

# SUBDIVIDING RURAL LAND – *carving up the block*

Escaping to the country may be just what the doctor ordered for some, but what happens when farmers look to downscale; do they have to say goodbye to the land (and home) they love?

With Waikato District Council rules set to be extended to cover its share of the former Franklin District, local farmers may soon be able to subdivide their farms at a reduced cost.

“By no longer having to purchase the right to subdivide through a transferable title, rural landowners in the former Franklin District Council area could save around \$100,000 or more,” Todd Shuker, from Pukekohe-based The Surveying Company explains.

People with rural properties in this area will have the opportunity to subdivide lots from titles of 20 hectares or more which haven’t been subdivided since December 1997.

“This gives farmers throughout the Waikato more scope to subdivide. The idea behind the subdivision rule is to allow people to create a lifestyle block (of a maximum size of 1.6ha) on their property without having to pay for a transferable title.”

Separating a dwelling from a farm often increases property values, Todd confirms. The house can remain as part of the farm or be incorporated into the new, smaller lifestyle block.

“It also gives the option of selling the farm but not your house, or vice versa. This can be especially well suited to those looking to sell their farms (especially if retiring) but who don’t want to walk away



from their land entirely.

“The title to the farm must have been issued before 1997 – following subdivision, new titles will be issued – so you only get one stab at this.”

Frankliners who fall under the Super City cannot benefit from such exemptions.

“Opportunities for farmers to subdivide will be more extensive throughout the entire Waikato District than they are in the Auckland Council region,” adds Todd. “In general, subdivision of rural properties in the Auckland region is extremely restricted, to large lot sizes of more than 50ha.”

To be implemented in August, the subdivision rules are just part of Waikato District Council’s new District Plan, designed to apply uniform standards throughout its district. More detailed information is available via Waikato District Council or by contacting Todd and the team at The Surveying Company.

“The rules (under both Auckland and Waikato councils) may seem complicated – subdividing land is never exactly easy! – but we’ll be happy to discuss them with anyone keen to do so.”



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