

Council

**Wednesday, 28 July 2004
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN,
WAITAKERE CITY, ON WEDNESDAY, 28 JULY 2004,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART C - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

A NEW CITY AND A NEW FUTURE

I always read with interest the enthusiasm of the Community Board Chairs who write in glowing terms of the month that has been. They do so with a great deal of passion and you feel that it has been a month of action, energy and achievement. Without wanting to steal their thunder I would like to say that this has been an extraordinary month for Waitakere City and the future.

July was the “signing off” of the Annual Plan, which was also the second year of our Long Term Council Community Plan.

The “LTCCP” as it is known is a pretty long winded title for something that is pretty simple really. It is, essentially, our road map for how the City will develop over the next 10 years. It has been developed with a lot of extremely hard work by staff and elected members. And most importantly, through extensive community consultation.

It is more than a budget and a work programme - it is our contract with the community for the next decade.

As well as projects and asset management plans etc, it encompasses this Council’s vision for the future.

Personally, and since long before I became mayor, I have always maintained a strong vision for Waitakere - its potential and its passion. It is an extraordinary place where so much can happen and indeed it does. The people of the area are resilient, passionate, and magnificent in what they achieve, whether it is in small communities or collectively. We are very hard working and we care for each other like no other community in New Zealand. Our values are local and strongly upheld.

Perhaps what we care most about are our children and their future.

For twelve years I have been proud to be the leader of this city and together we have achieved more than we would have ever dreamt possible. Together the people of Waitakere and your Council have worked to create economic wealth by job creation and economic investment.

To do this we need a number of strategic paths - which are again encompassed in our Long Term Council Community Plan. When I look back we have achieved these and more. Waitakere is now one of the safest cities in New Zealand; we share this honour with Christchurch. We have cleared our streams of litter, planted trees and “greened” our streets. Gone is the graffiti from public and private buildings and our unemployment is now down to under 4%. Virtually everyone who wants to work can find a job.

At a recent powhiri to welcome a new staff member, Graeme Campbell, high-ranking officials from the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of the Prime Minister and cabinet spoke glowingly of Waitakere’s achievements.

New Zealand’s finest stadium is on track to open in Waitakere, a tribute to Council and the Licensing Trusts of our region. Three new libraries will open, beautifully designed spaces of education and enlightenment. Henderson, New Lynn and Glen Eden. Our movie studios are employing over 500 people per day with top international films in production.



On the evening of the 21st I started the first of a series of presentations on Waitakere Central to the retailers of Westcity. This presentation which I will give tonight will be held throughout the city and will open the door for sponsorship and partnership in this extraordinary hub. The presentation is part of unveiling the model of Waitakere City and a DVD presentation which will be a stand alone display in our libraries, public buildings in the next six months. I hope in all, to do 20 presentations before the election period excludes candidate participation. All Councillors will be informed of the time and date of these presentations.

Unitec, our partner in tertiary education will soon build a massive campus on the Council site and in downtown Henderson. We will become a “campus city”

The Eco City vision has been an outstanding success and we now move in this 21st century to an Eco Tech partnership. Our new web portal, Waitakere Online, enables every one of us to share and to welcome the world to Waitakere.

Yet we must not sit back and take any of this for granted.

In October the people of Waitakere will be able to choose a new Council, hopefully with many old hands to continue the leadership and the management of this great city.

I’m confident that what they see - despite the resident knockers and whiners - will ensure a Council committed to the same values and visions that we hold true to.

The Prime Minister (and others) Visit

This month I was delighted that the Prime Minister spent a day in Waitakere, where we were able to showcase a few of the achievements listed above. Her visit was arranged by our excellent local MP Lynne Pillay and began with a visit to Alto Plastics in Keeling Rd (Henderson).

It had been five years since I had visited the factory - and the transformation was truly amazing. On my first visit, the then Deputy Mayor Bob Stanic and I helped plant trees and shrubs on the roadside, in an effort to help beautify this industrial area.

Alto Plastics was, then, a typical factory - dirty, dusty, oily, and noisy. Since then it has been the subject of a management buy-out and has embraced new technologies like few other companies I have ever seen.

