

Submission No.

00643

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Date Received

To: Hon Peter Salmon ~~Chair~~,
Dame Margaret Bazley DNZM, David Shand,
Royal Commission on Auckland Governance
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Kia Ora, my name is Aileen Austin and in last year's local elections I campaigned for the North Shore City Mayoralty, on Governance, amongst other things. (see attachment). I received nearly 6,000 votes on the topic and I have widely consulted with others since.

It is the second time I have campaigned on local issues, after over 20 years pro-active submissions to; the Birkenhead Council, Community Board, and, since Amalgamation was foisted onto the residents and ratepayers, North Shore City Council, the Auckland Regional Council, and the council staff, and their "contractors", and "Independent Commissioners".

While I campaigned with a neutral position on the subject because there are advantages to both, the status quo and a change, the trick of course is to do either without increasing the burden financially on those least able to pay; existing Ratepayers/ Residents (and Taxpayers).

It may be possible to do this by legislation, so as to give effective power to the Auckland Regional Council for some matters of regional concern, a self-governing state, subject to democratic process (discussed later).

Introduction; Challenges, Democracy, Livability for People, Environmental Protection, Ethics, Boundary Issues, Urban limits, Pacific Housing, Diversity of Communities...

1. Challenges; examples...Solutions
2. Discussion; Decision making, Processes, Consistent Practises...Solutions
3. Representation and Advocacy...Solutions
4. Governance and Accountability...Solutions
5. A World Class City?...Solutions

Major issues; Consultation and submission process- only my china horse submits.

Terms of reference-a) Communities are made up of individual ratepayers, who pay rates!
b) Contribution to whose wider national objectives and outcomes?

Auckland's Current Governance Arrangements- are unsustainable, re; spending and loans (Infrastructure) ... unaffordable to have world class versions. No harbour tunnel.

Transport } ... own the buses, and trains first. Ferries. Reduce spending on roads.

Water } ... Not to be privatised, or sold for profit.

Ownership of Regional Assets- be held on behalf of all Auckland's Region ratepayers
Submission, some options are suggested for discussion.

MY VISION for the Governance of Auckland, as a nation state; 7 principles.

Introduction...you use this meaning of "Governance. The United Nations has defined this term as the processes for making decisions and implementing them."

***Challenge.**

With a unique understanding of their Bi-cultural history, New Zealanders born here must determine; Whose **Process?** How?, Whose **Decisions?** Whose **Vision?** Whose **Priorities?** **Who pays/ and for what?** (No power to those who arrived off the plane in the last storm) My understanding is that "**Local Governance is for local people by their Democratically Elected Representatives and including Maori Representation,** (and Not by bureaucrats, nor determined by Central Government from Wellington.) is to occur in such a way that **enables people** to have liveability, to be self-determining, to have **protection of the environment** and to then, be able to provide for reasonable growth.

Self Governance has been beyond Maori control since 1840.

This has also been out of the control of local residents/ratepayers, since Amalgamation. For large numbers of Residents/ Ratepayers "**the Process**" is not understandable, is unaffordable, and unsustainable, as are their escalating rates, Court appeals, Council charges, and the consequences of the Bureaucrat's mistakes and thievery, high rates of staff attrition, those imported from other places (ie. without local knowledge) and the profiteering of off-shore and private contractors, consultants fees, for services once done well, and more cost-effectively, directly by local Borough Council employees, and, for example; in the case of former Birkenhead and Northcote Councils which were debt free. The current debt burden of approx \$392 million, where debt and interest, is proposed to be spread over future generations is untenable, unsustainable and will rob those future generations of their own choices to determine their own future needs. There are time constraints, but not on costs, there is no accountability for staff errors. There needs to be.

***Solution;** Invitation for all bureaucrats to; the (twice-yearly) "**Birkenhead Bureaucrats Spring and Autumn (Rates)Accountability (Festival) Run**", where they attempt to cross the city enduring the public, residents and ratepayers wrath, barrages, water blasts, etc and end up in the "polluted" inner harbour sea off the Larkin wharf at Beach haven.

