

“The Waitakere Way”

**Looking Back,
Going Forward”**

**“Ka titiro ki muri,
ka hoki ki mua”**

**... a celebration of 20 years of
partnership and
collaboration in the West**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PAGE 1
1. GOING WEST	PAGE 2
2. STRONG COMMUNITY PEOPLE AND GROUPS	PAGE 6
3. LINKING COMMUNITY NETWORKS, COUNCIL, GOVERNMENT	PAGE 17
4. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN POLITICAL	PAGE 24
5. THE EMERGING WAITAKERE WAY	PAGE 28
6. PROCESS ISSUES	PAGE 31
7. THE WILD WEST TAMED?	PAGE 35

FROM THE WILD WEST TO THE WAITAKERE WAY:

**snapshots from the development of community,
local authority and government relationships
in Waitakere City**

*.... Community and government people talk
about the development of community action,
social services and strategic collaboration in
Waitakere City...*

*“Dedicated to everybody who has contributed,
heart and soul, to the wellbeing of Waitakere
people”*

*Edited with commentary by David Craig. Interview material from
Melani Anae, Megan Courtney, David Craig and Tracey McIntosh,
for the Local Partnerships and Governance Research Team, The
University of Auckland and Waitakere City Council*

INTRODUCTION

The document that follows consists mainly of quotes drawn from interviews with a range of people who have over years and at different times been involved with the community sector, local government and social services in Waitakere City (often well before it became Waitakere City).

In presenting this, we've decided mostly to let the voices speak for themselves: there's not too much in the way of academic commentary, and if what's said a bit rough and ready, or presents quite particular perspectives or memories of things, well, that's the way it came!

As anyone who's had even the smallest involvement in social services and the sector anywhere will appreciate, what's here, even if it refers to a few highlights, barely scratches the surface. The fields talked about here have involved many many people, dense networks and relationships, where over decades an enormous amount of hard work has been done. We've also chosen at least for this part of this presentation not to name names: an unusual step in a field so strongly characterised by standout leaders and ongoing personal involvement of people over years. The names, the individuals certainly do matter, as we hope other parts of this document will make clear.

The material does tell something of a success story, and this not just because there has been a good deal of success and satisfaction. We've also talked to some of today's central players, people who have sustained commitment, who are the survivors, those who have driven and grown with the processes. People who in general have been sustained in and by them, or by organisations in the middle of them. It's common that history is told by the survivors and winners: but the fact that there is a good deal that has been won means this is a story worth hearing. And as the interviews made clear, there has been even in winning a great deal of blood sweat and tears...

These quotes were initially compiled for a Celebration of Partnerships presentation at Waitakere City Council on 11 April 2003, called From the Wild West to the Waitakere Way. Given this public airing, we sought approval from those concerned for the public use of the materials. There was a degree of editing, certainly of selection, of grouping material into themes which in some cases were different from the original interview contexts: we hope what's here is clearer for this, though not what someone once called 'clearer than truth'.

What's here is in fact only a very small selection of quotes, drawn from a larger body which we will publish in due course, both in hard copy and on the internet. Nevertheless, we think what's here tells a small part of an important story about community people, their networks, how they've learnt to work together in effective and sustained ways, not without differences and ongoing political issues, and not always in the easiest of circumstances. It's obviously an unfinished story, or rather one that will never be finished, with issues that keep on being important, and relationships that continue to change.

What's here we hope will ring a few bells for people, raise a few smiles, hit a few points. This isn't sociological analysis: it's a few snapshots from a family album...

In the course of the Project, we'll also be drawing on this and a wider range of material to raise and consider partnerships and governance policy and practice issues, and for developing our understanding as academics of the sorts of things that are changing our societies.

It's important to note that we promised those who contributed this material anonymity, not least so that they could speak freely... The quotes as presented here have been edited, and grouped under themes by project researchers, usually with quotes from people with quite different backgrounds set alongside each other.

Of course, primary thanks, and our dedication, must go to the community, local government, and government agency people who contributed both all the hard work building the Waitakere Way, and, of course, this material: you know who you are; everyone else will have great fun guessing!!

1. GOING WEST...

It's significant that so many of today's leaders, networks, forums developed because as the physical city grew, a whole range of people saw the opportunity or need for something more than just real estate and subdivisions. Out West, it was pretty clear from the 50s through the 70s that community was more than roads, footpaths, and a three bedroom house on a section. Often, what people built, they built from small beginnings, from scratch, or worse.

They learnt, got to know each other, built alliances, earned respect as they went along. While the West has a long history of settlement by Tangata Whenua and a famous range of later communities, many organisations and people well into the 80s felt like pioneers, felt they could do something new here, felt they weren't ultimately constrained by either a lack of resources, or what was done elsewhere. In fact, many still feel that to an extent today. Resources could be fought for, and it wasn't long before the West had a reputation as a place where new things happened...

Something magic in the West

'It's Something in the water! We've got the 'going West' thing too. Into the sunset! Pioneering spirit!'

'There is something magical about the West. If you talk to people who live here, you will find that they all say that. That – "we are proud to be Westies" – because there's that kind of feeling. We pulled ourselves up by the bootstraps. We've bloody well done it ourselves. We're no-nonsense people. We just get in and do things. That's been a really strong thread for me. There's a sort of sense of excitement about doing this'.

This, to me, comes down to the nature of 'Westiness'. There are some patterns of behavior and characteristics that I think are held by groups as being 'Westy'. I speculate that, even on the spooky level, some of us talk about the land itself being conducive and certainly Maori people may have a perspective on that. But the City's nestled under the Waitakere Ranges and that gives it a sense of location, landmarking and also a sense of almost being nestled in something of a bowl underneath the Waitakere Ranges, as they curve around two sides of the City. So I think there's that as a psychological effect on the Community'.

Pioneering collaboration

'At that time you have to appreciate there was very little presence of central government organisations. New Lynn Department of Social Welfare for example. Only recently opened... I think it was Labor politics that put it out there. There was nothing in Henderson. The seeds of collaboration got started there. It was a bit like, we were all in together – Government agencies, community - going West – the whole symbolism! Wagons circling!'

Subdivision landscapes in the Wild West: A service-free zone

'We were the dormitory suburb for Auckland. So we were getting a large amount of the poorer classes. Nappy Valley, Massey and so on. No government agencies to speak about here. Low socio-economic status..very little in the way of industry, commerce, bugger all. A highly fragmented local government scene as well'.

'I married, moved to the West and had children. At that time, 40 years ago, there weren't the Social Services problems, or the dilemmas. So we didn't have Services. It was a golden time in New Zealand in the 60s. Things changed a little. Some of the first things we saw out here were the development of the large subdivisions. That brought an amount of significant social problems - like unemployment. Massey was the first. Prior to that there had been very little difficulty for most people to build their first homes as young couples. Everyone on my little street, the women didn't work. Traditionally, you stayed home'.

Lack of services

'The main issues [in the 60s were] trying to get the different services into these new towns. It was just green fields... They had these green fields, but they never thought they might need some room for community Centres and Citizens' Advice Bureaus and swimming pools. It was about money more than anything else. So that was a problem. It could have been a hall, a gymnasium, and a rugby club. But general community facilities. Tennis courts. The general things that the community needs.

'People did argue, you shouldn't be spending money for reserves on community facilities. But my argument was always that you've got a balance here. If all we do is provide more and more open space, what use is that to everybody in the short term? You've got to actually get some facilities available now'.

'... you had local body Community Workers at areas like Glen Eden, New Lynn, and facilities being set up in Mt Eden and Mt Roskill and by the different Borough Councils. Often they had nobody to turn to. They were small local bodies. So they used to turn to [others outside, who] became a sort of an Advisor to a lot of the small local bodies. For example on the North Shore, there weren't any Community Workers. So there was only primarily Auckland City and Manukau City. Then Manukau was smaller than it is now. Otahuhu – that was a separate local body. Newmarket and One Tree Hill – all those were little ones.

'I was really concerned about the new suburbs that were being built in the early '70s out there – Massey East, Massey West, Mangere.. The lack of any thinking again in what people might need, down to telephones. They couldn't co-ordinate getting bloody telephones in to those areas – basic communications that people needed because they were so lonely. Women were stuck at home. There was one car. The baby. They were isolated. There was a lot of mental anguish'.

'Those days it was Waitemata City Council. We wrote a paper, which was published as an ideas document. It was called 'Social Planning for New Communities' – about 1974/5. I went around hawking the ideas in it about co-ordination, getting basic services in before you build your big services'.

Maori and services in the West

'Maori flowed into the West from Ponsonby, Grey Lynn and other places into Henderson Valley, Te Atatu North. The West at that time was quite wild. We've been called the Wild Wild West, specially in the 70s but we started to get a good picture of what was needed for Māori'.

'The main reason Māori came here was for jobs but there was nothing in place to attend to the other needs that we had as Māori. Whether they be cultural, iwi needs and we all the story that with the move, our links to our own whakapapa, tribal links and all of that were severed in quite a savage way and that created things. That then created the whole turnaround of our high unemployment, our socioeconomic and the rest. Our health needs were not being met. There was nothing. At the best at that time, it was something like Salvation Army, which wasn't a Māori organisation. Which did they best they could in terms of meeting Māori needs but they weren't Māori, or for Māori with little Māori staff.

'In those days all the Māori committees were very close, there were very few and they were people with passion, that came together because they had a vision, and that vision was to have and provide a service. There was a vision to have a marae, the first marae for Waipareira and the second vision of course, was the service for people, a social service'.

'In the case of our people gathering out here in Waipareira, we were gathering because we had one common interest: that we lived in a community and that we had issues that concerned the community. We had issues that concerned us as parents and we had issues concerning us as workers within the different departments and agencies around here'.

'It was to build an infrastructure that would be the best for Māori. They knew coming together was the way together. They did it because of critical mass, because of the urbanisation-Māori drift to urban areas. There was all of a sudden mass Māori here whose needs weren't getting met'.

'Things used to be informal. The focus was serving the people, a social service to meet everybody's needs, especially Māori. Things started to change years later, but through the 80s it was very, very informal.

'There have been real changes, both real and symbolic. I mean you've got the old Henderson police station, and it was seen as a place that hurt our people. Now it's a place of healing. It's now Whānau o Waipareira.

Not many networks yet..

'Right back in the early days there didn't seem to be a lot of networks at all. There was the Waitakere Women's Network. The Women's Centre was distant from it. But basically that came about in about 1980. It was women working with women's services. There was no way that we were linking up together. So the Women's Refuge, Women's Centre, Abuse and Trauma Centre, lawyers, Victim Support – we all used to get together and talk about services and the development of services. And particularly in those days, we were very concerned because there were no male services'.

Local government in the 60s

'We had four local authorities in those days. They weren't a major factor. At that stage there was no community development. They were in the Henderson Borough, that was 2 miles square – Henderson. Smallest Borough in the country just about. It actually owned all the assets though, because that's where the business sector was. Waitakere was a very rural place with no assets. The vineyards.. So West Auckland was quite rural. It opened up with the motorway. That opened up the West.

Tim's team shake things up

'Tim Shadbolt's [team], that was I guess quite a fresh combination of people for local government, which was traditionally older men – self-employed, often retired. So even though the start had been made, we had not only a range of ages from something like 18 through to 60s..there was a range of professions; two Maori, one Pacific Island person – all of that was really quite rare. And Tim, himself, of course had a very fresh approach to local government and he tended to break down barriers. So I guess that even though that team didn't stay together, there was a different approach and more of a fresh look at what the possibilities for local government were. Having said that, I suspect that things didn't substantially move until the team split and quite a conservative Council came into being. We almost went back into the traditional ways of doing that, but there were two of us still there – I was still very much learning and still am'.

Early problems, early beginnings

'Probably young families, not enough services, the beginning of the breakdown of the family values and structures etc, I think that was beginning to happen then. Big suburbs with very few resources, so poverty began to kick in there. Issues for women beginning to show – solo mums, sexual abuse, family violence. They began to be addressed, or began to be seen. They began to be named, they weren't named before. [What are the major solutions that were seen? Were there general things to solve these issues?] I think it was kind of haphazard, really. People with particular passions and ideas would come forward and start something up. Or the local feminist movement – the Refuge, the Women's Centre, and the Sexual Abuse Centre. The movement began to ripple through into the Community.

Early empowerment

'I used to feel so pleased to be in Waitakere because my friends and peers, who were working in other communities, didn't have the sense of empowerment that I obviously felt. I felt that if something came to my attention that was an issue, that I had places to go and people to talk to, and mostly, a Council that would listen and do something about it. The Council has been really key in that. So that's probably the unique aspect of it.... I remember they were some difficult times too, when you didn't feel you had a voice. Tough. But there's always been friendly Councilors that we could go in to – ones that had kept an eye on us and been particularly supportive of the Community'.

A place for issues

'It appears to me that we're still an issues-based place, and that's where the strength of some of the networking comes, in that you are talking about common purpose in terms of mission or intention, whereas if you do it on a geographic basis, then you may not be bringing together a commonality of philosophy. You're bringing simply a commonality of location, which can be channeled into the common good of the area, such as in Ratepayer groups. But even in Ratepayer groups, there's a diversity and a parochialism'.

2. STRONG COMMUNITY PEOPLE AND GROUPS

The basis of today's successes lies in yesterday's. From early days there were strong community leaders, and strong community networks in a range of areas. These networks typically staged forums where anybody with an interest could have a voice, where issues were raised and debated, often in very open and constructive ways, where there was respect for a range of views, and a sense that both participation and representation mattered, where new arrivals could be broken in, and where leaders could and did emerge... Naming all the leaders- and so many people named many important people is something beyond this presentation. Certainly, the fact that often it was the same people providing continuity, learning to work together, that made a crucial difference. And all along, leadership has mattered, but, again perhaps crucially, alongside processes and forums where those leaders interacted with and got powerful mandates from grassroots people and organisations.

