

**UNDER REVIEW:**

In February, Ngati Rereahu affiliate Edward Moana-Emerly staged a "peaceful protest" on a former Crafar-owned dairy farm east of Benneydale opposing its sale to Chinese investors.

Tiroa E and Te Hape B Trusts are continuing the fight by filing an appeal last week against the Court of Appeal ruling which supports the sale.

## Trusts to continue fight for farms

MAORI trusts representing Ngati Rereahu are continuing to fight against the sale of 16 Crafar farms to Chinese company Shanghai Pengxin.

Last month, the Court of Appeal dismissed legal challenges from a farmer group led by Sir Michael Fay and Te Kuiti-based Tiroa E and Te Hape B Trusts to the long-running attempt by Pengxin to buy the farms which have been in receivership for nearly three years.

Sir Michael walked away from the fight after last month's decision but that hasn't deterred the trusts from going it alone.

The trusts filed an appeal in the Auckland High Court last week against the appeal court ruling which supports the sale to Pengxin.

The trusts' chairman Hardie Peni says the Chinese have not met the business experience and acumen requirements to own sensitive farm land in New Zealand.

"On that basis we don't believe they've met the test and for that reason we are appealing the Court of Appeal's decision.

"The matter is now before the court and is sub judice."

The appeal court last month ruled the Crafar receivers' preferred bid-

der Shanghai Pengxin did have the sufficient business experience and acumen to run the farms.

Mr Peni says if the Chinese bid is successful the trusts would like the opportunity to directly buy two farms in Benneydale, considered ancestral land.

"Ultimately I would like our case brought before the rightful people," he says.

"Preferably someone who is completely independent who applies the law according to how he reads it without political persuasion or interference.

"I'm not saying that the other parties have done it through that avenue but I would like to be assured that the integrity of the people who make these decisions is paramount."

Mr Peni is unsure when a decision will be made.

He says the ongoing legal costs are being covered by a third party not the trusts.

"It's just a matter of waiting for a court fixture now but if the Chinese don't come back to that table before that, I won't be losing any sleep.

"I believe they'll be feeling very comfortable because they've already won it twice through court but we'll just have to wait and see."

## Councils upbeat about sharing some services

WAIKATO Mayoral Forum members are optimistic about prospects for shared services among member councils.

The forum, which comprises all mayors of councils in the Waikato region and Waikato Regional Council chairman Peter Buckley, has been meeting for the past eight months.

Forum chairman Matamata-Piako mayor Hugh Vercoe says: "Last week's meeting strongly reinforced the importance of Waikato leaders working together, and speaking with one voice."

North King Country mayors Brian Hanna (Waitomo) and Dale Williams (Otorohanga) were at the meeting.

"Although there is considerable interest in possible local government reforms, the region's mayors remain firmly focussed on identifying how we can work better together to improve services to our communities," says Mr Vercoe.

The forum is assessing councils working together on water and waste water services; road maintenance; planning; economic development; governance and management arrangements for any shared services.

"When we look at planning, for example, we see layers and overlap between central government, regional and local government, but we lack a strategy or spatial plan for the Waikato," says Mr Vercoe.

And that's costly to councils and businesses.

"During the next three years, our councils need to review and consult on more than 500 different policies, codes of practice, management plans and bylaws," says Mr Vercoe.

"There are efficiencies to be gained from collaboration among the member councils."

**TRANSPORT ROUTES**

Mr Hanna says a spatial plan looks at future transport routes and logistical aspects of regional planning.

Auckland and Wellington have spatial plans but currently the Waikato doesn't and having one would be a "good move," he says.

"Two thirds of the traffic going through the Waikato comes from Auckland travelling to somewhere else.

"You have a growing city wanting to expand but surrounded by rural councils with different plans for expansion and the centre of the Waikato

(Cambridge, Te Awamutu, Hamilton and all that area) under huge growth pressure. Other areas like Waitomo, South Waikato and Hauraki have declining populations and want to encourage growth.

"No one answer will fit the whole Waikato."

Mr Hanna advocates examining the dynamics of planning for the region taking all contributing areas into account.

And he's well aware of strength in numbers. "We need to do this as a whole group, not as individual councils," he says.

"When we need things from central Government we can go as a region with a plan and say: 'Hey, we need your input here.'

"At present there is a city up the road with 1.7 million people who say this is what we need, and they generally get it."

**VOTE OF CONFIDENCE**

Waikato's mayors have good reason for their optimism from a collaborative approach.

