



## THE MANUKAU HARBOUR RESTORATION SOCIETY

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### **Submission to Auckland Council 10-Year Budget 2018-28, Auckland Plan Refresh, Regional Pest Management Plan and Local Board Priorities**

#### **Introduction**

The Manukau Harbour Restoration Society Inc (MHRS) wishes to make a submission to the Auckland Council 10-Year Budget.

MHRS was established in 2011 to provide a community group with a “whole of harbour” perspective to drive education and implement programs to address serious environmental issues affecting New Zealand’s 2<sup>nd</sup> largest harbour. The Manukau Harbour has been subject to serious mismanagement and consequential environmental impacts over the past 100 years. The broad aims of the society are to represent all communities and organisations that border on or are influenced by the Manukau Harbour; to restore the Harbour back to its original water quality and environmental state; and in so doing, enhance the harbour as a recreational, transportation and well managed asset, loved by residents of Auckland.

Auckland Council is seeking feedback on the 10-year Budget (Long Term Plan) the Auckland Plan and the draft Regional Pest Management Plan. Local Boards are seeking feedback on their Priorities. Our feedback to the Governing Body and all local boards that border the Manukau Harbour is set out below.

## **10-year Budget (Long Term Plan)**

### ***(1) Cleaning up our harbours, beaches and streams***

*Your Consultation Document says that Council wants to improve infrastructure to save our harbours, beaches and streams from being polluted by overflows from ageing sewerage and stormwater systems, especially in the Western Isthmus. You are proposing a new targeted rate to increase funding of water infrastructure and speed up delivery of cleaner harbours, beaches and streams. This would equate to an average 2.8% rates rise for a residential ratepayer.*

We agree that Auckland must improve infrastructure to save our harbours, beaches and streams from being polluted by overflows from ageing sewerage and stormwater systems.

We support a targeted rate that is transparently 'ring fenced' to spending on these specific infrastructure upgrades.

However, we also note that around 80% of this targeted rate will be spent upgrading the stormwater network in the Western Isthmus to separate stormwater from wastewater. While we recognise that this will benefit the Manukau Harbour by reducing the amount of combined stormwater/wastewater sent to the Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant (MWTP)(and probably the number of bypasses), the benefits will largely accrue to people living in the Western Isthmus, one of the more affluent suburban areas of Auckland. We ask that those suburbs pay more of the share of the targeted rate to bring their sewerage and stormwater systems up to the standards of the newer areas of the city.

We ask that there be an increase of funding made available to design, procure and implement (with a strict timeline) a change process regarding the following issues on the Manukau Harbour: We ask that there be a separation of stormwater and sewage at source in those areas that have a combined system. There needs to be a rigorous timeline established to ensure stormwater sewage separation targets are achieved. We ask that Council eliminate stormwater entering the sewer network. We ask that Council eliminate wet and dry weather sewage overflows entering the Manukau Harbour, with priority given to those located near swimming beaches. And we ask Auckland Council, with Watercare, to actively pursue water reuse projects to reduce the volume of discharges into the Manukau Harbour.

The targets set in the Long Term Plan must include those to reduce the number of dry weather and wet weather by-passes discharging untreated or partially treated waste water into the harbour, including from the MWTP. We must include a target to provide that at a certain future point in time the Manukau Harbour is not to be used to process wastewater (ie to receive bypasses or overflows). Council and Watercare must begin now to look at future alternatives to discharging storm and treated wastewater into the Manukau Harbour.

We ask that Council follow principles of water sensitive design across all intensification and new development projects. This will reduce stormwater flows to the MWTP, improve stormwater quality and restore natural habitats.

We ask that Council develop a robust stormwater network in and near the Onehunga swimming beaches that discharges into holding ponds prior to being discharged into the Manukau Harbour ensuring any contaminants fall out of the water column.

We ask that economic solutions be implemented such as vacuum systems used to deliver sewage to the main sewer network to reduce civil works and overcome issues of gravity as required by the older sewer networks.

While we accept that we must improve infrastructure to save the Waitemata harbour as well as Western Isthmus beaches and streams from being polluted by overflows from ageing sewerage and stormwater systems, we ask that the proposed targeted rate be extended beyond 10 years so that funds can be spent on delivering projects in a specific timeframe that directly benefit the Manukau Harbour initially and then other catchments in the Auckland region.

We ask that Auckland Council's public consultation on all storm and wastewater projects funded by the targeted rate be vastly improved to allow the public to help shape projects and priorities and monitor cost-effectiveness and results.

We ask that Auckland Council's Healthy Waters work closely with Auckland Transport to reduce stormwater flows and improve the quality of stormwater resulting from all transport projects across the region.

We ask that Auckland Council continue the Safe Swim real time monitoring project and that funding be targeted to restoring all beaches now permanently closed to swimming.

We ask Auckland Council to begin a program of monitoring and upgrading all failing on-site wastewater and rural community treatment systems that are polluting swimming beaches, including increased enforcement and assistance to homeowners.

### Sediment

Inappropriate reclamation allowed by previous councils and the Auckland Harbour Board has resulted in large quantities of marine sediment compromising many parts of the Manukau Harbour including Taumanu Bay, Onehunga Lagoon, Port of Onehunga, the Upper Manukau Harbour Inlet, Weymouth and Waiuku Wharf.

We ask that Council allocate a portion of the water quality targeted rate funding to undertake test research by dredging the Waiuku Town Basin and the Onehunga Lagoon. This material needs to be evaluated to determine best long-term sustainable use (such as mudcrete for structures) and reducing any health and safety risks by locking up any contaminated material.

We also ask that the Targeted Rate specifically include spending on the sedimentation, contaminant/heavy metals and bacteria modeling as promised by Craig McIlroy of Healthy Waters at the 2016 Manukau Harbour Symposium to be included in the hydrodynamic modeling of the Manukau Harbour currently being developed by Watercare and NIWA.

### Manukau Harbour Forum (MHF)

The role of the Manukau Harbour Forum, representing all the local boards bordering on the Manukau Harbour is critical to making progress on improving the harbour. MHRS requests that the Long Term Plan include a ring-fenced budget for MHF initiatives for each of the 10 years and that the MHF be constituted as a Standing Committee of Council.

### Recreational Use of the Manukau Harbour

We ask that the **Franklin Local Board** include in its priorities a public jetty to be constructed at Clarks Beach to complement the Port of Onehunga and Cornwallis Wharf (as the last remaining wharf on the harbour).

We ask that the **Franklin Local Board** and the **Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board** include in their priorities implementing a sand nourishment program to rebuild quality public beaches (Clarks Beach, Kiwi Esplanade Onehunga Bay, etc) that have been compromised over the past 50 years as a result of inappropriate urbanisation.

The Manukau Harbour is an important recreational water space to the people of Auckland and providing quality safe harbour access is important as the population of Auckland increases.

We ask that the **Franklin Local Board**, **Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board** and the **Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board** include in their priorities safe public harbour access including for swimming, and for public launching of waka, kayaks, trailer boats (with vehicle parking and floating docks with wave protection) and potentially float plane operations.

## **(2) Protecting our Endangered Species**

*Your Consultation Document says that Auckland's rapid growth is putting pressure on the environment, as is the spread of pests, weeds and diseases that are threatening many of our native species. Your proposal is to invest more in environmental initiatives and to fund this through a targeted rate at one of two levels (equating to either an average 1.4% or 2.8% rates rise for a residential ratepayer).*

We agree overall that we must reverse the decline of biodiversity in the Auckland region, stop kauri dieback and address the spread of pests, weeds and diseases.

But we also ask that the proposed rate include allocating funds to commission appropriate agencies to start a change process to increase the fish stocks in the Manukau Harbour similar to the work undertaken by the Cawthron Institute in the Marlborough Sounds.

### **The Auckland Plan**

*As your Consultation Document says, the Auckland Plan is a statutory spatial plan for Auckland that looks ahead to 2050. It considers how Auckland will address our key challenges of high population growth, shared prosperity, and environmental degradation.*

We are very concerned that a number of key directives and policies in the current Auckland Plan concerning the Manukau Harbour are not being carried forward into the refreshed Auckland Plan.