But it wasn't just that it was a good place with good people: there was a good deal of history and water under the bridge, events and fights and issues that had made the people and place what it is today...

There were stories of good local people coming through from very grassroots organisations like Playcentres, and from small beginnings in CABs and community houses. People gathering around issues, people with professional approaches, expecting council and others to engage, drawing on international/ academic/ other learnings. Local community leaders, professional and educated people out in the community, participating in a lot of local forums and intersecting networks. Some of these people for various reasons ending up in elected positions, on council, in council jobs, in professional roles in community organisations. And in these roles working collaboratively: council staff and councillors sitting around the table. All of them interacting and engaging, opening up new ground, and then being further encouraged over time with some of their initiatives being recognised and picked up elsewhere... Through fights around the Kay Rd dump and planning process for the ranges, and upfront projects and processes like the Eco City, the Greenprint.... Building professional expertise, developing roles for policy analysts as well as community development, moving out into new political and policy domains, pushing the edges of things, developing a range of strategic social partnerships.

Over the time, people have come and gone, too, and some of them were missed more than others...

There were also tensions over community ownership vs council leadership, over the differences between paid roles, professionals being paid to attend meetings, and the ongoing roles of unpaid community activists. As consultation processes had multiplied, community and voluntary people were being severely stretched, and even beginning to lose patience with what was seen as bogus consultation. There is still ongoing fragmentation among services, and trust isn't always easy to build. Short term funding and competitive contractualism contribute to this situation. There is little or no funding for coordination activities, and there are cases where core resources and infrastructure is still dependant on changing institutional and political environments. The community sector still doesn't feel entirely secure: even as many are being held up as examples, they still feel vulnerable to a shifty environment.

West people

'I'm not pretending it's perfect, or ever was. The thing was, there was probably a quality about the West – that raw energy. We have incredibly talented artists in the City, right through the Arts, right through to Sports, but really reflecting this incredibly beautiful environment. So, an immense strengthening, an immense energy'.

'the sheer strength of character that some people had has made a huge difference.. These people acted like the yeast in the bread.....they were motivators and visionaries, they could see where we were going'.

'The growth of community organisations in the West was quite organic – can't say when and how things really started. In terms of working together it was key people that were the critical factor and made things happen, rather than \$\$\$\$. We didn't really need much funding to get things happening initially'.

'There's also the socio-economic one in that I find Westy people are incredibly straight and honest, whereas if you go on the Shore, you're struggling continually with bullshit, and appearances. Working with men from the Shore who have been violent, for instance, is different to working in West Auckland. A lot of the guys will come in and say, "Yeah, sure, I whacked her one. She bloody deserved it." You can work from that place. But if a guy comes in the door and says, "Oh, I don't know where she's getting all this from", you know, "and I'm going to have to go and see my solicitor". And it's like; it's bullshit, bullshit. Your program, or your therapy in a way, is bound to take two or three times as long because there is a need for them to maintain their positive presentation to the world'.

'We've got a cultural mix that's interesting. And that Maori is very mixed as opposed to being iwi-based. Your Pacific Island people, I think, are quite mixed in terms of the villages and Islands, and denominations that they come from. However, they all seem to be able to transcend that in terms of greater cultural good. I think that's been important – a willingness or openness to look to the social problem'.

'I think the core of some of the activist type of thing is people who come from a more liberal political position, and West Auckland has got a lot of them. East Auckland is going to contain more professional people who are going to be more, in a sense, without being judgmental I hope, opportunistic in their approach to the world. They will look at the opportunities in business. North Shore's a very mixed community from Glenfield to Milford sort of thing, and has potential I think for that liberal thing, but it gets lost.. There is sort of an ideology of critiquing of 'cut through the bullshit', even suspicion of radicalness, of creative divergent thinking'.

'I particularly would mention the creative because while that is expressed in terms of setting up unique organisations, it's also expressed in terms of art. And Waitakere City, I would see, as the cultural focus of Auckland in terms of the artists and writers that it hosts, fosters, and historically has produced'.

Busting your guts

'I really believe it was a different set of people those days. For some unknown reason it was not easy to get them together but once you got them together, I think those people from those days, if you gave them a task, they'd hang there to the end. I find today that you give people a task and they'll blow out. I don't know if it was a different upbringing or a hard upbringing or what but if you gave them a good concept and they saw the end goal, they'd work really hard, you know, bust their guts. You'd always get the ones that would of course, would do the majority of the work but at least you still had the community together and our group together and I suppose focusing on one thing'.

Getting on with the job

'Out here, you and I disagree today – and that's it, really! Your politics aren't mine, that's it! Up here, you and I can have a major argument about some point. But tomorrow we still can talk and get on and move on. Like, people see there's a greater interest at stake'.

Open-minded people

'It's people that are actually open-minded in terms of the way they approach things. Not only that – aware that in our communities, there are huge numbers of people of incredible experience and talent. And to think it's not an 'Us and Them' – and we don't hold all the ideas, that we needed to build our communities'.

'It's that open-mindedness, the flexible thinkers, the creative thinkers and people who are relationship-builders. I guess it's building trust, so that you try and be as honest as you can. I know there's a lot of cynicism about politicians, but the people I'm talking about are as honest as people are. I think is quite a rare quality of directness and honesty – as much as you possibly can in your own life'.

'And in a lot of ways, optimism is a key thread, a belief that you can make a difference. So I do think that optimism is something, and you can share that'.

Ongoing relationships

'It's all about personal trust.. those relations have built up over a long time. So we've actually got the pay-off now, still. A lot of people are the same players. They've gone and come back. There are some dangers in that. You become a bit incestuous, if you don't check outside... Like, at the moment, Council, when they look at Community Planning, have to be thinking, should we be just talking to the networks we already have, or do we have to go beyond them?

People and networks across the whole city

'I mean, compare us with other places I've worked, where there are hardly any effective citywide networks. Whereas here, you started off with strong citywide networks, and they remain strong citywide networks'.

Ratepayers and greens

'There were other things happening in our Community around that time. In the Valley we had a very strong Ratepayers Group. That was pre Shadbolt – a couple of terms before. Our group was committed to preserving the rural lifestyle and beauty of our area. Urban growth planned by the Council was a real threat. So there was a huge amount of work involved, and a lot of fun too. People striving to do what they believed in, and going to huge lengths to do it. We organized the petition. Imp talking about families busy with young kids, professional people many of whom worked in the City. But there was real commitment to the area and its preservation'.

From playcentre to the world!

'...we strongly believed in the need to have our own identity, to be in control of our own destiny. People together making decisions for themselves – not being "done to". We just did it, We had a strong belief in it and in our ability to do it. It was for the benefit of our children and we grew strong as a community from it. Playcentre gave me, and many other women in the community, the opportunity for personal growth through the training programme. That was a major turning point for me and set me off on an unintended career path'.

A Citizen's Advice Bureau

'Assid Corban was mayor of Henderson. This was before the amalgamation of Henderson, Glen Eden and Waitemata and we looked around and decided that there were all these various organisations that had all sprung up but nobody knew who they all were and they were all separate. So we decided that we would set up a Citizen's Advice Bureau and had a public meeting and away it went. Of course, at the same time, Citizen's Advice Bureaux throughout New Zealand were beginning to develop and you had a national organisation, a bit of an office and we had meetings to look at our ethics and how we were and everything else. It was quite a rallying point. In Henderson here, we set up. We had a very active group and the Combined Churches were behind us and they had this derelict house up in Lincoln Road- so they let us have this derelict house to function from. The Presbyterian Church used it on Sundays for bible class and so on but we had it during the week. It was condemned but it was still liveable. Somehow, Isaac and his council provided us with a bit of basic funding and we also linked up. The Methodist City Mission. At this stage they had social worker out here. A very very bright, intelligent delightful person and she steered us through the business of how to set up and run an organisation. She was absolutely invaluable. It was the Minister's

Fraternity that supported us too and we had a man; a guidance counsellor come out for a session, once a week from Auckland. A small group of local lawyers, who came and were available for general advice, I suppose initially advice for people with legal problems. We had a budgeter and then two of our brightest volunteers decided that they wanted more hands-on because CAB essentially is to advise people where to go and what to do, not to counsel a particular problem, so that's what they wanted to do and they went over to Henderson House, which was sort of an outreach psychiatric for Carrington.

Strong women stand up

'I can think of [the reasons why women got involved] as a gender thing a lot. In those times, employment for women was different. A lot of women were more likely to be working in the community, through processes, networks, Refuge, counsellor training, moving up professionally through the community that way. Perhaps because there wasn't such a demand for women to earn at the same level as there is now, and often women that you saw in those positions and in those jobs, were often women who had needed those services themselves. They had found the gaps and had done something about it. I'm sure there's men involved as well, but I think that men were less involved, because they were more likely to be out there doing real jobs. And being driven to earn more money – more than what the Community sector was paying'.

Building networks by word of mouth: Family planning, marriage guidance, AA, churches...

'Family Planning spawned a lot of very capable women way back in those days, and they were in the forefront of progress and looking after and improving childbirth in the whole post-natal area. I became involved with them and then I was also somehow involved with the AI Anon- the AA and I somehow went to the first Christmas party that AA had in Auckland, way back, and this was quite an extraordinary experience and I was sort of taken on as a bit of a resource person for AA. Someone heard about this or somehow heard me and so I was invited to become part of the executive of the Auckland Marriage Guidance Council. In those days, the Marriage Guidance was essentially a voluntary organisation and it grew and grew. And from that, I started off with Mahi Griffin, the first pre-marriage classes we called them in those days because a lot of people seemed to get married and we had the support of the Combined Churches and so on. So we started of a whole business of pre-marriage classes, which then attracted other people and educators and so on. And we gradually taught ourselves group work rather than lecture work. But that whole pre-marriage business went on for a long time and was very successful in those days. Well, ultimately, I became the chairman of the Auckland Marriage Guidance Council for ten years so I had a lot of association with them. There was one sort of Auckland council and yet North Shore was growing, Henderson was growing, South Auckland was growing, so ultimately we chopped ourselves up and we started...North Shore was going well, South Auckland struggled...but we created another little group out here. So we had West Auckland Marriage Guidance Counselling and that went on and functioned extremely well and grew with more counsellors and educators until it was taken over by the government.

Westies growing into the role

'It was the other part of the Westies that I think often isn't recognised. They and we are Westies, and it is about keeping the bigger picture, people who are educated, people who feel intuitively and often have a theoretical framework. Looking back, I didn't think.. there was a big theoretical frame-work..but I had 'processed' stuff, I just knew what felt right. I was living out at Karekare, we were living very close – the stream was just a few meters from the house. The septic tank would be out-flowing down there. We were constantly concerned about the water quality of the stream – and not just us, everyone in the valley was. We were really concerned about the degradation of the Ranges taking place and the breaking up into subdivision and that sort of thing. So we had to pool experiences – you just couldn't help but look at the bigger picture. Why were we putting out so many bags of rubbish? Once I was on Council, it was like, what has been happening in my own little garden with the septic tank and putting the rubbish out at the gate. Then the bigger picture .. became really passionate about this. I began to realize that there was absolutely nothing to guide Council, in terms of national strategies and things. So you couldn't help but see the picture getting bigger and bigger. Then you started looking at what was happening overseas'.

Voluntary professionals

'Well the advantage of it being a voluntary thing is that there's people from the community...what Marriage Guidance found early on was that to have a good counsellor you needed a person, not an academic, you see? So that you were using people with experience and balance and success in their own lives to be available to the community. This is the basis of it I think. Once you started...if you'd had a fully paid run requiring university graduates and everything else you wouldn't get people who'd proved themselves. The CAB had a selection procedure and a training procedure. Marriage Guidance had one of the best selection and training procedures in the world. We used to have Americans come out and talk to us about their system, where you have a postgraduate activity and they were very intrigued by the fact that we had very few postgraduate people. This made it hard for things like Council and so on to support it because they had to have faith in us, so it was a matter of trust between the funding organisations and the people doing the job. And it worked extremely well, it grew and grew and grew, you see. The mayor at that stage, his wife was having a baby. She was having a home birth and I was involved in that and we decided we better have some antenatal classes so then we set up some antenatal classes in the Anglican church basement- first in the hall and then in the basement and got a physiotherapist to help. Then when they built the new maternity hospital, they decided to take it over, which they did. That was entirely voluntary and that dovetailed in with the Parent's Centre, and of course the Home Birth people were still doing their thing but they weren't really recognised either. That was a group of midwives and that was considered to be beyond the pale'.

A new kind of Marae

'The concept of Hoani Waititi marae was first formed, probably back in the early 60s. Lots of people were involved, key people for this area, many of them gone now, and of course vital input from the Maori Wardens, the Maori Women's Welfare League and the Maori District Council. And I think the link was when they were getting marae together, they actually brought in a whole lot of the schools, like the primary schools, partnership were being made. For once, in those early days, the Pākehā were working with Māori and making those links. And I suppose forging ahead the marae project and over the years what came out of forging all those links was a really good link with the Pākehā community here in the West'.

'Hoani Waititi marae was actually for the people of the West, well actually for all of Auckland and anyone could come and use it. It was to give us as Māori an identity because in the 60s and 70s, Māori weren't as high profile as they are now, no way, you might be Māori, but hey that was about it. You were living in a Pākehā environment and every time you'd go home for a tangi or back to the homeland, that's all there was'.

'Hoani Waititi has had a huge impact on the growth of Maori identity out West. It's a source of great pride for Maori/non Maori alike. Hoani Waititi came before the wave of Maori regeneration, the vision was always so inclusive ...they had a huge outreach into wider community and this was marked by having picture of the Endeavour by the door when you came in'.

