

Council

**Wednesday, 29 August 2007
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT
WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE,
ON WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2007, COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

6. REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**ROYAL COMMISSION AND THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN
AUCKLAND**

Royal Commission's are strange things in a way. They come to us with huge authority and credence and yet their role could be easily done - often with more effective results - by those who understand and know the issues.

Over the years Royal Commissions have considered a number of issues, including social policy, Erebus and genetic modification. And now it's Auckland's turn. We should go about this task in a considered and mindful way. We should not jump to rapid and quick conclusions. We should not try and cover our own elected butts in glory or with mantles of security. Democracy is hard earned and won and is not something to be sneered at. It is in fact something deeply felt and wisely considered.

I have been reading a very serious tome on the development of Greek cities, because I am interested in the history of cities and the way voting rights have developed and evolved. And as I read *The Greek City and its Institutions* by **G. Glotz** - the definitive work on cities and democracy - things didn't seem a lot different from what we have in Auckland on the eve of the elections.

My favourite era in terms of Auckland was between 1871 and 1918, which is described in Graham Bush's history of the Auckland City Council, *Decently And In Order, The Centennial History of the Auckland City Council*, as the period when a relatively small number of people were 'building a solid city'. Aucklanders charted their council with providing and upgrading essential physical services, broadly defined as streets, drainage, water supply, prevention of nuisances and the related control through bylaws of a multitude of private activities. Early improvements included laying asphalt strips for pedestrians and the metalling of 11 main roads. They put a tramline to just about every far flung suburb, a beautiful town hall, a Post Office, a library and an art gallery. Queen Street in fact had the very best of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. It rivalled Sydney.

The following section of Bush's history amused me: "Dazzled by promises of receiving water, drainage, fire and telephone services, Ponsonby, Karangahape and Grafton joined up in 1882. Inspired by the city council a 'Greater Auckland' movement emerged in 1901 but suburban local bodies long resisted, preferring independence even at the cost of a precarious backwardness. However, faced by possible government intervention and an outright refusal to disguise their inadequacies by further resort to special purpose boards, many then toppled like dominoes. Ratepayer-endorsed amalgamations occurred with Arch Hill (1913), Grey Lynn (1914), Parnell, Remuera and tiny Eden Terrace (1915) and finally Epsom (1917). Although at least seven other local bodies declined 'marriage', Auckland City's population had doubled to 70,000. The evils of fragmented authority and parochialism had been somewhat curbed."

Auckland has a wonderful landscape and few cities in the world equal its beauty and its richness of green and glorious water. But when it comes to the building of a sustainable city we have woefully lagged behind the rest of the world's cities.



And as for Auckland's soul, I'm not sure it has one. It seems strangely disjointed and disenfranchised. It ain't Polynesian. It isn't quaint and it isn't inspiring. Queen Street is becoming more and more multicultural and around it flows the free-flung suburbs to the south and the west which have developed their own culture. The vibrant west and the troubled south. Here we have got much right. And I'm very proud of that. History may very well give us a few ticks. But do we need to think bigger, wider and be more encompassing.

At the Auckland Political Reference Group last week, the Minister of Local Government, Mark Burton, said the commission would not distract from the councils' process of developing one plan for Auckland. Indeed he was very complimentary of the work done over a sustained period. He was pleased we had worked in unity and that the proposal was strategic and positive, a step forward and from which progress can be made. The Minister also said the view was that it was all about leadership and constructing a long-term view of the importance of Auckland City and the region. He said the commission would complement the work already done and that it would be a three-member commission. After the meeting, the Minister wrote to the group's members asking for any thoughts we may have on the terms of reference for the commission, either generally or specifically, and membership suggestions which we will respond to.

THE END OF PLASTIC BAGS

After writing my last mayoral report article about plastic bags, I decided to follow the life of the plastic bag and what a journey it is. Plastic bags are quite likely to have started life as, say, a milk bottle. The milk bottle is purchased and consumed and the bottle is put out in the recycling bin. After collection it's sorted, processed, baled and then sent to China, which is probably where it was originally produced. In China it's made into a plastic bag and sent back to New Zealand where it begins its new life as a plastic bag. More on the rest of its life later. Right now I want to go back to China, the home of the plastic bag.

