



Aggregate News

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD SAY "ROCK ON IN 2008"

With a year ending which saw local authority elections and a general election year now approaching, let's consider some policies for New Zealand's future.

What politician from central or local government would disagree with the wise use of resources. The importance to New Zealand of better infrastructure is now also acknowledged by almost everyone.

Our aggregate industry is committed to sustainability. It was the theme this year for our annual conference and we chose it before any hint that government would make sustainability central to its policies.

We believe aggregates are essential for a sustainable society. You can't build houses or commercial buildings or roads without the gravel, shingle, limestone and rock that our industry produces.

There is a huge investment going on at the moment in Auckland and around the country to improve our roads. Every new kilometre of highway requires thousands of tonnes of base metal, chip and gravel.

Planning for future access to resources in close proximity to where they will be used is a demonstration of good stewardship by District and Regional Councils.

This year has seen considerable change in

membership of many local authorities. It is especially important that new mayors and councillors are aware of some of the issues facing the aggregate industry.

Quarries and/or shingle crushing plants are present in virtually every TLA in the country. An Auckland MP was reminded at our conference that there are two quarries in his urban electorate.

Unfortunately, the aggregate industry can still be subject to ill-informed concerns from local residents and others. Today's quarries are well-managed plants, minimising noise, dust and water issues. Our industry wins awards for environmental management which leaves land better than when quarrying began.

It is not in anyone's interests if quarrying is pushed further and further away from the urban centres that fundamentally require our products for economic and social progress. Already Auckland is importing a quarter of its aggregate needs from Northland, Waikato and beyond. Other regions are seeing similar trends. Already, more fuel is used in delivering quarry products than in producing them. The decisions made by local authorities about where to allow quarries to operate have a profound effect on the environment and on the cost of roading, housing and development.

*Article written for Local Government magazine by
James Boyce, President*

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DIARY DATES

2008

IoQ/AQA Joint
Conference
Auckland
Wednesday 9 July -
Friday 11 July
40th Meeting of IoQ



&
Meeting of
International
Presidents of IoQ

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TITAN



Aggregate News

AQA PLANNING ACTIVITY

The Association has an ongoing relationship with a firm of planning consultants who closely monitor all planning activity that could affect members or the industry, and make submissions on our behalf.

The following are the activity reports as presented to the Council at its meetings:

November 2007

- **Taranaki Regional Policy Statement:**
- **Oreti Water Conservation Order** - Currently awaiting determination on the basis of Fish and Game's further submissions. Environment Southland have managed to water down some facets of the Order to enable ongoing provision for primary and secondary industries using the river. This does not mean that it will necessarily be an easy path to undertake aggregate extraction on or near the river, but it does not currently preclude the opportunity for it to occur. We will continue to watch this situation.
- **Stevenson's Quarry Plan Change** - Hearings resolved and no further involvement for the AQA. An appeal has been lodged, but overall this project has been a good win for the industry.
- **Environment Waikato Shore Futures** - We haven't heard any further on this project and will follow it up. This may be as a result of local body elections.
- **National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission** - Currently awaiting the outcome of the hearing. The committee appeared sympathetic to the evidence of the AQA, and the message was echoed by other submitters (local authorities).
- **Horizons Regional Council Regional Policy Statement and Plan** - Awaiting the notification of further submissions. Anticipated February 2008.
- **Taranaki Regional Policy Statement and Plan** — Hearings scheduled to commence March 2008.
- **Canterbury Natural Resources Regional Plan** — Letter sent in support of local Member's submissions.

PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL BODY

The Association conducted a quick survey in late November amongst its membership on a proposal which could result in a national body embracing the aggregates, minerals, oil exploration and coal sectors. The proposal arose out of a strategic planning meeting hosted by NZMIA.

Twenty responses were received, that is 35% of the Full Members.

All but two voted to support the proposal in principle, so 90% of those who voted were in favour.

It is very clear from some comments received that there are a number of concerns relating to this proposal.

Aggregate & Quarry
Association of New
Zealand Incorporated

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The Council has discussed the proposal and advises that it will proceed but with a great deal of caution to ensure that the concerns expressed are addressed.

A time frame of mid 2008 has been suggested, to facilitate a more effective lobbying period in the run up to the election (Electoral Finance Act permitting). The Council is of the view that while the objective has merit, it is far more important to do it right than do it quickly.