Te Whanau O Waipareira

'Why Waipareira and how did we get Waipareira? Why did we even become to be Waipareira? Who were the movers in Waipareira anyway? It was a desire from the whole of the community. Talking about the beginning of Waipareira, and you'd see by the time in the 80s, or maybe the late 70s, Māori had been gathering, I mean, been out fundraising, we had the marae growing, kapa haka, there was a lot of activities around the 70s you know.

Actually, it was a good time in the 70s. There was a different type of leadership in the 70s. They were pretty bold. I'd have to say the 70s set the scene for the 80s and what had happened was because we gathered so much and hui so much, we came together and there were other needs that we required. We didn't have any sort of special status apart from being the Māori community because we had a Māori marae- but there was more to being just a Māori up at the marae. There were other initiatives that were introduced. In those days, they had a very strong Māori Women's Welfare League movement, in this community alone'.

'In the case of our people gathering out here in Waipareira, we were gathering because we had one common interest: that we lived in a community and that we had issues that concerned the community. We had issues that concerned us as parents and we had issues concerning us as workers within the different departments and agencies around here.

'It was to build an infrastructure that would second if not the best for Māori. They knew coming together was the way together. They did it because of critical mass, because of the urbanisation- Māori drift to urban areas. There was all of a sudden mass Māori here whose needs weren't getting met'.

Issues around emerging PI leadership

'My definition of a leader could be different from their definition for a leader you know. I mean somebody that is quite strong and clearly articulates the need of their own community and what that need is... It's really up to them, so they need to actually sort that out. I think the [...] for years, I mean I have worked with [that] community for the last 10 years, now that they've got their own politics as well that they need to sort out like now they've got the Community Trust and they've got the Incorporated Society you know so those two groups, you know I mean I was invited to go and talk to the two groups on separate you know and for me I have to be careful that I actually don't step on anybody's toes from their community you know so and I made that quite clear to them you know I'm only here to share some of the knowledge that I have and the information you know it's really up to you guys you know so yeah.

The beginnings of the health forum

'It was the end of the 70's when we had this little group wasn't it? And we used to meet for lunch in the Baptist Church premises and you couldn't belong unless you brought along a really nourishing lunch, you couldn't bring along junk food. We had to talk about where we were going in the last week and what was happening. It was very much a little group about ten or so and then I can't quite remember how the West Auckland Health forum formed but it grew out of that group. That group also launched proper lunches for kids at school to get away from the junk food and of course the school said, the tuck shop said " oh, but we make a profit and if you put in healthy food we won't make a profit". But in fact it didn't work that way, Henderson High School piloted the thing and it took off and went on making a profit... sandwiches and filled rolls and stuff. That was the beginning that sort of had folded and grown, folded and grown over the years of getting decent food into school lunches. It didn't ever take off with all the schools as we hoped. That was in the early 80's. Yes, and then what happened then was you see the Council funded for the first year this West Auckland Health Forum.

They funded a community liaison person, that was '89, including office space, no '87, the community facilitator and researcher, two people were selected...we selected them...community facilitator and research officer and it was funded including office space and telephone etc by the City. The important thing was Lee Gatt's expertise in getting around all the various organisations in the city and drawing them in to be part of this Health Forum.

There wouldn't of been a West Auckland Health Forum that had developed if it hadn't had been for Lee. She was marvelous and so she drew people from all of these health-orientated organisations. Also, right from the beginning when we had our first big public meeting, the District nurses who of course, they've been emasculated since, they were a very important part of community health set up. They were very much part of the early organisation. Since then, of course, because they'd been because they're employed by the Hospital Board they've been told they can't really belong to these sorts of things because they might say something critical of the Health Board. They've clobbered them and also the numbers and everything else have been wolfed right down. But in those days they were a very potent and very important part of the community, when we set this up in '87, they were very much part of the Health Forum.

The health forum changes

'While the Council funded the you know, put some essential funding in for your co-ordinator and so on, the whole thing grew like that and then it was decided that being a health thing, the Hospital Board could take it over. So in '89, the Hospital Board decided that committee of the Forum would be a standing committee of the Auckland Area Health Board. That was the beginning of the rot. Once you become a standing committee, we got paid for meetings you see and then the new National Government came in and clobbered the whole you know upset the whole apple cart. The Hospital Board was taken over and they very rapidly stopped funding the Health Forum and so for about a year the funding was withdrawn in '91. In '89 we became the standing committee in the Hospital Board. In 1991- '92, the funding was withdrawn and the Forum as such went down hill. For awhile, the committee kept Lee Gatt going by paying her what the Hospital Board gave us for meeting expenses. We just diverted that to Lee but of course, that couldn't go on forever and by '94 there was no core for the Annual General Meeting and that was bowled. But when it was functioning during those two or three years, it really did a lot, we got the Maori Health Awareness thing going and the Hospital Board accepted a Maori as a person on the committee. And we got the Health Fono that's the Pacific Island people going and doing their own thing. So that from that Health Forum came the Maori('s) developing and the Islanders doing it. I think that's the greatest thing we did. One of the good things that came out of being a standing committee for the Hospital Board was that they were recognised and accepted and actually paid a bit of something. Which whereas before, they hadn't had any of that. When the actual Health Forum went down the gurgler, they were beginning to develop themselves and they've gone on developing themselves.

Getting PI participation in a community health forum

'It was really really hard going you know for the fact is that there wasn't really a lot of people that know what a health forum is about you know and I think you know Pacific people in those days were probably quite happy in their own health and lifestyle sort-of-thing. So it took a whole year just to get the thing off the ground and like you know we were given the Council to have our meetings there, we were given Social Welfare to have our meeting there, we were given you know any of those agencies that I was sort of dealing with you know but it's just that the people don't turn up you know so... It's been a lot of hard work really trying to bring the community together, you know, but I think you know it's like anything else you just have to move on. When we advertise in the local paper we sort of you know in those days we didn't have any things like 531PI or Radio Samoa and all that sort of stuff you know. It was really relying on you talking with the people you know and try and bring them to these sort of fono. It has been a real hard struggle but I think you know somehow you can sort of see some of the end results – what's happening up there now you know and how it's developing and grown'.

Community networks and umbrellas

'What happened out here - and it wasn't a new start, what they did was build on what was already there – organisations got together. Those delivering either similar sorts of services, or services that could be running parallel or linking up in some way, and said Let's plan together.

So, for instance, in Mental Health Services, all the Mental Health organisations got together, with consumers, and that's when 'shared vision' was created. ...What they did was set up a way, that when they wanted to put proposals forward for funding, they actually got the mandate of the wider group. So in other words, they were working collaboratively in a competitive environment. The same thing happened with services for abuse and trauma, sexual abuse and so on. They've set up the best practice stuff. They've set up, too, a whole lot of networks. They've set up organisations and umbrella groups and networks.

The strengths of Shared Vision for Mental Health

'Shared Vision has done a huge amount not just in mental health. We've all learned so much from it. The processes that Shared Vision have used have been replicated by many other organisations and sectors because its way of working has been solid and has had lots of integrity'

Community forums that work: why?

'That's because, I think, it's come bottom-up, instead of top-down. I've got a lot of questions as to whether or not local body induced fora a work very well. They tend to be talking places where not a lot comes from in terms of action or even money, maybe. That's partly because Council is really, still, bound by a lot of the 'rubbish; rates; and roads' thinking. And if anything gets slashed by a conservative turn in Government, it's your Community stuff. It comes out of your own sense of cause or mission, as opposed to, 'You have been invited to..'. There is some pressure to attend; even coming right off the appearances thing. You must appear to be present.. Well, it doesn't go down that well with Westies. Westies see through the bullshit and say: "Shit, I've got two families waiting to move into.. who are on the street. This better be a good meeting!"

Taking on new problems

'People do appear to have an attitude to solving problems, which fascinates me. And consequently a lot of innovations have come out of West Auckland. If I look in my own field at Domestic Violence, say, it had one of the first, perhaps even the first, Refuge in New Zealand. This is about 21/22 years ago. The first men's program which I was involved in setting up, which was 20 years ago. The first men's house which we set up about 10 years ago – it lasted a couple of years – it was actually before its time and so it fell over. (Men as in men kicked out of their homes through domestic violence orders.) What else? Waipareira is an innovation of its own – The Waipareira Trust. Hone Waititi is an amazing statement. And both of those organisations had the idea of 'urban iwi', as opposed to traditional iwi. That fact, that those two – that's their identification I think, gives a huge clue to West Auckland. We're not here under some sort of socio-economic hat as in the suburbs. We might be under some sort of whakapapa-iwi link. We're here because we're here. This is the ground. This is the place, and we do it. And we're prepared to solve our local problems.

'So currently, we've got the Ranui Project which is an innovation. Last year I was talking to somebody who was working out of the Department of Ed. in Wellington, trialling Values education in West Auckland schools for a National project. We've got the Restorative Justice Project running out of West Auckland Courts just at the moment; Family Conferencing as well. Effective Practice. It worked for us. The idea's fine. But what would be interesting is to look at why, perhaps, that hasn't worked. And for me, there may be some slight clue in that people believe that it's going to create more case meetings. And West Auckland services are so flat out, the last thing people want is a whole lot of Case Meetings'.

Getting community development into council

'The importance of that was to unite people, as much as the outcome. It demonstrated that people could work together, that they could get results, that they would get coverage. It took six years or something – it was no short campaign. It was ups and downs and lulls and so on. By the time we finally won, it was under Tim's terms. Political change, basically, took place to create the conditions whereby we could actually succeed in doing that.

Council and community in the 80s

'In earlier days there were no government departments out West, they were all in Auckland City so you had no people to talk to locally. There was no ethos of central government being part of a locality fabric. Those that did take a locality focus eg. the education department did so in such a way that looked at needs and then gave people information about the decisions they had made for them. Councils for example had no say in where schools might go."

'They didn't have such a defined role in the Community. They've become a lot clearer about their relationship with the Community, although that comes and goes with what the politics are at the time. But certainly there's been a lot more support about the Community. Like, I've always had a close relationship with Carolynne Stone, Penny Hulse and I think they've been really strong supporters of the Community. I've always felt valued by certain people in

Council, and certainly undervalued by others! Council do see that they do have a place and they define it more clearly. Whereas if I think back to the late '80s, and early '90s, it was a bit chaotic in what was pushed through. Like, I think some of the things that got through were – good systems weren't in place. Or the political arm didn't know. Or the political arm did, and the other arm didn't. ..it's far more accountable. Like, consultation processes. I'm just so impressed with the City Council's willingness to listen to Community. And I know that they don't necessarily – aren't able to – fight through all the Community's desires, but they do listen and they do find a way.

New opportunities and capacities for the council following amalgamation

'There were no major partnerships with central government before Waitakere City formation in 1989. Things like the grant to get the Ranui Action Project going would never have happened in the old days. There wasn't the pressure for groups to collaborate like there is now and there weren't big, complex gaps to fill either. This situation lends itself to a joint approach to social needs'.

'With local government reform in 1989, came the annual planning process which stipulated community consultation – this has had a huge impact on the way that communities are involved **and expect** to be involved in what their Council does. Before it was like they didn't care.'

'There was a huge drive to get a local hospital facility – it had a huge galvanising effect. The concern was shared by all councils in the area and many people worked continuously on this issue for 40 years.'

'... another important thing in terms not only of different approaches and different people coming into the Council (quite often women who are very good at 'process') but also we had an opportunity, because amalgamation meant that you had a bigger city and you also had the opportunity to bring on some staff who were quite specialist. We were very fortunate in having 2 or 3 people brought in: a Chief Executive who was open to new ideas, who was a flexible thinker, who wasn't afraid of powerful women, because lots of people are; but also we had an incredibly 'big thinker'- who vastly influenced the ability of the staff to start looking at things in a different way'.

'[These] people, who stuck in there through some of the ups and downs, started to bring on board people who were younger, who were open to new ideas, who were often graduate-trained and not in narrow areas. I guess we gradually built together, and attracted, some key minds, some very bright people. So what happened was the coming together of the bureaucracy of the local government officials, and the politicians, in a way that broke down a lot of the barriers.

New council processes

'There was land where new decisions had to be made. So right from the beginning, we said, What a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate something that's really different, that actually respects all these things that the Community has been saying to us. Things like, the District Plan –how could we do it – a use a 'process' to really involve the community; but end up with results that were going to.... Like, we just kept on and on saying, What we want for our grandchildren is something better than what we've got now.

'We recognised it was really important to work with the really active groups that we had out here anyway, keeping close contact with environmental groups, ratepayer groups, particularly the key ones in those early days in the Waitakere Ranges. They were far more active in working with the other groups. Then there were key people in the community that also needed to be kept on board with it. ...A lot of the people who had been involved in a whole lot of the different groups.

'So what we did, we made sure that we were actually involving them right from the very early stages with talking about what we might be doing. They could see that it wasn't our idea, that what we were doing was actually pulling together into a framework the stuff that they'd been pushing for, for so long, about a: care of the environment; b: social issues and the need to reflect the community's interests; c: the concern was to ensure that we were developing more job opportunities out here. Certainly right from that very early stage, we were looking at including businesses.

New structures, new relationships between people

'We were fortunate because we had people like the Head of Planning ... in charge of the District Plan. [We] hadn't worked this way before, but a number of us had good relationships.

Also, if I remember correctly, within Council, [the CEO] set up a structure that they were working across the Departments for the first time ever in the Council. So Planners were working with the Works people and they were working all together with the Strategic Plan... So they were getting it all around in terms of all the planning that was taking place. ...We blurred the boundaries between political and Officer roles, but we were all really clear about our own ones. But we would get together as working parties. A lot of it was unpaid. But we wanted to. We were absolutely committed. It was absolutely full-time. So there was a blurring of the roles between those two, with each of them absolutely clear what our official roles were, but saying We need to work together. Then there was the cross-Council work, across all the Units.

