

A plan for the Bay!

I've been MP for Napier for six years now. It's been an absolute privilege.

The seat of Napier runs all the way from Taradale up to Mahia and across to Waikaremoana. It means that I have to consider issues on a much wider basis than just Napier City, albeit the majority of the population lives here.

I've also worked closely with my colleague, MP for Tuki Tuki, Craig Foss, together with the region's mayors and councillors. As a result I've gathered an array of big picture ideas (from a range of people) which if implemented across our region could make a huge difference to our future, to the prosperity of our grandchildren and to the health of our environment.

To implement many of these ideas requires merged governance (or at least thinking) across our province. It requires one provincial vision which we buy into and which is supported from Wairoa to Waipukurau.

What it does not necessarily mean is amalgamation of all our councils. It might, but I think full amalgamation is probably at the extreme end of the spectrum of options. There are all manner of other ways we might merge governance while still retaining city councils and local mayors. I'm keen for these options to at least be explored and debated so that you can decide whether there is benefit in change. To this end I think an investment in a "HB Governance Options" paper is well worthwhile. Just because one was done 10 years ago is no reason not to revisit it!

Let me make it clear - I have no agenda to force amalgamation. It is not an issue I am taking to this year's general election for you to vote upon.

So what's the debate? In a nutshell there are two questions to ask. Firstly: Is there any benefit in having a regional strategic plan which we all support? And secondly: Is there a regional governance structure that would better accommodate the implementation of that plan?

Some of the big picture ideas that I've gathered, which a regional plan might include, are suggested to the right of this page. Some of these may not make the cut. I am sure there are many others which might. The fact is that if we put our collective minds together we could create an incredible plan for the Bay.

So there you have it. I'm all for taking the Bay forward with a regional plan. I'm not fixated with how we might do that. Like I say total council amalgamation is just one option. There may, however, be a solution that is quite unique to Hawke's Bay.

It is important that you all know that this would be your decision, not mine. Options would be taken to local body elections with a referendum decided by you, not me.

All I ask is that we don't bury our heads in the sand without having the debate. Personally I believe that there really is a bigger picture out there for our province just waiting to be grabbed.

Chris Tremain
MP for Napier / Wairoa

COLLECTIVE THINKING MIGHT INCLUDE ... (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF PRIORITY)

1. Working with DOC to create NZ's largest predator-proof eco-system on the Mahia Peninsula while still allowing existing farming property rights.
2. Continue to focus on lifting water quality in our rivers and lakes with a special focus on the Tuki Tuki, the Mohaka and Lake Tutira.
3. Changing the HB Power Consumers' Trust so that dividends can be used for public legacy assets such as swimming pools, theatres and sports facilities. As a first priority we would build an Olympic-class regional swimming pool.
4. Working with central Government to upgrade State Highway 38 from Rotorua to Wairoa allowing tourist bus access.
5. Working with iwi as key investors and DOC to build tourist eco-hotels at Waikaremoana and Morere Hot Springs.
6. Building Maori tourism with an urban marae and concert hotel at Wairoa, together with replica pa sites at Petane and Otatara.
7. Rebuild the historic marae site at Otatara with a significant conference option.
8. Focus Tourism HB on the wonderful opportunity to bring regular tourist buses from Rotorua via Lake Waikaremoana to Napier / Hastings returning via Taupo or Taihape.
9. Create a ratepayer-owned assets holding company to own the port and other key province-wide infrastructure. Purchase both the Government and local council shares of HB Regional Airport into this company (if not acquired by iwi in settlement).
10. Find solutions to enable the sale of the remainder of leasehold residential properties to allow all current leaseholders to buy freehold over time.
11. Invest in water storage on the Heretaunga Plains to grow opportunities in CHB.
12. Continue to develop Marine Parade and Art Deco Napier as the "jewels" in our tourism portfolio.
13. Work with central Government to purchase Waipatiki Campground to hold in public hands. Look to similar opportunities at Ocean Beach and Waimarama.
14. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to build a strong economic development agency with a total focus on key business sectors we want to grow or move to the Bay. One possibility would be to zone specific land / areas with a key business focus and provide the necessary infrastructure to support growth e.g Ahuriri - "IT Hub", Tomoana - "Cuisine City", Omahu Road "Destination - Design and Build," Wairoa - "Timber Town", Onekawa - "Innovation Campus" etc.
15. Build a Bay-wide network of highly connected innovators, entrepreneurs, artists and exporters to grow an on-line and face-to-face community which attracts others of this ilk to the Bay. Encourage these people to start and invest in a "HB Business Incubator" and a "HB Venture Capital Fund" with a focus on new opportunities in the clean / greentech space.
16. Build on the existing cycleway networks with additions on the Karamu Stream and a wine ride. Continue to build totally off-road "tree-lined" walking and cycling routes from Napier to Taradale and Havelock North to Hastings to Flaxmere.
17. WiFi our key cities and towns so anyone in a cafe from Wairoa to Waipukurau gets free internet access.
18. Zone additional sections around the province to ensure an ample supply of sections (in advance). Quantity of supply has a major impact on keeping price affordable. Focus on lower productive land where possible e.g. Mission Hills.
19. Create one district plan for business, building and construction to lower compliance costs and to speed up decision making.
20. Take the "Havelock North to Expressway Link" to environment court with the aim of expediting this roading project. Continue to move southern traffic to the expressway to reduce trucks on Marine Parade.
21. Work closely with the Ministry of Fisheries to improve the sustainability of the HB fishery with consideration of additional Marine Reserves.

