
Auckland Super City For the Rich - By the Rich

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The Royal Commission report into the governance of the Auckland region has concluded that all eight existing councils in the Greater Auckland region, which includes the regional council, be abolished and replaced by one 'Super City' council.

The Royal Commission reported that consideration shall also be given to six local councils below the 'Super City' as well as twenty to thirty local boards and M ori representation.

Naturally, the National led government and in particular Act leader Rodney Hide - Minister of Local Government - rejected most of the recommendations apart from the 'Super City' and the toothless local boards which sit below it.

As far as the government is concerned what they wish to see is a governance model which allows big business to do as it pleases with a thin veneer of democratic accountability and use this democratic veneer to remove any socially progressive council initiatives that exist as well as to privatise the public assets that the councils own. This is thinly disguised in the rhetoric of making Auckland an internationally competitive city.

The above can be concluded by the representation model which will allow the election of an all-powerful Mayor with far reaching powers and twelve councillors elected at ward level with eight from the whole of the Auckland 'Super City'.

Each ward councillor will be representing 117,000 people which is twice the number of electorate MPs! Quite clearly, even from a representative democracy point of view, it makes future 'Super City' councillors far removed from their electorates. This suits the interests of big business as rich candidates can easily afford to stand and have the backing of the right wing media.

No doubt some concessions are likely when the submissions are finalised after the recent hearings due to the backlash from Auckland's grassroots. However, the fundamental concept of the 'Super City' will remain. At present the government has hand picked individuals to sit on the unelected Auckland Transition Authority (ATA) to run the show. The ATA in effect scrutinises all spending from the existing councils, which means the present elected representatives have been politically neutered.

The 'Super City' council will be elected in the 2010 local government elections. At present, Len Brown, Manukau Mayor and Labour Party member, is being portrayed in the media as the Left candidate to stand against the right wing candidate John Banks. Clearly the real task ahead for the Auckland labour movement is to develop a socialist manifesto and ticket for Auckland that will motivate workers to vote and deliver a world class city for the workers.