

BEFORE THE AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 and
the Local Government (Auckland
Transitional Provisions) Act 2010

AND

IN THE MATTER of Topic 081b and 081c Rezoning and Precincts
(Geographic Areas)

**STATEMENT OF BERNARD STANLEY
ON BEHALF OF
THE LONG BAY-OKURA GREAT PARK SOCIETY
AND
OKURA ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Weiti Precinct and Okura

10 February 2016

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Bernard George Stanley.
2. I have lived in Torbay for ten years and on the North Shore for a total of 39 years. Previously I acted as General Manager in the chemical industry. I graduated with a BSc degree and a MSc in Chemistry with honours from the University of Otago. I am an active member of the Wai Care stream monitoring programme and am part of the Marine Education and Recreation Centre and the Department of Conservation's Long Bay Beach Interest group. I am currently the Deputy Convenor of the Long Bay – Okura Great Park Society.

PROTECTION OF THE AMENITY VALUE OF THE OKURA BUSH SCENIC RESERVE

3. Now in my 92nd year on planet earth and perforce living alone, I am firmly convinced my regular, virtually daily use of the magnificent range of public amenity features offered by the Long Bay-Okura complex of Park, beach and Okura/Weiti catchments have contributed significantly to my continued physical and spiritual wellbeing.
4. The 'back to nature' traverse from Haigh's Access on the Okura Estuary to Karepiro Bay is one of my favourite activities. Through the rare broad-leaf coastal forest with impressive ancient and regenerating kauri and accompanying native birdlife, the bush breakout at the spectacular sandspit jutting out into the middle of the Estuary, then on to the old pa site and finally Karepiro Bay site of the historic Dacre Cottage.
5. Bird spotting of wading seabirds feeding on the tidal flats, nesting New Zealand dotterel on the shell nest sites and even the occasional white heron, banded rail on the Estuary are additional delights.
6. A particular feature and attraction of this diverse and interesting walk is the sense of remoteness and freedom from urban incursion it provides. Intrusive housing development across on the southern side of the Estuary would seriously detract from this and impair the superb marine forest and rural vistas the walk provides.
7. Its value as a readily accessible escape and relief from the daily stresses, and artificiality of intensive urban living will increase exponentially with urban development occurring and being planned for the future across the Auckland region.

CONCLUSION

8. It is vital the high public amenity value of this splendid natural asset, that is, the Okura Scenic Bush Walk, be preserved from visual impairment by intrusive urban development on the rural landscape on the southern flank of the Estuary.