

22 May 2012
Document: 1048475



Mr Michael Self
72 Patu-Kukupa Street
MANAIA 4612

Dear Mr Self

Your Submissions and Allegations at the Council's Long-Term Plan Hearing

The Taranaki Regional Council has unanimously resolved to write to you to express serious concerns in respect of your submissions and allegations as presented at the hearing of submissions on the Long-Term Plan held on Monday 7 May 2012. In brief, it is the Council's view that your content and conduct were unacceptable for any forum and especially for a Council meeting. You were treated courteously as becomes a fellow councillor but chose to violate long standing and accepted meeting protocols and to attack our collective integrity.

Four matters, in particular, were notably concerning.

1. Without offering any reputable evidence or analysis, you alleged that the Manaia/Waimate area was experiencing a disproportionate incidence of cancer-related deaths. The Council has checked with the appropriate health authority and there is no evidence that the Council has been made aware of, to support your contention. You then proceeded to further allege that this unsubstantiated serious health issue was the result of pollution from the Kapuni oil and gas industry. The implication was that the Council are, at least in part, knowingly and carelessly responsible for these alleged health issues.

These claims are both alarmist and irresponsible given that you have presumed to speak and draw conclusions on matters of public health without substance.

2. Secondly, you claimed that the Council was either not monitoring the various emissions (presumably either authorised or unauthorised) from the oil and gas related industry, or that it was hiding information on pollution events in the depths of technical reports which contained summaries that were highly misleading. You noted that councillors would not have read the full reports and thus officers were engaged in mischievously and unprofessionally misrepresenting an accurate picture of the industry's environmental performance.

Such claims and allegations are wrong in fact and fully refuted. The Council is unique amongst its peers in New Zealand for the quality and quantity of specific consent compliance information that it provides to the public. Your conspiratorial delusions and allegations in respect of the conduct of both councillors and staff are disgracefully inaccurate and scurrilous. The Office of the Auditor-General has previously

comprehensively and vigorously reviewed the Council's monitoring and enforcement procedures and found them to be robust, defensible, comprehensive and transparent. We take our reputation seriously and do not like our integrity to be falsely impugned when the charges are so patently false.

3. Thirdly, your specific mention and related inferences about Director – Resource Management Mr Fred Mclay, Chief Executive Mr Basil Chamberlain and Council Chairman Mr David MacLeod having conflicts of interest, resulting in dishonest and corrupt activities was slanderous, disgraceful and unsubstantiated.

Your suggestions are totally without foundation and are fully rejected. The personal attack made on Mr McLay based on the fact that several years ago he was employed in the petroleum industry is neither rational nor fair.

4. Fourthly, you stated and otherwise implied that you and unnamed others had experienced 'heavy' intimidation-type responses from the Council as an outcome of raising concerns about the performance of the oil and gas industry. You specifically noted a recent pest plant inspection at your property, being, in your mind, the first you had experienced in over two decades.

The facts show that your property was inspected, along with almost every other small/urban property in the Kaponga and Manaia townships recently. These townships were inspected as part of a regular programme involving all towns in Taranaki. No problems were identified on your property and no notice to undertake activities to address pest plant issues was issued. A calling card was left as a courtesy by Council Officer, Catherine Law.

Your allegation is totally without foundation and fully refuted. That you made it at a public Council meeting, impugning the integrity of the Council, its management and Catherine Law is a disgraceful slander and scurrilous.

Mr Self, you are generally entitled to your opinion on matters and also to express those opinions, however misguided and unsubstantiated they may be.

Your behaviour and conduct on this occasion, however, was wholly unacceptable. Your lack of provision of any credible evidence backing your claims as well as your slander of councillors, senior executives and other staff are unacceptable. As councillors, we were both angered and appalled to observe a local authority councillor behave so poorly and foolishly.

Yours faithfully

David N MacLeod
Chairman