

New Group Calls for Fresh Approach by Council to Port of Auckland

A new group of Port stakeholders is being formed to develop a new vision for the Port of Auckland. The group is calling together interested parties in early March to discuss the development of a Charter for the Port that calls on the Council to take a broader view to the Ports future.

“We are concerned at the direction the Port of Auckland is being forced to take by its shareholder. The current focus on return to Council set by the Council and being implemented by the Board of the Port, means we will miss out on a range of benefits the Port should be delivering to the City.” said Michael Lorimer, Director, Grant Samuel & Associates and one of the initiators of the meeting.

The group which includes Mainfreight Group Managing Director Don Braid, Heart of the City CEO Alex Swney, CTU President Helen Kelly and Michael Lorimer, Director Grant Samuel & Associates, believe there is a demand from a range of groups in Auckland for a new approach that balances the need for the Port to make a return and the Ports role as a service to business in Auckland, employer of Aucklanders and guardian of the beautiful Auckland space it occupies.

“We have a vision for a triple bottom line approach to the Port – this vision includes;

1. A Port that meets the needs of both those onshore (the importers and exporters of New Zealand) and offshore (the shipping companies) now and in the future;
2. A Port that shares its land with the public, protects its environment and sees itself as part of the development of Auckland including encouraging use of the waterfront and harbour for recreation; and
3. A Port that adopts a modern approach to employment relations which maintains an efficient and productive Port including retaining decent jobs and is not part of a “race to the bottom” in employment practice.” Michael Lorimer said.

“The current approach means the Port Board is being forced to cut costs and capital expenditure. This impacts on us all. Now is the time to put up a new vision for the Port that recognises its primary role as a service to this City and New Zealand and its return to the Council must be based on a longer term understanding of its unique role in the City.”

“The need to increase earnings is being used to justify the current plans to reduce working conditions on the Port including contracting out labour. We support decent work conditions and oppose casualisation in the manner being proposed by the Port. Not only is it unnecessary but it could cause major disruption to its customers and contribute to increasing inequality in the City. This is another example of how focus on earnings is inappropriate for a key strategic service such as the Port.” Michael Lorimer said.

The group has sent an invitation (attached) to a variety of groups and will hold a meeting on the 6 March to discuss a proposal for a Charter for the Port which we will present to the Auckland Council. In addition to Mainfreight, Heart of the City and New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the Westhaven Marina Users Association and the Auckland Architecture Association have confirmed their attendance.

Contact: Michael Lorimer
Grant Samuel & Associates
09 912 7777
m.lorimer@grantsamuel.co.nz