



A letter from Wayne Brown.

To the People of Albany,

I am proud to be standing for Mayor again. I have a strong plan to get our city moving better, control council costs, and bring better value for every ratepayer's dollar.

I am particularly keen to set the record straight on some of the claims being made by the existing Albany councillors. It's important that you have the facts, not just their political spin and baseless claims.

Albany has been poorly served by its existing councillors because they are not constructive and able find solutions.

Stopping Waste

They have claimed they've *"worked to find savings across council, bring debt under control and retain strategic council assets."* But the reality is quite different. Neither of the current Albany councillors is on the Revenue, Expenditure, and Value Committee, which is responsible for our savings programme. In fact, they've consistently voted against major savings initiatives throughout their term.

I have led that charge and we have brought council costs under control. But the situation would be far worse – if your existing councillors had won.

They also voted against the sale of the minority stake in the airport shares, which were a poor investment, returning less than 1% in dividends while we were paying interest on debt to keep them.

The establishment of the Auckland Future Fund is a far better strategic financial investment. It protects the value of our assets by diversifying investments and provides a better return, which in turn helps reduce our reliance on rates. The old shareholding was only deemed "strategic" because legislation required it. The new fund is a real strategic investment.

Regarding debt, we use it to spread the cost of major infrastructure projects over the generations that will all benefit from them. Our group net debt increased by \$1.8 billion to \$14.1 billion, but this was driven by \$3.9 billion in capital investments, including improvements right here in the Albany ward. If we didn't use debt for these intergenerational assets, you'd be looking at double-digit rates increases.

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Rates

I have worked consistently to keep rates down, and most Councillors have been focused on this task – that's why Auckland has the lowest rates increases of any major metro centre in New Zealand, despite the rampant inflation we have faced in recent years.

The Albany councillors claim to be "*voting against excessive rates increases*," but they have never proposed any alternative funding source. They regularly oppose efforts to diversify our revenue and keep rates low, yet they are happy to advocate for things like an \$80-\$100 per passenger subsidy for the Gulf Harbour ferry. Where do they think that money comes from? It comes from you, the ratepayer.

North Harbour Stadium

You've heard their claims about me trying to "*demolish and sell North Harbour*." This is simply false. As part of the Long-Term Plan (LTP), we put forward three options for the stadium, and not one of them included demolition or sale. The process that sought new operators for the stadium was led by the local board, not the councillors, and resulted in the retention of the current operator, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (TAU).

They also complain about revaluations, but this is a process dictated by the government. After 24 years at the council table, are they really suggesting they don't understand how rates are set? It's simply not credible.

On the Port and Golf Course

When you consider the existing (outgoing) Albany Councillors claims to have "*stood firm against wasteful spending*" and the "*proposed privatisation of the POAL*," look at their record. They had oversight when \$63 million was wasted on the failed Port automation project. I used the previous mayor's proposal to privatize the port to pressure the Port to provide better performance. The port is now providing record profits and dividends.

Finally, they've claimed to be "*saving the Takapuna Golf Course*" while actively misleading you. They're promoting an option for flood mitigation that has been rejected due to poor engineering and excessive cost, which would divert water to another flood-prone area. They would rather use this issue to get re-elected than find a real solution that protects the lives and property of communities in Milford and Wairau. That's not leadership.

It's time to stop the political posturing and focus on what's best for Auckland. We need Albany to have strong and constructive voices advocating for you at the Council table, not the negative grandstanding that you have suffered the consequences of, from your existing councillors.

Let's Fix Auckland.

Wayne Brown

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