

## Seasons Greetings from NAG! Newsletter: December 2018



# The Northern Action Group Incorporated

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Dear NAG Member/Supporter

### **XMAS CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

Since my last newsletter in June the NAG committee have continued with our High Court appeal against the Local Government Commission's (LGC) decision, even though the outcome, if we won, would not necessarily get us more than a new assessment process (and the associated publicity of course). However, with no other immediate avenues open to us we decided we had to proceed.

Up until recently the High Court (by its own discretion) allowed Bill Foster and myself to represent NAG in court but when that courtesy was granted us the judge made it clear that she would be reviewing our representation along the way. If it was rescinded we would then have to hire professional counsel to move the appeal to its conclusion.

That day has now arrived because in a recent interlocutory decision the judge has ordered that NAG must now have professional representation in court.

As I'm sure you would be aware that would cost a substantial sum (estimated to be in the region of \$50K) and although we have been trying to raise the money for some time in anticipation we have so far only managed about half, so it seems unlikely that we will be able to proceed with the appeal now.

The only glimmer of hope in that interlocutory decision is that in the same decision, the judge has ordered the LGC to file a report on how they set the deadline for submissions on their Morrison Low (ML) report last year. (LGC has used the alleged late arrival of the APR report we commissioned to disallow it's inclusion.)

You may recall that the APR report reached a totally different conclusion to the ML report (which indicated massive rate increases and has since been proven by their own peer review to be full of errors).

The APR report on the other hand showed that a separate North Rodney (NR) administration could not only be financially viable but had the potential to thrive (something we have always argued).

LGC have indicated their report to the High Court on that matter will be ready in January next and you can be assured that we will continue to argue, to the extent we are allowed, that the APR report should have been considered.

In the meantime we have come to the view, and our legal advisors agree, that since in the end our destiny will be a political decision, we should put our efforts (and funds) into promoting legislation for a referendum.

Accordingly, in parallel with our work on the legal process, we have been lobbying to re-energise that idea with a piece of enabling legislation (something that NZF promised to do but reneged on once they got into power!)

Although such a Bill will have to be professionally drafted, before that commences we have been working on the necessary supporting material for how the Bill might look and what it will achieve, why it is needed, and how the process of separating NR from AC would happen. The Queensland de-amalgamation examples provide some useful guidance on this.

Of course it is no use going to the expense of a professional draft if it would be unlikely to get sufficient support in the House and we are hoping the saga of how unfairly North Rodney has been treated, not being allowed to have a say in the form of our own community governance, will be persuasive in attracting that support.

Some of you may be of a mind that after nine years we should give up and accept the fact that we will be dominated by Auckland for the foreseeable future.

However I believe that while there is any hope we must carry on with our campaign. Feedback the NAG committee and myself regularly receive from our community is that there is still an overwhelming desire to have our own local administration. Even those who either like AC or don't care, concede that we should have been able to have a vote on the amalgamation decision.

In the current political climate, things can change very rapidly so we should keep the pressure up until we achieve what clearly most of us want – better local governance for North Rodney!

In the meantime the team at NAG and I would like to wish you all a **very Merry Xmas and a prosperous 2019!**

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support!

Sincerely

Bill Townson  
Chair - Northern Action Group Inc.

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