

Chair's report: Waiheke Local Board

Two Months to 18 Sept 2018

Ngā mihi Waiheke

The chair was absent for family reasons for a fortnight in late October so there was no Chairs' report for the last business meeting agenda. John Meeuwsen is thanked for his willing support and cover on behalf of the chair for this period and for his cover of the deputy chair's two months' formal leave of absence up to 26 October whilst juggling his own responsibilities as chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

Fullers Freight

Top of mind for many local businesses over the past weeks was the announcement by Fullers Ferries that new package size limitations would be placed on their freight services serving the Downtown/Waiheke markets. After an initial urgent response from the local board among others for Fullers to reconsider their timeframes to avoid serious economic impacts on island trade, Fullers agreed to delay implementation of their changes to mid-December. Subsequently Fullers' Chief Executive met with the local board informally, and then with key customers in a meeting facilitated by the chair in the local board offices. A number of commercial fresh products' operators agreed to further meetings with Fullers to see how their specific needs might be met.

Because there are no clear timely affordable alternatives for both the Auckland market to get fresh produce/products to our island's hospitality businesses and to those needing urgent freight services, and vice versa for our fresh produce to meet their Auckland city markets, those affected are facing an uncertain and potentially economically damaging period over the holiday season. The board's primary concerns are for the sustainability of business and the impacts on the local economy. For that reason, a formal request has been sent by the board to Fullers Chief Executive to seek a further extension of the changes until after Easter 2019 to enable Waiheke's businesses to function seamlessly over the busiest period.

Downtown Reconfiguration

The board has met with various managers and executives from council and Auckland Transport over the past months seeking to be fully engaged in current planning for major changes to the downtown area and the ferry terminal. Those plans have several phases including urgent works pre the Americas' Cup in 2021, and beyond. The board has requested and urged planners to be mindful, and responsive to ferry travellers who are infirm, those with luggage and/or those with dependent travellers as they make critical decisions on permanent changes to our entry point to the city. Our request has been for them to return critical connectivity that was once enjoyed by ferry travellers which has been lost in recent years, namely access from the ferry building to immediately adjacent hospital buses and airport transport. The board will sustain its contact level with the decision makers and will report their responses as they finalise decisions.

APTR

The Chair continues to work closely with local online accommodation providers to move towards a united approach to council's Governing Body to seek relief for the inequitable allocation of the Accommodation Providers' Targeted Rate. The board will also work with Cr Mike Lee to align our actions.

Plans

1. Work is underway to inform everybody in the Waiheke board area of the opportunity to be involved in, and/or to follow the planning panel's work developing and then consulting on a new Waiheke Area Plan. Communication includes a household mailer to ensure offline residents know as much as those who read local papers or who use social media.

The council planning team has met with the local board and Cr Mike Lee to align our purposes and to ensure that the community consultation is broad, meaningful and accessible – our aim is to ensure anybody can get involved and be heard, and have views considered across the wide range of issues that will be canvassed as inputs into the new area plan. Public consultation will take place in March April 2019.

2. Terms of Reference are being finalised for the Rangihoua and Onetangi Sports Park Reserve Management Plan Development Committee. There is an omnibus plan that will cover all other reserves. Both of these plans will be formally consulted with the community next year including conducting hearings.
3. The board has begun work on our Local Board Agreement and we will also give input into the Auckland Annual Budget. The Mayors' intentions with respect to that plan will be presented to the Finance and Performance committee on 14 November. Both plans will be publicised for consultation. The Waiheke Local Board Agreement is drawn mainly from the body of the 2018-2021 Waiheke Local Board Plan adjusting for work completed in the current year.

Sculpture on the Gulf sculpture gifting

Following on from the highly successful installation of Te Rerenga Wai ō Tikapa Moana (The flowing waters of Tikapa Moana) by Chris Bailey in the McKenzie Reserve earlier this year, a second high profile and popular art work previously featured in the 2017 Sculpture on the Gulf exhibition is being donated to council through the local board subject to agreement on a suitable location. In this case the board is asking the community for its thoughts and feedback on the placement of the sculpture Manuesina with two options being proposed but seeking suggestions on other options including not accepting the work. Information about the work and the online survey will be available for viewing on the Auckland Council Have Your Say website from 22 November. Flyers and hard copies of the survey will also be available at the local board office and in the library.

Toilets for Summer crowds

The board is working with council to add more toilet capacity in Oneroa this summer. It is likely this will result in some quality portable toilets adjacent to the current block on the corner of Ocean View Road and Oneroa Village Lane this summer, with a view to securing funding for a new block of toilets adjacent the bus stop opposite the Red Cross building at a later date.

Timely safety audits

The board has been as surprised as local residents of closures of public amenities at short notice necessitated by council safety audits at times when the public enjoyment of those amenities is at peak use. Two years ago it was the Little Oneroa Reserve bridge that was closed at the peak of Christmas. Many of our swings were removed for the same reason that season. At Labour weekend this year it was several access ways (three of eight) from the Strand in Onetangi to the beach. The board is just being made aware of safety concerns with Little Oneroa Playground equipment which will lead to the closure of some components of our most popular playground. It is not known at the time of writing whether urgent repairs/replacements can be achieved before Christmas.

The board must now work with council staff to achieve an understanding that all critical recreational infrastructure enjoyed by families and visitors over the peak period are audited early enough in future years that there is adequate opportunity for remediation.

nāku noa

Cath Handley
Chair