

One Plan submission – Matt Bell

Oral Submission – Overall Plan Hearing

Introduction

My name is Matt Bell, I live in Feilding and as many of you will know I am a Manawatu District Councillor and the Deputy Mayor. So before I go any further I would like to point out that although I support the Manawatu's/combined TA submission as both a Councillor and as an individual resident, my submission here today is my own submission as an individual.

I have also submitted on the Land section of the plan.

Firstly I think it is an admirable step to try and create a Regional Planning document in order to create consistency, however I do have some major concerns.

I consider myself a shareholder in the Manawatu-Wanganui Region because 1. I obviously live in it, and probably more so 2. because I own a 384 hectare hill country farm/recreational block in the Whangaehu River Catchment (582 Whangaehu Valley Road, Mangamahu). It is a property that I have been associated with for 35 years and I have a good knowledge of the valley and its surrounding environment.

So to me it is important that Horizons get this plan right, and in particular the correct framework in relation to the Act.

I definitely consider myself a lay-person in these matters and quite frankly have been overwhelmed by the sheer volume of paper. Is it an attempt to bury submitters into submission!

However I do have some knowledge in these matters. I chair the Manawatu District Councils Hearing's Committee, I have a Bachelor of Commerce (Agriculture) VFM, and am a Registered Rural Valuer.

I will also acknowledge that I have not read the plan from cover to cover, but have had many discussions, mostly informal, with the likes of planners, surveyors, engineers, consultants and horizons staff. From these discussions I have formed my opinion.

Concerns

1). I have two main concerns with the plan as it currently stands. The first is what I consider is a major structural deficiency which in my mind really undermines the plan entirely. The second concern is more of a philosophical point of view.

So my first concern is that there is a lack of distinction between what is **the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and what is the Regional Plan (RP)**

Section 67 of the Act clearly states what a Regional Plan must contain

67 Contents of regional plans

(1) A regional plan must state---

- (a) the objectives for the region; and
- (b) the policies to implement the objectives; and
- (c) the rules (if any) to implement the policies.

Quite clearly objectives for the Region must be stated.

Then the policies to implement these objectives must reference back to these objectives. And then the rules to implement the policies.

I don't intend to get bogged down with the detail, but what concerns me, as a 'shareholder' if the structure is not right, and the Act is not being met, then there is a problem and now is the time to fix it.

I'm concerned, but I hope my concern is unfounded, that because it is called One Plan the Council has backed itself into a corner in terms of trying to tie everything up into one document. The result, in my opinion, has been to create a **Rule Book** as opposed to a **Regional Plan**.

So please Redraft the One Plan so there are two separate documents or parts to the document, with:

1. A Regional Policy Statement that clearly sets out the Objectives for the Region.
2. A Regional Plan with policies and rules with clear linkages to the objective that the plan is endeavouring to meet.

2). My second main concern, as I stated earlier is more philosophical, is that in my opinion the general theme of the plan is very skewed towards 'environmental purity' and lacks regard to economic costs to the Region and its communities. I fear that much of which the plan sets out to achieve is unrealistic in that the costs to achieve those outcomes far exceeds what many parts of the community can afford.

I feel that the economic well-being has not been sufficiently balanced with environmental well-being of the community.

It is up to the Councillors that sit around the Council table to consider if they have got this balance right as they are the ones that will have to shoulder the blame if the economy of the Region becomes hog-tied by excessive environmental planning.

However, before I close, as stated before I do commend Horizons on endeavouring to create a Regional Planning document. But please get it right, don't be afraid to admit mistakes, I will only think less of you if you dig your toes in for sake of protecting egos.

Conclusion

Thank you for receiving my oral submission.
Matt Bell