The factory floor is spotless, the workers spick and span - and Alto consistently beats off competition from markets like the US and China for major contracts. Alto, with a staff of around 200, pumps out millions of products very week (including the 300,000 plastic milk bottles sold in this country every day).

The Prime Minister was equally impressed, in particular with our partnership through the Gateway scheme, which encourages school leavers into apprenticeships with local companies. The scheme was piloted in Waitakere and is delivered through Enterprise Waitakere. Around 400 students were involved in the pilot, which also saw 6000 DVDs delivered to every 15 -17 year old in the City. The DVD sets out training and apprenticeship options and what the Prime Minister was most impressed with was that it, in her words: “speaks to kids in a language they understand”.

Progressive companies like Alto Plastics see the potential and have entered a formal “partnership” with Henderson High to recruit school leavers.



From Alto Plastics we went to Glen Eden Intermediate. Here we were joined by a high-powered delegation of Ministers and Associates - Carter, Tamihere, Cunliffe and Samuels, for a community forum. Around 40 representatives of local groups got the opportunity to talk face to face with members of the government and in true westie style some didn't hold back.

Topics ranged from youth and family issues to crime, the environment and business.

It was a morning of discussion and debate on topics which affect our community every day, and it was heartening to hear the government's very real solutions. In the area of Youth and Family, John Tamihere mentioned a comprehensive "wrap around" scheme for families, which will be trialled in Waitakere. He was reluctant to give details until it was formally announced, but here will be another example of our community networks being recognised for the collaborative way in which we deliver real solutions to real problems. Watch this space.

For me though the most impressive aspect of the day was that the Prime Minister and senior MPs actually fronted up to talk to constituents. That level of grass-roots involvement just doesn't happen anywhere else in the world.

Later in the day we took the Prime Minister to the set of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Directed by Massey born ex-pat Andrew Adamson, it is being filmed largely at our studios and the Hobsonville Airbase.

It is a major project, employing 500 hundred people. Estimates are that it will bring close to \$20 million into our local economy. And the good news is that the producers look like they are close to doing a deal on a sequel. Needless to say I, along with staff here and at Enterprise Waitakere, will be working hard to ensure that is also filmed in Waitakere.

As we chatted during the day, the Prime Minister confirmed that she will attend to open the new Trusts Stadium in September, and also expressed an interest in opening Glen Eden Library if her timetable permits.

A week later we had a day with Jim Anderton, the Minister of Economic Development. He visited local boat builders Vaudry Miller and, again, our studios to see the magnificent set for *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Mr Anderton has taken a particular interest in the film, as he, and the government's tax incentive scheme, played a major role in ensuring that the project came to New Zealand.

It was another extremely successful visit, showcasing in particular the talents and innovation of our young film makers.

Over lunch the Minister had the opportunity to discuss general business issues with some of our significant players, including Peter Babich, Graeme Douglas, John Barnett (South Pacific Pictures), Julie Salthouse (Salthouse Marine), Mark Gunton (Westland Developments), Tim Livingstone (local accountant) and Murray Spearman (CEO of the Trusts).

Along with Bryan Mogridge, in the afternoon we took the opportunity to brief the Minister on the Whenuapai airbase and our aspirations there (as Councillors are aware, a cross-government taskforce led by his Ministry is now assessing options for the land).

Also this month we had a visit from a delegation of film and television executives from our sister City of Ningbo. We had one day with the group of 10, who were brought here by a local Chinese production company, Golden Raindrop.

Ningbo City runs four television stations of its own, along with broadcasting the usual international fare of CNN etc.



We took the group first to South Pacific Studios. On my recent visit to China I was interested to see that they were making a number of their own "soap opera" type programmes and felt that a tie-up with the producers of Shorthand St might prove fruitful. And so it appears it might prove. We were hosted by South Pacific executive Andrew Shaw who is now entering into discussions about selling Shorthand St plots and storylines into Ningbo. It is not as simple as simply selling old scripts, because of the intellectual property and overseas distribution rights already in place. But I'm confident that the proposal that Andrew will put to them could reap benefits to this excellent local company. Hopefully it will be our first real foray into a strong economic relationship with Ningbo.

The group also met with internationally renowned documentary maker George Andrews, who I have known personally for many years. George and I floated an idea which the delegation seemed very keen on. Called the Waitakere/Ningbo Video Challenge, it would see a group of young filmmakers (say two at a time) travel to their respective Sister City to make 12 minute documentaries about life on the other side of the world.

