

**From:** Alex Dobie [<mailto:adobie@xtra.co.nz>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 13 November 2016 11:25 a.m.  
**To:** Michal Akurangi; Barbara Dempsey  
**Subject:** Submission On Proposed Opotiki District Plan 2016

### **Submission on Proposed Opotiki District Plan 2016**

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In regards to Provisions in the Residential Zone currently there is a lack of certainty and clarity in regards to any restrictions /controls around the grazing of animals, namely horses and cattle.

Residentially zoned land is rated at a much higher rate in the dollar than rurally zoned land. This reflects the higher level of amenity and provision of council services. The density / subdivision standards for residentially zoned land is also different from rural land allowing for more dwellings per hectare. The grazing of horses and cattle on residentially land is an inappropriate use and is more likely to result conflict as a result of amenity levels /standards being compromised. Issues around poor fencing, damage to adjoining properties, bad odour, flies, manure are all problems that need to be addressed via standards set out in the District plan against which any application for a resource consent can mbe measured. The ownership of a dog comes both responsibilities and with an annual cost and goes towards the costs of animal control currently Horse and cattle owners who graze their animals on residential land are not contributing to the cost of the provision of animal control services. A significant number of animal control call outs involving staff time and council resources are in relation to horses and cattle that are being grazed on residential land in a manner that is resulting in ongoing problems for adjoining residential property owners.

Public open space that in many cases was entrusted to council's care or acquired by council as the result of a reserves contribution from residential subdivision, should not be used for animal grazing. This land was set aside and intended for human recreation activity and it is compromised when it is used for animal grazing.

The Council Is asked to making the grazing of horses and cattle a Non Complying Activity on Residentially zoned land. Council is asked to include provisions / amenity standards that must be addressed before granting any resource consent for the grazing of animals in the residential zone.

These need to include the following:

- Land that is to be grazed must have animal proof fencing and adequate water supply that the animals can access at all time eg water troughs.
- All animals being grazing on residentially zone land must be micro chipped and a register of their owner(s) be kept and maintained by the council
- An annual grazing fee similar to the cost of a "full" dog fee be applied to each animal.
- Over grazing or a lack of suitable grazing often leads to animal welfare issues. Before issuing any resources consents for grazing the council should ensure that a minimum standard (of one acre per horse /cattle beast is available E&OE)
- The council consults with the SPCA's Animal welfare officer and where a person has a history / track record of concerns relating to animal welfare they should decline a resource consent application.

Where the grazing is to occur within 100 metres of an adjoining or adjacent residential dwelling, the consent of those near neighbours is required. A refusal to sign a consent form from an adjoining owner will not as of right result in an application for a resource consent for grazing in a residentially zone being declined, but their reasons / concerns for not signing will be taken into account and addressed as part of the process.

Based on the scientific research undertaken by Dr. Mike Joy (Massey University) who has documented the serious decline in the water quality of New Zealand's rivers, to the point where 62% of all New Zealand's rivers are now unsafe to swim in because of pathogens. Dr Joy's research has identified the grazing of river margins as a significant contributor to the degradation of New Zealand's rivers. Council is asked to consult with Dr Mike Joy and act on his advice. The council practices of issuing grazing permit alongside waterways is something that must stop. Council is asked to prohibit all grazing from occurring both on the residential stopbanks and on all land between the urban stopbanks and the Waioweka and Otara river's edge. ie alongside the Waioweka River from Duke Street right around the Opotiki Township then alongside the Otara River from Duke street. Residentially zoned land in Opotiki is low lying and is protected by an expensive system of stopbanks the cost of which is carried by residential property owners. A loan is still being serviced from the last time these stopbanks were repaired and upgraded. The practice of grazing these banks especially in winter is likely to result in bringing forward the time when they will need to be repaired. When heavy animals such as cattle and horse often in large number are allowed to grazed land upon which these stopbanks are built especially in winter the stopbanks are eroded and worn down. Examples of this eroding of stopbanks that protect residential dwellings and their owners can be seen by the cattle tracks that are carved into the sides of the stopbanks alongside the Otara river. The expensive flood protection is being compromised and the practice of council issuing grazing on river margins is short sighted and contributing to the degradation of the natural environment. Council is asked to cease the practice.

Can I please have a receipt / acknowledgement of the council having received this submission.

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