Close working partnerships, and trust

'And I also see we can sit down – politicians and staff – right at the beginning of an idea, together. And you look at it together, rather than always reacting to something. When I actually did do that at Central Government once and just said to someone, and I could see that that was just a totally new idea, to brainstorm in a focus group, to start with.. because you needed to have written something first. You needed to have decided what the ideas were before you talked about it, because it was too dangerous. It is that 'trust'. There is a huge degree of trust, and respect, in there. Surprise, surprise. But it is! And that, again, was a key element – that we had a huge level of trust with some of those key bureaucrats. Not always agreeing! Sometimes, I had quite strong arguments with the Chief Executive, for example. But, we knew that they were working jolly hard. We knew that we had a similar vision, and that we'd need to work through some of those things. That's where 'building that relationship' is really, really, key.

Keeping the big picture in sight

'...what we were really wanting to do, was to increase the job opportunities in Waitakere City. We were really concerned that over 60% of our working population was leaving the City every day, and adding to the congestion on the motorway. We had such a young and 'growthful' population, as we still have, and realizing that things are only going to get worse, not better.

'We realized, too, what a broad spread of different cultural groups that we had, and how important it was to really celebrate and incorporate and utilize those strengths. We were really struggling with Maori representation through all parts of the Council's work, not just the legal requirements, but what we were actually wanting to do, plus we had quite a lot of work.. contact situations..

Eco and social concerns together

'We were really concerned about the degradation of the Ranges taking place and the breaking up into subdivision and that sort of thing. So we had to pool experiences – you just couldn't help but look at the bigger picture. Why were we putting out so many bags of rubbish? ...I began to realize that there was absolutely nothing to guide Council, in terms of national strategies and things. So you couldn't help but see the picture getting bigger and bigger. Then you started looking at what was happening overseas.

Wider political contexts

'What we did have is that the Government had signed Agenda 21. So we were actually able to use that. I think we used it as political clout with the Government.

Working with community groups

'We recognised it was really important to work with the really active groups that we had out here anyway, keeping close contact with environmental groups, ratepayer groups, particularly the key ones in those early days in the Waitakere Ranges. They were far more active in working with the other groups. Then there were key people in the community that also needed to be kept on board with it. People like Gary Taylor, and a lot of the people who had been involved in a whole lot of the different groups.

'So what we did, we made sure that we were actually involving them right from the very early stages with talking about what we might be doing. They could see that it wasn't our idea, that

what we were doing was actually pulling together into a framework the stuff that they'd been pushing for, for so long, about a: care of the environment; b: social issues and the need to reflect the community's interests; c: the concern was to ensure that we were developing more job opportunities out here. Certainly right from that very early stage, we were looking at including businesses.

'We started off, and maybe we need to come back to 'keeping the Community involved', because it was always a concern of how we were going to bring the Community along to a stage where we knew where most of it was the underground part of us which nobody could actually see, and recognizing that in our annual plan, significant amounts of money were needing to be put aside for what a couple of Councils used to call 'Analysis by Paralysis'. ...It was absolutely essential that we had good people and that there were enough of them to take us through.

Creating a buzz

'We did a lot of presentations, a lot of talking to people, and it's sharing what's possible. So I do think that that communication and the floor for exchange of information and the stimulation as we did.. I was fortunate to be able to go overseas, and see, again, some dynamic people – 'water people' in Australia, 3 chaps in this case, one in Canberra, one in Adelaide, one in Sydney – who, in themselves, were 'inspirers', who were doing community stuff. And that inspires you. So I think there's quite an 'infection' in that kind of optimism and sharing different ways of doing things. I think creating the spaces to do that is very important.

The fight for the eco-city

'There used to be terrible battles...Policy Analysts..Planning Department..that was located down on the very bottom floor of Council. It was like the bowels of the Council. Somebody once described it as being the 'engine-room' of the Council, like the rest of the building was like a ship, and that's just exactly it did feel like. So, we had to fight hard that the funding was there.

'[We] used to discuss how we were going to keep the Community on board.. We decided to 'brand' the City as an 'Eco-City' right from early on. We recognised that there needed to be some ways of demonstrating to the Community what that was. And Ann persuaded me – it took me a while – she said, Look, we don't have to keep going out with documentation. We don't have to keep telling people about it. Let's let them find out what an 'Eco-City' actually is, by a whole lot of practical things that we're doing'.

'What we decided to do was to ensure there were a whole lot of out-front things that were happening that were, at the same time, linked in the political directions that we were moving into. Things like (some of them were very little, and we've still got them going) like 'Trees for Babies'. Every year, at tree-planting time, each Community Board has an amount of money, and anyone who has had a baby during the year can come along and plant a tree in that area that has been designated by the Community Board. It's one that they want to see further developed. It isn't just tree planting. Usually, it was actually developing the City'.

3. LINKING COMMUNITY NETWORKS, COUNCIL, GOVERNMENT

Something powerful, perhaps distinctive has emerged in the ways not just the people and individual organisations, but the networks themselves have found ways to interact and work together, often to take on new areas, or to support new ventures being started by one network or another.

The networks themselves have often participated in often strongly representative ways in community wide forums, planning processes, relationships with council and government agencies. So it has not just been relationships between isolated service providers or community groups, but a whole multi-level combination of networks of networks, inter-network forums, and (forgive me) intergovernmental ways of working that has set the crucial working context.

It's become a context within which they expect and demand a proper voice, and where they are well able to be a formal part of activities like collaborative planning which begin to affect actual programmes, budgets, and so on.

Collaborative working

'It just seemed to be the only logical way to go. You can't deal with this on your own. You have to look at ways of doing it together, and just get on with it'.

'...Once again, you have to work together because there's not enough of you to do it on your own. In working together, you have to find the one thing or two or three things that most people can actually agree on. That's your basic principle of partnership'.

Community networks and umbrellas

'What happened out here - and it wasn't a new start, what [people] did was build on what was already there – organisations got together. Those delivering either similar sorts of services, or services that could be running parallel or linking up in some way, and said Let's plan together. So, for instance, in Mental Health Services, all the Mental Health organisations got together, with consumers, and that's when 'shared vision' was created. ...What they did was set up a way, that when they wanted to put proposals forward for funding, they actually got the mandate of the wider group. So in other words, they were working collaboratively in a competitive environment. The same thing happened with services for abuse and trauma, sexual abuse and so on. They've set up the best practice stuff. They've set up, too, a whole lot of networks. They've set up organisations and umbrella groups and networks'.

Working with Pakeha networks...

'... They came and said to me 'We're from the WEA, we have a very strong network of people and we're Pākehā and we want to make a difference by working with Māori and we're wondering what we can do, and we've come to ask you what is it you would like us to do?' Well, from there a lot of us became involved with Pākehā networks and became involved with different community houses in the community. There were different programmes like literacy, numeracy, English as a second language, getting a driver's licence, getting a passport, getting a CV in those days. Working with these Pākehā networks was quite an education because we couldn't believe that this bunch of Pākehā did want to make a difference from working in the community. This took us into the Council and we started to relate with the Council and that was way back in the 80s, I think, in the early 80s'.

'I moved from being a Mum, doing my training, and I went and worked at the HELP Foundation, doing crisis work with raped, abused women. And I became involved in a group that (this is the origin of what we're talking about) were wanting to set up services in Waitakere, because there were no services for sexually abused women and children in Waitakere City. And there was a tremendous mushroom(of disclosures) at that point in time. That group was made up of key people on Social Welfare and Health Nurses etc. And we met for some time. What was a very organic community based service then grew from people

getting together and the statutory agencies and non-statutory, identifying the needs, going to City Council. Tim Shadbolt was in the Council at that time, and we managed to get help. They were putting that new linkage road down Lincoln Road, and into Central Park Drive, and there was a house that was being moved and they moved that up onto the Park and gave it to us! It was very generous on behalf of the Council. It's like we identified the need, had public meetings, big public meetings, heaps of interest, and got the Council along and said we need a Community Centre. We need it. We want it. And Council got there and said, Okay! So that's how that began for the Community.

Pioneering relationships

'In the '80s, it was very 'pioneering', but also Services were very generalized. They began to become more specifically client population focused. Like, the mushrooming of Women's Refuge or Sexual Abuse Services or Family Violence Services, whereas at one time the Women's Centre, say, would probably do everything. Pioneering - people sort of carving their territory. I remember that quite strongly. There was a very territorial base in Community Social Services. I know when the Sexual Abuse Centre first started, even when we did a lot of consultation, there was a lot that was jealously guarded, and it still is. I think that the Community sector in Waitakere jealously guards who is acceptable and who is not, and how people become acceptable. They have to prove themselves. They have to become involved in the network. They've got to be willing to put in time to develop relationships before they're trusted.

'But back then, I think we had the potential for rifts to occur, and rifts did begin to occur. And a lot of us put quite a lot of energy into 'Let's sit down and talk about it'. And we did a lot of that in the early days. So the potential for rifts was there, and they didn't happen because we did things like the 'co-gender dialogue'. We did things like developing WAVES or WAVAN, which were quite unique in those times. Everybody that was involved would get together. I remember that we had quite a few facilitated or processed meetings. We'd talk about difficult things. We'd talk about some of the myths that were developing about Social Services, or some of the truths as well. So that we were debunking them or working our way through it bit by bit. So it was quite a tough time.

Early networks, government departments, and WADCOSS

'What predated WADCOSS was the West Auckland Resource Network. That was really the first attempt that I'm aware of – to bring a wide range of agencies together. It was very deliberately done in the recognition that there were a lot of people in Government service that couldn't really speak out themselves. We're not talking about a situation when debate or dissent or anything was encouraged'.

'When you look back, some of the early meetings of Wadcross were, themselves, quite innovative in the way they tried to do things. What we were doing of course is trying to find any kind of a way to make people come. It's not as if there was an instant agreement that this was the best thing since sliced bread. In setting up any kind of organisation where you try and get people to commit to doing things, you always have a struggle to get them'.

'We set up Wadcross on the model of District Councils of Social Services, which was already reasonably strong in existence in other areas. I remember having meetings where there were 30 or 40 people there. Everybody there would stand up for about 3 or 4 minutes, and talk. You could have these meetings which would go on interminably. Some of them were pretty cool. They still work like that. Over the last couple of years they've resurrected that 'lunchtime forum thing.' That role was dropped for a while. It's a very valuable thing to have. There's also other ways. There's a whole multitude of networks now where previously Wadcross had very few'.

'WADCOSS gave the protection for public servants to raise issues. Issues could be raised through Wadcross as a neutral broker. Issues that couldn't be raised directly by public servants....'

'...Then many long evenings into the morning with the Te Whanau o Waipareira forums every month. Simple things like the WADCOSS forums where we literally put a soap box in the middle and let everybody get up and talk. Progressively, WADCOSS took a major role in umbrella-ing organisations and nurturing organisations, holding their funding and supporting them until they got to a point of being able to move on themselves'.

The beginnings of strategic collaborative planning and professionalisation

'...you planned, locally, in the absence of central planning. You actually got your act together locally, and with planning you could do pretty well what you liked. And we re-organized a community services team. But it was also recognizing that to be effective, we had to work at three levels – both the individual casework level; the group level; and integrate well with the community initiatives through local government.... I wouldn't say that was typical. It was just a combination of factors – the way we responded – and the 'let's do it' attitude. A lot of other places didn't have the confidence to do it. I think the boundaries often were in people's heads, to be quite frank, not there in reality. We did simple things, too, which sound simple now, but they were perceived to be radical at that time. ... So that professional background and being exposed to different ideas was important... Coming in and offering people a vision, saying, "Let's plan", and convincing people of the value of planning. It was hard work to get some people to take a day out of their work and believe there's value in planning.

The professionalisation of community work

'There were people from Policy backgrounds, Probation. I guess they came from the social sector rather than the commercial. As time went on, Community Workers had to upskill in all sorts of areas. The areas [we] found it necessary, working at a regional level, were in the area of Policy. It's been the same right across the board, that people, to provide the policy advice to Councils – there was nobody else to give it other than the Community Advisor. And there was always this tension between what title would you go under – would you be a Community Advisor, you advise the Council, or would you be a Community Development Worker who works with the people? You had to do both actually. But some people used to go through angst trying to work out the titles, because it would give us that flavor. My preference was to do it all. But you did have to upskill, and become better at policy analysis.

Emerging priorities, new goals

'When you look back, it's pretty clear, you can see a basic review of issues from the previous year, pulling out priority issues, and then your standard 'management by objective' stuff. What was crucial was 'headline goals', and by those goals, kept people focused. One year, I remember, a ball park-goal was that we would take no Maori children into care. That created a huge storm, which was good. People debated it, you know? Our National Office said, "You can't have that." We said, "Yes, we can. That's our goal. But if we take one or two into care, that's not failure." So, 'Headline Goals' – the symbols are quite important.

The beginnings of Effective Practice

'The other one ... was the 'Strengthening Families – Effective Practice'. That came about prior to it being called 'Effective Practice'. [We met together] probably two years prior to anything happening.... What we were finding, with people who were working with children and families was that kids were just slipping through the net because statutory agencies at that time were busy setting boundaries who they would and wouldn't see. At one time, CYPS would work quite holistically with a child, but they started re-trenching. They'd be saying, No, we won't be seeing that child, Mental Health Services were saying the same. So there was no inter-agency collaboration, or very little. It became really clear in the mid-'80s that something had to be done.

'And the Waitakere Child and Family Network, Children and Young Persons Coordinating Group got started.... We got an agreement to set up a model. Before that there was a meeting with Margaret Bazley. That was a really exciting time too. We began to recognize that we could work, bypass the systems. Like, Health had their systems and Social Welfare and Education had theirs, and they didn't talk to each other. We realized as a group that,

working on a Project, we could actually bypass that by setting up what we call 'Effective Practice Meeting'. Then of course when we did get the support from both statutory agencies with the Government agencies, the model began to get clearer and clearer about how we could work. And the support from Council. Once again, the community could do so much, but it became far more powerful once Council got behind it.

