

First I'd like to say that I think you folks at ECAN have an enormously difficult job of trying to do heaps of important work without enough money. I hope the Government's Tax Working Group will realise the important work that local and regional governments do and change the national tax structure so that more money goes to local government.

With that said, most of what I would like to see ECAN do is probably not really possible given the current budget constraints. Nevertheless, I think it's valuable for you to hear what local taxpayers/ratepayers would like to see in the future so you can lobby the Government to enable better funding.

Also, I notice throughout the consultation document there is reference to "stakeholders". I'm wondering who that is exactly and how that differs from the public. I'm concerned this probably means industry and agricultural interests and not groups such as the bus drivers union. Anyway, here's my 2 cents...

Freshwater Management and Biodiversity

These two areas are extremely important to me and I am appalled at the degradation that has happened in recent years. The conversion to intensive dairying enabled by unsustainable irrigation projects has led to the appalling state of rivers in Canterbury and threatens pristine aquifers with pollution. The National Freshwater Policy standard of boating/wading is disgusting. We should be aiming for swimmable rivers and lakes. The conversion of MacKenzie's precious high-country ecosystems into pivot irrigator-based farms for yet more intensive agriculture is reprehensible. The enormous conversion throughout Canterbury to unsustainable farming practices needs to stop right now and a focus on ecologically sustainable practices should be the standard. We are destroying our natural resources for short-term private profits and that is just plain stupid. Society will have to pick up the costs and my fear is that some of the damage will be irreparable.

I am pleased to see the idea of consent reviews starting with the Hakatere catchment. I would also like to see more fines handed out for violation of consents. From what I've heard on the news, violators just get warning after warning. There are many responsible land-owners who are doing the right thing and they are to be commended and there are also volunteer organisations such as Te Awa Kakariki doing good work, but those efforts can and are being undone by poor planning and enforcement and we can see the results for ourselves. Degraded rivers with warning signs, declining fish and bird-life. A lot of damage has been done and we need to stop creating more damage and adopt sustainable practices.

Hazards, Risks and Resilience

More emphasis needs to be placed on Climate Change. Enormous changes are coming and all branches of government need to factor this into their planning more than they are at present.

Air Quality

There have been enormous gains in this area over the last twenty years and I can see a great improvement in Christchurch. I do take issue with the current fire emission standards because there is an arbitrary cut-off for log-burners based on age. I have a log-burner that is very clean-burning that consistently produces no visible smoke. You can only tell it's on by looking for the thermal heat-waves coming out the chimney. This unit is older than the cut-off date so I will be forced to replace it; I can't see the sense in that. Yet I commonly see neighbours with very smoky chimneys, in fact they produce more smoke even though the fire has been running all day than mine produces during the cold/start-up phase. So I will have to replace a log-burner that seems

perfectly acceptable. I think we instead need an friendly inspection program targeting smoky chimneys and either help people to upgrade a log-burner that really isn't very good or perhaps they need advice about properly drying and storing wood.

Transport and Urban Development

I am a strong supporter of urban public transport. I would like to see ECAN buy the trains that are being decommissioned in Auckland and use them to start up a commuter service from the Waimakariri and Selwyn areas. This was rejected in the past whilst we spend hundreds of millions on tremendously expensive and inefficient road projects and bridge expansions. The previous Government drove these choices, no doubt, but recognising a change of Government, the whole transport system should be up for a rethink and review.

The tracks are there, they need to be used and integrated with an urban bus/biking system as the center-piece of a new urban transport system and in time the conversion of key roads to urban light rail with density intensification along those corridors. According to Tane Apanui (a local candidate for NZ 1st in last year's election) this system could be implemented for much less than ECAN projected. <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/90457839/Commuter-trains-proposed-for-Christchurch-at-fraction-of-previous-cost-estimates>

In the mean time we should discourage the urban sprawl supported by the previous Government's LURP program. We should be consulting the likes of Susan Krumdieck and her vision of Christchurch's future development - "From the Ground Up":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTrj2f9t3So>.

Until we have the density to support light-rail, we could use hybrid buses that are also able to go on train tracks. These are currently being used in Japan and would enable a more flexible and efficient train/bus system.

I am frankly very angry at how much of my tax payments go to subsidising road/private car/trucking transport whilst Kiwirail and public transport is neglected, minimally supported, and marginalised. I would like to see free buses (as has been done in many other parts of the world). This level of subsidy leads to tremendous use of public transport which makes both it and the road system more efficient. It is the best transport money we can spend, in my opinion. I would like to see ECAN and Local Government New Zealand lobby the new Government for a large-scale diversion of transport funding away from roads and in favour of public transport.

As for the proposed Options, I don't want to see any bus-routes dropped, but I would prefer to see rates go up rather than fares, so I prefer Option 2.

Revenue and Financing Policy

I don't have a problem with the rates increases, however I would like to suggest that ECAN and LGNZ lobby the Government Tax Working Group for 1) Land Taxes and 2) Water Use Charges - on ALL water at a minimum rate of 1 cent/1000litres and higher rates for bottling - with the revenue going to local and regional government and iwi where the land is situated or where the water is used.

Just to give some background on myself. I pay about \$4000 a year in rates and about \$60,000 a year in income taxes, so my income is well above the national average and I own property of greater value than the average Kiwi, lest you think that I want someone else to be taxed for what I'm proposing. I am happy to pay taxes, it is how we pay for a good society. There are many things that

private business and free markets will not produce because there isn't a sufficient return on capital and so government must provide these things or our society suffers. I do, however, expect efficient government and effective use of all our tax dollars.

Finally, I trust we will see the return to full democratic elections for ECAN councillors and the dismantling of the cairn from Cathedral Square. The removal of basic democratic rights was a disgrace that enabled much of the environmental destruction we've experienced recently in Canterbury and the time to reverse this travesty is well overdue.

Thank you.