

## Urban design a priority for everyone says ARC

28 June 2005

**The Auckland Regional Council says that a report released today by the Ministry for the Environment helps to clarify the reasons why good urban design needs to be a priority for the Auckland region.**

The Value of Urban Design report sets out the overall benefits of good urban design and the contribution it has to creating healthy, dynamic and successful towns and cities.

ARC Chairman Michael Lee says that the report provides some compelling reasons why urban design is everyone's responsibility, and adds strength to the commitment made by the 90 or so organisations and agencies who are already signatories to the Urban Design Protocol.

"Urban design pays at all levels – it is good for the community, developers, and the public sector. If we are to really commit to improving our urban environment, good urban design principles need to be applied everywhere - in centres and suburbs undergoing growth and in new greenfields areas, not just in the CBD and other more intensely developed areas.

"Population growth is one of the key issues facing the Auckland region. In the past, we have focused on quantity, and trying to fit everyone in. It is time we gave much more emphasis to quality development and aesthetic coherence in urban design to ensure we have a quality environment that Aucklanders deserve.

"The region is defined by its outstanding natural landscapes - the harbours, islands, volcanoes, ranges and parks, and the built environment needs to compliment these rather than detract from them, as is sometimes the case."

Cr Lee says that as a signatory to the protocol, the ARC is focusing on ensuring that regional plans, strategies and processes all contribute to good urban design outcomes.

"Urban design is fundamental to regional open space planning, managing the impact of development on the environment, economic development and business land use, which are all part of the ARC's responsibilities. The current changes to the region's policy statement outlining where growth should happen now include objectives and policies specifically on quality urban design. It's a start."

As part of its support for urban design research and policy development, the ARC contributed to the Value Case report launched today. The report is available online at [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz).

Ends

For more information please call  
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