

MEDIA RELEASE 24 SEPTEMBER 2002

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 6PM 24 SEPTEMBER 2002
(Post Film Auckland DVD announcement)**

**MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT IN FILM
INDUSTRY**

A massive new studio is to be developed in Waitakere as part of an on-going, world-wide, push to turn the city into an international film and television location.

The new studio, with five sound stages and capable of hosting several feature films at once, will dramatically increase the film-making capacity for Waitakere and the Auckland region as a whole.

Waitakere Mayor Bob Harvey says that Waitakere City Council will purchase the old Enza cool-store buildings in Henderson Valley Road. The Council has the sole option to purchase, and the price is likely to be above \$3 million. The existing sheds will be converted into an 11,000 square metre indoor facility located on four hectares of land. Waitakere Properties Ltd – a Council-owned business - will manage the facility.

Mayor Harvey made the announcement today at the launch of a new promotional DVD aimed at major national and international film companies.

While Waitakere has had remarkable success to date in attracting local and international productions the potential has been limited by a lack of soundproof production facilities with high rooflines for big sets.

“The new studio will be remove those limitations and open up the potential for huge industry growth,” says Mayor Harvey, quoting recent research by Booz, Allen and Hamilton that shows world entertainment markets grew by about 50% (to \$US 500 billion) between 1995 and 2000.

“The contribution to the local economy in terms of new spending, investment and high quality jobs, is potentially massive. We estimate up to \$60 million a year in new cashflow and up to 500 extras jobs per year,” Mayor Harvey says.

“We are aiming to make the local film industry not only bigger, but sustainably bigger: a place where the Spielbergs of this world want to come on a regular basis.” he says.

Mayor Harvey says both the DVD – produced jointly by the Waitakere and Auckland Councils - and the new studio mark the beginning of a push to take the film industry in Auckland to an entirely new level.

“Since the early days of the New Zealand film industry images of the west – our coastline, our people – have been in the groundbreaking cinema and television of this country. Waitakere City has been a major driver of film in the Auckland region since the early 1970s *Test Pictures* and much of *Sleeping Dogs*, which were filmed in Huia. “

“Ten years ago the Council identified film and television production as a major economic sector. Since that time, we have seen globally successful productions such as *The Piano*, *Xena Warrior Princess* and *Hercules: the Legendary Journeys* shot and produced here.”

Currently a \$20 million feature film - *Power Rangers* - is being filmed in Glen Eden.

Local television shows such as *Mercy Peak*, *Street Legal*, and *Shortland Street*, are also shot in Waitakere.

“With them come with literally hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of direct and indirect jobs. This decision to back production facilities is a sound one for the economy of the region, and will take the local industry onto a new level of strength and growth.”

ENDS

Mayor Harvey will be available for interviews at the Film Auckland DVD Launch at 6pm.

For further media inquiries contact Alan Rodgers-Smith ph 025 898 207.