



## Hon Eugenie Sage

Green Party List MP | Mema Pāremata o Te Rōpū Kākāriki

21 September 2023

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Cc Megan Tyler, Chief of Strategy

Tēnā koe Craig

### **Re: Open letter and LGOIMA request regarding land use consent Ngahere Road, Pukekohe and felling of large native trees**

I understand that Auckland Council has granted a certificate of compliance to Aedifice Property Group for tree felling and clearance for a subdivision and housing development at Ngahere Road, Pukekohe which included the felling of several tall native trees. From their size and height, the trees appear decades old and were a distinctive feature of the site and the local landscape.

The Council's media release of 14 September indicated that a certificate of compliance had to be granted because the native trees were not part of a Significant Ecological Area; but was not clear about whether any resource consents were required for associated site works as part of the development.

The benefits of trees within new developments are significant. Mature trees reduce noise, including vehicle noise, improve mental health and physical wellbeing and provide habitat for plants and wildlife. Urban trees soak up rain and reduce and slow stormwater run-off to streets and streams after rain, they help prevent land slips and soil erosion, sequester carbon and provide welcome shade on the increasing number of hot days.

Can Auckland Council please confirm whether the following matters were considered in deciding to grant the certificate of compliance:

- Whether the Unitary Plan requires any land use or other resource consent for subdivision and housing development and earthworks on the site?
- If so, whether Auckland Council could have imposed consent conditions requiring preservation of the trees on site as part of these consents?
- If so, whether Auckland Council could have required the compliance certificate to be bundled with consent applications for processing?

The logo for the Green Party, featuring the word 'Green' in a bold, green, sans-serif font with a stylized leaf icon above the letter 'G'.

Further, can Auckland Council please provide all relevant information on the following matters:

- Whether a variation has been considered to the Unitary Plan to provide rules around the clearance of indigenous vegetation; including requiring land use and subdivision consents for greenfield developments on sites with significant indigenous vegetation?
- What work Auckland Council has begun, if any, on implementing the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity?
- What mechanisms Auckland Council uses to give effect to implementing the Urban Ngahere Strategy (which has a target of 30% tree cover across the region, but currently achieves only 18%) in relation to clearance of significant trees on private land?

Please treat the above queries as requests under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

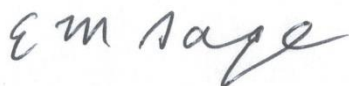
The Green Party recognises the problems created by the 2013 changes to the RMA disallowing general tree protection rules. We have worked through the Environment Select Committee, of which I was chair, to ensure councils have better tools for tree protection under the Natural and Built Environments Bill.

The Green Party has written separately to Aedifice Property Group to encourage it to protect all of the remaining trees on the Ngahere Road site, to restore and replant the area where the large native trees have been felled, and to work with nature, rather than against it, to make the remaining trees a valued and admired feature of the development.

We also hope that Auckland Council will work together with Aediface to assist in ensuring all remaining trees have the strongest possible protection. Protecting the trees at Ngahere Road as part of any housing development would help create a liveable, well-functioning urban neighbourhood consistent with Auckland Council's goals.

Mana Rakau representative and Green Party candidate, Steve Abel and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the future of the remaining Ngahere Road trees.

Ngā mihi nui



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