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Media release
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port – 1

THEY'RE SHRINKING OUR HARBOUR

More containers, bigger ships, less water

Ports of Auckland plans to add the equivalent of 16 Eden Park #1 fields to its container wharves – and most of the new space juts out in to the Waitemata harbour.

A publicity campaign titled “Your Port, Your Call” kicks off today (Jan. 26) urging Aucklanders to find out more about the “extraordinary” plans by the port to expand its operations.

The port’s plans, which are buried in technical documents supporting the Auckland Draft Waterfront Plan, have been graphically represented in the campaign to show the impact they will have on the harbour.

The pictures demonstrate how Ports of Auckland wants to grow container wharf space by adding 267,000 sq. m. in area to its wharves - with an associated 400 per cent increase in container traffic.

Ports of Auckland has supplied one visual of the proposed expansion for the council’s consideration. But the information does nothing to show the extent of the company’s intentions a lobby group says.

Once the expansion is consented the ability to overturn the consent can be extremely difficult and expensive.

A wide range of supporters have set up a Facebook page¹ under the banner “Your Port, Your Call”.

They are asking New Zealanders to ‘like’ the page to show their support for closer examination of the port’s plans. It’s their strongly held view that Aucklanders – and New Zealanders – deserve to know the facts -. it’s their port, so it’s their call they say.

¹ www.facebook.com/yourportyourcall

The container wharves are to be consolidated and will extend far out in to the Waitemata Harbour. To compensate the city, Ports of Auckland is offering to sell Aucklanders Captain Cook wharf; provided consent is given for the extension.

“This is a joke,” says Alex Swney of Heart of the City, “when you can fit 16 or so Captain Cook wharves into the area the port plans to expand on.

“We’re not opposed to the port increasing its business but we are opposed to the expansion plans as currently proposed. To make matters more complicated, the Auckland Council owns the port company and is also the governing body that must approve the port’s plans.

“We are simply asking citizens to take notice and ask themselves if this is what they want for their harbour and waterfront,” Mr Swney says.

Deputy chairman of the Westhaven marina users association, Barry Holton, says he was “shocked” when he learned of the port’s plans in late December.

“We’re completely opposed to the plans. They will significantly narrow the entrance to the harbour and will affect tidal flows and wind patterns. I can’t believe we’ve never seen these plans before; they’re conspicuously absent from the waterfront plan and city centre masterplans. They will have a grave effect on the harbour,” Mr Holton says.

Graeme Scott of the Urban Design Forum said he also viewed the plans with “considerable concern”. “I think the port has filled in enough of the harbour already. Where do you draw the line?”

The Auckland Council’s waterfront plan claims “the port will continue to develop largely on its current footprint”.

“Perhaps the accent should be on the word ‘largely’,” Alex Swney says, “because the plans we have uncovered on the port’s own website tell a different story. When Council has gone to such extraordinary lengths to produce such comprehensive plans one can only speculate as to why they have not provided the same level of detail around the proposed ports expansion.

“The harbour is a jewel in Auckland’s crown – we all know that,” Mr Swney says. “It’s our playground as well as a commercial pathway. We all share a responsibility to enhance and protect our natural assets and pass them on as best we can to future generations.

“While the port’s plans are important for the ports and the role they play in our trading success, they also have a wider responsibility that needs to acknowledge what so many Aucklanders hold dear to

their hearts – access to the waterfront; recreational use of the harbour; views of the harbour from the city and Parnell and city views from the North Shore.

“We cannot allow this unbridled expansion of the port to go ahead without Aucklanders having a say on one of its precious assets.

“All YPYC asks is that council act as much for the port as it does as trustees and good guardians of our city. Council should be demanding of the port a wider range of options that protect the commercial viability of our port while also restricting this grotesque expansion into one of the world’s most beautiful city harbours.

“We would like an independent review that explores the range of options available for ports efficiency in the North Island,” Mr Swney says.

Public submissions on the draft Auckland waterfront plan closed on 31 October however the council is due to consider the plan in February with a final vote in late March.

- To find out more and to have your say about the Ports of Auckland plans go to www.facebook.com/yourportyourcall and ‘Like’ the page, leave a comment, read more about the plans and see the video.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Hi-res before and after images are available on application to Greg Hay, Pead PR, Tel: 0-9-918 5576 or email: greg@peadpr.co.nz

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Issued for Heart of the City by Pead PR

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Your Port Your Call: Supporters

Penny Whiting MBE – Sailing Coach, former Auckland City Councillor

Adam Mercer – Auckland Architects Association

Graeme Scott – Urban Design Forum

Harry Holton – Westhaven marina Users Group