'And then, when Social Policy agencies and Government started recognizing the benefit of it, it was quite an amazing time what happened around the whole of New Zealand was the development of collaborative partnership models. And I don't know that Waitakere was totally instrumental in that but we had a good part to play. And the fact that it did come from Community was really important. And we did have a struggle once again. Like, we developed a model, named it and got it going and then we didn't feel pressured by the government people to do it their way. It ran the risk of moving away from the Community. And we had some very tough discussions with government agencies, about how we could maintain some Community voice and links. I don't know that we were totally successful because there were rifts in the Community about it. They felt they'd lost their say in it. I was the Community representative on the Effective Practice management group.

'Like, just an amazing sense of linkage with Effective Practice Model when Community and statutory agencies and Margaret Bazley all came together, and it was just fantastic! Then we got three Director-Generals up and it was like the whole family came together. It was quite an amazing feeling. And the fact that those three Director-Generals had never met together! It was just phenomenal! That level of collaboration started something, and gave the Community and Council, everybody, a sense of This is how it should be. This is how we've got to do it. We've just got to build partnerships and collaboration. And it needs a lot more of that, because there's still tremendous issues about funding gaps and things could be far more efficiently organized'.

Council and social services

'Because I had that lack of confidence in myself, I couldn't be 100% sure, but my sense is that the Council didn't see their role, particularly, as being involved in supporting or being involved in Social Services. That was my sense. I think they, sort of, did a helping hand, but I don't think they saw themselves as advocates for the Social Services the way they do today. That's been a growing thing. The sophistication of the Councils, and their recognition of healthy cities has grown.

Council and Pacific peoples

'Waitakere City Council set up the first PIAB. It's the first ever committed, their commitment was such that they gave it to a policy analyst. So good will is not short. I would like to see it formalised by way of an amendment to the Local Govt Act. In Waitakere it's working quite well. I would like to see what's happening in Waitakere in the rest of Auckland and I can't see it happening in the rest of Auckland and you talk about enhancing. Well let's say for example enhance the relationship between Auckland City Council and the Pacific communities – the only way I can see it happening is an amendment to the legislation and create a legal obligation. I've been doing some work on that front. There are things that are happening right now but in the end if I am ever successful it's going to be out of good will again.

'You wouldn't find anywhere else in the country in any local authority a group of islanders who meets monthly inside the council chamber, that's us. I mean that's a physical thing, but it means a lot. It means the council are saying to the Pacific community – 'yes we want to work with you' Before 1998 we were meeting, not at my place, not big enough, anywhere we could find and some council staff came, just out of their own interest. And the door slowly slowly – the door is now wide open so it's up to us now to make use of that, to do our things the best we can and right down from the mayor and so on. So with all of that, and I was saying before the way to get our people forward, is through economic development rather than depending on the State. And by that I mean at a community level'.

‘. . . to acknowledge that in Waitakere City it’s very much a multicultural city and you know for us as Pacific people to work towards to be part of the whole Waitakere City Council structure, in terms of becoming councillors on the WCC, you need to build that capacity in terms of the Pacific – the whole infrastructure of the WCC – I’d like to see more Pacific Islands people working there and, but also I think we need to start lobbying hard in terms of having more Pacific Islands people on the Council you know and that’s something we still haven’t successfully worked through it you know. And the Council needs to actually play a very big part in that you know.’

‘I can see it happening but it needs – Pacific people can’t isolate themselves from this whole thing. You know they need to work in collaboration with the WCC but at the same time I think WCC need to acknowledge the importance of Pacific people within their city and by doing that they need some ways of working towards some sort of a partnership with the Pacific Islands community. I mean I know that we’ve got PI the advisory board there but sometimes you know the community are saying that their voice are still not being presented there so you know we need to actually take that on board and listen to what the people are saying and the Council need to listen to what the Pacific people are saying you know in terms of their needs. If it doesn’t happen then I think there is definitely something wrong in terms of WCC and their policies and the whole structure that won’t meet the needs of Pacific people in Waitakere City’.

‘On the well being and social economic development aspect again it’s particularly of Pacific peoples within areas that will impact on their social well being – issues of health, education, environment – a whole range of other sectors that Pacific people need to understand about and what are their specific needs and how can that be integrated into the planning processes of Council. Again it’s the whole thrust of empowering Pacific peoples to basically come together and assess and plan how best they can address their own needs as they see it through their own eyes basically. So the whole notion of Pacific peoples empowerment you know by Pacific for Pacific people’.

‘Apart from PIAB organising itself it’s looking at the best way to link up with the communities because community ownership is one of the fundamental principles for which this Board operates and the recognition by the communities – a very strong bottom up approach and talking about empowerment and full participation of the Pacific peoples in determining the future development process. The spokes of the wheel all sort of come in in a different way but that’s the sort of framework eh in which it’s trying to work. We’re fortunate that the leadership of the Council, there’s recognition of having to work together with Pacific peoples cos otherwise if you look at Manukau it’s all token . But Council here has really contributed very much into, looking 70%/75% of budget of core support is from Council and all the other Pacific people in the other regions they were saying to us “How did you guys do that?” – it’s basically the leadership the vision – and for them to constantly feel that we’re knocking on the door and saying “We want to be another significant stakeholder in the devt of this city and Pacific people” – 12% and it’s slowly building up. For the whole of Auckland you know 2050 we’ll be looking at 20-30% in the next 50 years it’s going to be the demographics. Through natural growth out of 5 Aucklanders 4 will be Pacific origin, so it’s going to be a major stakeholder and as such I think that’s where the vision of the Councillors were looking at – it could well be the next election Pacific people will start coming in as councillors and that’s what we want. That’s the only benefit that Manukau has, they already have people in...’

‘The PIAB has now been able to link up to the Ministry and under the capacity building strategy has been able to work together with the Ministry in really ensuring that there is a holistic and integrated approach you know to dealing with needs of Pacific peoples so you’re looking at a whole range of intersectoral issues – health economic development, education, even on specific areas such as mental, disability. As a partnership basically it has provided a very effective tool in consolidating the needs of Pacific peoples in Waitakere and as a community have been able to come together and strongly and effectively work with Council to address local needs for Pacific peoples and I think also at the same time it has created a model for which local govt and local Pacific peoples can be able to work together and that leads to the fact that this is the first you know local partnership between local govt and any Pacific Islands community set up or organisation basically first in NZ’.

Funding WADCOSS

'...the contract with the Council meant that we [WADCOSS] were able to become a viable and, I think, effective organisation, though from time to time we do apply elsewhere if we're wanting extra things. It's actually meant that we have sufficient money to employ staff at a reasonable level.... the Council came to the party. They took us to see the building that we're now in. The Salvation Army were in it at the time. It was horrendous. It just looked awful. It was much darker than it is now. Little offices. Huge great big kitchen where they cooked up a meal they used to serve us – 80 to 100 people. It was just dreadful. Three Council Officers showed us around. They said, What do you think about it? I said, You'd only offer it to the Community. And they basically said, Well, it would scrub up well. And I said, Well if you think it's a really good place to work, you vacate your offices and we'll take them over from you. But I have to say, once we decided that we'd give it a go.. The Council put about \$20,000 in. The shared office space where the community groups are – there was actually a gap between them and the rest of the building was just a bridge that went across. The Council did all of that work – sort of, joining it up properly and making the four offices, and then putting in the ramp. Then we set about getting sponsorship for the rest of it. There were other nice things like.. At that time Waipareira Trust had a training, painting module going. All the trainees painted the place'.

'With the Resource Centre, WADCOSS, one year the Council cut the money. If the thing had died that year, you'd question what it was, really. They didn't cut it entirely. But they cut it, and there was sort of word, 'Oh, it'll die.' It didn't die. It's stronger than that'.

A dog of a place

'You take that Centre – that Centre was a dog of a building – a really incredibly bad place. And some people – [...] might have been one of them - they had a go at Council. They said, "How come someone else has these flash premises? And when it comes to the Community, we get this dog of a building.'

Local Government's Role

My experience is that local bodies play a really key role, because they are in the middle between the individual and central government. I know that there are other bits and pieces in-between, like the voluntary sector is a key mediating structure. But a local government that does its job well has a really key role to play if it's in touch with the community, particularly the staff and politicians. If they've established good relationships with the community so that they can tap in at regular points in time rather than when a problem arises, help us out. They're there all the time. And the local body sits in that key position and it's able to do some analysis of community issues, and not worry about the silos that Wellington has to worry about, because they see things through their own particular departmental eyes, whereas the local body sees differently. So the local body plays a really important part.

'I don't think it's as simple as saying, "Through Waitakere's history, you've had Councils that have been really strong and effective with Community, and Councils that have been awful." I think you can clearly see that some have been stronger on consultation than others. But in terms of what's being done physically, there's a thread that goes right through them I think since '89'.

Council, planning, the community

I talked before about putting a blank sheet out, and saying 'What do you want?'. When we did the First Annual Plan process, the first three of them we did that. We had two consultations. The first one was 'What do you want?' The second one was 'Here'. Then the second stage was 'Here is that Plan'. The third stage was 'Do you want to comment on that Plan?' We don't do that anymore, and I think that's appropriate progression, because you get 'consulted out'. But when it first happened, it was very important, culturally, to push that point: don't just find out what people think about your ideas, find out what they think of all those things. So, coming back to First Call for Children, the same sort of issue arises. You can go out to the kids and say, "What do you want?". And they say, "Swimming, Skateboard, Bowls, activities in the Park" and so on. Or, you can go into the Council and say, "Well, what can you do?"

'When you do the first one, the frustration often is that when it comes in, it's nobody's responsibility and there's no budget. It's like meeting with Pacific Islanders and they say, "The thing we want most is housing". Or "the thing we most want is.." – things that the Council is not going to do. But, coming back to that, one of the important things is how those two things meet: the ability of the organisation to deliver and the openness of the invitation to identify the particular community's priorities. What we did (and I don't think it's still done but it's an interesting process) was to do the thing of 'What do Youth want?' but also do, through the structure, a 'How do your Activities influence Children?' And then, at least one year, when people put their budget up, they were to identify how those activities were going to affect children and any change they'd made for the betterment of that'.

'You could turn that into quite a powerful budget process. We haven't quite taken that next step. But the interesting thing about that was, of course, that there are lots and lots of areas that the kids might come up with that are important. Like – footpaths - or other people - the Health Inspectors might have something they think they can offer. I think that we must have gone through the organisation and asked people what they're doing, because you get some of these that wouldn't come up if you just said "What do you want, kids?" Oh, they'd all say they want pool fencing. They wouldn't!

When you've identified the issues from both sources and you're reporting back on what can happen, they get a contrast comment on whatever'.

The council and the community

'This is really interesting 'cause there's ambivalence; some things, obviously, the Council's done very well, and the Council's strongly welcomed in. Yet there's also a will of people to draw a line and say, "Well, what we're doing is not governance, what we're doing is 'Community Activism'. What we're doing is that, in a sense that Council can sometimes, not so much steal the thunder, or not even steal the recognition, but create an atmosphere which isn't quite the same as the dynamic 'Activism' - which sort of normalizes things a bit too much, whereas the Activists like to keep a rough edge on things sometimes. They really like to make it clear that this isn't being governed, thank you very much'.

4. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN POLITICAL

Despite lots of evidence of growing collaboration, trust, and concerted action, community, local authority and government relationships remain partly political. And the politics aren't straightforward: they're between community and government, providers and funders, competitive re-structurers and collaborative resisters, there are gender politics, there are turf definitional issues between groups, there are issues about representation vs consultation or participation, there are good old left right labour-conservative politics, and there is the central political relationship of the Treaty...

Sometimes in all the language of consensus and partnerships some of these are smoothed over when they needn't be, and sometimes there are in fact common grounds that can be reached once-and only once- political differences are recognised and respected. These aspects won't- and arguably should not- go away: that doesn't make working with them any simpler!

Community and other politics

'Community Development and Social Policy and all that, the whole area is also political activity, and always will be. You can't escape that. You're in the firing line all the time. That's what I found. There's always somebody going to have a go at you. And that might be on a political level or it might be from within the Community – because the Community's got high expectations too'.

'Once people started cooperating and actually doing stuff, then came hassles over territory. It takes time for real cooperation to happen as it actually means giving away a certain amount of power and many people weren't ready to do this.'

Ongoing representation issues

1. Beyond advising, into decision making

'It is too late to be just given a tokenism ride. If you want Māori consultation in its truest sense and a true partnership; it's got to be decision-making that we make, not advising. We are sick of expecting to have relationships with others where we are expected to be compliant. We need to be proactive in our relationships or nothing'.

Ongoing representation issues

2 Pacific voices into politics and the planning processes

'On the well being and social economic development aspect again it's particularly of Pacific peoples within areas that will impact on their social well being – issues of health, education, environment – a whole range of other sectors that Pacific people need to understand about and what are their specific needs and how can that be integrated into the planning processes of Council. Again it's the whole thrust of empowering Pacific peoples to basically come together and assess and plan how best they can address their own needs as they see it through their own eyes basically. So the whole notion of Pacific peoples empowerment you know by Pacific for Pacific people'.

'A few of us actually went for the election for the Waitemata City Council, a few PIs and Maori but none of us got in. Mmm that was another thing too because we know our people are not registering and we know our people are not voting so it was a lot of hard work at that time. When we decided to go for the local body election and hardly any of our own people know what to do'.

Gender politics

'Quite simply, women often, because they raise families, are the relationship builders, and therefore, it's not surprising that they are more process-oriented, because they are used to looking after people, trying to look after their interest, hearing their voices, trying to work out ways of dealing with things'.