By young, I mean under 25.

The film makers would choose the subject for their documentary rather than being given one, but they would have to go to defined places in which they would document an element of contemporary life. They would be new style film makers -using digi cams and doing everything themselves. It is something of a "hit and run" mission.

The documentary makers would be selected from competitive entries offering a free trip to China/New Zealand. The short-listed entrants would have to submit a 30-minute DVD to demonstrate their ideas.

The three from Waitakere head off together to Ningbo, where they are guided and hosted by their companion director, who also helps them post-produce their film. They would have twelve days to research shoot and complete their documentaries - an interpreter will be provided. They would produce two versions - a Chinese version and an English version.

Then it's the turn of the Ningbo film makers to visit Waitakere/Auckland, where their companion New Zealand director plays host and guide.

The whole challenge would last just over a month.

The six films - travel films but travel films with a difference - would then be shown on television, and at film festivals, in both countries.

I think it is an excellent way of not only introducing our young people to a new culture, as we do through student exchanges, but also encouraging creativity in one of our most important industries.

George is currently trying to source funding for the project through the likes of Asia 2000, airlines, production companies etc. It is a great project and one that I will report back on.

Finally, my thanks to TVNZ who also allowed the group a tour of their studios, and to Councillors Fenton and Lawley who hosted the delegation on our behalf in the evening.



MILESTONES

Obituary

I would like to record a tribute to Mr Errol Meek of Whenuapai, a great friend of Waitakere and of the Lions organisation. Errol came to Japan with our delegation on my second visit and became a good friend of the previous Mayor of Kakogawa Mr Kinsohita. Errol was kind enough to host a dinner for Mr Kinsohita on one of his visits to our city. Errol who grew tomatoes, was a great supporter of our successes and I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to his family on behalf of Waitakere and Kakogawa. Errol was farewelled in Melbourne, Australia.

Moving On

Mr Andrew Shaw (son of Community Board Member Barry) Chief Executive of South Pacific Pictures. Andrew was the producer of NZ Idol as well as a number of other well known television shows and a great friend of Waitakere City's film and television initiatives. Andrew moves on at the end of this month to Prime TV.

In My Father's Den

I joined the Prime Minister at the New Zealand premier of this truly fine New Zealand film from young director Brad McGowan. It was given a first screening in at the Auckland Film Festival to a full house. I have had a lot to do with the development of this film from its script through to its shooting, both as a member of the New Zealand Film Commission and because "the den" was built and shot here in our Waitakere studios. The film was set in Central Otago and it is a seamless transition from the farmhouse and exterior to the beautiful interior of "the den" rich in colour and memorabilia which is the secret hideaway of the central character. The film is one of the best that has come out of the emerging young talent from New Zealand and I urge all Councillors to put it on their "to see" list. It opened the Melbourne Film Festival and will open here later in the year.

Wellbeing Summit

The 2004 Wellbeing Summit was held at the Waitakere Bible College in Henderson. There was excellent attendance by Council, government and community agencies, all committed to improving the economic and social wellbeing of our communities.

The 2004 wellbeing Report is a significant benchmark in the history of this City. It gives us hard data of what the social conditions for our people are at, and what areas we need to improve on. For me though, the most satisfying aspect of the report is that 86% of people surveyed say that this is a "great" City to live in.

That would, I believe, be hard to beat anywhere in the country.

M1-M2 For more on the summit and a copy of my speech is attached at pages M1 - M2.

Waitakere On-Line

At the Wellbeing Summit we also had the "soft" launch of the Waitakere Online web portal. This is something that I first envisioned when I saw a similar concept in action in the United States some four years ago. At the same time I became inspired by Dushko Bogunovich of Unitec, and his vision of the "Eco-tech City". Then along came Bevis England who I have often described as the Peter Jackson of the IT world – a man 10 years ahead of his time. And in the world of IT, 10 years is a very long time indeed. Bevis then put us in touch with another IT expert, Andy Williamson, and together this group has helped deliver the portal.



A big thanks must also go to staff member Rochelle Edwards who has worked tirelessly to make the portal a reality.

