

For immediate release

Texting Campaign to Save Park

A local group have launched a call to 'get texting' to save Point England Reserve sports fields and endangered bird sanctuary from Government plans to sell it for a housing development.

The group called Save Our Reserves are asking people to contact local National Party candidate for the Maungakiekie Electorate, Councillor Denise Lee denise.lee@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz 021 629 648, so she will ask the government to put a stop to the Bill that rezones over 11 hectares of the reserve for housing. *"This Bill sets a dangerous precedent that affects all Aucklanders – their expectation that local parks and sports fields are off-limits for housing development"* says Save Our Reserves spokesperson, Julie Chambers.

The population surrounding Point England Reserve is expected to increase by at least 20,000 people in the next ten years because of the Tāmaki Regeneration Project which is bulldozing streets of state houses in the biggest intensification and re-development in New Zealand's history. Julie states *"the additional people in our community will need this open space for recreation; there is simply no other place like it"*.

There has been confusion around the Bill being associated with Treaty settlement for Ngāti Paoa and the provision of social and affordable housing in Tāmaki. The Bill currently before the Select Committee does not provide for Treaty settlement, Ngāti Paoa, social or affordable housing or environmental protection for the endangered dotterel that roost and breed at the park.

A big question for many locals is why the Government is determined to sell off local sports fields and parkland when its Tāmaki Redevelopment Company (TRC) has \$1.2 billion of residential land slated for re-development that could be used to settle Ngāti Paoa's aspirations to be involved in housing development in the Tāmaki area. Mayor Phil Goff told the Select Committee that Auckland Council, as a shareholder in TRC, was open to using TRC land as an alternative solution for Ngāti Paoa Treaty settlement "but to the best of our knowledge that was never explored" by the Government.

The Labour Party and their local candidate Priyanca Radhakrishnan are opposing the Bill as a short-sighted land grab that will permanently remove irreplaceable open green space from a rapidly intensifying community.

The Government legislating to sell parkland for housing is heating up as an election issue and not just in the marginal Maungakiekie seat. Local Boards from across Auckland are very concerned at the precedent this legislation provides for the Government to take public reserves for housing.

Save Our Reserves spokesperson Julie Chambers says *"the Select Committee is reporting back in late April, so there is not much time to stop this disastrous Bill. We hope Councillor Lee will talk with the Nick Smith to personally let him know there are no cows on the sports fields and that the grasslands are an important open space area and endangered dotterel nesting ground. If this Bill is passed these well-loved sports fields and the bird sanctuary will be gone forever"*.

Save Our Reserves has also started a national petition asking the Government to not use parks, sports fields and public reserves for housing. For more information visit <http://www.saveourreserves.org.nz>
<http://www.facebook.com/SaveOurReservesNZ/>

ENDS

Images available on request:



Movies in the Parks, Point England Reserve, March 2017. Photo by Helen Momota