

## **Lifestyle disappears in Western Bays**

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If the latest round of proposed rule changes is ratified by Western Bay of Plenty District Council a true lifestyle block may soon be hard to find. WBOPDC is moving to stop most subdivision in their Proposed District Plan.

Rural Councils such as Western Bays, Waikato, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Waipa, Otorohanga and Whakatane, allow lifestyle and retirement blocks to be subdivided off the farm. Many people do this when retiring, diversifying or just trying to balance the books in tough times, like now.

By obtaining consent to subdivide, property owners secure their rights without outlaying the full cost. It is comforting to know that they can't then be caught out by future rule changes. They will be free to sell off a smaller blocks to keep the bank manager happy or else retain their home while selling off the farm. This potential may have been a key factor in the original purchase decision.

Surveying Services Ltd specialises in subdivision throughout the Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Coromandel. Subdividing in WBOP is business as usual for now. We are still obtaining approvals for people under the old rules and expect this to continue for a few months yet. The rules relate to when your existing title was applied for (not the title date) and this requires some investigation. There is a good chance for subdivision if your title was applied for prior to August 1, 1992 and it is at least four hectares, or if it was applied for prior to November 22, 1997 and is over eight hectares.

Regardless of the title age you can subdivide where you protect native vegetation, wetland, riverbank or other significant cultural feature located either on your property or another in the WBOP District. For example half a hectare - 100m x 50m - of wetland or two hectares of forest.

There are opportunities to subdivide around existing consented land uses such as packhouses, 40 hectare lots, and separation lots where your property is physically separated by a geographical or public feature, but all this is set to change under the rule change.

If your title qualifies now it might be a case of 'use it or lose it'. On the positive side, the titles you create soon should increase in value once Council stop production. The big question is where will lifestyle live then? One thought is that they will move on to a productive block and farm that...or not.

By Brent Trail – Managing Director