

**Newsletter: June 2018**



# **The Northern Action Group Incorporated**

---

Dear NAG Member/Supporter

## **NZ FIRST UNABLE TO DELIVER PROMISED REFERENDUM**

We held our AGM on Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> and the minutes of the meeting and the Chairman's report can be viewed on our website.

As you can see in the report on Tracey Martin's address to the meeting, NZ First will not deliver on the promised Binding Referendum for North Rodney's future governance.

This NZF promise for a referendum did not even survive coalition negotiations and NZF has now decided it will not force the issue (for example in exchange for their support for Labour's Regional fuel tax Bill) because, they claim, neither of the major parties, Labour or National, will support the necessary enabling legislation.

Tracey said that Phil Twyford (Labour) has made it very clear that his party will not allow North Rodney to leave the region under any circumstances - despite his personally having strongly and publicly supported our drive for self-determination back in 2010.

Both Parties say that North Rodney will not be allowed to leave the region as it is needed for Auckland's growth – though it has never been stated why a North Rodney Unitary Authority would prevent that?

I believe that what the major parties really mean is that they want our money (rates and development contributions and shortly Fuel Tax and a Targeted Rate as well) to prop up the CBD's infrastructure needs, most of which is of no benefit to us at all. After all we're not going to 'tow' North Rodney away anywhere and it'll still be available for growth, but under local day to day control.

I also believe that NZF are being disingenuous when they say they cannot force the issue with Labour as they don't want to 'rock the stability of the Coalition Government' by 'holding the Country to ransom' with this issue. How, I wonder, do they square that position with the fact that NZF vetoed Labour's 'three strikes' law recently? Are they not being selective with their stated election promises?

I do believe that Tracey has done her best to get the Party to keep their promise to us but is frustrated by other forces within NZF caucus. Party leader Winston Peters (who publicly promised us a referendum) and Shane Jones will not even respond to

our emails on the subject so unless they start honouring promises they certainly will not be getting my support come next election!

Although we are proceeding (as far as we can) with the High Court appeal - to show that the process the Local Government Commission has followed to arrive at their “do nothing” decision has been neither correct nor fair - this path of action does not assure us of a better outcome, as any reorganisation scheme still needs to be sanctioned by the Labour dominated Cabinet before it could be actioned.

It is all one way – the Commission has proposed amalgamation 5 times in different regions since the Act was changed in 2012. These have all been rejected by the communities when they can vote: when communities propose de-amalgamation, the Commission rejects it and communities can't vote on that.

NAG has committed a huge amount of time and money to representing North Rodney's communities and has always endeavored to follow due process. Sadly, in the end the outcome is still determined by political decision. One which clearly makes a mockery of the legislated reorganisation process in the Local Government Act!

However, NAG will not give up and the AGM was unanimous we should continue the fight. For now, it looks like we must search out and push for any other ways we can find to improve the governance of North Rodney.

That goal is, and has always been, a democratic outcome for the citizens of North Rodney – fair representation, fair services and fair rates and charges, something that has been repeatedly denied us by the very people who claim to represent us.

Tracey suggested we should change our current focus and now concentrate on getting a better deal for North Rodney under AC. She suggests that together with her, our local representatives, ourselves and other stakeholders could support an initiative to come up with a devolved operating model within AC that gives NR better accountability and control over matters frustrating our NR communities. She hinted at some sort of ‘think tank’ to develop the model and if such a model required new legislation she's in a position to initiate that. Better that we get engaged in thinking about how to get more control over local matters than continuing to accept being told by outsiders what's best for us!

So, thinking caps on please everyone and please share your ideas so we can explore them. It has been suggested that we need to make better use of social media and although we have in-house knowledge of its mechanics, it's the matter of how best to strategise its use it that we need to explore - so the more input from the wider support network the better will be the result.

Contact details for us can be found on the NAG website.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support!

Sincerely

Bill Townson  
Chair - Northern Action Group Inc.

*Copyright © 2018 Northern Action Group Inc, All rights reserved.*