Gender, politics, and violence

'There were about 5 or 6 men that we invited to what we call a 'co-gender dialogue' meeting. We had, in the course of 2 years, monthly meetings with men's Service Providers and women's Service Providers. Basically, trying to develop a collaborative way of working between men's and women's Services. There was an enormous rift in the community between them. Like, the women were really angry with the men, and the men were angry with the women, feminist movement, oh – stropy women! But we mediated our way through that with facilitative meetings. It was a very powerful time. From that the women's services got behind 'Man Alive' being started, and in conversation with the men, set about accountability processes between women's services and men's services'.

Politics with government, funders and ownership

'... the fact that [Strengthening Families] did come from Community was really important. And we did have a struggle once again. Like, we named a good thing, and we got a model going, and then we didn't feel pressured by the government people to do it their way. It ran the risk of moving away from the Community. And we had some very tough discussions around Social Policy agencies, with government agencies, about how we could maintain some Community voice link. I don't know that we were totally successful because there were rifts in the Community about it. They felt they'd lost their say in it'.

'Central government thought that the community didn't know anything so they kept us in the dark, like the community didn't need to know what was happening. In the early/mid 1990s...a whole lot of overseas folks arrived into government agency jobs. No one was looking holistically at the broader community needs and agencies kept within boundaries of their self defined "core" stuff - they were very inflexible, not willing to stick their necks out to achieve change or to do things very differently, they wouldn't go out of their comfort zone. Some people within agencies you had good relationships with, but this really couldn't be generalised'.

Politics affect links to government

'Traditionally, central government took no interest in local government, there weren't votes in local government so they didn't really bother with us or our affairs'

'Reality is that back then MPs were not part of the local political fabric. It especially wasn't easy in the days of a National Government as all the West seats were Labour ones. There were very little contacts with MPs except on formal occasions.'

'When political parties started to stand for Council the view of local government and its roles changed – especially when the Labour Party entered local politics. It started in the 70s and grew from there. When the politicisation started, local government started developing a social conscience. Central government then decided to withdraw from a whole range of services and ask local govt to pick up the pieces and the tab. Often in the first instance they subsidised an activity and then withdrew funding for it – like the community houses'

Commie Bastards

'We had a lot of support [setting up the CAB]. You see at that stage there was Assid Corban who had been involved in that whole machinery of local government from way back. He supported this and there was no question that the council fathers and so on, they weren't in opposition at all. When the councillors amalgamated, one of the councillors was a supervisor of the CAB. There has always been good feeling and good co-operation between the people who are doing the jobs and the Council as itself. The WEA, you know what that is, that started off in a small way and developed. Its main funding at that stage came from the Government rather than the Council. Then of course, eventually, the National Government got in and said: "these must be commie bastards we won't fund them " you see, and so there was a struggle for a long time. The WEA started off men's groups, in other words, groups of men who came along and we called it 'self-awareness and self-assertion' and that was an extraordinary business. These men's groups were quite amazing, and then the anger management- the men's Anger Management thing started up and then that was sponsored I think, in the early days, by Henderson House and that's grown into to Man Alive.

Restructuring and the struggles of the early 90s

'That's another era that's got me again. The re-structuring of the early 90s really dismantled a lot of things that were progressing'.

'Re-structuring was rampant. Redundancies were all over the place. How did that happen? Nobody will answer to that. In 1990, we had a 'collaboration forum', or consortium. We were almost there. We just about had it. We had 100 people at that meeting, agreement amongst all the agencies that this was what we wanted. We were putting together proposals to go back to government agency headquarters and all sorts of things, and then re-structuring started. Half the people that were at the meeting, just disappeared. Their jobs went..disappeared. None of [what's happening now] is new. All of this has been the model in development at various points. It's just been historical ups and downs. What seems to me to be the significant learning from all that, is that out West, we managed to keep the vestiges of the model going through the 90s'.

'All the consequent re-structuring - public financing – which basically put government departments into strict output criteria. Social Welfare, social work got into narrow boundaries about outputs. The community funding side got shaved off. Wadcross did fund some aspects of Waipareira and so on but the consortium aspect was blown apart because you had constant re-structuring.. The whole environment was set against it. It became more difficult to get forums together with a norm because people realized that at the end of the day they were in competition.... ...Progressively it became a boundary ride, arguing with Health about who would pay for what, and all that sort of rubbish. There was a lot of downtime and arguing who was meant to do what... And of course having personnel and so on being selected to do one job and then expected to do quite a different job with different skill sets'.

'It made people focus on small parts instead of the whole. Like.. the Social Worker people would go into a house, we could only deal with the feet! – when you could see that it was part of a whole. So for me that was a fundamental flaw of carving everything up into little bits, and funding just that. And you don't have time to have the 'cup of tea' in which you hear the other bits that are the crucial bits. So, I mean, you're counting the time you open the door, rather than the quality.'

The nasty 90s: everyone for themselves?

'A while back there was a right-wing thrust where everyone was in competition with each other, the business model. And that was a very unhealthy time in the Community – jealously guarded funding pockets and fighting between Social Services about who was getting what as far as money was concerned. And even though that's still there today, I think that there's some key players in Waitakere that get beyond that competitive model. It's actually the competitive model versus the collaborative model, isn't it? I remember my own internal struggle with fighting to get money and then thinking 'Hey, we're all in this together'. And, like, should I just try to make sure that [we] are well provided for, but..what about them down the road? Like, it really stretched me, as well, to think beyond the things that I was managing. All that I can think is that we were thinking about the greater picture and looking at the wider needs of the community, not just their particular sector, or their particular group or iwi'.

Politics between and within sectors

'One of the best things was the Health Forum – the day it folded was a HUGE disgrace. It did so much good. It was like the grassroots got a chance to talk and be heard. It was really inclusive and found money for Maori/PI to do their own things in their own ways eg. PI set up a fono and hui were held on marae''

'Plunket and public health nurse roles in the community were pivotal – especially with at risk families and young children. Public health nurses (phns) used to take more of a big picture role then and were in the homes more. There was some rivalry between plunket nurses and and phns....they couldn't see for awhile that they were working for the same end product (healthy kids and families). It's really sad that the PHN role has changed – there's no acknowledgement anymore that you need hand holders in communities''

Time and resourcing to do community development

'The other thing I think about too is, from about 1986 onwards, there seemed to be less and less time available in the Community to give to Community Development. I know for myself and my role at WASAC, it was the combination of the growth and the development of WASAC, I had less time to give to the Community, although I always made it a priority. Also our funding didn't allow that. It was far more Service delivery focused. It was the number of clients you had going through the door, the output, rather than being given money which the Service could decide some of the direction of that money. We didn't have those choices. I think the Community really struggled to be resourced enough to do Community Development work. It's only been the generosity of the governing board at WASAC and my particular passion for it that's allowed that to happen. Because I know other Service Providers, like Community Social Services, they don't allow their staff that networking time.

New politics in the Waitakere Way

'Drawing together central and local government politicians in with the community **has had a huge impact over** time. Party politics has its pros and cons but generally speaking it has brought benefits in recent times. Reality is though that because of points scoring, there won't ever be full collaboration..there are too many agendas."

'The way central government works with both local government and communities now has changed. Part of this has been MMP – it's made people need to work together more at a political level and this culture has filtered on down. People now have to look at the wider relationships they have with their stakeholders both actual and potential."

5. THE EMERGING WAITAKERE WAY

Insofar as there is a distinctive way of working out West, it owes a great deal to the ways it is actively made up year after year by the players, groups, networks and coordinators, who have developed ways of working and planning together, forums for coming together and raising issues, and, crucially, a set of expectations about participation and partnership, which newly arriving people ignore at their peril. These ways, structures and expectations have emerged from both bottom up pressures, and from strategic leadership from groups and people that have had an overview of issues out here, and have convened the various forums, and gone out of their way to keep people in the loop.

In recent years, they have evolved a whole new level community wide forums and collaborative planning, including the Waitakere Wellbeing Strategy and most recently, the Waitakere Collaboration Strategy, with its focus on 'calls to action' in areas where interagency partnership is seen as essential. This Waitakere Way of working has its costs- meetings and more meetings- but also its benefits, especially when it's time to get down to business, when trust and ongoing open communication matter. Keeping it going requires enormous work, and especially the resourcing of community and other people whose time, while it is sometimes given free, must never be taken for granted and treated as cheap.

The community stands up, talks to council and government

'I think we've learned to value ourselves and stand up for ourselves and say, Hey, we're key to the infra-structure of this Community, and this Society. Listen to us. We've got a voice. And I think you'd find that the Community has moved from that sense of feeling that nobody recognizes the value of things. I think the Community is quite good at it and have got better and better at it. And tapped into the key players a lot more. Like, in the early days, it was a bit of a struggle to talk to the City Council. Like, I'm looking at that from my own development as well. I felt a little bit immature, a little bit not big enough to go and talk to the City Council, not big enough to talk to any of the Police or Social Welfare. I gained enough strength to be able to do that, and I think the Community has as well, not to just sit back and wait.

'Local agencies have also been able to see how we have effected change down in Wellington. That's really empowered the Community. Like that situation with the Courts – they brought in those Victims Advisors. We got up in arms about that and did something about it. We spoke up, we didn't sit back, we were just empowered by it. We wrote letters, we had meetings, we got dialogue going. And we got an apology. Just a few experiences like that is enough to say, Hey, we do know what's right for us. We do know what works and doesn't work, and how we need to treat it.

'And the other thing is that I think that Government has got wise, that they now recognize the power of the Community, that we're a source to be tapped into, and that we have a wisdom that they don't have because we're in touch. And so that's the other key thing –that they know that the best services come from an empowered Community who are taking ownership of what's happening.

Planning together for wellbeing

'Another thing that I think has been really important – again a pre-runner of the 'Wellbeing Strategy' – is 'Healthwork'. The first day I started in 1988 was one of the first meetings of a whole range of people to talk about problems with health services. Again the context of - no hospital out here. Virtually nothing in the way of public health services, accident and emergency.. Just diabolical. The first thing I had to do was facilitate a meeting of about 60 people on health issues, which was really cool. One of the outcomes of that was a thing called a 'Health Forum'. In many ways the 'Health Forum' was a precursor of a number of things including the 'Wellbeing Strategy', because the Health Board set up a newsletter, it set up a structure, it was an advocacy group that was supported and facilitated through Council.

'Health Forums turned into Health Summits, turned into Wellbeing Summits. Community Safety came into it, probably 1993-4, thereabouts. Safety Community Council and Injury Prevention Projects. Again for me, the establishment of the Injury Prevention Project was hugely significant. The real significance of that was for the absolute adherence to community development principles. There was a lot of community development principle work going on before that. But that one was one of the first ones where we became a national pilot deliberately to test out how local authorities would respond to having Injury Prevention within their structure. What impact would that have on the community? Would it be better to do it that way than other ways? It was the thesis I suppose. Secondly, how Injury Prevention organized along community development principles i.e. local control versus institutional control – whether that would be more effective in lowering 'injury'.

Evolving uses for the wellbeing strategy

'Again, the wellbeing strategy's another building block for partnerships: Okay, we come from a situation where we were, like with the first Wellbeing Strategy, consciously using the results as an advocacy tool. Now, we've gone right through a whole other process whereby we and the government agencies in the community are actually building the Plan, not just advocating to central government for the plan. So it's now a planning tool, rather than a straight advocacy tool.

'If you look at the way that's developed from the early days, it started off with a Health and Housing focus. Now it's including Employment. It's including virtually anything you can name. Economic development now – we're still struggling with how you actually do this. But at least now, everybody in that whole 'Wellbeing' process understands that economic and social development go together. So that's a breakthrough in mentality. Social Services people ten years ago would have been at your throat if you'd suggested you should be talking to business people.

A strong brand, a stronger process

'The Waitakere Way has become a really strong brand, an inclusive and collaborative process. Different sectors have seen that they can add value to each others views. Both central and local government politicians have had to learn that they don't have all the answers. It's not about doing things my way, it's about realising that we get a better answer when we listen to other people and their ideas'.

'Statutory requirements for agencies to consult now means that they have to talk to communities, just like they have to take the treaty of Waitangi into consideration. Because it's written into legislation they have to take account of it. The problem is that people need time to really understand what that means... that understanding/learning process doesn't just happen overnight'.

It gets easier

.There's a big investment of time, there's been a big investment of everyone's time upfront, over the years. One of the gains is that once you've been through the rounds a few times sitting round a table, in Wellbeing Network or interagency things, you really know who people are and where they're coming from. It gets to the point where for some things it's just a matter of one phone call, and you can get straight to the person you know can make a decision, without going through all that uncertainty, not sure who you are and what you can do. People who've worked in other places notice that as a difference out here. I think community organisations feel they can do it too, and often government agencies, though it's always a matter of new people finding their feet'.

Expectations about working together

'I think when people, new people or organisations come here now there's an expectation that they will work together, that they will engage in the forums. I don't think actually a lot of people would tolerate people working in other ways, just off doing their own thing. So that builds a kind of accountability, accountability for everyone, really, and that keeps things, together. And in fact when new things come here, or even like especially when there are the same old consultation processes people do elsewhere, or new 'consultation', it's as if they are so out of step with the reality on the ground that's already here, and we have to stop and say, well, that's not really consultation as we know it, you can't really just come here and do that'.

Working with community, government agencies, and politicians

'Community driven initiatives are the most powerful form of action. But it is often hard for them to get traction with the other people who need to be involved to make something happen. The role of key politicians and bureaucrats can be critical, as catalysts, facilitators and advocates. Dame Margaret Bazely, as the CEO of the Ministry of Social Development, for example, who saw the sense of collaborative practice, much preferred dealing with communities when the local Mayor and senior Councillors in an area took an actively supportive role in Government proposals to collaborate, as they did in Waitakere. The leadership of key politicians, as facilitators and brokers, with their status as elected people, worked best when there was a strong working relationship with their own bureaucrats, but the political role, making connections at a different level, was often pivotal'.

