

Whilst travelling to the Sunshine Coast for a well earned break, I saw these above four words in the 'In Flight' magazine.

It prompted me to explore, in agriculture, and particularly the Waikato – Are We There Yet?

I was also fortunate to be asked to be on the discussion panel at the recent Waikato Bay of Plenty Institute of Chartered Accountants Economic Summit. What came from that meeting made me realise that living in the Waikato, is a privilege. There are many initiatives that make the Waikato a most fantastic place to live. It must be one of the richest and most fertile valleys in the world. We have a great inland City, growing on itself, which is being well led and well managed, with improving services and facilities. More than that, recent initiatives by Hamilton City Council to acquire land, so the inner City has a place for people to go to face the river. This initiative can only be saluted.

This City is surrounded by a number of small towns and villages, all supplying goods and services to the community at large as well as the farming sector.

One of the main points that came from the summit was clear, that we need to embrace where we live. We need to feel the love and energy that living in such a unique district brings. We need to cross all the divides and work together as a community to avoid the 'them and us' situation occurring again and again. We are after all interdependent on each other. The rural and urban divide, needs to go. No matter what industry or service you are working in or involved with, we depend on you, and you depend on us. An example of this would be, what is wrong with slowing down and letting a 44 ton milk laddened tanker into the traffic, rather than trying to head it off, at great speed. The tanker is carrying goods that will make the Waikato more prosperous, is he not?

What is wrong with lending a hand to a neighbour and offering help? We all live in the same valley and one community.

We have some totally unique things in our valley which include Innovation Park, Titanium Park, Hamilton Airport, Fonterra's Head Offices and factories, Maungatautari Ecological Mountain Reserve. The list could go on for some time.

It is not until you actually focus on what we have, that you realise just how well off we are. Being involved in the economic summit, made me realise that very point, 'We are there'.

Yes, there are uncertain times, as one presenter correctly pointed out. It is like going through the winter, but soon the economic sun will rise again in the sky and we will be in for better times.

Many rural people are stressed. They are worried about job security, how they will pay their interest bills and so on. So lets all work together, to help those less fortunate than ourselves. It is support they need, and remember, we will need them again in the future, to be part of our business. Disadvantaged people belong to our community and we should be cared for them.

Another important issue to realise is we have some exceptional leaders in our community. Included in this list is, our Local Members of Parliament, the City Councils, County Councils, Tainui, Fonterra, and the Chamber of Commerce to name a few. They make up a group of tireless people, who make our valley what it is, and what it stands for. 'We are there'.

Finally, I put it to you, 'We are there'.

We live in one of the most diverse, dynamic regions in New Zealand, if not the world. We need to embrace what we have, what we stand for, and what the future holds. We need to take pride in our valley, to work together, for the betterment of our community and our fellow man.

I put it to you, if you live in the Waikato valley 'You are there'.

These are the opinions of Don Fraser of Fraser Farm Finance. Any decisions made should not be based on this article alone and appropriate professional assistance should be sought.

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