



CHAIR'S REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Michael Higgins, Environment & Planning Committee Chair

REFERENCE: S611

SUBJECT: **CHAIR'S REPORT – REPORT EP10-02-08** - Report prepared for meeting of 25 February 2010

Welcome back for 2010, it is a late start for the E&P committee, but made up for by our late finish last year.

I was pleased to hear the report to Council from the Waimea Water Augmentation committee in February; clearly water users are making a big effort to address water availability issues in the Waimea basin. Hopefully there will be some feedback from the public consultation meetings for the E&P meeting and a sense of direction going forward. The extended summer rainfall has benefited the Wai-iti catchment and I have suggested to the management committee that they consider lowering the storage level to 30% in order to assist the Waimea basin, and keep the aquifer levels higher than they would otherwise be. Sometimes I wonder if the aquifers recharge as much as we think they do over the winter period, because they fall quickly in dry weather.

I have been contacted by residents in Motupipi, with regard to the motocross track and associated noise. The track has been used a lot over the summer period. On at least one occasion, the use was for four half days within seven days which is outside of the voluntary provisions. There is also a further development in the use of sports quad bikes with a particularly aggressive noise. When establishing the user's protocol, Council lumped the noise values of rural production together with the racing bikes. In most parts of NZ these values have been separated with "productive rural noise" being permitted and "other noise such as sports bikes being controlled. As a Council we have relied on neighbours respecting each others' values with a spirit of tolerance. If it has not already happened by the meeting today, I would recommend that we ask Crs Borlase, Riley and Norriss to meet with the track owner to achieve a better outcome. I understand that a motorsports rep is also willing to attend.

I receive regular communication from landowners around Redwoods valley with regard to the noise of frost fans. Throughout the South Island, this is an evolving issue, and one that this Council will further address through the TRMP process before long. The issues are difficult and will require some corporate wisdom by the Council.

There appears to be a consistent workload on resource management issues going forward. The Resource Consent hearing schedule has reduced as a result of the slowdown through last year, but new applications are working their way through the system. There have been interesting discussions about shipping containers, and where they fit with regard to the building act. The recent publicity around housing prison inmates in shipping containers has raised expectations that others could do the same. From the information so far, I doubt very much that it will be happening at all.

Our meeting today is based around quarterly reports, and will be a good start for the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Higgins", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Michael Higgins
Chair, Environment & Planning Committee