***Solution;** eg. Disband the entire (North Shore) Bureaucracy. It is not cost-effective. Keep the elected Councillors/ Mayor, and **re-distribute funding to reflect the actual rates take to each Local Community Board/ Borough/ Shire** (who may then engage an expert should they think it necessary). While matters such as water reticulation, sewer services can be dealt with as is the status quo. They should NOT be privatised.

A successful World Class City?

No thank you. We can't afford the one we have already.

Everyone wants to come here but not many want to stay. My family have been here for centuries. Land, now so highly rated, my children, families, the elderly, and others, will not be able to afford future rates either. **Example;** The NSCCouncil demolished the local office/ Birkenhead Library, during "independent" Commissioners' hearings, the Council proposed a new one (with 19 matters of non-compliance in its own resource consent application!), not the best solution, huge legal costs etc. This happens too often now.

What we have is rapidly degrading. Many are fleeing already. Many migrating in have unrealistic expectations. City air has become polluted, the traffic congested, the Justice, Public Health and Education systems etc simply can't cope. With over 145 languages???

Example; Since amalgamation, the local Community Board Refused Consent for an **intensive, non-complying, Residential Development**, held hearings, only to have its decision overturned by the NSCCouncil approval, its officers advised; "adverse affects would not be more than minor", and stupid, unenforceable consent conditions imposed by the Environment Court (process)... The ARC retrospectively approved consent for a dam (which subsequently failed). The developer, despite being served with continued abatement notices, continued... not much complied, so this adjudged bankrupt migrant/foreigner expected "that all our high quality native bush should come down because this is an urban city"... Well, several years later, there are still 30m high native trees continuing to fall on my property, Kauri have been stolen from my property and from within the native Reserves adjacent, by opportunistic contractors, the Council staff stole my building materials and Mayoral posts, from the front of my property on Waitangi Day, and my rates have increased while it has cost tens of thousands in costs, and tens of thousands in legal fees for four barristers in the last two years alone. Rein-statement costs are estimated to be in hundreds of thousands. I have personally suffered loss of income, fractured skull, falls, etc. while over 100 families have left the neighbourhood. There were even alleged bomb scares, causing delays, further costs, while we attended Court. This Council "process" took 11 years, the consequences and costs are on-going... This is Not community well-being... It is Not my well-being either. It is Not affordable, nor is it sustainable. Our land was high quality native bush, and the once pristine streams are polluted, the diversity of biota gone forever... still homeless. We pay rates for this?...Where are the Tree Protection Officers?...(an arborist is not!)

*Solutions; Get an "Ethics Committee", with similar powers, such as found in the Ombudsman's role, with power to enquire/investigate matters before they get to costly, mess-up stage. In transition; funding to be available from Govt. to ensure that costs of queries/ consequences are not borne by ratepayers. **Local Borough Community Board/ Shire decisions must Not be overturned, by higher Councils.**(hui/discussion required)

Boundary Issues...

God's Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, Lands, Forests, Harbours, Sea and People.

*Challenge...Discussion

Auckland/ Tamaki Makerau as an "independent state". (Taxes and rates gathered here; spent here). Local people making local community decisions, & ARC overview.

*Solution; Not a super city!

Metropolitan Urban Limits were deviously extended by ARC "planners", eg. at Okura/ Long Bay at the time of 1989 Amalgamation, yet the Auckland Regional Council has Not purchased sufficient land there, for the millions of city-wide visitors now attending the beach/park, the ARC preferring instead to continue to waste our dollars in litigation over the matter. This is not a wise or sustainable process. (see below). Urban and rural?

***Solution;** (ARC) **Urban boundaries must NOT be extended** further into rural areas. Alternative locations (beyond Auckland) must be developed for other new urban cities for population increases and new migrants, as a matter of urgent Government policy.

