

Date: Wednesday 24 July 2024
Time: 1.00pm
Meeting Room: Waiheke Local Board office
Venue: 10 Belgium Street
Ostend
Waiheke

Waiheke Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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An appeal to the Waiheke Local Board

As members of Stand with Palestine Waiheke! (SWPW!), we would like to ask the Local Board for their support for the NZ Government to issue humanitarian visas to whānau of Palestinian New Zealanders immediately as the situation worsens daily in terms of indiscriminate bombings, lack of medical care and medication, starvation and the withdrawal of water supplies.

Last November the Board demonstrated its concern regarding the conflict in Israel/Palestine, now a 'plausible genocide' of over 38,000 people in Gaza, (International Court of Justice), and called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, as well as agreeing to fly the Palestinian flag for one month. This provided those on the Island concerned with these terrible events, with a sense that their responses had some agency, along with the hope that this Local Board's action would then provide a template for others to express similar statements and so affect Government policy.

Our call for Humanitarian visas follows on from the above calls from SWPW! and the welcome official statements of support from the Local Board.

Humanitarian visas were issued in 20 days in the case of the conflict in The Ukraine and we feel that the issuing of such visas will give hope in a very dark situation.

We liken this situation to that of the war in mainland Europe in 1939 when Mike Grunfeld's father Paul was sent by his parents on the KinderTransport from Prague to London saving his life and that of 600 other children who went on to live full lives. We believe that saving a life transcends all political concerns and reminds the board that over 16,000 children have been killed. And that is far too many lives lost.

Ten children per day are losing one or both of their legs in the war in Gaza, the head of the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees said Tuesday. "Basically we have every day 10 children who are losing one leg or two legs on average," UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told reporters in Geneva on 25 June 2024

We therefore ask the Waiheke LB to support a motion to the NZ Govt to agree to issue humanitarian visas immediately and also to support an immediate ceasefire.

Elizabeth Eastmond
Kathy Voyles
Mike Grunfeld

Item 9.1

Attachment A

Merran Lawler – Presentation to Public Form of the Waiheke Local Board on 24/7/24

Once upon a time, a local board met together in a closed-door workshop with Council officers to consider a significant development and its consenting process. Invited to provide feedback, the Board produced a mere five bullet points, ostensibly representing the concerns the community might have about a proposal they knew nothing about.

Eventual public notification led to one of the country’s most significant community led court cases. The five bullet points came to light – expressing minimal concerns, premised on greenlighting the development in accordance with the views contained in the Council officer briefings. The developer was surprised at the level of opposition - Council and the Local Board had intimated no more than minimal opposition from the usual suspects, the “vocal fringe minority”. In the absence of information about the Board’s involvement, the community created its own narratives and conspiracy theories, filling the corners of secrecy. The case created division in the community and fuelled mistrust of Council and of the Local Board.

When the Matiatia marina development was struck down by the Court, it had cost this community half a million dollars, fund-raised by the vocal fringe. It created community divisions which endure today.

Workshops are not just information sharing. They are where you engage in advocacy, where you turn over ideas and opinions and persuade council, and each other. Fully open-door workshops ensure those processes of advocacy are visible, accessible and informed. The messy fringe minority’s uncomfortable shifting in seats, eye rolling, the sighs, the throwing of hands in the air are all part of participative democracy. But they are also your lightening rod, ensuring when you put together five bullet points, you do so with the community you represent in your sights, and you in theirs.

In considering whether to open workshops, if your primary concern is for the comfort and convenience of paid council officers, you are advocating for the wrong people.

If your concern is for effective, tidy workshops, you’re not engaging in democracy. That’s managerialism.

Accountability as elected representatives is not merely horizontal accountability of voting at elections. It’s diagonal accountability, the right exercised by those who elect you to hold you to account...constantly. Closed door workshops, even recorded workshops released after the event, deny people that right. Selective information is misinformation and the gaps are filled by supposition and conspiracy theories when you deny people’s right to diagonal accountability. That’s hardly the ground you should be laying for the thriving, engaged community you each represent.

Public Forum presentation, 24 July 2024, Pam Oliver – Waiheke Local Board transparency, engagement and democracy
Key points

- The question of whether Local Board workshops should be open to the public is only one part of a much broader issue of (i) democracy and (ii) a lack of transparency in Local Board decision-making; it is assumed that all Local Board discussion in formal meetings occurs, ultimately, for the purposes of making some decision/s affecting the community that the Board serves.
- While Local Board elections authorise Board members to represent the community they serve, being elected is not a blanket consent from the community for Board members to make significant decisions on behalf of the community without community input via genuine consultation, especially in relation to matters where the community may either be divided or have major concerns.
- Arnstein's 'ladder of citizen participation' (p 4) succinctly illustrates the point at which attempts at citizen participation are considered token, where they do not allow for any genuine participation by citizens.
- Currently the Waiheke community is not being given genuine accessible opportunities to provide input into Local Board decision-making, for the reasons summarised in the table below.
- # 65 of the *Response to the Ombudsman's recommendation to open workshops by default* notes that: "Those local boards that run open workshops have provided some feedback that the benefits of open workshops include transparency, increased community connection, boosts media and public awareness of local board business, helps local board members gain recognition, and reduces reliance on social media. In addition, there is greater access to information even if public attendance is low, people appreciate the option which fosters a better understanding of decision-making and the ability to follow topics of interest."
- I acknowledge that the Waiheke Local Board members have a large workload, and a dual role and status, as both community members and Council employees, that imply inherent conflicts of interest.
- *Prior to the current Board term, the Waiheke community experienced some notable instances where decisions affecting the whole community were debated very effectively through a process where the Local Board provided early information, invited short oral or written submissions, and ably facilitated democratic discussion; they resulted in strong community support for Board decisions, even where not everyone was supportive of the actual decision, because democratic process had been observed.*