In China you just have to go behind any of the markets to see the absolute hell of the landscape that the plastic bag makes in those teeming cities. And what interested me was the branding on the bags. These bags were carrying the images of global corporates, supermarkets and products. Why? Because they have returned to China for recycling and resale. Convenience comes at a cost.

Here in developing China, 8000 kilometres from the nearest British supermarket, plastic bags clog streams, along with bags from the giant United States chain Wal-Mart. Throughout China small provincial recyclers eke out a living from items that have no value in the west. They are simply given away and discarded. If you look out any council building window on the south west you'll see what's on its way to China to be turned into bags.

There the plastic bottles and other cast-offs will be melted and moulded into pellets and they will start their life all over again - as plastic bags, and they will be returned to New Zealand, America and Europe. In China they foul the streams and rivers and the smell of recycled plastic is everywhere. Although these small Chinese villages have never heard of Tesco or Wal-Mart or Pak'nSave, their factories are the direct result of this recycling nightmare.

Places like Guangdong, they say, are the end of the line for the plastic bag. But it's also the beginning. The 16,000 km between manufacturing and dumping is the story of our high tech age. Okay, as the Chinese media says, it's part economic miracle but it's also part environmental tragedy. In the space of just 20 years these small villages have become industrial plastic recycling power houses.



Shenzhen's container port handles more cargo than anywhere in the world other than Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai. This is where the world's toys and shoes are made and where Apple outsources much of its iPod production. This was once a small fishing village. Now it's huge business. The Shenzhen Delux Arts Plastics is a typical manufacturer and it churns out 25,000 plastic bags every day. Twenty percent goes to Europe, 10 percent to Australia and three percent to New Zealand.

I asked how a plastic bag was made and if you are interested, and you should be, it's a simple three-section process. Plastic pellets are fed down a large funnel where they are melted at 180 degrees Celsius. Then they are stretched and pulled onto rolls the width of the desired bag. The rolls are then fed through a series of large printing presses, each adding a different colour, although generally it's only one, and finally an army of workers takes the bags off the rolls and stacks them. It takes just five minutes to produce a bag.

The primary ingredient is polyfabric polypropylene or other types of plastic, all of them petroleum based and imported from Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Japan. The plastic bag industry alone has significant carbon footprints: by one estimate the United States' requirements alone requires 12 million barrels of oil for the 100 billion bags its consumers use a year.

Clearly there is a problem here. The cost of plastic is rising, along with the surge in oil prices. I needn't tell you that the working conditions and the pay are terrible. Plastic bags are becoming more and more unacceptable. Local Government New Zealand is doing a major survey and working with government to look at legislation to minimise their effect and use, which is good news, as my friend Matt Cross, the man who had them banned in Huskisson, Jervis Bay in New South Wales said, not only do they clog the bags but they kill wildlife. He was referring to the dolphins in the bay.

In China, plastic bags are the number one pollution. Britain consumes 17 billion plastic bags a year and they too are looking at legislation. Environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth in the UK say that plastic bags account for three percent of the domestic waste stream in Britain, where the average Brit accepts on average 10 plastic bags a week, about a third of the number its Hong Kong counterpart uses. This all means - whether you are in the UK or Hong Kong or Waitakere - the supermarket check-out is in the front line of our battle for the hearts and minds of the consumer.

If we are to have a better planet we must make the decision to not use plastic bags. Friends of the Earth, a global organisation which I have some respect for, would like to see governments tax all plastic bags, but they also add degradable and biodegradable bags are not an environmentally-friendly option. By this they mean the public will become increasingly confused, simply not knowing what to do and how to recycle them. They believe we have to start looking for other ways of carrying our goods. If biodegradable bags end up in landfills, says Friends of the Earth, they will eventually produce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. In Europe there are many cities now talking about banning plastic bags - that just means sending them back to China. In trade terms this makes an odd kind of sense. China exports almost 12.6 billion dollars worth of manufactured goods to the UK alone per year and in return the UK sends back 1.9 million tonnes of rubbish, for the simple reason that it's cheaper than dumping it at domestic landfill sites. In Waitakere we do just that. We bury it. It's cheaper that way.

