

PORTS OF AUCKLAND
VERBAL SUBMISSION TO AUCKLAND COUNCIL
16 April 2013

It would be different if this was a genuine conversation about the Port and Auckland sharing space. Most would agree that was a healthy conversation.

Unfortunately, a large part of the conversation is being pushed by an organisation that has traditionally advocated for the Port to be moved or closed so it is not credible for them to now suggest they are simply trying to balance the discussion.

It is HOTC who are the Trojan Horse. It really isn't believable that they are not pursuing their long held agenda. So lets return to the real heart of Auckland – its Port.

When Auckland and it's people went through the process of developing and signing on to a 30 year plan for the City and region, the Port was acknowledged as being of strategic importance, along with an expectation from the Council that the Port would increase its performance in the coming years.

Having a port on our doorstep in which the supply lines are short, of less cost and less time to market for imports is a strategic asset of incalculable value to Auckland's economy and employment – to deliver jobs, underpin investment and much needed economic activity.

I was asked yesterday "which of the proposals the Port has produced", did I favour.

I suggested it was the wrong question.

The issues for me are:

- That over time 2 Ports (Northland and Tauranga) will not cope with the expected growth of New Zealand's international trade.
- When I look at the impact on our economy of POAL now and by 2031, it's contribution in value and jobs more than trebles.

The right question for me is - how can we harness this growth, extract the benefits and have a city and it's Port live together?

The revised give-and-take port development plan unveiled recently is a step in the right direction. I note the proposal is not just about growing the Bledisloe container wharf facility, it is also about offering back Capitan Cook Wharf to Aucklanders at an appropriate time. This is not to endorse every detail of their development plan, but we are talking here about a realistic and practical proposal that gives a good template and a platform upon which we can move forward in the certainty that the port will continue to be in it's current location for the foreseeable future.

This certainty is reinforced by Council's recent study that all three upper North Island ports will be needed to cater for predicted freight growth. As the Price Waterhouse Coopers study made very clear, Tauranga and Whangarei are not alternatives – all three ports will be needed to cater for projected growth.

This means we can also put some steel in our words when responding to outsiders and others who continue to re-litigate, as they do, and call for the port to close or be moved elsewhere.

Let's be clear - Some of these organisations claim to be business organisations, and they might be, but do they represent our regions businesses involved in International trade or might they represent retailers, developers and property investors.

Do those organisations really imagine that the productive sector want the Port to be closed or moved to Ponui Island or into the middle of the Firth of Thames?

Do they honestly believe Auckland could fund \$5 billion repositioning experiment for our Port? This would be environmental & commercial vandalism.

What are they thinking with - their wallets - or yours?

Their views do not represent the majority of Auckland's business community. The overwhelming majority of productive businesses – importers and exporters – want the certainty of seeing the port strongly supported by its owners and taking steps to improve its performance.

At the end of the day, if we allow uncertainty about the future of the port to go unchallenged we end up contributing to undermine the value of a business that is owned by the people of Auckland.

What we are in effect doing, is giving Tauranga ratepayers money that should be subsidising our rates.

I am asking that we consider the wider impacts of affected communities, the thousands of businesses and employees who rely on the port and which underpins the views of many who passionately support its ownership remaining in public hands. They want the port to continue to be working for Auckland and to be strongly defended as an integral component of our economy going forward. They want your informed and measured leadership to help us to build our port to a level of performance and status that befits New Zealand's only city of global scale.