***Solution;** "**Pacific Housing**" (the New Zealand way) is one to four stories high, Not twenty stories or more. High rises become slums, "leaky buildings" are unsustainable, and unaffordable. "Planners" and Council officers must Not have control of these decision-making processes. Ratepayers must not bear the burdens. **Where is/are the Ministry of Works trained building inspectors/ retired master builders?**

***Solution;** **Diversity of Communities** is served by the status quo, being modified to; (1) Regional Council, (5) Urban councils: North, West, CBD, East and South, (2) Rural Councils, and Community Boards. Neighbouring city/suburb and voluntary partnerships/ relationships between areas, with successful small scale solutions in our neighbourhoods. Unlike Auckland City, **North Shore City** is suburban, and has always been politically free from party politics. **It MUST be separate from Central Govt. influence, too.**

Consistent practises;

***Solutions;** **Service which means service. Local and Free;** access to Public/Council records/ information. Consistent practices apply to Earthquake, war and Civil Defence matters, Water supply, Plumbing and Drainage, and, Construction/ Building structures, subject to variances for local conditions or specific situations.

Challenges...for Discussion/ Decision-making/ Processes (for the future, or now?)

Questions; Who "Governs" what?

*** Answers/ Solutions;**

Who funds what and how? ...

***Core Services first.**

Eg. It's Not a home-owner's rates burden to fund; road infrastructure,
large infrastructure costs,
housing the poor etc. > Government taxes

Water; It is a fundamental right to have a life-sustaining supply.
ie. NOT privatised. (NSCC is a good example, at present) > User pays at cost,
Not profit

Electricity; Communications, Phones etc > User pays, profit
set at < 3 % CPI

Electrification of trains, monorail/ skyrail; Not a ratepayers burden. > User pay with
30% tax subsidy

Sewerage; funded as per North Shore city status quo, but 10% set aside for maintenance. **The \$100m just to lengthen a pipe
pumping raw sewerage further into the gulf is insane, and unsustainable.**

Ports/ Ferry terminals; > HarbourBoard/ARC

- Public transport; No further residents/ business subsidy! when we don't own buses or trains! Why are we subsidizing the off-shore profits of these particular businesses? No-one subsidizes other business/ workers (or students) to work...
> User pays with 10% Govt and 10% Regional} subsidy
>Free ferries, trams!
- Libraries /Beaches / Public Toilets;
> 50% Rates and 50% Regional rate
- Theatres/ Art Galleries, ie. luxury items
> User pays, }
Sports Complexes/ Stadiums
Corporate funded}
Big projects- regionally
Public floats }
- Rubbish Collection/ Street Cleaning;
> local rates, Not Contractors' profit
- Roads; \$1 toll on Harbour Bridge
> Vehicle Registration tax
Cycle-ways; Not a business/ratepayers' burden
> Tax on bicycles
Footpaths;
> Community Board
- Environmental Protection;
> Local rates
Parks Aquisition; funded by levies on intensive developments
> Local & Regional
Parks maintenance;
> Community Board
- Administration; eg Resource Consents
> Regional rates }
Local Council & }
Community Board}
- *Hospitals/ Schools/ Defence/ Police/ Bio Security etc;
> Govt tax, local Decisions
- Community Well-being; Ratepayers can no longer afford to fund /subsidize every community group's "wish list".
> Fundraise, sponsors Not rates.
- Ratepayers' well-being; Correct decisions, core services first
> Rates, No increases.
- Westpac helicopter/ Lifesaving/ Ambulance/ Fire Service/ Bio Security at Airports/ Ports/ Civil Defence;
> Taxes
- Cultural Festivals/ Civic Events/ Exhibitions/ Orchestras/ "Ethnic" Occasions/ Santa Parades/ Churches and Maraes;
> Sponsorship, ie. Not Rates
- Tourist items/ Museum/ Motat/ Zoo/ Observatory/ Camping grounds;
> Regional Rates, }
User pays, sm fee}

- Conservation Projects/ RMA/ Pest and Bureaucracy Control/ Heritage sites; > Regional rates
- Urban Design/ Building Permits/ Art/ Street Lighting, street Furniture/ Gardens/ Noise Control/ Tree Planting/ Public toilets Graffiti solved with mural solutions/ Playgrounds/ Cemeteries etc. > Community Boards/ Shire; local rates
- Rural problems/ Fishing officer Patrols/ Ferry Services; > Relevant Rural Regional Council
- Business concerns; > Local rates Differential
- *Matters of concern to Iwi, the elderly, the vulnerable, and >Govt taxes,
*Guardianship for future generations of New Zealanders; Local decisions
*Representation and advocacy (by Ariki, Rangatira, others on an Ethics committee)

* Solution; PROPOSAL; A (5) Council city eg. North, South, East, West, CBD, With ARC Administration for Regional matters as the independent state of Auckland, Separate Governance for Islands and Rural Areas, by local people. Separate Governance for local neighbourhood issues, by local Community Board/ Shires.

