

Reporting under fire

■ David Haxton

Two council reports have come in for sharp criticism from researcher Salima Padamsey.

Ms Padamsey, of Paraparaumu Beach, was a guest speaker at a Kapiti Concerned Citizens meeting in Waikanae on Wednesday.

"I'm a human rights adviser and reports are one of my specialties especially when they come from governments."

The reports she referred to were the ones about possible council amalgamation and on the erosion of the foreshore.

She was "quite stumped" by the amalgamation report.

"It kind of reminds me of reports that come out of the Soviet Union or from China, that are so convoluted that you really have to be an expert or you have to have the time or willingness to go through it.

"For me this is a kind of tactic to keep us at arms length from understanding what's really going on."

She said if she submitted reports, like the amalgamation and erosion reports, she "would be fired".

"I would not have a job to go to on Monday if I wrote something like this.

"It causes more questions than it does answers.

"And getting those answers are much more difficult and people give up — everyone is busy — and I think that's what they are counting on."

She said the reports lacked terms of reference and evidence-based research, and failed to report on the methodology used to establish their findings.

"You have to show accountability in the process you use.

"The erosion report does have a methodology but it is so technical we would have to have another professional to come in and refute it or review it.

"They [council] said they did a peer review but it's not a peer review — it's a rubber stamp.

"Peer reviews are very constructive criticism of your work to ensure it's transparent, and this, by my standards, is not a peer review."

She felt the style of reporting was "either a genius tactic, or they just don't know what they are doing".