Ireland, for instance, introduced a 15 pence plastax on carry bags and this has had a 90 percent reduction of use since 2002. Australia continues to lead the way with its campaign Say No to Plastic Bags, and Italy is promoting the biodegradable bag. In France, reusable plastic bags account for more than half of the market.



The old story of countries looking after their own rubbish is gaining currency. In Beijing there is a campaign starting, sponsored by Greenpeace, to demand that international companies stop using China as a vast rubbish recycler. The environment costs are too high. With China wanting desperately to emerge as one of the clean green places on the planet, they need to stop the waste trade first. If China can do it, they say, the world can. It probably means the end of the plastic bag and most people won't be unhappy with that.

And so back to the rest of the plastic bag's life. Joe Bloggs goes to the bottle shop on Lincoln Road and buys a six pack of beer. The six pack is put into a plastic bag. The consumer takes the beer to a football match and drops the bag, which is blown away. Eventually the rain takes it down the storm water system and it ends up in the harbour. The plastic bag is then picked up by the Waitemata Harbour Clean Up Trust and delivered to the landfill. As I said earlier, it's then buried. End of story. Or is it the beginning?

Which brings me to the full life-cycle irony of "recycling". The fuel alone of the collection and transport to get plastic and other materials recycled, in the name of the environment, is simply unsustainable. This is the prime reason the Ministry for the Environment is proposing exclusive domestic consumption of recycled products in New Zealand. Unfortunately this will add to the cost of recycling and we will no longer be able to enjoy the high international demand dollar paid for such commodities. But if sustainability is the goal then this is what needs to happen. Certainly a lot to think about!

WELLBEING SUMMIT

M1-M58

I was very pleased I was able to attend several sessions of the Waitakere Wellbeing Summit at the Kelston Community Centre on July 26 2007. It was just so good to see so many people in attendance (well over 150) and the presentations were outstanding. So was the level of talk. Everyone was absolutely committed to making Waitakere a better place to live and I honestly think this community is in very good hands. But there's certainly a lot of work to be done. The summit's focus was on the major challenges of social inclusion and reducing poverty. The keynote speakers, Megan Tunks from Hapai te Hauora, Alan Johnson - policy advisor for the Auckland Regional Council and Dr Emma Davies from the Children's Commissioner, provided huge insight into the current situation and the best way forward, and our own people, Tony Rae, Sue Dodds, Annette Smithard, Kim Conway, Mark Allen and the rest of the team did us all proud. I have attached at pages M1 to M58 the main presentations.

The summit saw six main premises discussed in workshops:

- All families in Waitakere have enough to live on;
- Everyone is healthy and safe in Waitakere;
- Affordable sustainable housing for everyone in Waitakere;
- Older people live well in Waitakere;
- There is a strong sense of community and people feel connected and valued in Waitakere; and
- All young people in Waitakere are able to make positive life choices.

In the papers given to the groups as prompts for discussion, there were some very depressing statistics about people who live in severe hardship, who are crippled by debt, who are the victims of crime and domestic violence, who are on housing waiting lists and who leave school way too early.



But those attending the summit didn't just sit about shaking their heads in despair. Indeed they did not. What they did do was identify underlying causes to the various problems and figure out what would it take to make a difference, what works? The workshop groups were also encouraged to come up with a low cost or no cost idea as well as an 'off the wall' idea.

Ideas for future action are still being evaluated, however, I was impressed with the workshop feedback summaries I reviewed. Suggestions ranged from creating family-focused service centres around schools and holding a friendliest street competition, to showcasing migrant work, providing more youth services in the city, regulating the non-banking lending agencies, and more emergency housing and legislative changes to ensure security of tenure for tenants. All in all I think this was a very successful day and I look forward to seeing the action plan.

