

Makara Ohariu Community Board
c/o Chairperson
Ruth Paul
403 Makara Road
Makara
Wellington.

6 May 2010

Submission of the **MAKARA OHARIU COMMUNITY BOARD**

on

Wellington City Council

Draft Annual Plan 2010-11

Environment

P17: In the overview, it is noted that Council will provide a planning environment that supports sustainable energy generation. This may be what is more specifically referred to in 2.5 as encouraging the use of renewable energy sources.

While the Board supports this in principle, we note that the rural area is often the chosen site for large scale renewable energy generation in Wellington City. The Board supports the encouragement of smaller scale generation (e.g. solar hot water heating) and does not support any alteration of rural policies and objectives in terms of existing amenity and rural activities to enable larger scale projects in the rural area. The Board further comments on this subject in submissions to the Climate Change Policy.

2.2 The Board supports pest control in open space and reserve land, and is actively pursuing a goat eradication scheme on private land in the southwestern peninsula of Wellington. The Board supports Council's involvement within existing funds through in-kind support, technical advice and re-prioritising of funds. Subject to the success of external funding bids, additional funds for the project may need to be considered through next year's annual plan.

The Board has successfully gathered support from private landowners over 12,000 Ha of land and is applying with Council for a DoC biodiversity fund grant to undertake a three-year eradication programme.

The successful regeneration of native bush over significant portions of this land fits with Council's proposed Climate Change policy and recreational green open space policies.

Economic Development

3.2 The Board submits that WCC need to make a concerted effort to assist with broadband coverage in Makara. There is no available ADSL or mobile broadband coverage in most parts of Makara, although the school and a number of properties around the village area are supported. Other properties with cellphone coverage manage with mobile broadband. But the majority of properties are unable to connect to any network and this is stifling the ability of the area to support work from home and educational opportunities. Copied below is the body of a correspondence explaining Makara's broadband situation, currently being discussed with Telecom:

The only reason Makara has any Broadband now is due to project PROBE, the Govt initiative to get broadband to schools. Telecom put in a few extra connections for broadband into the cabinet near the village when it upgraded the Cabinet to allow the school to get broadband. The available connections (approx. 5) were snapped up straight away. So, the current capacity for wired broadband in Makara is for around 5 (not sure of the exact number) users between the village and the turnoff to Makara beach to have broadband through their phone lines. No one in Makara Beach road or most of South Makara can get broadband as the cabinets supplying them would need to be upgraded. Telecom have indicated they have no plans to do that. We note, however, that Ohariu Valley, a rural area beside Makara, with far fewer residents but over an equally spread out area, was fully upgraded a few years ago so all homes have access to ADSL broadband. That being the case, there seems no rational case for Makara not being upgraded likewise.

A fibre optic cable going in up Takarau gorge road would be a wonderful resource if we could use it, or if the Council want to take the opportunity to use the trench while its open to extend Citylink, but it may be too close to cable laying time now for that to be arranged.

So, Telecom failing to do the job, the current options for Broadband for Makara residents are:

Satellite: very expensive and not suitable for many applications

Mobile Broadband: only patchy coverage, especially at the beach and South Makara.

Wireless: anyone with line of sight to Mt Kaukau can get rural net, but not many properties have this.

Although Makara is served through Karori telephone exchange, this is through several roadside cabinets, which, apart from the limited broadband capacity in the Makara village cabinet, (upgraded for the school), have no broadband capability at all, and often don't even allow reliable dial-up connections.

The upshot of all this is that most Makara residents have no access to broadband. The lack of affordable broadband hinders the ability for Makara residents to work from home or develop technology based enterprises from Makara. Without some external assistance in developing broadband infrastructure, Makara will remain a dial-up back-water. We are fully rated (WCC rates) on the basis that we have access to the same infrastructure as Wellington City residents, but in practice we do not enjoy anything near the level of infrastructure that even Karori does.

The Board request that WCC provide funding to explore the most affordable alternative option that can be provided to the majority of residents in Makara to provide them with broadband coverage.

Social and Recreation

5.6 The Board supports grants funding for community spaces and submits that the community halls in Makara and Ohariu need to be able to apply to a contestable fund for annual support.

5.3 As rural residents use facilities in both Karori and Johnsonville, the Board supports the new development work in the swimming pools of both areas and support continued library access.

The Board also supports the increase in grant funding for school swimming pools with the Makara School outdoor swimming pool used frequently by the community for both recreation and lessons.

The Board will further submit on the Community Services and Facilities Policy.

Urban Planning and Policy

6.1 The Makara Ohariu Community Board supports the idea of urban containment and managed growth so that urban development does not encroach into the rural area of the city. The Board wishes to see the rural character of the rural area maintained for rural activities, residents and recreational users.

The Board has an ongoing issue with respect to non-complying rural subdivisions and the increasing number of applications thought to be received by Council in the future. We are not sure of the financial impact of this on Council, but wish to raise the likelihood of the potential increase in notifications and hearings in the rural area.

Rates, Charges and Spending

As long as rural residents are continue to pay 100% of the general rate, the Makara Ohariu Community Board supports retention of household rubbish and recycling collection in the rural area as this is not a targeted rate.

The Board supports the use of targeted rates so that rural residents are not charged for services they are not connected to.

Prepared by
Ruth Paul

Chairperson
On behalf of
Makara Ohariu Community Board.