

**Men's Issues Summit 2005**

**Mayor Bob Harvey's Speech**

Greetings and welcome to a genuine milestone event - New Zealand's first Men's Issues Summit 2005.

I am personally very proud to be hosting this event.

I am patron of Man Alive and my ongoing association with the group is especially pleasing because we are making such good progress on men's issues.

A special acknowledge to Man Alive and Warwick Pudney (summit organiser).

And I would like to acknowledge the other sponsors and supporters of this event – NZ Father and Child Society, Massey University Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, NZ Violence Prevention Association, NZ Family Research Trust, AUT and Waitakere City Council.

Clearly these are all intelligent organisations in touch with the challenges and potentials of men living in 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand.

As I said, this is very definitely a milestone in the growth of the 'men's.

But make no mistake – we have a long way to go.

As part of marking this milestone I want to talk about lifting the game.

Because isn't that what real men do – challenge, push, expect more from themselves?

We've done well but we need to do more, we need to do better.

We need to do better by ourselves.

We need to do better by women.

And we need to do better by our children – our future.

We are still seeing too much domestic violence.

We are still seeing too many young men killing themselves – either by taking their own lives or through horrendous car accidents as bravado that seems more important than life itself.

Did you know, and can you believe, that the highest cause of death in Waitakere is suicide? 38 percent!

That's five percent higher than motor vehicle accidents at 33 percent.

The statistics, from ACC, don't drill down into that 38 percent to identify age or gender however I would suggest a high proportion of that percentage will be young men.

We are still seeing aggressive male behaviour as young men do not learn how to understand themselves and their emotional nature when they feel hurt or challenged by life.

We are still seeing everyday sexism as men worry about women wanting their 'power'.

We still don't understand that women don't want our power – they only want their own.

And we're still seeing too many fathers not taking their responsibilities seriously enough.

Twenty four years ago I attended my first men's group run by Felix Donnelly at Auckland University and I would like to pay special tribute today to Felix.

More than 20 years ago I wrote an essay for Metro Magazine called The Joy of Fatherhood.

I wrote it because while a great deal had been written about parenting, children and the role of mothers, little was available on the relationship between children and their fathers.

The essay was later extended to a book called Hey, Dad! A New Zealand Father's Guide to Survival, later revised to meet the 90s.

At the time I was confident men had 'come of age' in terms of being fathers.

We were a generation of men not blooded by war like our fathers and grandfathers.

We were the first generation to start working with our minds and brains.

We had a different kind of relationship with our mates and therefore our children.

We made time for our kids.

We took them to Saturday morning sport and we took them to the supermarket.

We took our kids away from the care of their mothers and looking after our own children became 'fathering' not 'babysitting'.

A lot was thanks to the brilliant invention of the back pack!

It was a wonderful time and I know my relationship with my children is far better for the building of those vital relationships so many of us missed out on as we grew up in another era altogether.

What it wasn't about was being red-blooded or blokey.

It was about enjoying my kids and them enjoying me.

It was about equipping my kids with the best of what I could give them so they could have a happy, healthy life with their own partners and families in the years to come.

It was about letting them become involved in life as quickly as possible.

Really, it was pretty simple stuff.

But it seemed to strike a cord and if in telling about these common sense things I helped some fathers, I am pleased about that.

The book worked at that time but now we're 20 years on and as I said earlier there are still far too many activities associated with men whose emotional intelligence doesn't seem to exist in any mature form.

Perhaps the real enemy to progress is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people and their failure to lead and to follow.

Too many settle for being critics and experts.

There is too much intellectual wheel spinning, too much retreating into 'research'.

Too little preparation for and willingness to undertake the hard and high risk tasks of building better institutions in an imperfect world.

Too little agreement on seeing “the problems” lie ‘in here’ NOT ‘out there’.

Let’s not be all doom and gloom though.

On a positive note I do think we have achieved a great deal.

We all know that these days women don’t fall about laughing as much as they used to even 10 years ago when they hear the words ‘men’s group’.

And I don’t think they’ve got the same misgivings about men getting together that they once had.

But we must continue to include women in our plans to redress the educational and social challenges facing men and boys.

We must see women as allies not enemies.

Women are our team-mates in the game of healthy parenting and the co-creation of a healthy society.

They are not the opposition and we must stop playing our end of that game.

We need to look at feminism and see the bigger view - the freedom it affords, the expansion of both gender roles.

For example, men have had such a strangled relationship to grief.

All those men from the wars unable to face their own feelings of appalling grief effectively passed it onto their sons, their post feminist sons who are just starting to explore the expression of feeling, who are just becoming emotionally literate enough to actually feel that grief and let it go.

Blakeism and red-bloodedness will just perpetuate old thinking that is no longer relevant or useful and shove all that down the dark hole of repression to what I believe is the wrong definition of 'staunch, tough men'.

We can do so much better than that.

We can still be staunch – but let's be staunch about the right things.

We can still be tough but let's get toughness in the right perspective.

We need to be tough and staunch – about violence, child abuse and self respect.

We need to stand firm and tall for the forward view of what a truly honourable man is.

He is not an emotionally repressed distant father and provider.

