

ONSLow RESIDENTS' COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Submission of the Onslow Residents Community Association for the Wellington City Council 10 Year Plan

The Onslow Residents Community Association represents the areas of Khandallah, Broadmeadows and Kaiwharawhara. Our purpose is to act as a conduit between the community and local authorities, represent the views and interests of our three communities, promote, develop and improve the public services and facilities for our community and foster a sense of community. We are a voice for our community.

Priority Area: Housing

Our submission will focus on the Housing Strategy as that is of major concern to the people in our community. We would first like to remind you that in 2015, Council consulted on housing choice in the Khandallah area. Over 80% of residents of the nearly 500 who made a submission opposed medium density housing or were neutral to it. <https://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/projects/housing-choice-and-supply/khandallah/consultation-feedback>.

In September 2016, Council voted to put any discussion of medium density housing on hold in our area until they could consult further with us. <https://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/projects/housing-choice-and-supply/khandallah/khandallah-as-a-medium-density-housing-area>. However, it seems that Council has overridden the desires of our community and has gone ahead with allowing medium density housing in Khandallah and in our adjacent suburb of Broadmeadows. This has caused a great deal of angst amongst residents who are feeling that Council is disenfranchising them. This is a real concern as it seems that Council says one thing but acts in a different manner. This does not engender trust in both Councillors and officials.

Assumptions

Population forecast: The Housing strategy is based on a number of assumptions and we are concerned that these are not robust. The first assumption is that by 2043 the population of Wellington will be up to 280,000 people and 30,000 housing units will be needed to accommodate this huge number of new people.

However, Council's own projections on your website state the population for Wellington, currently estimated at 212,000 would be 250,000 people which would mean that 20,000 new housing units would be needed. We note that this detail is buried deep in the report. Has Council accurately gauged the drivers for population growth given the huge range in its population forecast, with an important driver, immigration likely to be more controlled? We think this forecast needs to be revised.

Consultation with the community: We note in the 2015-2025 Ten Year Plan that engagement with the community was very prominent. We couldn't find it at all in the 2018 plan. We are concerned that Council pays lip service to listening to the community and that many decisions are made before consultation over an issue begins. We believe that engagement with the community should be authentic, not tick the box. This includes consulting the community at the design stage of a project, rather than letting officials lead the decision-making.

Billion Dollar Spend-Up: We note that in the 2015 plan, council debt was capped at a maximum of 175% of annual income – the same as a household earning \$50,000 a year having a mortgage of \$87,500 (p.13). We understand this is conservative but we are concerned that Council is ignoring this financially prudent policy. We do not want Wellington to be in the same position as Dunedin which nearly went bankrupt in 2011. WCC has a AA Standard and Poor's rating which is good. But more than doubling the debt per resident over 10 years seems a lot. Especially if there isn't quite the expected population growth to share the burden. Ultimately the ratepayers will be paying dearly for this – especially if the population forecasts are incorrect. Many of our members are concerned about the doubling of borrowings and debt and that this will result in a huge debt repayment and interest charges for ratepayers.

Giving our land away cheap to developers: Whilst we agree that we need more affordable housing for renters and first owners, we are concerned that Council will be giving our land away to developers. We believe there are other macroeconomic tools that can be used to slow the meteoric rise in house prices. The affordable houses for first home owners will only be affordable for those people lucky enough to be a first home buyer and after that the price will be

determined by the market. Meanwhile developers get richer and Wellington Council is stripped of much of its land. We would like any decision to sell Council owned land to be transparent and notified.

We also note the huge developments proceeding within Wellington's boundaries that are projected to release 1,800-2,000 sections annually. We note the increasing cost of building exacerbated by the shortage of builders and the ever-increasing cost of building materials and council charges.

Voiding Due Process and the Right to be heard: We are most concerned of Council's intention to further fast track resource consents in order to build more units faster. We note that this is to happen in the Special Housing Area but we think, given the track record of unnotified consents and 'less than minor" impacts in all neighbourhoods, that Council is once again being disingenuous and ignoring the rights of the people who live in these areas. This policy is essentially to permit wholesale and across the Board non-notified consents which it would only be a matter of time that they are applied across all neighbourhoods.

Some of our members believe the council should require all developers to pay 100% of the infrastructure costs when applying for Resource Consent and Building Permits. We understand the need to attract developers to build in Wellington, but judging by the amount of building currently going on, that does not seem to be a problem. We do not think it is the correct that ratepayers should subsidise developers.

We believe that residents in existing neighbourhoods have the right to have the amenity, character, security, privacy and parking not impacted by new housing. Any new build should improve urban design outcomes not take away from them. Furthermore, any new build should take into account existing infrastructure, wastewater and other infrastructure needs such as adequate parking.

We are concerned that the Council often deviates from the District Plan as it gives no surety to residents. We believe there should be transparent and accountable decisions made regarding resource consents, and given technology, this should not hold up decision making. We would be interested in legislation to over-rule case law which at the moment gives very little weight to resident's rights. An example of this are apartment complexes approved in Taranaki Street

with parking for less than 10% of the complex and in Wigan Street where no on-site parking is available so residents need to park on the street.

Highrises throughout Wellington: We note that Council intends to further intensify Wellington City and envisions 80 new high rises in Wellington to accommodate the forecast of 280,000 people. Given that Wellington lies on a fault line, given that climate change will in 100 years start to affect the sea levels in the harbour, we wonder if it is a good idea to allow such intensification in such a vulnerable area. Wouldn't it be better to keep the population to a certain level in Wellington and encourage housing development north and west of Wellington including in the Tawa and Grenada Village areas.

Affordable Housing vs Social Housing: We believe that everyone deserves a safe, long term home over their heads and the opportunity to own their own home if at all possible. It is sad to think our children's generation will never be able to own a house except for those who are wealthy, inherit or who are saddled with astronomic mortgages for life. We know this is a huge issue and Council's housing strategy is trying to tackle it and we applaud them for this. We think caution is called for as more housing is created by developers for rental – what is to stop them from offering market rents which is unsustainable for many people? There needs to be boundaries around these areas so that they are rent controlled.

Khandallah Pool Support

We support the Council's proposal to invest \$1.1 million in the pool and to engage early on with the community on how the pool should be developed. The pool is nearly 100 years old and is a feature of the city attracting not only locals from the Onslow area but also the wider city. It is an integral part of the connected recreational and family spaces nestled at the base of Mt Kau Kau.

The pool has seen little investment over the past few decades and it still has its original filter system and pipes from when it was built in 1924.

Renewal of the pool's infrastructure will enable improved functionality to the pool (heating) and future proof it for many more decades. Improving functionality will also see increased usage by Wellingtonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. We will also be sharing this submission with the residents in the affected areas as well as in ORCA's communications with our members.

Please feel free to contact our association on this email or by phone on 0274 511 366 over this submission.

Yours sincerely

Nicola McFaull

President

Onslow Residents' Community Association