efficient.

Hilton Worldwide recently announced its sustainability measurement system saved more than $US74 milion. This included a 6.6% reduction of energy use, 7.8% reduction of carbon output and

Too few steps

So why aren't more steps taken to boost productivity through energy management? One institutionalised misconception is that energy costs are fixed so it's not worth spending time on efficiency meas-

The international examples show that major savings in energy costs are not the only benefit. A building recognised as being of high standard and well managed in terms of air conditioning has a positive impact on staff productiv-

mandatory system over the next two to three years.

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Auckland heads in wrong direction

NBR 22/6/12

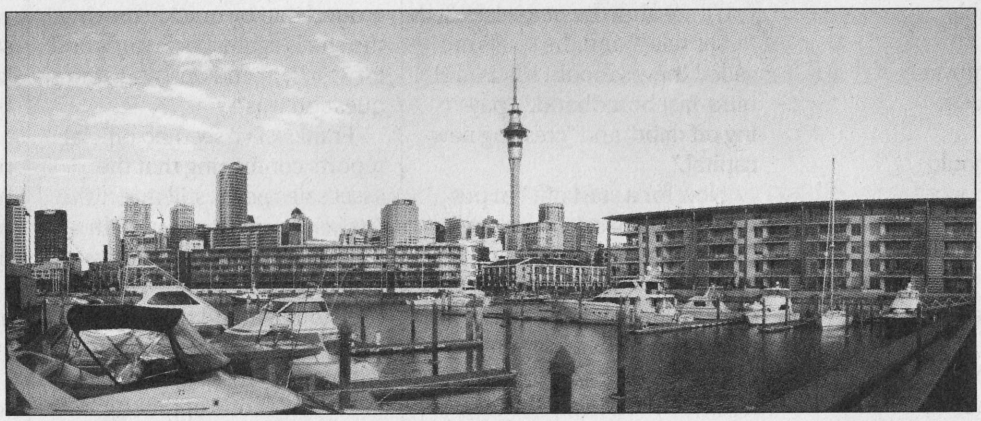
Bryan Leyland

The more I study the Auckland Council plans, the more worried I get. While the aim is to make Auckland the most liveable city in the world, the evidence points to it being a massively expensive exercise, a risky experiment in social engineering and will be unaffordable for many people.

Gordon McLauchlan once said "...the outstanding characteristic of a Labour politician is his absolute conviction that he knows what is best for everyone else."

The same can be said of the Auckland Council. Instead of judging people by their actions – which would have shown that they like suburbs and personal transport – the council has focused on minority views.

The policy of trying to concentrate much of the population and employment of Auckland in the central city flies in the face of the number one lesson from Christchurch – do not put all your high-value assets in one place.



AUCKLAND'S VIADUCT HARBOUR: Most residents prefer to live in the suburbs

Auckland has a risk of volcanic eruptions and some risk of a massive earthquake. Surely the logical solution is a less vulnerable city with a number of major hubs and good transport links between them?

If the hubs include a wide range of industry and commerce, many people would be living closer to their place of work. Such a city would be cheaper to live in, less risky and much more people friendly.

The council's determination to restrict urban limits has pushed up the cost of land and new housing developments to unaffordable levels for the ordinary person. Having created the problem, the council has the cheek to demand the government subsidise housing to make it affordable.

The dream of forcing people into high-density suburbs and high rise apartments is a risky and expensive experiment in social engineering. Experience overseas shows that this breeds antisocial behaviour. Home ownership does the reverse.

Contrary to what the council believes, suburbs are safe, green, biodiverse, socially and environmentally friendly areas where people want to live and bring up families.

On transport, the council seems allergic to motor cars and has blind faith that trains – a solution devised when horses were the only form of transport – are still the best solution. All this despite the fact that commuter trains to Hamilton and Helensville have been abandoned as uneconomic while the line to Onehunga carries a fraction of the predicted passengers. Per passenger, cars are as fuel efficient as trains, usually quicker and far more convenient.

In the modern world, it is virtually impossible to live without a car for shopping, transporting children and do the host of other things that add to quality of life. The council seems unaware cars are more energy efficient and of the progress being made in automatically guided vehicles.

Quite soon, we will be driving along motorways in wirelessly linked "car trains" that could double traffic densities and, at the same time, reduce the number of accidents.

In cities much poorer and larger than Auckland, private minibuses provide affordable and flexible public transport. With modern technology, Auckland could have GPS monitored taxis, minibuses and buses controlled by a central computer and summoned by text message.

They would take you to where you want to go – or connect with another vehicle that did. For a fraction of the money being squandered on trains, the council could fund a pilot project based on optimal routing for airport shuttles.

The 20th century taught us that rigid centrally planned solutions lead to disasters. Auckland councillors need to realise that the people can and will make their own choices. They will decide where to live and work, and how they want to get there, as new technologies and lifestyles evolve.

The councillors' role is to help this happen, not to impose rigid, expensive and impractical plans. A low cost, pleasant, energy efficient, environmentally friendly future for Auckland is achievable and far better than the council's dream of a crowded, family unfriendly, unaffordable city.

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