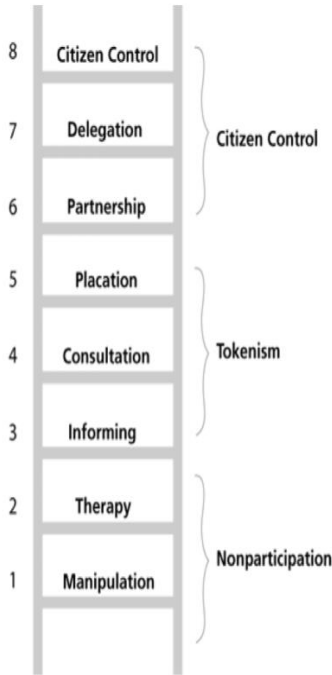
Request

- I wish to request that the Board implement the processes set out in column C of the table below.
- These changes will increase real opportunities for community engagement and input, and will not add significantly to Local Board staff workloads.

A. Key principles	B. Current situation on Waiheke	C. What's needed
<p>1. Genuine democracy can only be achieved when a community's residents have real opportunities for engagement</p>	<p>Opportunities to input into LB discussion and pre-decision-making are limited in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Board business meetings are held at times when most residents are unable to attend easily Board workshops are closed, and the community is not invited to make submissions to those No further input from a Public Forum or deputation presenter is available where Board members misinterpret the presenter's material or intent; presenters are commonly shut down in these situations, resulting in discontent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Board meetings to be held at a time when most locals can attend; feedback is the previous time of Thurs 6.00pm was much more suitable Workshops to be (i) opened 'live' and (ii) available via an online link
<p>2. Genuine engagement opportunities require that communities are well advised in advance of matters for upcoming decision-making, and are given an accessible vehicle through which to voice the wishes, their contributions of value, as well as their concerns</p>	<p>Advice to residents of upcoming matters do not reach the majority of the community in a timely way because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting agendas are not sufficiently distributed for all community members to access Agenda items are not summarised for quick perusal, requiring residents to search through the entire agenda document Availability of the agenda by the LB does not synchronise with the <i>Gulf News</i> publication timing <p>Loss of community wisdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly valuable community knowledge, expertise and skills are being ignored because of the lack of opportunities for community participation Much of the broader community has become disengaged, either through lack of timely or perceived genuine opportunities for participation, or through frustration fatigue More advice is being taken from Council staff who are not part of the Waiheke community than from informed and knowledgeable community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting agendas need to be made available to the Waiheke community via a range of platforms suited to the Waiheke demographic and dissemination media Ideally, the Local Board will establish an online forum where community members can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) access Board meeting and workshop agendas, at least one week before those meetings, and ii) give quick input into specific items

<p>3. Engagement can only occur where delegated decision-makers offer structured and timely opportunities that (i) genuinely seek <i>broad</i> community knowledge, wisdom and expertise and (ii) provide genuine opportunities for community input and discussion.</p> <p>Records (agendas, minutes) need to be published in a form that allows community members ready access to particular items.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputations are required to be sent in a week in advance, in writing, thus preventing residents from raising urgent matters • Public Forum submissions are limited to an impossibly short time (3 mins); contributions are not documented in the minutes; there is no opportunity for residents presenting submissions to engage in any Board debate on the matters raised, or in the resolutions – that is, people are shut down • Public Forum submission content remain invisible to potentially interested or concerned community members, because: (i) the topic is typically not specified in the meeting Minutes; (ii) the Board does not permit presenters to have written submissions included in the Minutes; so that (iii) residents are expected to listen to potentially an hour of audio-recording, through an internet link, to identify the item/s of interest to them, with no option of a written record. This process effectively makes those records inaccessible to a majority of the community, who lack either adequate internet access or the time required in already busy lives. • Board members ‘cherry-pick’ local residents to consult about particular issues, rather than inviting broad input through an online platform on matters specific to Waiheke, as other local governments do for their constituencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions through Public Forum should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ i) be recorded in the Minutes with specific and clear reference to the topic; ○ ii) provide an option for each presenter to submit a one-page summary within 48 hours before the meeting, and have that summary included in the Minutes (as occurs currently for deputations)
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Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation

 <p>Arnstein's Ladder (1969) Degrees of Citizen Participation</p>	<p>1 Manipulation and 2 Therapy. Both are non-participatory. The aim is to cure or educate the participants. The proposed plan is best and the job of participation is to achieve public support through public relations.</p> <p>3 Informing. A most important first step to legitimate participation. But too frequently the emphasis is on a one way flow of information. No channel for feedback.</p> <p>4 Consultation. Again a legitimate step attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings and public enquiries. But Arnstein still feels this is just a window dressing ritual.</p> <p>5 Placation. For example, co-option of hand-picked 'worthies' onto committees, or for 'consultation'. It allows citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum, but retains for power-holders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice.</p> <p>6 Partnership. Power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders. Planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared e.g. through joint committees.</p> <p>7 Delegation. Citizens holding a clear majority of seats on committees with delegated powers to make decisions. Public now has the power to assure accountability of the programme to them.</p> <p>8 Citizen Control. Have-nots handle the entire job of planning, policy making and managing a programme e.g. neighbourhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds.</p>
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