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Report to the Wellington Regional Council
From Councillor Chris Laidlaw

Wellington Conservation Board Meeting 15 December 2000

I attended the meeting held on 15 December as the WRC representative.

The following points of interest arose:

1. Kerry Marshall, lately of Local Government New Zealand in the days before instability set in, who is now the Chairman of the New Zealand Conservation Authority gave the Board a briefing on matter of national interest. He said that NZCA intended to concentrate its attention on the following issues in 2001:
 - The marine environment
 - Pests and weeds
 - Marginal lands
 - Treaty issues and conservation
 - Walkways

Most of these are obvious choices. The decision to take up the Treaty area again has been prompted partly by recent upheavals in other areas of public policy and the fact that Department of Conservation has a more explicit recognition in its legislation to give effect to the principles of the treaty. This concern has also been prompted by disquiet arising from a meeting of Maori representatives on the various regional boards and the Authority itself late last year. There is dissatisfaction among Maori at the approach of the NZCA on a whole range of

issues, including the authority's failure to come to grips with the issue of cultural harvest. Kerry Marshall was to take this matter up with the Minister and report back. Clearly, Maori are becoming more assertive on environmental/conservation issues and we can expect to see some of that reflected in our relations with Iwi in the Wellington area.

2. As if to underline this point Mat Rei indicated to the Wellington board that Ngati Toa had decided not to support the Tapu te Ranga Marine Reserve largely on the grounds that as an Iwi claiming mana whenua it had felt the consultation process with it to be inadequate. The Board's submission on the reserve had however been positive and had underlined the importance of adequate consultation with each of the Iwi involved.
3. There was some discussion on the upcoming Oceans Policy review and the extent to which this was likely to deal with marine reserves. The feeling of the Board was that the marine reserves review should continue separately and its results then factored into the overall picture that would be prepared by the Oceans policy review team.
4. The issue of concession policy on Kapiti Island was raised again. Regional Conservator Alan Ross had circulated a set of operating principles following the application by Ian Buchanan for visitor concession rights on the island. Mat Rei declared, with considerable passion, that he objected to the policy, stating quite unequivocally that rights should be given to a single concessionaire. Alan Ross reminded the Board of the implications of this for Commerce Commission consent and it is clear that the matter is far from being resolved.
5. The Porirua City Council gave a presentation on the new Porirua Walkway plan. This is an ambitious attempt to create a network of walkways through and out from the urban area into the surrounding hinterland. It has considerable relevance to the WRC network of walks in such areas as Belmont and I offered whatever assistance WRC could provide in the co-ordination between the two organisations in promoting the Porirua walkways. It was suggested that a sub-committee of the Board be established to work with Porirua City to help bring the plan to fruition and I was asked if WRC could consider providing some minor financial assistance for some work by the Board in this area. I agreed to commend this at the appropriate time. I attach (for Landcare staff) relevant documentation.

CHRIS LAIDLAW
Councillor

15 January 2001