

Community excluded

I must take issue with Paul Dell's (WDC) response to Bev Wood's complaint that the Ruakaka area including One Tree Point and the Takahiwai has been omitted from a coastal policy review. Quite frankly, his explanation does not conform to the facts.

The structure plan for this area is no justification for exclusion, especially when readers learn the undemocratic manner in which it was devised and confirmed by our councillors. Unlike the rest of the Whangarei district we were excluded from council's organised consultative process. Instead, a non-resident developer offered to fund a review using his own planner. Not only was the community as a whole excluded from providing any input but surprise, surprise the revised plan appeared very conveniently, to benefit this same developer.

It was matter of great concern that this planner made no concessions to the fact that we are living in a changing world economically, socially and environmentally. He studiously avoided the impact of climate change.

When belatedly, the time came to allow the Ruakaka community to comment on this plan, many individual residents community and business organisations took the time and trouble to make submissions rejecting or recommending significant amendments. Only two submitters provided detailed support whilst the remaining 46 in favour were anonymous or unable to provide adequate reason.

Guess what? Our councillors chose to affirm the revised plan! What does that tell us about them? One thing is for certain, they have no respect for the democratic process.

The consultation process was a farce.

NORTHERN
ADVOCATE
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(Abridged)