

ADU. June 6th 2012.

Hands up, silent majority

MAYBE you should go lemon picking up in Kerikeri," he suggested. "Why?" I asked not getting where the conversation was heading. "Well, you voted for Morris Cutforth, you said that Phil Heatley would romp home last election and you liked the idea of the Hundertwasser building — I'd have thought you'd be an expert in picking lemons by now." Ha. Ha. He wasn't laughing with me. I do support the idea of a Hundertwasser building or something (anything!) that will attract more people to Whangarei. Whether it's the right time or place is questionable but there are things about the latest decision that rattle nonetheless. I'm grappling with what the Mayor was reported to have said at last week's resolution to fund the Hundertwasser. I'm considering asking him for next week's Lotto numbers as his psychic abilities are astonishing. That you can receive 65 per cent of submissions against a proposal in a community infamous for its pathological apathy and then ignore them entirely is astounding. That you can then claim to read the minds of those who are silent but by your own calculations; the majority, and then do their bidding is nothing short of miraculous.

Forget the Hundertwasser, I'm prepared to sell my house and follow Morris, Kahu and his

merry bunch of minions towards the promised land. Which, according to the mouth-pieces for the mining industry, could be somewhere north of Puhipuhi in a town near you. The dismissal of those councillors with reservations about community buy-in by our Mayor was on the brink of offensive. That they "have got ratepayers in their areas that are against it and they need to take notice of what they're saying to them, so they want a bob each way". Taking heed of ratepayers or even citizens' concerns! Disappointing. Radical even in these parts. They should be punished! I'm sure they will be. The message is very clear to those of you who took the time out of your busy days to write tedious things like submissions when you could have been fishing or with your kids. Next time — don't bother. The Mayor can read our minds and he'll do what's good for us. What I believe is of equal concern is that the business brain behind council, which should be the CEO, seems to me to have been a very public agitator.

Perhaps I'm old school, but I thought CEOs of councils were the shorts, socks and sandals kind of guys, the steady hand on the cheque book.

Didn't they advise on a project as to whether the numbers stacked up and if it was good for the community rather than be an active proponent for or against? I know. That was before they got

all sexy and said they were worth the same as the guys in the private sector. No one bothered to tell them that the private sector salaries were also entirely fictitious but I didn't think, on nearly \$300,000 a year it could be considered a job for life. Mark Simpson has been CEO of WDC for nearly 20 years. Wasn't he around in Stan Semenov's first time as Mayor in the early 90s? In my view, it shouldn't be surprising that a CEO starts to merge the lines between stewardship and ownership when the timespan with that "enterprise" is so long. It's why private sector CEOs move on after five years. It's not his fault. These councillors, bar one, voted for him. And we voted for them. Still it must have been nice for the councillors to have Stan back in chambers, eye-balling dissenters, to see finished what he'd started. Nice to have him back. Yup. Almost like he never left.

