Panel pleases council

A Hearings Panel has been appointed to consider submissions on the proposed Thames-Coromandel District Council’s District Plan. The panel of three includes two independent commissioners, Mark Farnsworth and Ian Munro, and Thames Ward councillor Sandra Goudie.

After hearing and considering submissions, the panel went on to make recommendations to the council, which will then make the final decision.

District Plan manager Leigh Robeck said the council was pleased with the calibre of commissioners on the hearings panel.

“The standard of commissioners in New Zealand is high and we have selected some very experienced, competent people.”

Mark Farnsworth, who has more than 24 years’ experience in local government and resource management, will chair the panel.

“I’m really looking forward to the role and am preparing myself by getting a better feel for the Coromandel and a better understanding of the local issues,” he said.

He suggested residents making a submission on the proposed plan should convey the essence of what they want and why.

“It’s not a numbers game, it’s about evidence and the quality of that evidence.”

Members of the Hearings Panel will not be discussing any District Plan matters with the public in advance of the hearings.

“We need to ensure that the process is fair and equitable,” said Mr Farnsworth.

“People have the opportunity to talk in support of their submissions at a public hearing. So when making a submission please include in it whether or not you want to speak to your submission.”

Anyone needing help preparing a submission or understanding the process should contact the “Friend of the Submitter,” Annette Ellis, at the council’s customer services department, on (07) 868 0200. Submissions close at 5pm on March 14.

Mr Farnsworth has a long history of involvement in local government, including 24 years as an elected councillor.

Sandra Goudie is a former MP with more than 10 years’ experience in local and national politics and has had extensive involvement with community groups, organisations, and local and central government.

Familiar with Thames-Coromandel’s communities and the distinct resource management challenges, Ian Munro is a practising urban planner and urban designer with work experience across the country.

Before the Proposed District Plan was notified, Mr Munro was a member of the council’s District Plan Review Committee.

Academics at Onemana

The wet and sometimes cold weather didn’t present Onemana at its best, but four visitors from the United States and Canada who spent several days at the beach settlement earlier this month were happy to be at the seaside.

They got to enjoy the view from an Onemana holiday home — even if the usually magnificent ocean vista was barely visible through the mist and driving rain. And it was certainly a lot warmer than at home for the visitors, who came at the time of the year are used to much chillier temperatures.

They were in a laid-back setting compared with their normal cities, said Dr Paul Wright (Northern Illinois University), Dr Andrew R Richards (Purdue University, West Lafayette), Dr Michael A Hemphill (College of Charleston, South Carolina) and Dr Sylvie Beaudoin from the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada, weren’t there just to relax.

Hosted by their New Zealand colleges, Richard Gordon, Senior Lecturer School of Education Policy and Implementation at Wellington’s Victoria University, they were preparing a symposium to take place before the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education World Congress, held in Auckland from February 10 to 13.

The symposium was organised by the TGFU (Teaching Games for Understanding) group and was themed “Using TGFU to promote active and healthy citizens”.

While their work and research is wide-ranging, the four focus on teaching model that promotes physical activity to produce positive skills in aspects of life including leadership, decision making and self-control.

“We’re looking at not just producing good citizens through sports programmes, but looking at how we can transfer those skills to other parts of young peoples’ lives,” said Dr Wright.

“For example, transferring leadership skills to school or community projects. It’s not our entire focus, but that is a strong theme, so it’s good for us to be able to get together for a few days. We’ve probably cooked up at least three ideas in the last 24 hours that we might want to collaborate on or write together.”

Dr Hemphill, an assistant professor in health and human performance, said because experts involved in the teaching programme were spread around the world, it was good to take advantage of rare opportunities to meet colleagues face-to-face.

Involved in his specialist field for many years, Professor Gordon has worked with some of his visitors in the past. He says the teaching programme basically focuses on the positive socialisation of children, or the people involved with them.

“The aim is to use the power of physical activity and the power of physical programmes and sport in an overtly positive way, rather than just hope that it might happen through involvement with sport.

“There can be positive outcomes through sport, but they need to be positively structured in terms of social and personal responsibility.”