

26 October 2012

Glenn Leach
District Mayor
Thames-Coromandel District Council
Private Bag 515 Mackay Street
Thames



Dear Glenn

I would like to congratulate your Council for initiating a disability strategy for the district which recognises and will endeavour to promote and protect the rights of disabled people. As you note in the Introduction to the Strategy "We recognise that as a local governing body, we have a part to play in upholding the rights of disabled people in our communities". This demonstrates a strong commitment by your Council to take action to ensure disabled people can fully participate in the community and the Strategy and Action Plan expresses clearly what this commitment means.

The Commission would like to particularly commend the Council for giving the Disability Strategy prominence in terms of it being an overarching document which will guide Council's business. This is a very positive approach and one the Commission would like to see replicated across all local government bodies.

Council has selected three focus areas which are to:

1. Recognise and protect the rights of disabled people
2. Address physical and attitudinal barriers to participation
3. Encourage collaboration in the disability sector

In my view these address the responsibilities of the rights bearers and are supported by a robust set of actions.

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to engage with Council in the development of the Disability Strategy and as Disability Commissioner I look forward to receiving updates on the progress you make in ensuring your community becomes a place where the rights and aspirations of disabled people are evidenced.

I apologise for not being able to attend the launch of the Strategy but would hope there is an opportunity later for myself or one of our disability team to meet with the disabled people and key stakeholders in your community.

Finally, I am confident that as a result of the excellent work done in the development of the strategy, the Coromandel Peninsula is fast moving towards being an "accessible inclusive place that values the rights of each individual".

Yours sincerely



Paul Gibson
Disability Rights Commissioner