MILESTONES

Glenda Pauling

I think we were all shocked and saddened by the premature death of Glenda Pauling at just 54 this month. Glenda was one of those women who dedicated her life to her community. She spent 17 years working in the office at Kelston Girls' College and was a keen supporter of Rotary activities. Glenda was also active behind the scenes at the Taikata Sailing Club, and when Glenda and her husband Colin moved to Whenuapai in 2002 she helped on the gate at the annual Kumeu Rotary Wine Festival and supported Colin in his role as chairman of the Don Oliver Youth Sport Foundation Trust. Our thoughts are with Colin and the couple's sons Michael and Craig. A small ceremony will be held at Kelston Girls' later in the year when a commemorative plaque will be unveiled in Glenda's honour.

Rae Westbrooke

It was also with much sadness we learned of the death of one of the West's great activists, Rae Westbrooke of Glen Eden. Rae's early childhood was spent in Northland and she moved to the West 60 years ago with her husband Felix. Author of the book entitled Karekare, and a contributor to the Western Leader and the West Auckland Historic Society's publications, Rae was the expert on the Murdoch family of Karekare. She was a great researcher, a fine historian and a long-time member of the Historic Society. She uncovered real gems about the West but her real strengths were women's issues and peace work. She was one of the founders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, attending its international conference representing New Zealand.

Rae was also a foundation member of the West Auckland Health Action Group, which advocated for healthy school lunches well before its time and for a 'real' hospital in the West. She was a long-time member of the Family Planning Association and a participant, with Felix, in the anti Vietnam War and apartheid marches and protests. She was a first aid assistant in the bloodiest of the Springbok Tour battles. Felix and Ray built a house in Titirangi and were instrumental in the establishment and development of the West Lynn Gardens. She was a stalwart member of the Waitakere Herb Society. Felix died in 1996 and the couple is survived by three children - Liz, Neil and Ian - and four grandchildren. Our thoughts are with them at this sad time.



Local Government New Zealand Conference

The theme for this year's excellent conference was *Investing in our Future*, which reflected the funding issues facing local government as we try to balance the local community's needs with national's needs, and our community's willingness to accept rates increases. The quality of the keynote speakers was outstanding. Sir Michael Lyons spoke about the Lyons Inquiry into the role and funding of local government in the UK. The inquiry was commissioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a final report will be published later this year.

M59-M68 The inquiry began in 2004 and was initially focused on finance, however in 2005 it was extended to consider the role and function of local government. One of the really interesting things Sir Michael had to say was that local government needed to encourage and have greater and better engagement with its communities. He was also very forthcoming on leadership and the importance of local government advocating powerfully on behalf of its local community. He said that as leaders we need to be accessible and visible and that the importance of effective communication could not be underestimated. Sir Michael also encouraged us to look outward rather than upward, i.e. to focus on service performance for its impact on the community. I have attached Sir Michael's presentation at pages M59 to M68.

M69-M77 Conference delegates also heard from David Shand, the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Local Government Rates here. He said there had been many meetings with mayors, councillors and senior officials and that those meetings had been very productive. He also said the meetings with the public had identified a good deal of angst. There have been 950 submissions to the inquiry from all but eight councils around the country. David raised some interesting questions. Is the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) concept sound but the process constipated? Is local government exercising sufficient spending restraint? Is local government adequately considering affordability to all groups of ratepayers? Some of the key issues the inquiry is dealing with are the question of replacing or supplementing rates, rates as a property tax or user charge and the rating of Maori land. All food for thought. I have attached David's presentation at pages M69 to M77.

M78-M113 The Minister of Local Government, Mark Burton; Minister for the Environment (at that stage) David Benson-Pope; National Party leader, John Key and Local Government New Zealand president, Basil Morrison, also addressed the conference and their speeches are attached at pages M78 to M113.

My own presentation, a DVD on the loss of our heritage, which I think most of you have seen, was well received and of course I've already talked about how wonderful it was to receive the Creative New Zealand award for Henderson.

Ella Louisa Mudgway

I haven't been to many birthday parties for women turning 103 but Ella Mudgway's was fantastic. She is still full of energy and great stories. And boy what a life she's had. Born in 1904, Ella was raised in Ponsonby and because she was thin and pale was often told she wouldn't make old bones. How wrong people can be! Ella worked in a number of factories and married Richard in 1926. The couple bought their first house, in Pt Chevalier, in 1927 and there was great excitement because it was the first time they had electricity. Ella got her driver's licence and her first car in 1948, an Austin Big Seven. When she turned 50 she had her first and only overseas trip, a boat trip to Fiji. In 1971, at the age of 75 and having worked for more than 60 years, Ella retired. Richard died in 1974 and in 1976 Ella moved to Te Atatu.



