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# The **RAM** Manifesto

team  
**RAM**

## OUR VALUES & THEIRS

Meeting the real needs of humans and our habitat is the priority of RAM, the Residents Action Movement. Our grassroots values are social justice, ecological balance and global cooperation.

These are not the values of the market and its corporate and political elites. Their world is geared around profit, not people.

The widening rift between the market and the grassroots lies at the heart of all the accumulating crises that society faces, such as:

- Increasing hardship in the midst of fabulous wealth.
- Growing political alienation alongside the institutions of electoral democracy.
- Social breakdown in parallel with the consumer society.
- Accelerating climate change during the age of science.
- Wars for oil and power in tandem with corporate globalisation.

Unless crises like these are overcome, and quickly, humanity faces a bleak future.

RAM is part of a global network of grassroots alternatives to the dangerous dead end into which society has been forced by the market.

Popular discontent with the way things are has fueled RAM's rise as a major player on the political landscape of Greater Auckland.

In the 2007 local government elections, the RAM team is standing for 27 positions on the Auckland Regional Council, Auckland City Council and Community Boards, and the region's three District Health Boards.

RAM candidates who are voted into office will put their electoral legitimacy at the service of building broad campaigns for positive change. Reshaping society requires a dynamic interaction between grassroots leaders and mobilised majorities.

The 2007 RAM platform includes these major planks:



## BEAT THE HEAT

If humanity is to survive global warming, the carbon emissions of industrialised countries have to be slashed by at least 80% over the next two decades. Carbon-emitting cars must be replaced by a workable alternative. Free and frequent public transport across the urban areas of Greater Auckland is a boldly realistic antidote to climate chaos. It would also fix road congestion. Buses would run on dedicated bus lanes to make them faster than cars. Electrified rail would be expanded as fast as possible. Funding would come by diverting state cash from motorways and levying airport & hotel taxes. As a first step, RAM is promoting a large-scale free buses trial.

## CUT HOME RATES

The market is forcing ever more New Zealanders into the ranks of the "working poor". Overburdened homeowners urgently need rates relief, which would help restore the viability of grassroots communities. For too long, corporates have enjoyed the lion's share of council services and infrastructure. And businesses can claim GST refunds and tax write-offs on their rates while passing on the rest to consumers. Councils have the legal power to levy or increase a business differential where commercial entities pay a higher rate in the dollar than homeowners. RAM will utilise the business differential to make corporate Auckland pay its way, thereby allowing home rates to be cut.

## WE ALL BELONG HERE

2007 saw the rise of organised bigotry against New Zealand Muslims. A network of extreme right Christians began promoting racist lies like "every mosque in the world" is

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a “centre of war” where Muslims plot to “kill Christians and Jews”. While these vile slanders are rejected by responsible Christian leaders, Islamophobia is being continually fueled by the US state’s wars for oil and power in the Middle East. RAM has defended local Muslims, and will stand alongside all communities in Greater Auckland facing unjust attacks. We all belong here, no matter where we come from.

### SAVE OUR PARK

Councils are investing over \$100 million to “green” the upper income Waitemata Harbour. But the opposite is happening on the working class Manukau Harbour. Pikes Point, the last significant public green space on the Upper Manukau Harbour, is soon to be transformed into a commercial lot for Japanese used cars. Driving this privatisation of an important recreational facility is the port company, a 100% subsidiary of Auckland Regional Council. Their eco-vandalism is being opposed by RAM. We must keep Pikes Point for people, not cars.

### FARMS IN CITIES

The market is divorcing urban from rural life. Our foodbowls are being priced beyond city boundaries, a trend which will have dire consequences as we face peak oil and climate change. As a first step towards restoring an urban-rural balance, RAM is promoting a foodbowl differential. That would mean working farmers paying a lower rate in the dollar to councils so they are not taxed into exile.

### PEOPLE’S GOVERNMENT

The super city plan is being driven by corporate lobbyists. Their real agenda is the corporate capture of Greater Auckland’s



water services, power supplies, public transport, waste management, port operations and other community assets. Their super city would generate a super bureaucracy which distances the grassroots even more from local government. The result for most people would be rising costs for our water, power, transport and other necessities of life. RAM proposes an entirely different approach. We need recall referendums, people’s assemblies, expanded community board powers and other measures which shift local government closer to the people and protect community assets. We stand for government of the people, by the people, for the people.

### WORKERS CHARTER

RAM leaders were prominent in the collective authoring of the Workers Charter in 2005. The Council of Trade Unions has endorsed the charter, which promotes:

1. The right to a job that pays a living wage and gives us time with our families and communities.
2. The right to pay equity for women, youth and casual workers.
3. The right to free public healthcare and education, and to liveable superannuation and welfare.
4. The right to decent housing without crippling mortgages and rents.
5. The right to public control of assets vital to community well-being.
6. The right to protect our environment from corporate greed.
7. The right to express our personal identity free from discrimination.
8. The right to strike in defence of our interests.
9. The right to organise for the transfer of wealth and power from the haves to the have-nots.
10. The right to unite with workers in other lands against corporate globalisation and war.

**The RAM Manifesto published September 2007. Interested?  
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