Privatisation and lack of accountability of spending by local Councils since Amalgamation in 1989, has resulted in large scale debt where previously none existed. This model is untenable, unsustainable.

Offloading Council responsibilities onto Consultants/ Contractors (who don't know what they are doing, contracts mysteriously, constantly, exceed budgets) wastes rates, while profits go off-shore.

***Solution;** The practise of this "process" must cease.

We were sold; Amalgamation would result in rationalisation, economies of scale, cost savings. The contrary occurred, and the services diminished. We will not be fooled again!

A World Class City is a worthless model to strive and pay for. We have that already! **It lacks vision.**

World Class Cities are also rife with "crime", prostitution, homeless folk, poverty, mental illness, violent crime, wasteful of scarce resources because of urban sprawl and consumerism, wasteful of landfill, polluted, traffic-congested nightmares, potential terrorist targets, with tall ugly buildings obscuring harbour views, with noisy boy racers hooning in cars through the streets, and drugs sold in local parks, wood rats smash bus shelters, while the paths are littered and covered in broken glass. Vision-less planners promote, and greedy developers build; CBD high rise, (copied elsewhere) rapidly becoming slums. **This is Not the kiwi way!**

*** Solution; "Aucklanders"** like to live within friendly local neighbourhoods(not fenced and gated cities), have clean and safe footpaths (not smashed bottles, drugs and litter), enjoy unrestricted access to public open spaces, parks, reserves, beaches, carparks at the local shops/ markets. They participate in opportunities for a wide range of social, cultural and sporting activities and events, and have numerous not-for-profit organisations and committees, by which these things can continue (without ratepayers contributions).

***Solution;** There must be limits to the Auckland sprawl, and there must be population control (particularly where incoming migrants are to be settled, so as to not ghettoize the city into suburbs along racist and territorial lines, as has been occurring under (political, ie.) National and Labour policy since Amalgamation, in particular).

We have responsibilities to look after those who are already here, first (then the visitors). We must do so in a way that is fair to these existing ratepayers, first.

***Solution;** Those who are born here must have greater control of governance structures, processes, decisions, than the immigrants. Residents who are immigrant/ ratepayers should wait 20 years, before making Governance/Council changes, (and get in the queue), Maori have waited 168 years!

It is a privilege to come here. Much has been built/ conserved, and paid for by our ancestors/ pioneers, (some was not). A thrifty person who has saved for a home and/or a business should not subsidize the costs of debt/ infrastructure at the scale envisaged, and beyond an ability to pay. We all become aged/ disabled, live on fixed income, and our ability to pay then, today's proposed rate of debt and spending, remains unsustainable.

***Solutions;** Processes for Accountability; Democratic (sequential) Elections, 3 yearly. Community Board/ Council Elections, then Regional Council, Then... Govt. Elections.

***CEO, and Admin/ management to be on an Annual Contract; (Serve or leave)**

***Transparency;**not just for computer users.

***No sprays. Clean air to breathe, clean water.**

"Sustainable development" is an incongruous myth. Identifying something as a "resource" (implies plunder), a simple "management plan" becomes ineffective when Annual plans, District plans, Long term Community Council plans, etc. are amended, variances are made endlessly, no regard is given to the huge costs, large number of developers, numerous hearings, meetings etc. when appeals "processes" are beyond the affordability of most ratepayers.

***The correct decisions should be made the first time.**

***Solutions;** Decisions about change; need to be made so that consequences of how their effect will impact on the next 5 generations, is thought through first (eg. On rivers).

To plan only 50 years, ahead, shows poverty of spirit, for those who live here today, and in regard to the way forward for our largely NZ Christian community, caring for our fragile environment, and the places where we live, work, raise our families, respect our neighbours, enjoy business and education opportunities, realise our hopes and dreams, and sustain life without reference to divisive "ethnic/racist" concepts. We are all after all, he tangata/ the people. We deserve better. "A world class city" will not deliver that.