A strong, independent woman, Ella is still, even at 103, quick to jump up and put the kettle on for a cup of tea when she has visitors and keeps her days busy with gardening, sewing and walking. In short Ella loves life and she is a joy to spend time with. I am sure you join with me in wishing Ella a very, very happy birthday.

Olive Conquest

M114

One of Ella's guests at her birthday was 102-year-old Olive Conquest, who lives in Te Atatu Peninsula. Olive is celebrating her 103 birthday tomorrow (August 30) and so it's happy birthday to you too Olive. Olive immigrated to New Zealand in 1952 from England. Like Ella she has taken very good care of herself - no smoking or drinking - and clearly that's paid off. As too is Olive's attitude to life. Again like Ella, she is very keen to help others and plays an active part in the life of all her family members. Waitakere is privileged to have these two women in the city. I have attached a photograph of the celebrations at page M114.

Wellington City Council Visit

On Tuesday, 14 August 2007, we had a visit from Wellington City Councillors Celia Wade-Brown and Ray Ahipene-Mercer, with Director of Policy John McGrath. These people were at the ICLEI Melbourne conference earlier in the year and were impressed by Waitakere's work and wanted to see it first hand.

Celia chairs Wellington City's newly-formed Climate Change Working Party - a similar position to the one Councillor Penny Hulse has held here since last year. And Ray - an ex-guitar tech for Led Zeppelin and a fan of local artist Dean Buchanan - has been fighting on environmental fronts for years.

Our guests talked to Councillors and staff about matters ranging from making it easier for people to have small wind turbines on their roofs, to how Waitakere City could prepare for sea level rises. They toured Waitakere Central and had a big list of questions. They had covered our fact sheets about the building and the Action Plan on Climate Change and Energy with pink highlighter, to raise specific points about the design and operation of the building and the ways we are working within Council and the community on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Wellington City Council has announced its intention to be New Zealand's first 'carbon-neutral' council, so naturally we talked about that. The way we see it, the most important factor in becoming carbon neutral is to first reduce emissions. Only when you've gone as far as possible down that route should you then consider offsetting emissions by investing in other projects. Even then, we would rather see our ratepayers' money spent within our own City than on emissions-reduction projects elsewhere.

Another thing we discussed over a working lunch was the fact we have sister cities in other countries, but not similar connections with cities in our own country. I have been keen on what I call 'mirror cities' for several years and I think there's an opportunity to become a 'mirror city' with Wellington, as it shares our passion for sustainability. Something to think about.

Stadium Partners' Evening

Last week Waitakere City Council and The Trusts held an evening for our major funding partners and friends. We wanted to acknowledge the investment they had made in the stadium's development and operation and thank them for their contribution to date.



I have included below Chief Executive Simon Wickham's excellent speech, which covers off some of the major achievements, for you to read.

"You have been invited here this evening because you have a pivotal role in the past, present and likely the future of our City's wonderful award-winning stadium. Without you it wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be here in this room. Nor would the hundreds of young netballers running around on our courts tonight.

In simple terms the Waitakere City Stadium Trust has some key aims and objectives:

- 1) *Through fundraising and the profit centres we operate (events, fitness centre, catering concessions, ticketing, tenants, etc) we aim to support community use of our world-class facility. Unlike many other major event centres, we open our doors every night of the week for our community. Here for just \$5 anyone can come in off the street and shoot around when a court is free and we're proud of the fact that at \$20 per hour for youth and \$30 per hour for adults, we represent some of the best community rates in the country.*
- 2) *We aim to create a focal point for Waitakere to gather and participate in sport, recreation and events.*
- 3) *We also aim to provide much more than a great sport and recreation facility - we aim to attract vibrant events for our community that were previously unable to be hosted in Waitakere and for which our residents drove to other cities, taking their spending and economic value with them.*
- 4) *Lastly, and also of significance, we provide a world-class events' base for significant community events such as the Diwali Festival of Light, that attracts 12,000 people, Waitakere Fireworks 13,000 people; Toddlers' Day Out 10,000; Trash To Fashion 2,500 and many others.*

I want to share with you some major achievements thanks to your investment:

This year we broke the half million visitors mark with 512,000 visitors to the site (up from 300,000 year one and 400,000 in year two). That's an average of 1,400 per day every day that come through our gates.

We have had unprecedented levels of community support - more than one in every three residents (35 percent) in Waitakere used the stadium (UMR Research undertaken by The Trusts). I would challenge stadia and indeed most community facilities and infrastructure across New Zealand to beat that sort of wide-ranging use.

An overwhelming 95 percent of residents rated the stadium as excellent or of a very high standard. (UMR Research undertaken by The Trusts).

This year, thanks to Waitakere City Council, some economic impact research was undertaken by Market Economics which highlighted that, in addition to the benefits of social cohesion, we have made a very tangible impact economically - visitors from outside Waitakere attracted by events the stadium hosted in 2006 contributed more than \$1.8 million to Waitakere's economy and as well as 72 full-time equivalent employees who were supported through flow-on effects across the Auckland region from these events.



I think it is also worthy to note that 98 percent of income to support the stadium's operation comes from sources other than community hirers (the basketballers, netballers, Special Olympics, local cricket clubs, schools etc) and yet these hirers make up 50 percent of all visitors using the stadium (2 percent income for 50 percent use). Your investment assisted us greatly here.

And we are pleased to note that more than 70 percent of all opening hours to date have been made available to the community, with around 3,000 hours annually being used for community recreation.

Thank you all for making that possible, as gathered in the room are people who without your foresight, vision and courage to invest, none of this would be possible.

Like many pieces of City service infrastructure, you invest in these for other reasons that profit or direct financial return on investment - that takes real courage. It's an easy investment in business to say, well for every dollar I invest I'll see a 10 percent profit in this particular venture - they're not hard to say yes to. However pieces of City infrastructure like this do not always have such clear terms of investment.

Many of the returns are often intangible or hard to quantify in dollar figures and that means it takes real courage and foresight to invest and see benefits - some benefits as I have outlined are quantifiable, such as economic return. But we also know from feedback, we make significant returns in terms of:

- *Social capital and cohesion - the community glue that brings people together and gets them sharing each others company;*
- *Pride in our City;*
- *Profile - Waitakere is on the map, for the first time in 11 years we've helped Auckland host an international netball match and the first national tournament for seven years;*
- *Changing perceptions of Waitakere - thousands of people have been to Waitakere and seen what a young, vibrant, go-forward place we are and more importantly we've shown them that we can be world class; and*
- *Inspiration for our youth (be it through international sporting fixtures or international acts - many of Waitakere's youth have gathered here to see their heroes and role models).*

If you want to quantify these returns, I guess you could ask yourself the question "what if" the stadium closed its doors - what impact would that make? I know our team and trustees feel very proud to hold the mantle at the present time for our community and it gives us great pleasure to serve the community in the way we do. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support and wish you all very well."

Maritime Crew Gigs Overseas

Rudy Sunde and The Maritime Crew have spent the last month travelling and performing in Europe. It's been an amazing tour with a very busy gig schedule, including a show in Amsterdam and I am looking forward to hearing all about it. I am sure the tour will have been incredibly successful and it's always good to hear about locals on the world stage.



Peace Foundation

M115-M118 It was an honour and a privilege to be elected president of the New Zealand Peace Foundation last week. As I said in my speech, which I have attached at pages M115 to M118, the Foundation has a proud history. I look forward to upholding and continuing the dedication to peace and its enriched agenda that now encompasses social change and challenges in this country. As you know, I have been working towards peace for a very long time and it feels now the time is right for another surge forward in this regard. We need to get peace firmly back on the agenda of this country's young people. I was very proud to be able to let the annual meeting know that Waitakere had declared itself a City for Peace and that our official launch of this initiative is just weeks away.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP

MAYOR OF WAITAKERE