

Council

**Tuesday, 20 November 2007
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT
WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD, HENDERSON,
WAITAKERE, ON TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2007,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Welcome to the first 'down to business' meeting of the 2007-2010 term of the Waitakere City Council. I want to acknowledge this city's incredible and successful journey over the past decade. I believe that unless you honour the past there can be no future. The journey we have been on until now has been one based on seriously and continuously improving Waitakere's infrastructure. On top of the new civic centre and The Trusts Stadium we have opened four new libraries and an enormous film studio. We have seen a university campus in Henderson for the first time. Double tracking of the railway line is a reality. Also on track are electrification and the further development of the Hobsonville marine cluster and super yacht industry. Yes indeed, it's been a truly amazing decade for us, this city and its people. We should all be rightly proud of what we've achieved.

As I said in my inaugural council meeting speech this is my sixth Council and I am deeply honoured to have been once more given this city's trust and respect as Mayor. It's a great responsibility to represent the people of Waitakere. I know each and every one of you feel the same and I once again congratulate all of you who have been re-elected. Voters clearly knew this city was in good hands and we look forward to three years of hard work, achievement and delivery. Congratulations also to our two new councillors Mike Jolley from the Waitakere Ward and Paul Mitchell representing the Henderson Ward and a sincere welcome back to Henderson's Brenda Brady.

Yes, this is going to be a very interesting, exciting and challenging term because we are on the threshold of two of the biggest projects this city has ever seen - the under grounding and redevelopment of New Lynn and the northern strategic growth area. There are three components to the latter project - Hobsonville Airbase, the Hobsonville Corridor and Massey North / Westgate.

In total we're talking about 435 hectares of land offering more than 4000 new households and nearly 15,000 new jobs. Over the next decade Waitakere is poised to assume a much more significant role in Auckland's regional employment growth. The northern strategic growth area will transform Waitakere's competitive position in the Auckland region. By 2016 our population is predicted to be 223,000 which will make us bigger than North Shore City. I don't think I need to go into any more detail about just how significant that all is. Suffice to say the project and its success is imperative to this city's future not to mention incredibly exciting. I will just say though that the success of this new sector is not dependent on a second airport being developed at Whenuapai. It will succeed without that.

The picture is no less exciting in New Lynn which will be thoroughly transformed by under grounding of the railway, intensification and an expansion of the existing core retail area. And we, the Council, are at the centre, the hub, of that transformation. We have a very important part to play as I am sure you are all aware.

These projects will cement Waitakere's position as a modern 21st century city where people are proud to live and work. But we're also going to have to put our efforts into initiatives that affect not just our city but the Auckland region as a whole. I'm talking about the Royal Commission into Auckland's governance announced last month by the former Minister for Local Government, Mark Burton. By December 2008 we should all know the deliberations and findings of the commission. In the meantime we must plan to be an integral part of the process to ensure we can be part of the right delivery. We must robustly address the issue in every way. Waitakere, with its proven strengths, can triumph in this review with ideas and thinking that expands the debate - in funding, philosophy and yes, vision.



I am impressed by the commissioners. They have a proven track record and strength in understanding local government. I know there is some concern that there is a not a former member of local government on the commission but I'm comfortable with this line up. These are the people we need to impress with what our thoughts, wants and needs are. We don't have to impress anyone in Auckland City, Rodney or Papakura. We have to impress these three individuals with our thinking. It's as simple as that. We're tendering for the future. We must bring to the table sound, strategic and wise thinking that envelops the complexities of this 21st century city. It is my belief they will be seeking ideas that stretch from over the Bombay Hills to almost Whangarei. They will not be charged with thinking small. They will need to think of the strategies 10, 20 and 50 years out and so they should. They will need to capture the trends and aspirations of the region and believe me that is not going to be an easy job. I think the task is enormous and it would be easy and cynical to limit the thinking and discussion to Super City? Four cities? Two cities? Or the old Curtis model of three? Believe me, this is one case where super size me is the worst possible scenario and it should stay where it successfully seems to belong - with McDonalds.

Sadly as a result of the recent local body elections some of our former strategic partnerships and relationships need to be re-established. I am the only mayor left standing! But I pledge to you here and now those all important relationships and partnerships will be re-established and we will move forward in a direction that is not only good for our individual cities but which is good for the Auckland region as a whole. Yes we have to look after Waitakere but we also need to look 'big picture'. It was that kind of thinking that led me to involve Waitakere in the national anti-family violence campaign. As we know, much can be achieved when we work with central government and our other partners. Family violence is not OK anywhere and so I, Dr Pita Sharples, the other members of the Mayoral Taskforce against Family Violence and those people who work in the family violence area tirelessly will continue to take the lead in putting an end to this scourge.

