

13 Nov 2007: Waitakere City endorses findings of People's Inquiry

Waitakere City endorses findings of People's Inquiry "I certainly hope the Government take notice of this groundbreaking report. We said all along the Painted Apple Moth spray programme put our community under huge stress and impacted on their health both mental and physical, this report confirms what we said." That's the response from Waitakere deputy Mayor, Penny Hulse in the wake of the independent report of the People's Inquiry into the effects of Waitakere City being repeatedly sprayed to eliminate the moth. "Nobody knew what the physical and psychological effects were going to be from such a sustained spraying. There was no precedent, yet MAF said they knew what the health effects would be, and refused to acknowledge health effects that erupted on every spray day," says deputy Mayor Hulse. "Many people, including the Wellington Medical School researchers, said that there needed to be in-depth study and were ignored. "The biggest concern we had was that MAF only concentrated on the elimination of the Painted Apple moth and there was not a clear focus on the impact of the spray on the community. We had to fight very hard to be heard on behalf of our community and the report clearly sets out the fact that these mistakes must not be repeated," says deputy Mayor Hulse. Councillor Hulse said that she congratulated the "determined and intelligent individuals behind the world-leading People's Inquiry." "The lesson is that the next time we have to combat a biosecurity risk, the agency tasked with tackling the incursion would be checked and balanced by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for the Environment. "We asked for such a system and were ignored. But if we'd had it in place I'm sure the people of Waitakere would have been protected from the outset and we would not have had to resort to community led initiatives such as the People's Inquiry," says deputy Mayor Hulse. ENDS