Last week the Government announced the 2012-2015 National Land Transport Programme, a partnership between local councils and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

The mayors say the Government's investment in the region's transport infrastructure is a vote of confidence in the region as one of New Zealand's economic powerhouses.

Mr Vercoe says the "package of investment" signals the importance of the Waikato to NZ's economic growth.

"We are very encouraged by the Government's investment in transport infrastructure in the Waikato. This shows Prime Minister John Key, Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee and the Cabinet place great emphasis on keeping the contribution we can make to economic growth."

The National Land Transport Programme announcement includes allocations of \$590 million to ongoing construction in the Waikato Expressway; \$485 million to maintenance, operation and renewal of the region's road network; a \$100-\$150 million investment in new infrastructure to progress state highway and NZTA-partnered projects across the Waikato, including the Hamilton Ring Road; replacement of the Atiamuri Bridge on SH1; \$25 million to the operation of the Waikato public transport network; and delivery of the Safer Journeys action plan as part of the development of SH2.

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# One simple test, every three years

NORTH King Country women are being urged to use September – Cervical Screening Awareness Month – as a reminder to have a smear test, every three years.

Waikato District Health Board screening services manager Clare Coles says investing a small amount of time in having regular cervical smears can reduce the risk of developing cervical cancer by 90%.

“The cell changes to the cervix that can lead to cervical cancer are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV infection is very common.

“Changes in the cervix as a result of

HPV occur very slowly and may clear spontaneously. However, sometimes these changes may progress to cancer.

“So, having regular smears, every three years, means it is very likely abnormal cells will be found and treated long before they ever become cancer.”

Mrs Coles says some women may now be offered an HPV test when they have their cervical smear. This helps identify women who may need further follow-up with a specialist.

“A negative test result indicates you are extremely unlikely to be at risk of developing cervical cancer in the next three to

five years. This can reduce the need for repeat smears for women whose smears have shown mild changes or who have previously had treatment.

“A positive test result means a high-risk type of HPV has been found. In this case, your smear taker will discuss follow-up with you, so any cell changes can be treated early.”

“The HPV test is usually taken at the same time as the cervical smear test, using the same sample of cells, so there is no need to have a second test,” says Mrs Coles.

“It’s important for women who have

had the HPV vaccine to remember to have regular cervical smears.

“The HPV vaccine does not protect against all the types of HPV that cause cervical cancer, so women who have been immunised must still have smears every three years.”

Regular cervical smear tests are recommended from the age of 20-70 for women who have ever been sexually active.

“I hope all our local women book in for a smear if it’s due or overdue, and join the National Cervical Screening Programme if they haven’t already,” says Mrs Coles. “And if you’ve had your smear, that’s great, but don’t forget to have another one in three years’ time – you’re worth it!”

## Waikato statistics

IN the Waikato DHB region which includes the King Country, more than 75% of all women aged 25-69 had a cervical smear in the past three years.

This includes 58% Maori women, 61% Pacific Island women, 59% of Asian women and 82% of European/other ethnicity women.

The National Cervical Screening Programme is working towards a national target of 80% of women having had a smear test in the past three years by 2014.

Women who are not sure when their smear is due, or who want to become part of the National Cervical Screening Programme can ring the freephone number 0800 729 729 or visit the website – [cervicalscreening.govt.nz](http://cervicalscreening.govt.nz)

## Councils upbeat about sharing some services

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Mr Vercoe says the programme will deliver improved productivity and efficiencies throughout the Waikato.

“A high percentage of NZ’s freight, including export goods, passes through the Waikato, and these investments will enhance the region’s contribution to our country’s economy.”

## WILLIAMS UNSURE

While Mr Williams sees the benefits of the Waikato Mayoral Forum for the region in looking for efficiencies through collaboration he remains somewhat reticent.

“We’re all collectively doing the responsible thing but I still personally am struggling to see where Otorohanga district is likely to benefit.”

He says the Otorohanga council is as “efficient and effective as anybody”, and questions why there is a rush to get bigger when ODC’s successes at keeping debt and staff to a minimum are credited to the fact of it being small.

“There seems to be no logic in that big discussion.”

“There just seems to be an absolute frenzied belief that putting everybody (councils) together will be better.”

The result may vindicate this belief he says, but he wants the homework to be done first.

“Once you de-construct a framework, if you look back in five years and say it was much better before, you’ll never recreate it again.”

He wants to ensure that only the things that need changing are changed.

“I guess the mood around the table is change is happening whether we like it or not and it’s important as elected leaders of the region that we are leading that change.”

The Waikato Mayoral forum meets again in mid-October.

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