

## **Waikato landowners outraged at losing subdivision rights**

*Published November 2010*

Waikato District Council has upset many landowners with its recently proposed change to Rural Subdivision Rules. These changes were signalled earlier this year when Council consulted with land development professionals. Their proposals don't appear to have changed since then.

Everyone with a subdividable property will be affected by this change, intended to reduce the number of lifestyle blocks being created. As I reported back in July, you will now need over 6 hectares with an older title before you can even contemplate a subdivision – and then you will only get one new title. Currently the starting area is 2.6 hectares.

This will have the effect of spreading the 'lifestyle zone' further afield into the more productive areas. At present there are many lifestyle subdivisions close to Hamilton where the productivity of land has been compromised already. In my view it is this area that should be targeted by Council for further intensification, rather than just spreading further. Why not utilise the land that is already fragmented and will never go back into large scale farming?

I am predicting a significant rise in the sale price for well located small lifestyle blocks as a consequence, simply because there won't be many more small blocks created close to town. Council propose to lift the minimum size threefold to 1.6 hectares and allow blocks to be up to 4 hectares in size. That might suit some, but I wonder if we will see a lot more land taken out of high production as a result.

In other changes, Council propose to require a resource consent application to build a second dwelling or 'dependent person's dwelling' on any property. I presume that is an attempt to stop people making money by renting out the house. It is likely that this process will be onerous with several more layers of justification and cost.

Public submissions are open until 30 November. This is your last chance to have a say on this proposal before the rules come into play early next year. In the mean time it's business as usual. You must presume the changes will happen and get your approvals in place smartly. Resource Consents last for several years and you can postpone significant costs until final titles are required.

Currently major changes are on the table at Waipa and Hauraki as well, so if you own land there and want to be able to develop at all you should discuss that with me immediately. We are currently assisting many people with making an effective submission and getting consents in place to secure their existing rights before they are gone.

By Brent Trail - Managing Director

*Links for further information:*

[Waikato District Council - Summary of proposed changes to District Plan](#)

[Waipa District - Draft District Plan - general information sheet](#)

[Hauraki District - Key changes in the Proposed District Plan](#)

[Waikato Times article - Plan variation hits farmers](#)