

# planning news

KEEPING YOU INFORMED OF PLANNING ISSUES

Issue 01 October 2009

## Introducing the Horowhenua District Council Planning Team

**Welcome** to this, the first edition of our new look Planning Newsletter targeting the industry. The industry by definition includes all professionals who we believe could have an interest in planning matters. It is our intention to produce a newsletter at least six monthly interspersed with industry meetings.

The purpose of the newsletter is twofold – to keep you informed of matters that we believe could be of interest to the industry and secondly to encourage feedback from the industry to assist us in providing a better service to you.

In this edition we introduce you to the planning team, profile our new planner, Isaac McIntyre, and provide articles on the status of our current plan changes, the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill and compare last year's processing statistics with those published by the Ministry for the Environment earlier this year. Lastly we provide contact details and introduce you to the concept of duty planner whereby a planner is available every day to deal with general inquiries, vet applications and assist with general planning matters.



The Planning Team (clockwise from top left) David McCorkindale *Project Manager*, Brent Cryer *Planning Assistant*, Isaac McIntyre *Resource Management Planner*, Philip Lake *Enforcement & Compliance Officer*, Lynette Baish *Resource Management Planner*, Dorstan Hayman *Planning Services Manager*, Sue Graham *Senior Planner*.

I trust you will find this newsletter informative and look forward to suggestions on what you would like to see in future editions.

You can contact members of the Planning team any time on telephone number 06 366 0999. You are welcome to drop into council to discuss planning related matters with the duty planner. We have a duty planner available to vet applications

and to help respond to enquiries, every day of the week. Information on planning including the online version of the Horowhenua District Plan, advice about applying for resource consent, engineering standards and development contributions, in addition to our series of helpful leaflets, can be found on the council's website under: [www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Services/Planning](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Services/Planning)

The following are currently notified for submissions:

Plan Change 22: Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes – Closes 23 October 2009

Plan Change 23: Financial Contributions – Closes 23 October 2009

# Meet Horowhenua District Council's New Planner

I am originally from Wanganui, notable for its glorious black iron sand rich beaches and its fantastic muddy brown river. I attended Wanganui High School and whilst studying geography in 6th form I was exposed to resource planning. I was very interested in this field of work and I enrolled at Massey University in the Bachelor of Resource and Environmental Planning programme in 2005.

During the course of my degree I discovered my interests lay in Coastal Planning and Hazards Planning. For my Honours year, I undertook a project under the guidance of Bruce Glavovic. The project was 'Dealing with debris post a flood event' and the guidance document I eventually produced was based on lessons learned from the 2004

February storm event. I received a lot of information through an interview process which involved Horizons Regional Council officers as well as the Emergency Management department at the Police station and Higgins Contractors, (the main contractor for removing debris such as dirt and trees on the state highways). I was the only person in my class to receive funding for the project as it was headed by David Johnston at GNS Lower Hutt. My project formed a portion of his major project which was looking at dealing with debris post an earthquake in Wellington. The GNS report is due to be finalised shortly.

I now reside in Levin with my partner Kirsten; she works for Massey University in NSATS, the extramural department, and carpools with two others from her



New Planner Isaac McIntyre.

department, (very sustainable). Aside from Planning, many of you know I am a keen runner and cyclist with running being my favourite of the two. I'm also an audiophile with a passion for rock music.

## Latest News on the Amendments to the Resource Management Act

The Select Committee has reported back on the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Bill. The changes are set in the Bill to come into effect on 1 October 2009. Key changes that the Select Committee has made affecting local government include:

- District Plan Reviews - The Bill clarifies flexibility in how councils carry out a plan review (for instance by rolling plan changes) but councils must still have to review each provision at least once every 10 years (the original Bill had proposed the removal of the 10 year requirement).
- Legal effect of rules - The Bill retains that plan changes have effect after decisions are made on submissions with the exception of rules that protect or relate to natural resources or heritage.
- All proposed restrictions on appeals on plans have gone. The only exception relates to plan changes giving effect to an NPS or NES.
- Non-complying activities are to stay.
- Further submissions are to stay.
- Introduction of a discount policy for late consents will now be set nationally by regulation.

- Affected party test - the threshold has increased for an affected party from the current Act but not as much of an increase as the original Bill - an affected party now has to be affected in at least a minor way.
- Ability for councils to extend processing timeframes under section 37 has been severely restricted, and a requirement would be introduced to demonstrate special circumstances.
- The ability for applicants to request a commissioner hearing is amended so that it no longer refers to a request for one independent commissioner (i.e. as part of a panel of elected members) but now refers to delegation to one or more independent commissioners. Although it may have been the intention, the wording does not actually say that the whole panel has to be independent, so there is some uncertainty if this will have real implications.

Watch this space for further news as the Bill, and further phases, progresses through the legislative process.



Proposed Outstanding Natural Landscape – Manawatu Estuary.

## Proposed Plan Change Updates

Proposed Plan Change 20 (Rural Subdivision) and Plan Change 21 (Greenbelt Residential Zone and Urban Growth) were notified in January 2009 and attracted a considerable number of submissions both in support and in opposition to the proposed changes.

In total, 62 submissions and 13 further submissions were received in relation to Proposed Plan Change 20, and 92 submissions and 20 further submissions were received on Proposed Plan Change 21.

**The hearings for these two plan changes were held during the second and third weeks of August 2009. Each hearing has been heard by three commissioners. The commissioners have finished hearing all submitters and have begun deliberating on the matters raised by the submitters and the reporting planner.**

Following their deliberations, the commissioners will make recommendations back to the Council, who will consider these and issue the final decision. The final decision is subject to an appeal period.