Evolving uses for the wellbeing strategy: from advocacy to planning

'Again, the Wellbeing Strategy's another building block for partnerships: Okay, we come from a situation where we were, like with the first Wellbeing Strategy, consciously using the results as an advocacy tool. Now, we've gone right through a whole other process whereby we and the government agencies in the community are actually building the Plan, not just advocating to central government for the plan. So it's now a planning tool, rather than a straight advocacy tool'.

A three way working model

'To my knowledge [the Collaboration Strategy] is the only working model [in NZ] which is truly attempting to work three ways- community, local govt and government. Having a history of mandated community involvement and a facilitative fantastic council have been essential elements... And the process has been as educative as useful. From here the main thing will be to keep "pushing" through with the process of developing the 'calls to action'. Also that the initiative doesn't become like the 'Emperor's New Clothes'- everyone talking about it but nothing actually happening'.

6. PROCESS ISSUES

It wasn't just people, it was developing good process too, over time, and at a whole range of different levels.

In the words of one respondent, this meant "changing the culture of government, attitudinal stuff, behavioural stuff, politicians in particular feeling they didn't know stuff, sharing of case studies"

None of this happened overnight, or by itself. Policy analysts getting out into the community and engaging was never an easy or straightforward matter, and if often they came back feeling they had gained something from the process, there were certainly times when the benefits of consultation and processes were questioned.

There had been numbers of occasions where conflict management and negotiation had been needed, and this in general had been able to hold things together. However, there had also been frustrating processes where despite a great deal of time being committed, a good deal of dissatisfaction remained.

Process doesn't happen on its own...

'It's very hard work, because when you're trying to engage communities and you're open to engaging communities, somewhere you've still got to make some decisions..and how those decisions are made is really important, and the processes that are involved'.

Anger and resolution

'For example, we went to Oratia, in that quite difficult District Plan process, where there was a lot of community anger. You have to start and say, Look I accept all of that, but this is where we are – these are the constraints, and we'd really like to engage you on that. If you are honest, and you do try and communicate and share information and so on, people appreciate that and value that. But you've got to keep at it. You can't then just drop it'.

Community expectations

'What was very different from the way I'd worked elsewhere was that there was an expectation that you got out there and you worked with community groups and worked with them and got into, sort of, partnerships with them'.

Keeping it all going: Process, process, process

'There's no way you could do this sort of stuff on your own. It's around understanding how politics works, understanding how to actually get things done from within a bureaucratic organisation. It's understanding your own community in the sense of the dynamics of that community – who can get things to happen, community wise. That's knowing all about leadership and knowing how to exercise leadership; how to tap into leadership and develop it – all those sorts of things. Process, process, process – absolutely critical. If you don't have a process that's credible, results orientated, respectful, inclusive – all those sorts of buzzy words. But it's true, that we've only got where we've got by really struggling to get to that degree of professionalism'.

Ongoing inclusion issues

'... to acknowledge that in Waitakere City it's very much a multicultural city and you know for us as Pacific people to work towards to be part of the whole Waitakere City Council structure like in terms of to be part of to become councillors on the WCC and also you need to build that capacity in terms of the Pacific – the whole infrastructure of the WCC – I'd like to see more Pacific Islands people working there and, but also I think we need to start lobbying hard in terms of having more Pacific Islands people on the Council you know and that's something we still haven't successfully worked through it you know. And the Council needs to actually play a very big part in that you know.'

'I can see it happening but it needs – Pacific people can't isolate themselves from this whole thing. You know they need to work in collaboration with the WCC but at the same time I think WCC need to acknowledge the importance of Pacific people within their city and by doing that they need some ways of working towards some sort of a partnership with the Pacific Islands community. I mean I know that we've got PI the advisory board there but sometimes you know the community are saying that their voice are still not being presented there so you know we need to actually take that on board and listen to what the people are saying and the Council need to listen to what the Pacific people are saying you know in terms of their needs. If it doesn't happen then I think there is definitely something wrong in terms of WCC and their policies and the whole structure that won't meet the needs of Pacific people in Waitakere City'.

Holding on to what you love, and who you are

'All we do with culture stuff is we impart what we love, you know we tell them what we love we show them what we love we do with them what we love. But further on down the track they have to make up their mind whether they want to carry that on or move somewhere else and that's where a lot of our kids are. They know fa'a Samoa they know hoko Tokelau they know but whether they want to do it is up to them and in your 40s you sort of turn back the clock but before then they're experiencing the world, they're experiencing NZ but whether Tokelauan carries on with my son I have no idea because they make that choice. Yeah we can only tell them and show them what we love. It's funny 50 years from now, we have our own real culture here in NZ, it's unique, it's like the Black American Movement, it's uniquely theirs, it's the same thing here... what I'm saying is the inter-relationship now between cultures is already happening. It's been happening for 30 years and the melting of the pot is already there. Usually kids in classes now it's a mixture of different races. In my class I have 29 different cultures within the room itself and yet they look brown, they look white, they look Asian. They're all be mixes. So it's already happening and we have to see if we can get on and learn about one another – Samoan speaking Korean – it's cool. We're getting a good one but we bloody have to. If we don't the canoe will sink'.

Celebrating things

'Celebrating things. We're probably not as good at that as we should be. But every now and then we get it together. There was a really neat WEA celebration, two or three months ago I suppose. They had a celebration of the handing over of a house to WEA that was owned by two people who'd been long-term supporters. They handed the damn thing over to them. It was phenomenal generosity. They had an afternoon when a whole lot of people including myself who'd been involved in WEA over the years got together and had a lunch and said things to these people. It was an occasion of reminiscing. That was absolutely great. All sorts of people were having a laugh about each other, poking fun at each other, that sort of thing. That's extremely unifying, to do that every now and then'.

Relations with central government: officials

'We're talking about maybe creating some sort of basis for a training module for government officials, on 'participation'. That's got to be interactive. It's no good just putting out a whole lot of guidelines. It's got to be something that actually rattles the cages, that actually starts to talk about – 'Well what does it mean to trust?' I find a huge blaming culture at Central Government. Everybody blames. No one can fail! They always blame somebody else! It goes down the chain. I'm not used to that. I'm used to sort of supporting! So I've found that quite difficult. I get a bit cross, and a bit depressed about it sometimes, because that culture is endemic!

'Somewhere along the line ... we've got to look at the spectrum along Central Government. I don't know how you do this at Local Government level, because I haven't put my mind to it. But, looking at the performance, how do you choose Chief Executives? What skills and talents are they chosen for?'

How do you measure their progress or how they've achieved that? So we're looking at - for example, having something in their performance agreement that says, 'How does your Government Department engage with the community?' and the community judges that, not them – right across to the training packages for government officials or local government officials whatever, how they're 'inducted'....'

Relations with central government and elected officials

'That is hard because it needs to be about a whole lot of levels. It's really about changing the culture of government, and how does government support community organisations, rather than boss them round – and that's about attitudinal stuff, and behavioral stuff. That's what I mean about the politicians, in particular, feeling that, how could they possibly, a small group of men, sit around the table and decide things in isolation, just dependent on the work that a professional might do, which often just came from their brain, as well'.

Success and frustrations getting funding

'I've been quite successful in getting money. I've known how to do it and how to assert for a particular issue and need. I've spent lots of time being very frustrated, seeking out small amounts of money to try and cover demands for services, and myself being prepared to take less than I ought and also my staff. I expected too much of my staff to behave the same way. There's a mixture here. I was able to access money, but usually it wasn't enough, and usually the expectation of how you spend that money, the amount of service delivery that was expected, was beyond what was reasonable at times. It's got a lot better now. That's one thing I can really say. There's a big demand for higher level professionalism and we've had to say, You want a higher level of professionalism, you'll have to pay. And we are now, we can see, CYPS Funding and Courts Funding being more professionally realistic than it was'.

The virtues of having a paid coordinator

'They all now, the ones that I can think of, have to have a paid co-ordinator. The 'Effective Practice' project - initially we didn't have anybody. And that was really hard work. We had to scramble from year to year to try and get a paid co-ordinator. Initially the Government said, Our expectation is that you only have a paid co-ordinator for a short period of time, then you'll just have to sustain yourselves. We managed to keep it going. There's things like the Women's Network, which have a social component to it – 'Let's get together and eat lunch and talk about things and resource each other'. That didn't have a co-ordinator, that was okay. And there's things like peer professional support and networks'.

Catalysts and real community power: is there a balance?

'That catalyst role is really important. I think communities appreciate that. The danger is when Councilors try to run the thing, in the front row all the time, rather than sitting in the back row. That 'catalyst facilitating' role - if your communities can trust you enough to do that without taking over and having the power – that's really key as well. And sometimes some of our communities were never convinced! I think of a couple of key people, who are getting on a bit now, who never really felt the power, ever, went out. To a certain extent, that might well be true on lots of occasions. But it was with communities trying to enable them to do things, rather than us always doing it.'

'It is interesting. It's not exactly cynical, but I just don't feel like putting a huge amount of energy in to this next stage, because I really don't quite understand. Nobody's been able to explain to me exactly what's likely to happen'.

'There needs to be a major shift in saying 'Okay, this is Waitakere. How do we bring all those juices into an even more unique way of working here, together? That's that context.'

'To go forward we actually need to understand what have been the clear limits of the past. To go forward we need to use those clear limits. There's the success of the past to build on'.

Bumpy process, struggles, and less than perfect outcomes

'I think that [starting Safer Community Council] was another example of Government identifying the needs. Not giving time for the community to fully input and talk. You'll remember the myths that occurred around starting the Safer Community Council, and how that put WADCOSS off side. A lot more could have been done to make sure those relationships were worked through and that WADCOSS was on board with Safer Community Council, before it got started. I think that suspicion from the Community, of Government's got this good idea and pockets the money to the Community, and here we've got WADCOSS that been driven by really well-meaning people for a long time. Why couldn't have we found a way of bringing those two together, because there was a level of duplication potentially there. I was told Safer Community Council was a big risk for WADCOSS, because of lack of consultation and clarity about what it would do. And it's unlike Council (who set it up) to fall into that trap. I think it's been a big learning from Council because of that. I think they've become far more consultative with the Community'.

'It caused big hiccups for Council and for WADCOSS. I was part of meetings, there was no talking, there was just frustration and anger about the whole situation. And then there were a few meetings between WADCOSS and Safer Community Council which did some clarification about the what and how. The thing we can learn is to take what's already here and build on it. 'Cause you end up having duplications and a waste of people's time. You see the same groups of people traveling around the community going to very similar network sorts of meetings, with the idea of sitting down and looking at the duplications and where time could be saved'.

7. THE WILD WEST TAMED?

It's a sign of something that's alive that it still encompasses a range of issues, issues people are passionate and urgent about, issues they want resolved. The Wild West has never really fully been tamed, and arguably nor should it be. Issues about representation, about ownership, about boundaries between the different players are alive and well: people want some of these things formally sorted out, built into processes, and funded accordingly. These are issues about resources and power, about how much is done on sheer community adrenalin, and how much can be claimed by different agencies. At the same time, things are increasingly complicated, and sometimes it all seems much too messy.

And even when it functions well, big picture questions remain: how much, really, can local agencies working together actually achieve? If you are trying to bring jobs or housing to the West for disadvantaged groups, how much effort should go into local partnerships and planning, and how much into bigger picture advocacy with the Centre?

A long way to go

'As far as my conception of things goes, we've still got a hell of a long way to go. We're nowhere near it. If you consider where you could be with this stuff and where we're at, I still think we've got a long way to go. But it's really by looking elsewhere that you think that, "Ooh, we've actually come a long way as well, by comparison'.

Will she ever trust him?

'In some ways the relationship with government, between community and government after all the contractualism is a bit like 'battered wife syndrome'. Community are still feeling a bit uncertain, you know, "will she ever trust him again?"

At least we can have conflict

'Particularly if you look at the cultural issues – Maori and Pacific Island – we haven't solved it. My hackneyed description of it is that at least we can have conflict, you know what I mean? We can actually argue with each other in a reasonably open way. We can say, "You're wrong" or "I don't agree" in a relatively upfront way, which, in a lot of areas, you just can't do that. We can have something happen out here, but we'll still be meeting with each other the next day. You can have a problem. You can think, "Oh this is terrible." But by and large the people will come back into the room the next day and try and talk'.

Making arrangements more mandatory

'Waitakere City Council set up the first PIAB. It's the first ever committed, their commitment was such that they gave it to a policy analyst so good will is not short. I would like to see it formalised by way of an amendment to the Local Govt Act. In Waitakere it's working quite well. I would like to see what's happening in Waitakere in the rest of Auckland and I can't see it happening in the rest of Auckland and you talk about enhancing. Well let's say for example enhance the relationship between Auckland City Council and the Pacific communities – the only way I can see it happening is an amendment to the legislation and create a legal obligation. I've been doing some work on that front. There are things that are happening right now but in the end if I am ever successful it's going to be out of good will again'.

Now: connecting the dots

'What's happening now is that all of the pieces are starting to come together. I'm into 'connecting the dots' stage. That's what the Collaboration Forum's about. That's what all these things are about. We've now got a whole range of these projects set up, a lot of them set up through the processes. I don't want to overplay that either. A lot of those would have been set up anyway. But a lot of them were set up by people that were very closely connected with all the stuff we were doing'.

How far can it run on love?

'A lot of the stuff that's being asked by Govt and by Council are done on a voluntary basis, done on the cheap and to get quality you've got to pay for it eh. If you're paying somebody good money to do this kind of thing it will make it easier for Govt to make policies that will fit not just the PI people, it's not elitist or victim mentality thing it's strengthening of PI people to do their own thing. Unlike the Maori we have the opportunity to do it without having to resort to history or to resort to anger or to resort to pain. We can do it because we need it now rather than 20 years from now and our grandchildren doing it. But absolutely you need to pay key people. Like you were saying we have a very limited pool and like with the CRG group and the Pacific Islands Advisory Board we need to share the workload. I'd love to be on just one group and concentrate on that'.

