



James Dowding
Manager Southern Resource Consenting
Private Bag 92300
Auckland 1142

Cc:

Andrew Benson: andrew.benson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Alan Moore : Alan.Moore@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Robert Andrews: Robert.andrew@auckland.govt.nz

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Regional Water Discharge Consent P52051

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 September 2017. Unfortunately this letter, along with the formal discharge consent decision and invoice, was posted to a consultant who has not been involved in this project for over a year. I have therefore only received a copy of this paperwork this week. I note on your letter that you state that if I disagree with the additional charges, or parts of it, that I can lodge an objection to cost within 15 working days from the date of the invoice. If at all possible I would like to open a discussion with Auckland Council about the fees that have been charged and determine if we can possibly come to a mutually agreeable outcome.

However before I get into that I would like to record my thanks to Auckland Council for the support it has given the Living House project through the process of applying for an obtaining a discharge consent. As you may be aware the project is targeting something called the Living Building Challenge (LBC) and without receiving a discharge consent we would not have been able to meet the requirements of the Water petal, thus rendering us ineligible for LBC certification. The council staff that we met, and dealt with, throughout our application process were at all times helpful and very pleasant to deal with so we would like to say again, thank you for your help and support in this matter.

In saying that you may be aware that it is not easy targeting such an aspirational target as Living Building Challenge certification and we have had to engage the services of many additional consultants, as well as incur many additional costs that we didn't anticipate. We would therefore really appreciate it if perhaps we could review some of the charges that appear on the final discharge consent invoice and perhaps see if we could meet half way on some of these costs. Specifically I would like to open a discussion on following two items:

1) Specialist Input - \$4,276.86

In order to put together the initial application, and then answer the three Section 92 requests that were submitted on our discharge consent application, the Living House project had to engage the services of, and

119 First View Ave
Beachlands, Auckland, 2018
5364223
022 324 8500
chelleade@yahoo.com

bear the costs for, 2 'specialist inputs' of our own. I must say that these consultants do not come cheap and it was a considerable cost to the project. It is therefore a little disheartening to be asked to pay for a third 'specialist input' to then review the information of the other two specialist inputs.

To be clear we take no exception to the specialist who was involved, as we believe that they were excellent and to be honest their cost is not excessive given the work that they were asked to do, however we were wondering if in this instance, given the exceptional circumstances of this project perhaps this cost could be borne by Auckland Council?

As you know we are attempting something that has never been done before in NZ and we are therefore blazing a trail for others to follow. In hindsight we now see that perhaps a large amount of time and effort could perhaps have been saved on this consent application if Auckland Council and the Living House project team had come together at the start and jointly engaged the services of an independent 'specialist input' to design and review the proposed system in the first place. Perhaps this could be an approach that Auckland Council suggests for future projects that are seeking to do something 'different' like the Living House project. But for now we would greatly appreciate if there is anything that Auckland Council could do in terms of bearing the cost of the specialist input.

2) Time Sheet - \$6,964.20

As with the specialist input we were hoping that perhaps we could discuss the in house time sheet. The hourly rate that is being charged, in addition to the number of hours on the consent seems quite high. Particularly in light of the fact that all of the technical review was undertaken by a specialist consultant and therefore the rest would mostly be limited to administration and analysis of potential affected parties. Again we have no quarrels with the staff who were involved in processing our consent, they were excellent and exceedingly helpful at all times. However the costs attributed to the project feel very high and we were again hoping that perhaps, given the exemplary nature of the project and the fact that it will be a living showcase for other sustainable projects, that perhaps you might be able to do something in terms of reducing that costs that have been attributed to this consent?

Perhaps Auckland Council would be open to meeting us half way in terms of this invoice in recognition of the trail blazing nature and design of the project and that it is something that Auckland Council would like to support in any way that it can?

Thank you and Kind Regards



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