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For immediate release

**Winston Peters slams National for selling local park for housing**

Community opposition to a Government plan to sell off nearly 12 hectares of public reserve land for housing intensification is growing, with about 200 people attending a community rally on Saturday afternoon at Point England Reserve.

The rally was organised by the group Save Our Reserves as the Point England Development Enabling Bill approaches its second reading in Parliament.

Group spokesperson Julie Chambers says “National’s plan to sell in Point England two sports fields, public open green space and an endangered bird sanctuary for housing doesn’t make sense, even during a housing crisis. This area is currently undergoing massive intensification with the government-directed Tamaki Regeneration Project which expects at least 20,000 more people living there within the next 10-15 years.  This area is definitely doing its bit to provide more houses for Auckland – to confiscate part of the most loved local park for housing as well, is going way too far.”

NZ First Leader, Winston Peters, nailed his party’s flag to the cause at the rally, telling the crowd “Stealing a reserve off the people is a low blow and a cheat’s way of trying to solve a massive crisis”.  
“What’s happening here is daylight robbery,” said Mr Peters. “This is change by deception. If you had this happening in Cornwall Park, you would be seeing a massive protest”.

He added: “My party supports you and will support you to the hilt because what is happening here is just damn wrong.”

The Point England Development Enabling Bill will not only revoke the reserve status of 12 hectares of the reserve but will also force Auckland Council by law to re-zone it mixed urban residential, after which the Government states that it will enter into a contract with a housing developer.

Although the Government is publicly stating that the Bill is intended as a Treaty settlement with Ngāti Paoa Iwi Trust, the Bill itself does not mention Ngāti Paoa, instead stating: “…A new housing development on the development land will result in new homes being made available that could rehouse existing Tāmaki Redevelopment Company (TRC) tenants and therefore assist the regeneration.”

TRC was unsuccessful in its attempts to buy other land such as Ngāti Whatua’s block across from the reserve and Auckland University’s Tamaki Campus land and thus turned its eyes to the park, to deliver on the promise it made - that those who wanted to stay in Tamaki, could. How would they re-house people in Tamaki while wanting to bulldoze their homes? Build houses on the park, ahead of further bulldozing of the suburbs.

ENDS