Of note are:

*462\_ Integrated management is necessary to address the effects of land-based activities on the marine area, and to enhance the linkages across land and sea. Sustainable management of the natural values of coastal ecosystems will maximise the economic, social and cultural opportunities that rely on a coastal location. Marine spatial planning is a collaborative approach to achieve more effective management of Auckland's marine environment.*

*465\_ This plan includes a target to "establish by 2018, through the relevant statutory process, future marine-protected areas, including marine reserves, identified by the Hauraki Gulf, Kaipara Harbour, Manukau Harbour and West Coast marine spatial plans." These areas will be identified following an inclusive and consultative process with all stakeholders, and appropriate measures will be introduced for the effective management and protection of our marine values. To achieve the target, these measures will be effected through the relevant statutory process by 2018.*

*Directive 7.13 - Ensure integrated and sustainable management of marine areas through marine spatial planning for the Hauraki Gulf, Kaipara Harbour, Manukau Harbour and west coast.*

None of these actions relating to the Manukau Harbour have taken place, despite serious environmental issues with water quality and sediment in the harbour and the large percentage of the harbour's beaches permanently closed to swimming. Increased population will increase demand for recreation use of the harbour on the few places around the harbour where there is access to the water.

In fact we have serious doubts the 'refreshed' Auckland Plan meets the statutory requirements set out in sections 79 and 80 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, especially section 79(f), which requires that the plan identify policies, priorities ... programmes and investments to implement the strategic direction and specify how resources will be provided to implement the strategic direction. Further, the section does not appear to provide authority to 'refresh' the Auckland Plan, but only to amend it.

In light of these concerns, we ask that the 'refreshed' Auckland Plan **not be adopted**.

### **Increased recreational use of the Manukau Harbour and foreshore**

We also ask that the Unitary Plan Rules that control use of the Manukau Harbour regarding NOR's, ONF's, ONL's SEA 1, SEA2 and allocated mooring areas be reviewed and aligned with best

practice ensuring better short and long term outcomes. With the rapid increase in Auckland's population, more and more people are seeking access to beaches and water. Changes to the Unitary Plan should improve recreation access to the harbour and restore foreshore areas to enable increased public use of the foreshore (eg walkways, cycleways, improved beaches, boat ramps and moorings, wharves and jetties and access to the water for fishing, recreation and transportation) and enhancement of conservation values such as bird and juvenile fish habitat.

### The Port of Onehunga

The Port of Onehunga, currently in a state of neglect, is the most important piece of harbour infrastructure on the Manukau Harbour and is the key to starting a long term positive change process for the harbour.

The Port of Onehunga is very important to the West Coast fisheries located in the Tasman Sea and must remain available for that purpose. The Port of Onehunga must enable these vessels that operate between North Cape and New Plymouth to bring their catches ashore at Onehunga. There is no alternative port.

The Port's location close to a rail station and bus system is also is the key to providing water transportation to communities around the harbour.

We ask that the Port of Onehunga provide safe 24/7 all tide access to vessels using the harbour. The rules that control the Port of Onehunga need to provide a protected water space with sufficient water depth 24/7 and tidal flushing to prevent siltation build up. This area must allow the safe berthage of the fishing fleet, Coast Guard, Harbourmaster, research vessels, harbour ferries, charter and private vessels. This same area should allow for new uses such as a wet fish market and potentially fish handling and processing, café, space for local groups such as Aotea Sea Scouts and the Manukau Cruising Club, as well as vessel maintenance on the hardstand areas, marine related car parking and access to both heavy rail and light rail stations.

### Auckland's Regional Pest Management Plan

MHRS notes the lack of provisions in the proposed Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) covering marine pests. Pacific oysters are an introduced species in the Manukau Harbour and their shells and embankments create health and safety issues for people, boats and pets, cutting feet, hands and paws and damaging craft. As removal is governed by national regulations, we request the RPMP be amended to indicate that Auckland Council will work with Central Government to amend national regulations, making it easier for community groups to remove shells and oyster banks from public beaches and foreshore. Auckland Council should also indicate it will facilitate community efforts to remove oysters from public beaches eg through obtaining resource consents where required for removal.

Thank you for considering our submissions. We wish to speak to our submissions.



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