

## **Some remarks on the “Transparency” of our Local Government**

1. In June 2014 FNDC declared that Paihia Cat Protection (PCP) was allowed to continue their -by then- 10 years community work of neutering, supplying shelter, veterinary treatment and food to a colony of abandoned companion cats in the urban area of Paihia.
2. For that -and only that- purpose FNDC issued a “Licence to Occupy part of Road Reserve” along School Road on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2014.
3. Subsequently PCP built a feeding station and shelter according to the requirements of FNDC which amounted to NZD 3,000.- (transport & installation not included). Without the “Licence to Occupy” and the accompanying, confirmative correspondence PCP would never have put any effort in neither its construction and transport nor in enquiries about the requested liability insurance. PCP consider all these proceedings, given and received in good faith, as proof for having established an implied contract to fulfill the a.m. purpose.
4. Four weeks later, after all the work was finished, FNDC withdrew the “Licence to Occupy” on the grounds that BBA (“Bay Bush Action”), a complacent and self-appointed group of conservationists and cat haters had protested, although they had refused to attend a mediation meeting before. However PCP assumes that plain lobbyism of people like Gareth Morgan has acted as a game changer.
5. BBA and their affiliated youth organisation “Bay Bush Warriors” not only trap pests in bush and forest (as their name implies), but, contradicting themselves, also companion cats in urban areas, who then have “just disappeared.” (See attached photo). Kids who are members of this group learn shooting guns too. They perform target practice and are rewarded pocket knives for trapping and killing pets. PCP believe that this “education” and its resulting cruelty against animals can easily lead to cruelty against humans and later to domestic violence. The continuously rising crime rates in Northland (youth gangs) are probably related to an irresponsible lowering of social and ethical standards. By regarding nature with a prejudiced view, thus ignoring its subtle balance, BBA does nothing to assist young people to obtain informed decision-making abilities.
6. In 2015, after on-going unsuccessful meetings with Council members (the Mayor himself showed a very poor performance) the Council paid no heed to a petition signed by 771 people, asking that the last few old cats be left alone to live out their natural lives, cared for as before by PCP. This undemocratic conduct is even more disappointing because in their own media release FNDC had previously stated that “the cats would be too old to fend for themselves.” How could they then be any danger for a non- existing bird habitat next to a helicopter pad? In this context and for the sake of completeness it should be noted, that only a few weeks later the district’s mayor showed his appreciation about the outcome of another submission against Northland's “Super-Council”: Around 1400 people of 166.000 had voted against a proposal, which the Council wasn’t very fond of and which had thus been ditched. Or in other words: Less than 1% of the population actually favoured the council’s view, whereas in this present petition about a cat colony 8% did NOT support Council, but their efforts had been ignored.
7. In the meantime the shelter had even been installed by FNDC on the same portion of Road Reserve for a while, but was then suddenly removed without previous announcement and a trapping company was employed to catch the remaining cats – but only two were caught, of which one was lost by the SPCA. All remaining ones are now scattered, starving and probably have become feral.
8. This all shows a considerable lack of transparency, honesty and democratic understanding, but also a remarkable contempt for facts and good community work. In fact FNDC have forced us residents and “persons in charge” to break the “Animal Welfare Act.” Recently FNDC even refused to reimburse our expenses for the construction of the feeding station but want now to sell it in order to cover “storage costs”, although removing and storing it was their own decision.