Fighting, essential funding

'You've got to keep fighting. You can keep fighting. If a bit of core funding is removed for your core person who facilitates and develops the thing then it's going to fizzle.

Over-consultation?

'I'll just run a quick thing about over-concentration. Early on we did a policy – I can't remember how it evolved – but there were about four points concentration. They were things like, a genuine matter which hasn't been decided. People must have the information provided to them with which to make appropriate responses... there must be an opportunity for them to make those responses. Feedback as a result of those responses must be given. Since that time I've seen hundred-page Consultation Policies and I don't understand it. It's simple. It doesn't need a hundred pages. I'm sure there's something worthy about the hundred pages but..'

Community now... too narrowly focused??

'My sense is, [community has] pulled back a bit more. There's pockets, and good strong networks still operating. Services themselves have become far more business focused, less Service delivery focused. Less connected to the Community need. Like, ... they capture a certain level of funding, they work within that, and somehow they become a little bit more removed from the client because of that. And the complexity of social issues has also caused the community to specialize and set clearer boundaries about what they will and won't do. Because before people were more inclined to be more flexible. And I think that's a survival thing. It's also a developmental thing. Like, the example of [**]. That's actually gone from the service that used to go the extra mile for a client, or for a recognised need, to pulling back, and saying, Well this is all we can do, and drawing a line in the sand, which is exactly what we saw the statutory agencies doing 8 or 10 years ago. And we were all saying, Hey don't do that. That's too rigid. But we've had to do it too.

Sustainability, avoiding burnout, avoiding cynicism

'I think that there's a way that people work in the Community that is not sustainable. It's real 'burn-out' territory there, when you're working at the coal-face. A lot of people do it because they've got 'heart' for the issue. So it's not sustainable. People that are drawn to work in the Community are usually doing it from belief or passion or wanting to make a difference. It's their desire to build 'Community' and make the community a better place. I think that's what the motivation is. The people I can think of are those pioneering types – they really believed in what they were doing. That's one of the core things that I think has changed. There's a level of cynicism, and not hopelessness but not as much hope that we're making a difference'.

Profusion and confusion in Pacific advisory board arrangements

'And government departments are confused as well. For example, each of the depts, the main ones anyway, like WINZ and Health, each one of them have got Pacific strategies and Pacific staff working with programmes and so on but when you look at the programmes of action and compare with what they are doing, they are very much the same. So that's a danger of them manipulating or changing those objectives. They're very much the same as

what the depts are doing anyway, part of their normal work. Our understanding from the community point of view from when the programmes were set up was that it was an opportunity for us to identify new ideas, new initiatives and then whichever dept picks it up as new things to add to whatever they're doing, you know, building on enhancing it but it didn't really turn out that way and that's why they're confused because they were saying, "what's CRG" and each of them will have Pacific Advisory bodies. I know in education the Ministry has got at least two I think Advisory bodies for Pacific before CRG came on board - reporting to the CRG, reporting, you know it's confusing...'

Keeping going in face of rising big picture problems

'I don't know if that's just reflecting my own personal 'where I came to'. This is a bit radical. My sense is that level of cynicism is there in the community, and people like myself who were pioneers have seen that things have not got better. Things aren't really improving. Where I've come to in myself is that it's a bottomless pit, that we're actually creating social problems because of the bigger distance that we've got operating, like Capitalism whatever, that we're not living in a sustainable way on the planet. People are not able to live sustainably. They're working too hard. Children aren't being supported well in their family homes. So social problems are being created because of that materialistic drive. Also the rift between the social problems, the rift between the rich and the poor is bound to create social problems and social distress. So that's why I fell back from working in the community the way I do it, because of my sense of hopelessness about 'I can keep doing it, I can keep counseling but women and their families that have been part of domestic violence - it's not going to go away until we address it up there.

Still need to address bottom line issues, including housing, local service access

'I still feel in Waitakere, you see one of the things I'm not sure of is how many Pacific people actually own their own homes in Waitakere? You know because some of those data will actually give us some idea of our people. You see during the years of my working with Pacific community I have come across some families that are very very small percentage that I know own their own houses but also they were in arrears with the Council with their rates. So I don't really know what is the percentage of Pacific people who own their own home in Waitakere but I mean a few of those families that I work with I find that they didn't really understand the whole process of owning their own homes and that was the other thing that the Advisory Board was pushing with the Council of actually doing translations of their information that goes out to the community. You know like translating the rates stuff and also anything to do with like the rubbish collection. They brought some people to actually do all those translations. . . and you know that was what was happening like two of those Samoan families that I went and see you know they were saying but well we didn't really understand and having to take them through that process you know sort of, that was a sort of outcome for me to whether that was something that we need to actually discuss it with the Council and you know maybe resource that and that's what happened.'

Effective Consultation? Filling the gaps?

'There's another sort of edge that came in. Funders used to do all of this sort of community consultation stuff for a while. I remember spending hours at community consultation weekends when the funders were looking for the gaps. I gave up after a while. So frustrating in that the Community would say, These are the gaps that we identify. There's a big mismatch between what the Community is identifying and the funding'.

Avoiding a confusing local mess

And government departments are confused as well. For example, each of the depts, the main ones anyway, like WINZ and Health, each one of them have got Pacific strategies and Pacific staff working with programmes and so on but when you look at the programmes of action and compare with what they are doing, they are very much the same.... They're very much the same as what the depts are doing anyway, part of their normal work.

Our understanding from the community point of view from when the programmes were set up was that it was an opportunity for us to identify new ideas, new initiatives and then whichever dept picks it up as new things to add to whatever they're doing, you know, building on enhancing it but it didn't really turn out that way and that's why they're confused because they were saying, "what's CRG" and each of them will have Pacific Advisory bodies. I know in education the Ministry has got at least two I think Advisory bodies for Pacific before CRG came on board - reporting to the CRG, reporting, you know it's confusing....

What's council, what's community?

'This is really interesting 'cause there's ambivalence; some things, obviously, the Council's done very well, and the Council's strongly welcomed in. Yet there's also a will of people to draw a line and say, "Well, what we're about is not being governance (compliance) focused, what we're doing is 'Community Activism'. In a sense Council can sometimes, not so much steal the thunder, or not even steal the recognition, but create an atmosphere which isn't quite the same as the dynamic 'Activism' - which sort of normalizes things a bit too much, whereas the Activists like to keep a rough creative edge on things sometimes'.

But who's getting the resources?

'It's a bit of a piss-off when you're in the community doing hard work – you're working on a minimal salary because you believe in your work – and you've got somebody who's earning 50% more than you, sitting on the Council, and is paid to describe your problem. But some of the Westy goes – "Well, *^%\$ off unless you're doing anything, mate!" You know?! How empowered are community workers to actually take political positions, would be a question I would ask.... If you're standing off trying to be reasonably either objective or grandiose or something or other, and describing the problem, it's not necessarily that helpful. Where the Council has been a little bit helpful, is in maybe pointing to bits of money that you can apply for. But WADCOSS probably is of more use in that area than the Council. So my present approach – where there is Council interest or Council offers – would be to say, (and this happened recently with the Social Community Council, which as you know takes money and passes it through to the Community), while it's an excellent talking place and it's good to know what's going on, no resources are really passed through that. A couple of years ago we had a dilemma. We advocated that the Safer Community panels would break off, and clarify its boundary with Council and locate itself in a separate building as a separate registered organisation, in the belief that maybe then we would get some useful outcomes from it. Because what it sometimes becomes, I think, is a screen for City Councils to say, "Hey we're doing really good things. Look, our Safety Community Council has said this recommends this and this is the place where you ought to be taking this issue" – when, in fact, we're finding them somewhat controlled and a lot of the meetings talking about the problem as opposed to addressing it'.

Partnerships and power relations

'I also think that the use of the word 'partnerships' is relatively new. A partnership, to me, seems to infer equality. I think it's very hard to have equality when you've got one partner with all the resources! and the other partner has to go and ask. We know they may want our services, but we know jolly well, they will probably go somewhere else.... You say what you feel and it helps to make the partnership feel more equal. But I think it is just a matter of feeling more equal, rather than it actually being more equal'.

Let the bottom up roll!

'I guess it sounds like old Socialism or old Community development, but the idea of empowerment from the bottom up, I think is one that's been maintained in West Auckland. Let's say, in Auckland City, there was more of that, I think that would be to the advantage of the City. And, in terms of Service, the function of their Council then becomes "How can we help you?" Okay, there's a collective of street kids here that want to do something about drugs on the streets – don't know how this came about, maybe a church group – "Great, okay, let's do it! How can we empower? What are they saying they need? They want an office." Auckland did that at one stage. They had a Centre at the top of Queen Street here. I said, "Alright. Old building. Give you space for an office." New movements came out of that.

But then you get a Council that comes along and says, “Ohhh, it’s really dirty. We better close it down.” What would be better in West Auckland is [**] on the Council; pack up a couple of briefcases; get out in the car and visit every single group in the City and say, “How can we help you apply for all these pockets of money to do your work?”

Understanding and building community development

‘My understanding of community development is really to do with the whole person’s you know well being or whatever so it really does cover your whole need of the person you know like with health education – it all impacts on ones life.

and you tend to get the same people involved in the different things as well?

‘That was the hard thing because it got to the stage where it was just the same people all the time and I think that’s where sometimes it’s become incestuous. And I think you know [we] have been criticised for just being on anything and everything well maybe they are right but I thought well if I’m not there somebody else has got to do it’.

A different kind of partnership: funding tipoffs

‘I think the question, if you’re talking about partnership between Council and Community Services, needs to be for Council to ask “How can we help you?” instead of “We’re setting up this workshop on applying for funding”. It doesn’t quite work that way! Or, you were setting up this workshop here on whatever. Haven’t we got a wonderful Green Print? Fine, but that’s a Council Green Print’. Maybe the Maori Rep on Council comes round. The Agency says, “Hey, not trying to push anything on you at all, but a lot of your accountability duties for your funding require Treaty of Waitangi accountability.” And then, “Can I help you at all? Do you want some ideas on this?” Or even tip-offs. “Oy, have you heard that the Lion Foundation has got to get rid of some money quickly by the end of the month, they’ve got too much.” Now, you might say, our community networks work okay in that respect, but I’m sure that a Council has a bigger source of information. It may be, that on Council there, they will be tapping into a new project there that’s coming out of one of the Departments in Wellington where there’s an opportunity to apply for something... I even picked up a piece of paper on Social Entrepreneurship the other day. I’m still not sure if the Government’s actually sponsoring people or not? Now my Council should have been banging on the door and saying “Oy, you fellas. This is a project out of that Department, and here’s a Project out of that Department”.

Partnerships and resources

‘The other thing I think about too is, from about 1986 onwards, there seemed to be less and less time available in the Community to give to Community Development. I know for myself and my role, it was the combination of the growth and the development of [the organisation], I had less time to give to the Community, although I always made it a priority. Also our funding didn’t allow that. It was far more Service delivery focused. It was the number of clients you had going through the door, the output, rather than being given money which the Service could decide some of the direction of that money. We didn’t have those choices. I think the Community really struggled to be resourced enough to do Community Development work. It’s only been the generosity of the governing board and my particular passion for it that’s allowed that to happen. Because I know other Service Providers, they don’t allow their staff that networking time.

Partnerships: Means and ends

‘The whole concept of ‘partnership’ is important, and ‘joining up’. But in terms of the role of the local authority, that’s one of the areas that we’re looking at, it is only one part of the wider issue of Community Development. And that’s one of their key functions and key roles. It’s a key aspect. And I wouldn’t want to put it out of proportion. It’s often a methodology towards achieving something. So you’re not wanting to achieve partnership. You’re wanting to achieve something else through partnership. We’re got to bear that in mind and our different community development methods for achieving the goals that we set out’.

Can't (won't) stop now...

'And often, and I think that's what's happened in the last 3 years, is that it's not a 'start-stop' thing. The relationship as all those key people knew is an on-going relationship. That's where the structural stuff of projects is often quite difficult. You do a project and it stops – then what happens to the relationships that you've developed? They just suddenly go into abeyance; the perception is until people are needed.

Making it sustainable

'What we've discovered, with 'Safe Waitakere' is that you can run, we've been now 6-8 years, virtually on adrenaline, in set-up mode and commitment and excitement and doing things new. But it's when you strike the '6-8 years', that you have to think, How do you actually translate this into something that's going to be around in 50 years' time when all of the originators have gone. That's the key thing to me'.

Lots to do, including keeping your eye on the big picture...

'Yet, I think of the deprived parts of our City where really people are absolutely struggling to make ends meet. Then I think we're not, yet. Somehow we've got to engage with Central Government better as well, because it isn't something that Local Government can solve'.

Basic social justice issues remain

'I still feel in Waitakere, you see one of the things I'm not sure of is how many Pacific people actually own their own homes in Waitakere? You know because some of those data will actually give us some idea of our people. You see during the years of my working with Pacific community I have come across some families that are very very small percentage that I know own their own houses but also they were in arrears with the council, with their rates. You know so I don't really know what is the percentage of Pacific people who own their own home in Waitakere but I mean a few of those families that I work with I find that they didn't really understand the whole process of owning their own homes and that was the other thing that the Advisory Board was pushing with the Council of actually doing translations of their information that goes out to the community. You know like translating the rates stuff and also anything to do with like the rubbish collection and all that [And did they do that?] Yes they did. They brought some people to actually do all those translations. . . and you know that was what was happening like two of those Samoan families that I went and see you know they were saying but well we didn't really understand and having to take them through that process you know sort of, that was a sort of outcome for me to whether that was something that we need to actually discuss it with the Council and you know maybe resource that and that's what happened.'