He is a dynamic, intelligent guy who contributes to his family and community from a healthy place and space.

Let's show New Zealand, and the world, what a bunch of really healthy Kiwi blokes can do.

Welcome to this summit which I am sure will identify 'go forward' strategies and take another step towards a new and desirable breed of ourselves.

Men, fathers, brothers, sons and lovers – we can do it all.



*Original Print*  
*Tony M. greer well done Tony at Sae*  
**Oratia District School**

Principal: C. S. Greer B.A. Dip. Tchg.

*sent 11/5/05*  
**WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL**  
*09 MAY 2005*

15<sup>th</sup> April 2005

The Waitakere City Council  
Private Bag 93109  
Henderson.

Chief Executive's Office  
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09 MAY 2005

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For the attention of Harry O'Rourke – C.E.O. Council

Dear Mr O'Rourke

Just a note to thank the staff involved in the E.C.O. water project.

This term our Yr. 2 – 3 syndicate, comprising of over 100 children, took part in a unit of work titled "Stream and Communities"

They approached your ECO water department and particularly worked with Sue Langton. She totally involved herself in the unit bringing in a council specialist and community artist. The staff helped provide both content and resources. Council staff assisted with a field trip and a camp, providing tremendous expertise.

This was a tremendous example of council expertise involving itself in the education of children, to help ensure the conservation of our streams and waterways.

Could I ask you to pass on this letter to the team to thank them for their efforts. However, it is also important that you, as C.E.O. of the Council, are aware of the good work undertaken by this department.

Yours faithfully

C.S. Greer  
**PRINCIPAL**  
**ORATIA DISTRICT SCHOOL**

CSG/CLH

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M39

4 Sunrise Lane  
TE ATATU PENINSULA

1<sup>st</sup> April 2005

Bob Harvey  
Waitakere City Council  
HENDERSON

COPY FOR YOUR  
INFORMATION

Fiona & Bob

Dear Bob

I enjoy reading the Mayoral Reports and wish firstly to commend you on the depth of the reports, the thinking that goes into them and the range of ideas covered. I am mindful of a conversation that we had at the time of your running for election when myself, Peter and Chris 'advised' you on the campaign. You wondered if the eco-city branding should be replaced by 'miracle city' but I wonder now if 'innovation' shouldn't be part of our branding. "*Waitakere: City of Innovations*".

For what its worth, things that I think the council does well include:

- the great new libraries
- the Massey Recreation Centre
- the gradual transformation of Waikaumete Cemetery
- the city parks
- the Trust Stadium and West Wave Pools
- the Civic Centre and transport interchange
- the Whenuapai Airport concept
- the film industry
- the Unitec Campus

(the last three are directly attributable to you)

Concepts and ideas that I think are great for the city include:

- weirs or dredging of the creeks. I suggested this one year during a leisure audit but was destroyed! Tui Glen was a holiday destination for boating and swimming. We need to dredge the mud and some of the mangroves which are choking the water ways and have boating, canoeing and rowing on the Henderson Creek.
- an outdoor soundshell is a great concept -- either at the Stadium or Cranwell Park or wherever.
- employment opportunities within the city -- this was a perennial of mine to annual plan submissions. Hobsonville Airbase needs to be developed in part as a technology park as well as the boat building.

- main street Henderson is dirty, drab and congested. It needs an urgent make over with decent trees, seating areas and traffic flow. As our main centre, it is a dump! We need restaurants, bars, cafes and galleries in the main street, not \$2 shops!
- I agree with your comments in regard to St Lukes/West city
- it would be great if we could get a Performing Arts Centre – Tui Glen in conjunction with Unitec?
- the Art Trail and your idea of a Music Trail are great. What about a Tirau – type enclave somewhere in the city?
- our traffic problems can not be solved until the parallel motorway is completed with Pt Chev – Hillsborough link up plus the Whau crossing. Much more pressure needs exerting in this area. I agree entirely with your comments in regard to an Auckland Ambassador to Wellington.
- I travel to concerts, V8 races and major sporting events in Australia and New Zealand. The Gold Coast Indy Car Race brings in \$51 million to the local economy. The Adelaide V8 Race generates \$21 mill. Major concerts or sports events in Melbourne generate \$12 million. In the last 3 weekends New Plymouth (pop 85,000) has hosted Womad, Mark Knofler (from Dire Straits) and R.E.M. I spend around \$2,000 for an Australian event on top of my fare and accommodation.

I am passionate about the excitement, profile and economic returns of events. Our city can have them too but we need a supportive infra structure in terms of accommodation, cafes, craft shops etc.

Sporting events are a starting point – a ‘Gutbuster’ Piha – Waitemata Road Race, a Waitakere Marathon, Scenic Drive Cycle Race, bowling tournaments, Masters games, Stadium Concerts are good starting points. Where are our free weekend concerts? – Jazz at the Falls, Rock at the Park, Symphony under the Stars. The Sentinel Waitakere Brass are the top brass band in New Zealand – when do we ever hear them? Council need to give serious consideration to establishing an Events Manager.

These thoughts are some ramblings from me in response to your last couple of Mayoral Reports.

Kind regards

Wayne Bainbridge