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Waikato DC mayoral candidate name: *Donna Nichols*

Please type in the space below each question, and use as much space as you require for each answer.

*Please email your responses back to info@sustainablewaikato.org.nz not later than **Monday, September 5th 2016.***

1. Have you personally been involved in any group, organisation, or activities that relate to sustainability? Please give details and outcomes. Lots, but most recent, have been invited to submit my proposal to mainstream tiny houses to Treasury.
2. What do you think are the top three challenges facing the Waikato district that WDC could influence over the next five to ten years?

I believe the main issues facing the District are water, transport and Auckland.

In terms of water we need to continue to support and enhance initiatives to clean up the rivers and streams in our District. Wai Ora and the River Settlement will certainly help along with better practices for land development and farming. I will certainly support these as much as possible. One of the main concerns I have with how the current Council is run is it is frequently breaching its discharge consents. This must stop. How can we expect ratepayers to be good citizens if Council is not leading by example?

Waikato is a collection of dormitory towns with a large percentage of residents commuting to other areas for work. My policies are two fold, increase the number of local jobs and promote the greater use of public transport including a commuter rail service to Auckland. Short term car hire is becoming more prevalent meaning that commuters need not take their car to work to do those lunchtime chores is becoming unnecessary. For longer trips we would put mini libraries, (books, CD's etc) on the buses and provide free wifi along with fold down tables like on planes.

The continuing growth of Auckland forces industry out of expensive land on the isthmus and into areas such as the Waikato. I'm concerned about the push by Hamilton city to have all heavy dirty industry outside the city limits. If they do come to the Waikato I would ensure that they have strict consent conditions and that these are properly monitored and any breaches dealt with promptly.

The number of commuters coming to and through the Waikato will also have an effect on our Environment. I will work with contributing Councils to ensure the impacts are duly distributed or recognised. I am proposing a "visitor potty tax" for Raglan to ensure that the environment is not undermined through sewerage overloads and visitor activities

degrading the environment. A few thousand local residents cannot be expected to cover the costs of tens of thousands of visitors.

3. What do you see as future priorities for transport in Waikato and what benefits do you believe changes will bring?

In addition to the above, we need to be planning now for the significant changes that will take place in our vehicle fleet including much larger numbers of E and driverless vehicles. We need to work with business to promote the introduction of E-bikes and cars into their fleets. We need to ensure that there are sufficient charging/refuelling stations available. Duplicating on the likes of the subsidy that Waikato University is offering to students to take public transport.

As mentioned above a commuter train should be reinstated with government assistance, as it alleviates their need to put increased money into the road network. (Read my article in the Cambridge News newspaper of this week).

4. What sustainable water management strategies do you think Council should implement?

I am in favour of water metres to ensure that people don't waste water. It has been shown in the past that Council's are one of the worst wasters of water with leaks in their infrastructure. I would ensure we get our own house in order to see what the true savings for consumers might be. We should also include onsite stormwater retention and water recycling in new developments.

5. What strategies do you think Council should employ to minimise Waikato's waste?

WDC has already introduced stickers for their bags to discourage too much waste. As Council's have issued recycling bins I believe we could also look at issuing compost bins to each household to reduce waste. Those with one already could either have two or sell their additional one. A how to use the bin campaign would also be run in local newspapers with a hint a week.

Raglan is looking to achieve zero waste and lessons learned from that programme could be rolled out across the District.

6. What role should Council have in encouraging sustainable economic development?

Council should be leading this. I believe that with my background in property, business and environmental planning that I have the skills necessary to lead this initiative in the Waikato District.

7. What are the most effective things Council could do to improve the wellbeing of Waikato residents, in particular for those of lower socioeconomic status and/or for supporting youth engagement in Waikato?

I am proposing to introduce a community plan the likes of the former Tomorrow's Manukau the predecessor of the Auckland Plan (not to be confused with the unitary plan) to the Waikato District. Each of our community's has a Plan but they are low level and the effects are dispersed and fragmented. Council must be at the forefront to lobby business, government departments, Ministers and NGO's to work collectively on addressing systemic problems. Having worked on a similar Plan, Tomorrow's Manukau, I am very well aware of

the significant benefits these Plans can bring to individuals and communities in redressing longstanding issues in economic, social, cultural and environmental areas in a comprehensive cross sectorial manner.

8. Waikato has many different ethnic groups from many different countries and a significant Maori cultural influence. How can Waikato celebrate this cultural diversity while helping the community to strengthen cross-cultural ties?

See answer to question 8. This was one of the key initiatives of Tomorrow's Manukau. I plan to initiate a similar strategy for Waikato District.

9. What can Council do to support businesses, schools, families and individuals to make more sustainable choices?

Council has to be led firstly by someone who truly believes in sustainability as a fundamental to change, that is why I am putting my name forward. Again it is Council that must lead by example in how it operates if it is wanting to see any significant differences in its community. This is also a key aspect of the Tomorrow's Manukau type plan I wish to introduce to the District.

10. Do you think Council has a responsibility to have policies to mitigate climate change and manage its impacts. Could you please give some examples?

The Local Government Act specifically states it must. The degree to which they do this is again led by the Mayor. I am highly supportive of addressing these issues significantly within the District. Raglan, Miranda and Pt Waikato for instance face major issues with coastal erosion, salt water inundation and major storm events. Farmers are facing the issues associated with higher temperatures and lower rainfalls. Business may face disruptions through flooding and storm damage to roads and other movement networks. All these issues must be identified by Council and plans put in place to either address the issues where it is Council's responsibility, work with Government to ensure issues are addressed at the central level and work with businesses and communities to make changes to lessen the effects along with putting in place contingency plans.

11. Do you see the Council having a supporting role in managing natural biodiversity in Waikato? If yes, what policies would you like to see in place to support this?

Council should work with Regional and neighbouring Councils to ensure we are doing everything possible in this regard. We should be ensuring our economic growth etc policies don't undermine diversity. We as a Council should ensure that our practices and infrastructure is not undermining bio-diversity. Where possible we should try to enhance it. Our District Plan plays a significant role in ensuring that development should either not degrade or enhance bio-diversity. There is one of the aspects of the Tomorrow's Manukau type plan that address these issues specifically including collective initiatives with, government departments, business community groups and individuals. All of this requires significant leadership from both the political and administrative sides of Council.

Many people shy away from sustainability because they think it will cost money but usually it ends up saving it.

**We need to sell those economic benefits more, that's what people understand.
Thank you for your time.**

Authorised by Donna Nichols, 195 Duncan Road RD3, Hamilton