Oratia District Ratepayers' and Residents' Assn (Inc) 

PO BOX 20184,

Glen Eden, Auckland 0641

**NEW ZEALAND**

Date: 4 April, 2017

**Official Statement from the Oratia Ratepayers & Residents Association**

**Re:  Watercare’s Huia Water Treatment Plant Options**

The Oratia District Ratepayers’ and Residents’ Association Inc. was established in 1952 by some of the original families in Oratia, to work alongside the Council in looking after the affairs of the district and the people in the community.

Oratia Ratepayers and Residents would like to express their absolute opposition to Watercare’s proposal for a Water Treatment Plant in Parker Road, Oratia.

Watercare’s Parker Road option would be devastating to the Oratia community; demolishing up to 30 family homes, displacing over 100 people, destroying businesses, tunnelling and piping pristine natural environments and streams, fundamentally altering the character of a protected heritage community including destruction of  rural activities and their associated landscapes, and unnecessary confiscation of private property.

The social impact alone should have been a fatal flaw, and seen this site discounted as an option long ago. To suggest that up to 30 families should lose their homes for the construction of the plant is outrageous, when there are clear and obvious alternatives which don’t carry such a heavy social toll.

Compounding this is the months of disruption and stress on residents and their children while the decision is made. This is entirely avoidable and completely unnecessary and frankly inexcusable behaviour from a Council Controlled Organisation.

Oratia is a valley whose people, and their rural activities and landscapes are steeped in New Zealand’s history.

The homes in the Parker Road red zones are family homes. Some families are recent arrivals who have sought refuge in a slice of New Zealand paradise. Others have roots firmly entrenched in the land often spanning some six generations. Destruction of this social fabric is obscene and must not happen.

Currently resident in the red zones of Parker Road are members of:

* The Oratia Church, including the organisers of the local Youth Group and the annual Oratia Church Christmas Picnic,
* A local school board of trustees
* The teaching staff at Oratia School
* Oratia Sports Clubs
* Oratia cultural clubs, such as the Oratia Singers and Garden Clubs
* The Oratia Ratepayers and Residents Association committee
* Stark Brown Trust organisers of the annual (Oratia Stark Brown Community Picnic)

All these people will be displaced by the Parker Road option. This will impact all of these community organisations.

The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act classifies as of national importance:

* “ the rural character of the foothills to the east and north and their intricate pattern of farmland, orchards, vineyards, uncultivated areas, indigenous vegetation, and dispersed low-density settlement with few urban-scale activities”
* “ the historical, traditional, and cultural relationships of people, communities, and tangata whenua with the area and their exercise of kaitiakitanga and stewardship:”

Watercare already has a significant long term holding of land adjacent to its current plant. The land was acquired and zoned specifically designated for the purpose of future proofing the growth of water treatment. We ask that Watercare invest in best practice design, to create a truly sustainable design on their adjacent Manuka Road land that limits the impacts and creates positive outcomes for the local surrounding communities.

Most importantly, we ask that Watercare choose a location that does not take private land and displace families from their homes.

We are giving our full support to the Oratia Heritage Society in their campaign to oppose the plant in Oratia