

## Northland's Christmas Business Wish List

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In my first 6 months as a repatriated Northlander I have begun to develop a “feel” for the state of local business and our economy. Based on feedback from clients and the wider business community, I intend to ask Santa to deliver the following things for Northland businesses:

**Less “think tanks” and local government consultation, and more entrepreneurs out there doing something.** We are all aware of the aquaculture and renewable power generation possibilities in Northland, yet nobody seems to want these businesses in their “back yard”. Hopefully in 2010 someone starts doing something about it. Local and regional councils appear to be staffed with some talented people, but often they appear to spend more time consulting and studying, than actually making things happen. You can't please all of the people all of the time. Find a location for an aquaculture venture and make it happen. Provided the proposed power generation initiative in the Kaipara doesn't adversely affect snapper spawning, make it happen. It's about time Northland became a leader, not a follower.

**Revitalisation of the Town Basin area.** Why are we using valuable land adjacent to the Town Basin for car parking? Why has the old Northland Regional Council building been underutilised for years? Compare our city centre to others near to Auckland, such as Tauranga, Hamilton and even Taupo. Do you notice a difference in quality?

**More marina berths for overseas yachties.** Somebody recently mentioned that the average overseas boat owner spends approximately \$60,000 whilst wintering in Whangarei. We turn away approximately 100 of these boats annually, due to a lack of available berths. An additional 100 berths in our port area would generate \$6million of additional revenue for our economy (excluding additional downstream spending). It would also serve to revitalise our declining marine services industry.

**Four or five star hotel.** Whangarei needs high quality accommodation to attract visitors with high disposable income. Instead, many of these potential visitors drive directly past Whangarei, to spend their money further north.