Basically, it gives our residents, and visitors, a comprehensive listing of anything and everything you want or need to know about Waitakere. From buying and selling cars, to renting a house, to restaurants, childcare, churches you name it.

While the Council's own, excellent, website makes available Council news and information, the portal is the window into the entire City.

A media launch is planned shortly, along with presentations to business groups. In the meantime, I would urge you all to check out the portal on www.waitakereonline.co.nz

M3-M8 See attachment at pages M3-M8 for Lynne Pillay's speech on how the portal fits with the Government's digital strategy.

Also launched at the Summit was the excellent and very user friendly New Settlers' Guide. It is put out by our Libraries and is a comprehensive booklet produced in simple, plain English, with excellent graphics.

It is similar to the portal in that it has information for everyday use - from what to do in an emergency, to when our public holidays are (and what they mean)...right down to where the local Post Shop branch is. Our libraries team are to be congratulated for delivering something that every new migrant will find invaluable.

Roof Shout

As mentioned earlier, the Prime Minister has indicated that she will open the new Glen Eden Library (set down for October 1) if she is available. This month saw the roof go on the building, which was marked with the traditional couple of beers and barbeque for the workers.

With the Play House Theatre opposite and Glen Mall in front, the new library aims will connect these three hubs of Glen Eden.

On one of the coldest days this winter, Cr Clews popped across the road from the warmth of her lounge room to officiate and offer a few words of thanks to the contractors on behalf of us all.

A Life's Work

I was delighted to receive in the mail a handwritten letter and copy of Mary Throll's self-published autobiography. Mary is a wonderful woman who lives in Glen Eden and has spent a lifetime on the stage and on radio and TV.

She is among other things a former president of Actors' Equity, a Variety Club Scroll of Honour recipient and received the Variety Artists Club "Benny Award" in 1993.

Her book covers the history of early show business in New Zealand as well as glimpses of life during the Depression in the 1930s.

It's a great read and is available at the Post shop in Glen Eden or at the Women's Bookshop in Ponsonby Road.



Matariki - The Pleiades

A month of wonderful Matariki celebrations ended. Waitakere had a programme of 28 events, which attracted hundreds, and in all there were dozens more across the region.

For me the local highlights were the two concerts at Lopdell House which I produced with Rewi Spraggon. Both concerts were sell-outs and we could have easily done another two. We will gauge interest from our large group of fellow performers as to whether we will repeat this next year but I think that the success of this year's performances will mean it will be a must for Matariki 2005. I was sorry to have missed the other extraordinary event, another first, an archive film showing at Hoani Waititi marae. The film evening was held in conjunction with the National Film Archive and featured early movies from the early part of the last century.

Matariki is growing in popularity and recognition and will, I believe, become a nationwide celebration of nationhood.

A new discovery

At the recent funeral of Les Pratt it was revealed that Les, after cleaning his guesthouse, would wonder up to Whenuapai Village for coffee and spend some time each morning in conversation with Kesu and his wife Jasu – the proprietors of the Whenuapai Village Café. I was recently up in the village and I noticed a corner of the pavement outside the café with a small sign that said simply “Les’s Corner” and what a treat it turned out to be. Kesu Bhana and his wife are extraordinarily fine cooks. In fact they were the regional winners of the New Zealand best fish and chip shop in 2002 but have gone on to turn the Whenuapai Café into a marvellous eatery. Their son Dhiman is the night chef and I am pleased to inform you that butter chicken has never tasted so good as well as a great and varied range of classic Indian dishes. The Whenuapai Café is licensed and believe me it’s an exotic experience.

Another discovery

I recently received a postcard from my good friend Mr John Barnett of South Pacific Pictures who was in London putting together a film deal. While walking down Old Brompton Road in Kensington he noticed an extraordinary sign. “The Karekare Indian Restaurant”. Now John being a great fan of Karekare Beach couldn’t resist a look. Around the walls were pictures of Karekare and surfers. On his return I met with John and we agreed that a letter and Rolling Thunder should be sent to the proprietors congratulating them on the name and wishing them well. My daughter Claris will be visiting the restaurant next week delivering the letter and the autographed book. Check out the website at www.karekare.co.uk it’s a great site to visit and I am sure the restaurant is an absolute joy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY