

Submission on draft annual plan Waitomo District Council

1 June 22

The reality is there is unlikely to be large scale housing development in the Waitomo District, so there is a need to put subdivision rules into perspective. Waitomo has in the past, seen periods of declining population. We are seeing more amalgamation of farms and more forestry; particularly carbon farming that is having an impact on the population in outlying areas.

In recent years we have seen more people coming into the area as a consequence of the cost of housing in northern regions. House price growth will inevitably slow. However, there is a trend in people working from home and moving away from large metropolitan areas. There has been a resurgence in domestic and international tourism. This will bring more employment opportunities. The region also has the potential for employment growth with the amount of industry currently located here.

I believe we should encourage population growth, as we have in the past and to be careful not to be too restrictive with subdivision rules. There is and will continue to be more demand for sections closer to our hubs of Piopio and Te Kuiti. Most people moving into the area are seeking a rural outlook but will only want smaller sections rather than 10 – 20 ha lifestyle blocks. It is important for the growth in our area that we still allow subdivision down to 2500m² in our rural zones. The continuing high cost of compliance and the cost of building will restrict the amount paid for sections, which in itself will restrict the amount of land being developed for subdivision.

I do not believe there is a risk of wholesale encroachment of lifestyle blocks on our productive farmland. Obviously we need to have responsible development that takes into consideration the infrastructure that currently exists and also we need to discourage ribbon development along our highways. This is something that rightly NZTA is restrictive of.

In the past we have subdivided off two houses surplus to our staff requirement. These properties have been purchased by families that have been permanent and contributing members to our community.

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