A society focused on Infrastructure, Privatisation of essential services and water, with Transport agendas costing higher than our ability to pay, has the wrong focus. It is nothing more than the outcome of past failures. Over-legislation/ regulation is Facist, crippling our ability to be spontaneous, use creative solutions and enjoy a quality of life we all deserve.

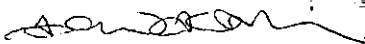
VISION: roe an Auckland State...

Governance for the future requires Courage and Leadership, to set down real priorities;

1. We need a society with a priority for the fact that we are all spiritual beings, living here, according to God's laws, first. ... Guardianship for future generations, is;
2. A society which provides for our human needs; "Caring for our people"; Defence, Housing, Quality food, Clean water, Fresh air, Space; to live, Places to relax which are quiet, peaceful, have a positive value, places to enjoy the joyful laughter of children.
3. Livelihoods; Security and safety for people, opportunities for honest, meaningful work. A Sustainable Living, well above the poverty line for all who live here. Making Wise decisions, at Council, Not wasteful spending of our hard-earned money (costs the hours & minutes of our lives). No rate increases. No GST tax on rates, (nor on savings)
4. Kaitiaki Responsibility;

"Respect for this land, its people, our heritage, our way of life and our future".
 Eg. No plunder of the fishing in the harbour, (by the immigrants). Care for the bush. Respect for one another. Our culture values and respects women, and values, nurtures and educates children. It values men in their roles as equals, fathers, providers, etc.
We have responsibilities to look after what we have for future generations, do this well
 Welcome, for migrants who bring expertise, skills and developing business, and who need time to settle, and help to understand. We each have our special gifts. Grow this.
6. Special Knowledge; (whakapapa), we are friendly, happy, people, who celebrate inter-generational occasions; Births, Birthdays, Baby blessings, Christmas and Easter, Waitangi day, ANZAC day, Graduations, Weddings, Sport, Cultural/ Business/ Other Achievement. Taking this Island Nation experience, as NZ.Ambassadors to the world
6. Building Shelter/ Waka; Inspirational Architecture, interesting, attractive, Public loos/ Buildings, colourful happy work places, cheerful homes which shelter, delight, and Protect families. Courts which deliver Justice, and is affordable. Hospitals, for healing. Educational facilities to cultivate a love of learning; preschool to University. Identity.
7. Gardening; Colourful Community vegetable plots, flowers and fruit trees on road berms, so we may share our surplus. Super camping grounds for our kiwi holidays...

Please phone me on [REDACTED] I wish to be heard in support of my submission.
 Thankyou. A [REDACTED]

 B. ARCH

AILEEN AUSTIN for MAYOR of NORTH SHORE CITY

Kia Ora,

I've a Bachelor of Architecture, am an Award Winner, Visionary, Conservationist/ Educator, Fundraiser, Support Person, Grandmother ...

Pro-active in Council submissions, over 20 years.

I stand strong for;

- * NEW Leadership: Resident/ Ratepayer focus; Reviews! Rates Affordability/ Accountability! Targeting Debt...*
- * Guardianship for future generations (Lifejackets first!)*
- * Whenuapai; Defence/ International Trade Fair/ Expo.*
- * Protecting our unique bush, streams, marine and wildlife habitats, Rural /Okura and Open Spaces from: sprays, sewerage, pollution, Bureaucracy and inappropriate development...*
- * Correct decisions; Core services first; water, rubbish, parks, sewerage, public loo's... Contracts, Budgets, Resource Consents, under control. Structural Removal!*
- * Creative self-funding solutions: FREE FERRIES, \$3.00 buses, trams, mono-rail, gardens, markets etc.*
- * Community wellbeing; Respect for others, and New Zealand Bi-cultural understanding... Friendly neighbourhoods without drugs/ crime/ child-abuse or violence!*
- * One Waka... many peoples moving forward with self-determination together; Challenges, opportunities, Governance... Music and dance for families, children and others... with Amazing Grace.*