Although the Resource Management Act does not require a decision on these plan changes to be issued until January 2011, it is anticipated that the recommendations and decisions on these Plan Changes will be issued much sooner and could be released later this year.

In the meantime, the provisions in the Proposed Plan Changes need to be considered together with the Operative Plan provisions when assessing resource consent applications.

More information on these Proposed Plan Changes is available on the Council website ([www.horowhenua.govt.nz/consultation](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/consultation)).

Ongoing updates on these Plan Changes will be provided on the Council website.

### Notification of Proposed Plan Change 22 (Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes) & Plan Change 23 (Financial Contributions)

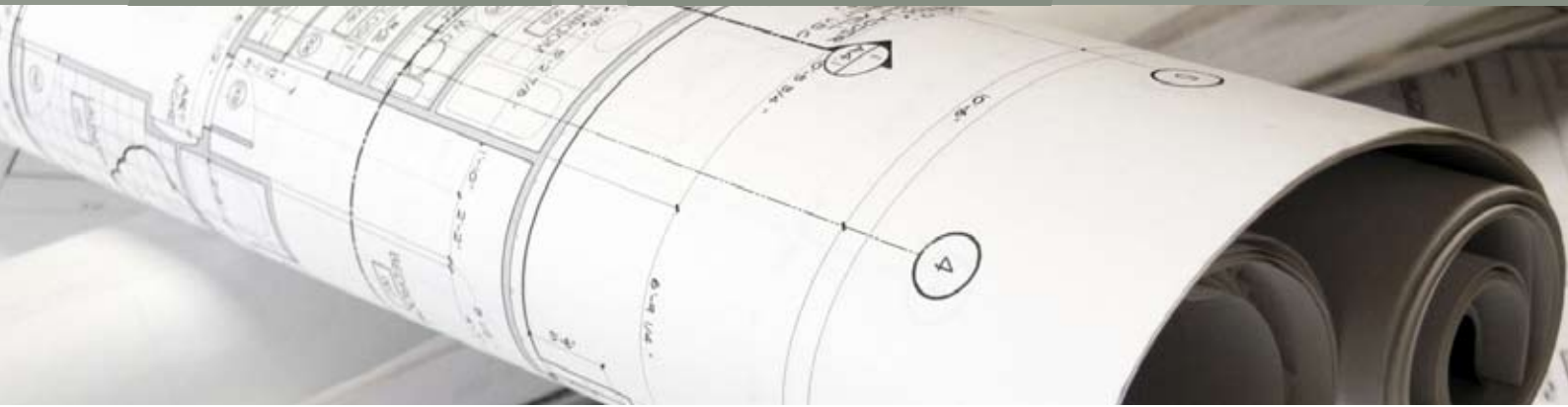
Council publicly notified proposed Plan Changes 22 & 23 on Saturday, 5 September 2009, inviting submissions on these proposed Plan Changes.

**Proposed Plan Change 22** seeks to identify and protect Outstanding Natural Features, Outstanding Natural Landscapes and High Amenity Landscapes within the Horowhenua District. Through new policies and rules, the proposed Plan Change would place restrictions on how land within the identified areas can be used and developed. It involves changes to the Outstanding Landscapes currently identified in the Horowhenua District Plan.

**Proposed Plan Change 23** attempts to resolve the current inconsistencies between the Financial Contribution and Development Contribution policies in the recently adopted Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019, and the Operative District Plan. This proposed Plan Change involves removing the existing references to financial contributions within the District Plan and other consequential or minor amendments.

**The period for submission closes at 5.00pm 23 October 2009.**

The Plan Change documents can be viewed at the Council Office and Service Centres. The full documents and submission forms can also be viewed and downloaded from the Council website [www.horowhenua.govt.nz](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz).



## Resource Consent Process Speeds Up

Horowhenua District Council continuously monitors the actual times taken by its planners to process resource consent applications and assesses these times against the time limits set by the Resource Management Act. Reports on this data are generated regularly for Council's Management Team and for Councillors and the Mayor. This data also formed part of the Ministry for the Environment's major two-yearly survey of all of New Zealand's local and regional authorities last year. It is now more than a year on from this survey period, and there have been some quite marked changes to Council's performance during that time.

Resource Consent Type	Number of Consents Processed		Percent on Time	
	2007/2008	2008/2009	2007/2008	2008/2009
Land Use	155	93	75	90
Subdivision	162	113	54	83
Total	317	206	64	86

As a further performance improvement on the 2008/09 figures, our planners have achieved 100 percent on-time processing of all resource consents issued throughout both July and August 2009.

The Ministry for the Environment's survey data placed the Horowhenua District Council 69th out of 84 Territorial Authorities for the 2007/08 year. The 2005/06 data indicated a similar percentage of resource consents processed on time and a similar ranking out of the 84 territorial authorities for the 2005/06 year. If our 2008/09 performance data were to be substituted into the 2007/08 survey data, we would have been placed 29th out of 84 Territorial Authorities. Our current performance would place us well within the top 10-15 territorial authorities if we are able to maintain more than 95% on time throughout the current year.

Council planners have been processing all resource consent

applications lodged since 1 October 2008. Prior to this, consultant planners were processing on Council's behalf a high percentage (30-60%) of all resource consent applications in order to cover Council's shortage of staff and the high number of resource consent applications being lodged with Council. The increase in Council's planning staff and the reduced number of resource consent applications has enabled Council to cease out-sourcing the processing of resource consent applications as well as enabling the processing of resource consents within the required time limits more often.

The average number of working days taken to process resource consent applications has also improved during the last two years, particularly for Notified applications, as summarised in the table below.

Resource Consent Type	2007/2008	2008/2009
Land Use - Non-notified	23	19
Land Use - Notified	84	77
Subdivision - Non-notified	38	37
Subdivision - Notified	151	108

