

Board member report May-October 2018

Kia ora Koutou

Time flies, I didn't realise I was having so much fun. It's hard to know what to focus on so I'll aim for some of the highlights.

In the arts space, there have been some great local initiatives. We've had a couple of events in the Auckland Heritage Festival, we'll be part of the Latin American Film Festival for the second year, there has been amazing community involvement and activities for Matariki including the Maumahara flame off the headland, and the collaboration between artists, the school and the art gallery.

Community Networks Waiheke (CNW) was also launched in September and is the rebranded WICOS, representing our social services networks. The RSA have now taken over the management of Ostend Hall and should be contacted regarding bookings in that space. It's also lovely to see WRT moving from strength to strength in terms of community engagement and activities, and activation of the Sustainability Centre for community. I'm particularly impressed by Friday lunches which have diverted so much food waste, and create an amazing space for people of different ages, locals and visitors, to meet and gather. In the school holidays it was also lovely to see school-aged kids as part of the activity and to hear the Indonesian group offering some indigenous songs and singing Te Aroha. The Kai Conscious activation at Onetangi has also been a success and lovely to see all the yummy things that bring people together.

There was a very successful youth hui held at Surfdale Hall earlier in the month with lots of participation from young people. We are currently looking at different ways of supporting a space for youth on the island.

In the environmental space, Te Korowai o Waiheke was launched as a way of bringing people together towards pest management on the island. Predator Free 2050 also agreed to support an island pest eradication focusing on stoats and rats. This is exciting news for Waiheke as it will mean we are working towards improving biodiversity and creating local jobs in this space. This has, however, never been done before so the group will be working towards realistic and achievable goals that have good biodiversity returns.

Waiheke Island is currently kauri dieback free and a number of initiatives are now underway to keep it that way. Forest and Bird have closed their reserves to the public and temporary closures of other tracks are planned. Cleaning stations are currently in place at the wharves, so if you know you have visitors coming from off-island to walk on Waiheke, perhaps suggest that they clean their shoes before they get here.

It's interesting to see the island gearing up for Summer and it seems like the season starts earlier every year. There has been significant planting at Onetangi and it would be great to keep reminding people to use the accessways rather than jumping off the bank. There is some work being done to protect the bank

and provide a couple of access points to the beach, including a ramp to bring dingies and kayaks down from the road.

At Matiatia, there are currently issues with taxis and as we move into Summer there will be continued issues around who parks where. The issues are compounded by the deregulation affecting passenger transport vehicles and taxis which has resulted in a number of off island taxis working from Waiheke. How we protect local businesses in a context where we cannot control the legislation is a challenge. A local labelling system might help in this space, as well as tourism providers encouraging and reminding patrons to use local.

In the last six months, the Kennedy Point Marina was approved by the Environment Court. This has now been contested on a number of grounds by SKP, the community group who challenged this development in the environment court. The central query is around whether the Ngati Paoa views, that formed the basis for approval, in fact genuinely represent the Ngati Paoa viewpoint. These mandate issues are playing out in the courts which may affect whether the marina issues will be reheard.

The Hope Walk and high school visit from Mike King to the Island were very successful in raising the profile of Suicide, but also focusing on the importance of connecting and being kind to ourselves and others. I really liked the way, Mike King drew attention to the fact sometimes we can be up, and at other times we're down. It's up to all of us to be there for people in their down moments.

Upcoming and current things to be a part of – Latin American Film Festival starts on Sunday, (20th), the Historic Society are hosting an open day on the 21st, the newly started Poto Hub Food hub is worth a look in on a Thursday evening. The Jassey Dean Garden Festival and the Walking Festival are coming up in November and mark the beginning of the Summer season for me. The elections for the Entrust board are currently being held. Voting papers will have arrived by mail. Things that might be at stake are the selling off of publicly owned assets so it's worth focusing for a moment and sending the papers in.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge Penny Bright who passed away this month. I've always appreciated the fact she's spoken her mind on issues that are important to me – the importance of transparent government, the Transpacific Partnership Agreement and its negative impact, US and British culpability in the war in Syria. Whether we agreed on all topics, it's important, in my view, to have people who draw attention to the big issues and show them in a different light.

One year to go on this term of the local board. If you're interested in standing or know people who would be great in the role, it's a good time to start thinking about what kinds of people would make good community leaders.

Nga mihi nui

Shirin Brown