non-aligned candidates for the local board achieved a significant majority of the popular vote. Candidates under the Rodney first banner still did well and the balance now means we are looking to see how the new local board members perform on matters which continue to concerns local voters.

Wayne wants to hold down rates, focus on project completion and performance, improve council efficiency, increase delegations in responsibilities down to a local level and reorient priorities to align with what voting rate payers want, rather than with the ideologies of those who purport to know best what voters should have. All of these are fully consistent with what NAG has been fighting for.

Chief among these concerns is the need to do something to fix the regions roads (Rodney's in particular) and balance servicing the interests of rural ratepayers (who have been neglected although they pay half the rates) with those of their urban friends.

Wayne's thinking as expressed to date aligns well with that of our Councillor Greg Sayers who has been a strong supporter of, and advocate for, Rodney ratepayers interests. Chief among these is keeping rates to a reasonable level; fixing Rodney's roads and significantly improving the quality and implementation of the planning for Rodney's infrastructure and facilities.

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In the New Year we also look forward to Wayne and Greg addressing and correcting the RFT report; continuing the fight to repeal three (now five) waters; and reviewing council's approach to disposal of residual waste (which currently has them supporting the flawed and strongly contested proposal for a new regional landfill in the Dome valley).

So NAG wants to congratulate our newly elected mayor, councillor and all local board members. NAG will be working to support their efforts to improve the quality of Rodney's governance and improving the outcomes for all Rodney ratepayers.

Of course we must recognise that not everyone will be happy with what decisions get made. Our aim is to get them made as much at the local level as possible. We have not forgotten the merits and strength of the Community Empowerment Model we argued for at the Local Government Commission. Localism and community empowerment is the only way we see to change the attitude of frustration and remoteness that Rodney people feel from being dictated to by an urban centric Auckland Council and its independent service silos.

Billboard campaign

This has been on hold pending the election outcomes and it looks like we will have to change tack! - lending support and credit to initiatives which benefit Rodney's communities. This is a welcome change from the ongoing need to criticise AC and remind people about the poor outcomes for Rodney.

Of course we have not forgotten central government policies and ideologies which are impacting our communities. There will be more to be said about three waters, transport policy, nationalisation, free speech restrictions. and local government and electoral reform as we head into the national election next year.

Donations

I want to give a special 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 we rely on your generosity with donations to meet our costs of materials (e.g. billboards) and basic services (e.g. admin).

Last year I noted the Covid spend-up and supply shortages would mean inflation – well that's one thing I am sad to be right about – and it definitely means your donation will never be worth more than it is now!

– thank you again to our supporters!

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

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Post Covid.. more Covid

I don't know about the rest of you but Zoom (and other video app) meetings just aren't quite that same as face-to-face encounters (where people can't just click you into silence – or click you away 😊). And lockdowns tend to sap your enthusiasm for things after a while... Sigh.

So, we have not progressed follow-ups to our AGM action points for you as we might – and hope to put that right next year!

Nonetheless we have continued our Billboard campaign thanks to volunteer support, and your committee has worked hard remotely to get NAGs viewpoints out there on:

- the RFT Rort;
- the disastrous 3 waters proposal; and
- our continued opposition to the Landfill proposal. I am a S274 party to the proceedings. The hearing continues in 2023. The [Fight the Tip Save the Dome](#) Facebook page will keep you up to date.

Thanks again to Jane Harris! for maintaining our website. More work is still needed as time permits to bring some of the outdated content up to date.

Items that we continue to advocate for, but have not progressed since, include:

- Localism
- Rodney subdivision boundary changes
- Recall elections

They were fully covered in the [last \(August\) Newsletter](#).

Following up from our AGM, we have still to get a face-to-face meeting with the Rodney Local Board (that is now expected to be in February) to remind them of our activities and seek better engagement with the Board's efforts to improve local governance and outcomes for Rodney.

Have a Merry Xmas and lets all look forward to a very Happy New Year for 2023!

Yours sincerely

Bill Foster
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Northern Action Group Inc.

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