

Candidates come clean on policies for pollution

The *Northern Advocate* has combined with Channel North to put Whangarei's mayoral candidates in the Hot Seat as part of Elections 10 — a six-part television series screening on Channel North.

The candidates were asked six questions, and allowed one minute per answer. Elections 10 has started screening on Thursday and Friday nights at 7pm. Each Friday, for the next six weeks, the *Advocate* will be publishing the candidates' responses from the previous night's show.

Today, we publish the responses to the first Hot Seat question — "What are you going to do about the Whangarei Harbour pollution problem?"

Vince Cocurullo

"The harbour pollution, what I'm going to do about it, pretty straight forward and simple there. Over the last three years we've implemented quite a few things to actually get things started. For example, we've upgraded the Okara pump station the Hatea pump station is the next one on the line.

"We've also got the Raumanga pumping area. All these things are contributing factors to the harbour but they are not the sole problem for our pollution.

Our pollution is also caused by run-off or stormwater run-off as well as just the everyday things that are in our harbour. Our pollution table, which we've checked over, is not as bad as what it could have been, but for me personally, once again, I would like things to be a hell of a lot cleaner.

"And the way we're going to do that is by maintenance, simple everyday maintenance. We've found several times we've done the maintenance they've fixed the problems."

Morris Cutforth

"Well I think I'll do something a little different from what this current council is doing, which is a quick-fix solution. They have stopped the spilling over but they actually haven't fixed the pipes and the flow of stormwater



Vince Cocurullo

ELECTIONS 2010

education as a community. Talking to businesses and people alike to educate them on the effects of pollution and I think number three is to review our sewage and storm water systems, look at the capacity and the overflow and what needs to be done there so that when we have large storms we don't pollute our harbour any further."

Isopo Samu
"I think we have to continue on what the current council's doing. They've put in a leading-edge wastewater treatment plant/pumping station but the problem is that it's not coping. Our population's growing.

"The pressures on the system is increased. We've known about this actual problem for a quite a long time and what we need to be doing is sitting the two councils down and say we have a problem here. We



Paul Jeeves

of that. If it wasn't for the pressure from the public nothing would have happened. They've all just talked at this stage, but now they've actually got to put some action into those words. I'm here for the future of Whangarei and that's my town. I want it to be right and clean. If we are clean and healthy, people will come here to live and want to come here to live."

Simon Vallings

"Well I think the harbour is the most beautiful thing about Whangarei. It's a treasure that we have to look after and the best thing to do is to look at land-based disposal of the sewage rather than disposing of the end product to the harbour. It should be put on to growing hard wood timber trees which in themselves would become a valuable asset to Whangarei in the future.

"I think several hundred hectares could be set aside for that purpose. It's a far more environmental method of disposing of it and it's primarily an aerobic process instead of anaerobic which is also better and that more nutrients are retained."

Terry Burkhardt
"When discussing harbour pollution we need to discuss the current council policy. That policy is poor, lacks leadership, lacks proactive action and is a result of reactive



Warren Slater

that's causing the spills, and so that really needs to be looked at. "It's a long-term solution and a very costly one indeed. I think the council needs to allocate a certain amount of money every year just to go into sewage and they've got to make sure that that money is spent only on sewage."



Morris Cutforth

Don Hedges

"Well I live in Limeburners street, [near] Limeburners creek. When I first came up here in 1961 we used to be able to swim in the creek and enjoy the harbour amenities and salt water and it's really disgusting what we've got to put up with now and recreation in that harbour use. Well it's really old technology and we've got to look at new technology to break down the bacterial content of this sewage and I think it's a very poor location were it's been situated in Limeburners Street/Limeburners Creek there and the discharge point. To start with I'd see about alternative discharge points, yes and also purifying it in other areas, satellite sewage systems."



Don Hedges

Paul Jeeves

"With the harbour pollution, there's three or four main objectives. One is policing and penalties for those that are creating pollution into our harbour and that needs to be done in conjunction with the regional council. I think another one is training and

here we have a common problem here, let's deal with it rather than people sitting back and saying 'that's your fault you know you should have been doing this'. Stop the blame game and get on and deal with our environment."



Isopo Samu

Stan Semenoff

"Well, we have been doing something about it and let's face it nothing's been done over the last recent nine or so years. And let's be fair to the mayors at that stage no one asked them to do anything about it. But we have spent \$5 million dollars to date we've got another \$10 million budget to take care of that. That will go a long way to alleviating the problem. But it's an ongoing problem and eventually we'll get on top of it. There is no quick fix and of course it's related to money coming in."

Warren Slater

"It's been proven that the infiltration and inflow into our wastewater system is the problem. In the summertime we have got a perfectly usable wastewater system for our sewage. What we've got to do is get teams of people out there and look at actually isolating the problem and do smoke tests and dye tests. "I'm not an expert, but I marched through this town, our town, with the Save our Harbour group and I'm proud



Stan Semenoff

reactive management from the WDC. The initial policy response of \$4 million spend on a second pipeline has just been transferring the problem from one area to another. "WDC has just had its resource consent application stood down for five months for council to come up with a better plan. This is poor policy and poor management. As council, this is such a serious issue that the community has already instructed council to sort it out. So this is where the performance of our management team may have to come into question."



Simon Vallings

Mita Kayel Ruri
"I went to a meeting just yesterday with a council of kuia and kaumatua from Ngapuhi and we've very much been thinking about issues of mining and what Mr [Gerry] Brownlee has been taking about in Parliament. I've made statement to them there [council] that I'm here and I go with your voice and if by some miracle I'm elected as mayor of Whangarei I will discontinue forms of mining that create pollution and are a detriment to our people pertaining to the pollution of water levels and areas like that. So we will seriously address that, myself, and I know I will get the support of many people in this locality on this very precarious situation."

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Terry Burkhardt

Voting systems explained

Voting in the upcoming local body elections is as simple as putting a tick in a box and sending off the voting papers.

But what isn't always as easy to understand is how the voting systems being used in the October work.

Two electoral systems will be used for the 2010 elections — First Past the Post (FPP) and Single Transferable Vote (STV).

Whangarei, Far North and Kaipara District Councils and Northland Regional Council use FPP, which is where the candidates with the highest number of votes get the available positions. For example, the Okara Ward in Whangarei has four vacancies so the

first four highest polling candidates will win those seats.

The Northland District Health Board uses the STV system.

Under the STV electoral system voters receive a single (transferable) vote no matter whether there is one vacancy or several.

Voters rank the candidates in order of preference — 1 next to the name of the candidate most preferred, 2 next to the name of the candidate next preferred, and so on.

When votes are counted, all the first preferences are allocated first.

To be elected, a candidate must reach a "quota" of votes, which is based on the number of vacancies and

the number of valid votes.

A candidate who reaches the quota is elected. If there is more than one vacancy and a candidate gets more votes than the quota, a proportion of each vote for that candidate is transferred to the voter's second preference.

If another candidate gets more votes than the quota, a proportion is transferred to third preferences, and so on.

If insufficient candidates reach the quota after the first preferences are allocated, the candidate who received the fewest votes is eliminated and each vote for that candidate is transferred to the voter's second preference. This process is repeated until enough candidates fill all the vacancies.