In the final analysis, a decision can only be made on whether the benefits to the members and the industry of such a proposal, outweigh any disadvantages. Adoption of the proposal will also require the majority of the members voting to support the move.

The Council advises that it is early days and there is a great deal of work to be done before any proposal can be presented to the Members for consideration. The President, James Boyce, is on the Steering Group so the AQA's interests will be at the forefront of the discussions.

Members will be kept informed on any developments in regard to this proposal.

On the meantime, James Boyce invites any member who wishes to discuss any aspect of this proposal to contact him on

0-9-233 6855 or 021-812 305 or james.boyce@holcim.com.

AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MUSES ON THE POLITICS OF LIFE

As we nosedive into the Christmas and New Year period, one wonders whether it is better to look back over the past year, or look forward to next year. Both can be equally depressing or in some cases uplifting.

What was achieved politically in 2007? Any doubts as to the standard of competency in our law makers was well and truly confirmed with the decision and comments surrounding the decision not to pursue charges under the Suppression of Terrorism Act and the 150 odd late amendments to the Electoral Finance Bill. . Does make one wonder!

So what is on the books to brighten 2008 for you and make your life so much easier.? Well, the employer contribution for Kiwisaver comes into force on 1 April which means further money to be paid out. Don't get me wrong, I personally support compulsory superannuation but what a pity this Government could not get it right and give tax cuts that went into Kiwisaver rather than tax credits that neither the employer nor employee see for many months. Had it been cash flow neutral, those who really needed it could have benefitted.

But that's OK because now the employee, if they have young or dependant children, adults or persons they care for can request flexible hours of work, and you must respond positively. If you are unable to meet the request, it can go to the Department of Labour who may make a binding decision. Again, a good idea but one that is badly handled and does not recognise the small business.

The Adult Minimum Wage increases in April. While ACC Employer levies have gone down, the earner levy, ACC component in vehicle registration and petrol has increased.

A recent Court of Appeal judgement found that if the employer is convicted of charges arising from a work place accident, the injured worker can now sue the employer for the difference between the 80% of wages received from ACC and the full time wage

And let us not forget that 2008 will bring the joys and excitement of a General Election, with all the promises, bribes, mud slinging and generally depressing political performances that we have come to expect over the past few elections. Those in power will do anything they can to hang on; while those not in power will do all they can to dislodge them.

To the immediate future however and the offices of the Association will be closed from Saturday 22 December to Sunday 13 January inclusive.

And on that happy note, can I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy and Prosperous New Year and a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Roger Parton
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From The Mind Boggles Department

Toilet worms can't be browned off By ESTHER HARWARD - Sunday Star Times | 16/12/20077

The inventor of a worm-driven composting toilet had to prove the worms were not traumatised or stressed by their task before council bureaucrats would approve the system.

Coll Bell, who invented the "wormorator" as an alternative to septic tanks, was told by an Auckland Regional Council staff member to get an expert's report on the psychological impact on the worms after she became concerned during a site visit.

"She felt that the worms were being unfairly treated, being expected to deal with human faeces, and that it could affect them in a psychological way," says Bell. "I said, 'Well, what do I do about that?' and she said 'you have to have someone with the necessary qualifications to say the worms are happy'."

In the wormorator, a colony of tiger worms, in a chamber, filters solids from the toilet waste. The leftover water is filtered and disposed of in underground trenches.

The ARC was satisfied after vermiculture consultant Patricia Naidu reported the worms were in excellent health and breeding happily.

Bell said this was one of several hurdles during a three-year battle with the council, and contributed to his decision two years ago to sell his company, Natural Health Systems, to another Matakana businessman, Steven Hoyle, who took up the struggle. The ARC staff member was unavailable for comment.

Senior consents officer Robyn Floyd said the woman's concerns were fair because they related to an application to use the wormorator at a campground, where sewage flowed mainly for two weeks a year, with little flow during the rest of the year.

"The phrase was used by a new member of staff, but it did relate to a valid concern with stress on a proposed worm population from huge fluctuations in flows and thus feed for the worms, and the corresponding performance of the system."

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40th Joint Conference & Meeting of the International Presidents of the IoQ

9—11 July 2008 Hyatt Regency, Auckland

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