

SUBMISSION TO THE AUCKLAND PRISON CAPACITY INCREASE EXPERT PANEL

This submission is on behalf of my husband Wayne Miles and myself Margaret Miles

We support the applications lodged by the Paremoremo Residents and Ratepayers Association and the submission by Bob Leveloff opposing the application to increase inmate numbers to 1200.

History:

Wayne and I have lived in Paremoremo since 1986 moving to our current address at [REDACTED] in 1993. Our property is within 500m of the prison land.

When we moved to our property there were 2 prison areas, the maximum security block and one medium security block. Expansion occurred with the addition of another medium security block, a low security block and a 60 bed sex offenders unit.

Following concerns from residents, meetings were held with the Department of Corrections and Members of Parliament. This led to a signed commitment from the Hon Geoffrey Palmer (who was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice at the time) and in a letter dated 31 October 1988 he confirmed that “ the maximum number of inmates on the Paremoremo estate will not exceed 650.”

Sir Don McKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) attended a general meeting of the Paremoremo Ratepayers Association on 18 October 1993 and he said there was “No intention to change the undertaking of 650 limit” for inmates at Auckland Prison.

On 12 December 1996 this limit was confirmed in writing by the then Chief Executive of the Department of Corrections Mark Byers.

It is now extremely disappointing that such ministerial commitments can be completely overlooked.

The letters referred to are included in Bob Leveloff’s submission. (I am unable to include them as I am currently overseas).

In earlier years the Paremoremo community lived alongside Auckland Prison sharing such things as the prison bus that locals were invited to use for morning trips to Albany and their return trip in the evening. There was a local dairy and petrol pump in the village and the officers club offered Friday night meals where the community got together with the prison staff.

Three monthly meetings were held between the Department of Corrections officials from Wellington, local prison management and resident representatives. This functioned on a no surprises basis so open discussion could occur in regard to all matters.

After a period these meetings were abandoned due to a lack of trust towards the Department of Corrections following a question posed in regard to future plans for expansion to which the response was that there were no plans, only to read in the NZ Herald 2 weeks later that expansion plans were confirmed.

It is my understanding that due to changes in rental charges many prison staff left their accommodation in the village and around 50 houses were removed from the village. This was followed by the closure of the dairy, removal of the petrol pump and the officers club no longer functioned.

These changes led to a break down in the relationship between the prison and the local community.

Today there is really no relationship between the Department of Corrections/prison and the local community.

Prison Riots 26 March 1998 exposed the risk to the community of living at Paremoremo.. Locals were advised to lock doors and remain inside their homes. Those of us who were trying to return home around 4pm were unable to do so with road blocks in place at Albany. We were not given permission to return home until around 9pm in the evening.

Thankfully security has improved greatly since then but with the proposal to almost double inmate numbers residents are concerned at the increased risk of a repeat of such an event.

Adverse effects of the changed designation to increase inmate numbers to 1200:

Traffic Effects:

1. The Avenue/Dairy Flat Highway intersection

At the engagement session in the village Auckland Transport stated that this intersection is currently at capacity.

In the fast track report 671. It states "Auckland Transport confirmed that it is satisfied that the Dairy Flat Highway and The Avenue intersection can continue to function up until a threshold of an additional 921 prisoners"

This is surely incorrect as there will not be an additional 921 prisoners with the change in the designation therefore I assume the report should refer to up to 921 prisoners.

As a previous North Shore City Councillor for 15 years I am aware that the intersection improvement project was in the North Shore City Council long term plan to be constructed by 2012 but with the formation of Auckland Council in 2010 this did not occur and as an Auckland Council Local Board member for 12 years the project was still not funded despite many attempts by the Local Board and community.

Therefore given the intersection is at capacity now how can there not be a major effect on the safety and capacity at the intersection without improvements to mitigate the adverse effects.

2. Capacity of local roads

There are 2 roads into Paremoremo, Paremoremo Road, which has had a significant number of major slips over recent years which have reduced portions of the road to one lane. There is currently a section where one lane usage is required with traffic lights to control traffic.

The second road access is Brookdale Road via Ridge Road which is a very windy road and also prone to slips.

An increase in traffic associated with construction, particularly heavy vehicle use, will have the potential to further damage the road.

Once the prison is operating under the changed designation traffic associated with the prison will increase substantially on a roading network that is already at risk both structurally and in terms of safety.

Infrastructure

1. Wastewater

There have been ongoing issues with the wastewater line from the prison to the Upper Harbour via Paremoremo Road and Te Araroa Dr for many years which are still occurring and this would suggest there will be further adverse effects from an increase in the wastewater flow from the prison with increased numbers.

The fast track report suggests that for inmate numbers to go above 921 a new waste water pipeline will be required along Paremoremo Road to Albany.

This will definitely have an adverse effect on the residents travelling from Paremoremo to Albany during a construction phase involving many months.

2. Water

While the prison receives piped water the surrounding community relies on water collection off roofs.

Therefore dust nuisance will be a potential issue especially for those of us who live in close proximity to the prison so mitigation of this effect is required.

Removal of the prison village proposed in the designation

During discussion with those undertaking consultation advise was provided that the Village would not be considered in the fast track application.

However in the application to alter the designation to increase prison numbers it does seek to remove the prison designation from the prison village site because the prison village is no longer needed for prison purpose.

The removal of the designation is opposed.

The community is very concerned about the removal of the prison designation as currently with the screening to those renting homes, there is a level of security provided.

It is recognised that the underlining zone for the village is countryside living, however as the houses are on small lots an application could be made by a new owner to change to residential which could have an adverse effects on the surrounding area.

Summary:

While we understand the need to provide additional inmate numbers the increase from the current 981 to 1200 is unacceptable due to the adverse effects and changes to the amenity of the area we live in as outlined in our submission.

Wayne and Margaret Miles

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