

30 Oct 2005: Funding Challenge forces critical decision to reschedule People's Inquiry

People's Inquiry into aerial spraying re-schedule - funding challenge forces critical decision.

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The People's Inquiry into the impacts and effects of aerial spraying pesticide over urban areas of Auckland due to be held in November this year in Waitakere City, will now take place between the 22nd and 28th March 2006. The Convenor of the People's Inquiry Steering Committee said that funding challenges forced the committee to make the difficult decision to move the Inquiry.

The People's Inquiry into the impacts and effects of aerial spraying pesticide over urban areas of Auckland due to be held in November this year in Waitakere City, will now take place between the 22nd and 28th March 2006. Hana Blackmore, convenor of the People's Inquiry Steering Committee said that funding challenges forced the committee to make the difficult decision to move the Inquiry. "One month out from the Inquiry, we were faced with travel and accommodation bookings for our Commissioners that needed to be confirmed," she said. "The decision was made to postpone because there was no guarantee that essential funding would be raised in time. The Steering Committee was also acutely conscious of the inordinate amount of time and effort we were having to spend on fundraising to the exclusion of everything else." After reviewing the situation the Committee all agreed the Inquiry would be compromised by continuing with the November date, said Hana Blackmore. She added that there were benefits to the move. "It means we have more time to concentrate on co-ordinating the essential submission process. Over eighty people have already registered to give evidence, and with half wishing to speak to their submissions, the extra day available with the March booking gives us more flexibility to fit everyone in." The People's Inquiry website was also up and running, said Mrs Blackmore, which meant people could now register and put in submissions on-line.

"We have also posted a host of information and history, including a number of community studies and reports, many of which are published here for the first time," said Hana. "These are good background reading because they document the community perspective on the aerial spraying campaigns, which is what the Inquiry is all about." The People's Inquiry will be held in the Waitakere City Council Chambers between Wednesday March 22nd and Tuesday 28th 2006. The commissioners will be welcomed and the Inquiry opened by Mayor Bob Harvey on the Tuesday evening before hearings commence, with the closing ceremony on the evening of the 28th March.