The other issue I am keen to address this term in education in this city. Unfortunately the figures show we have a very low educational achievement level and an acute number of low achieving school leavers. While Waitakere has excellent schools too many students - nearly a quarter - attend schools outside the city.

Only 19 percent of school leavers in Waitakere leave with University Entrance compared to 37 percent in the Auckland region. Fourteen percent leave school with little or no formal attainment although the good news on this is that that figure has decreased from 18 percent in 2005. We also have a very low uptake on tertiary education. I know there are many people who are as concerned as I am and that there has been some significant work recently looking at how we might achieve better education outcomes in the city. I am looking forward to the Waitakere Education and Learning plan due for release next month. The purpose of this plan is to initiate a whole of community approach focusing on the strategies and actions we need to put in place in order to achieve a top notch learning environment in the city.

Once the plan is released the next step will be to prioritise action areas and develop a work programme for implementation and I am hoping I can be of some help in that regard which is why I am keen to set up a Mayoral Taskforce on Education. Such an initiative will provide high level support and leadership and a way to bring the different strands of this work together. This is an incredibly important issue because without an education young lives are being marginalised. If you are illiterate the future is very bleak indeed and we need to turn that around for the sake of future generations. This city's future depends on it. Without a skilled and educated workforce how can we expect to attract new business and investment which is also going to be a priority over the next three years.



Last month I spoke at a lunch meeting for investors and entrepreneurs. The purpose of the meeting was to persuade them Waitakere should be on their radar. I told them Waitakere offered desirable and unique opportunities and we had a brand new city ready for them. The phrase 'on the radar' got me thinking about an article I read by Paul Hawken, an entrepreneur and social activist living in California. In the article Hawken explores what he is calling a significant social movement that is eluding the radar of mainstream culture. After many years of research he concluded there were more than two million organisations around the world working towards ecological, sustainability and social justice.

By conventional definition this is not a movement. Movements have leaders and ideologies. You join movements, study tracts and identify yourself with a group. You read the biography of the founder (s) or listen to them on tape or in person. Movements have followers but this movement doesn't work that way. It is dispersed, inchoate and fiercely independent. There is no manifesto or doctrine, no authority to check with. Hawken sought a name for it but concluded there isn't one. Historically social movements have arisen primarily because of injustice, inequalities and corruption. Those woes remain legion but a new condition exists that has no precedent; the planet has a life-threatening disease that is marked by massive ecological degradation and rapid climate change. It crossed Hawken's mind he was seeing something organic, if not biologic. Rather than a movement in the conventional sense is it a collective response to threat? Is it splintered for reasons that are innate to its purpose? Or is it simply disorganised? There were more questions than answers.

But Hawken did conclude this movement is the largest social movement in all of history. No one knows its scope. How it functions is more mysterious than what meets the eye. But what does meet the eye is compelling. Tens of millions of ordinary and not so ordinary people are willing to confront despair, power and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice and beauty to this world.

Hawken then goes on to mention eight individuals. Clayton Thomas-Muller who talks to community gatherings of the Cree nation about waste sites on their native land in Northern Alberta, toxic lakes so big you can see them from outer space. Shi Lihong, founder of Wild China Films, makes documentaries with her husband on migrants displaced by construction of large dams. Rosalina Tuyuc Velasquez, a member of the Maya-Kaqchikel people, fights for full accountability for tens of thousands of people killed by death squads in Guatemala. Rodrigo Baggio retrieves discarded computers from New York, London and Toronto and installs them in the favelas of Brazil where he and his staff teach computer skills to poor children. Biologist Janine Benyus speaks to 1200 executives at a business forum in Queensland about biologically inspired industrial development. Paul Sykes, a volunteer for the National Audubon Society, completes his 52nd Christmas Bird Count in Little Creek, Virginia, joining 50,000 other people who tally 70 million birds on one day. Sumita Dasgupta leads students, engineers, journalists, farmers and tribal people on a 10 day trek through Gujarat exploring the rebirth of ancient rainwater harvesting and catchment systems that bring life back to drought-prone areas of India. Silas Kpanan'Ayoung Siakor, who exposed links between the genocidal policies of former president Charles Taylor and illegal logging in Liberia, now creates certified, sustainable timber policies.

These eight, who may never meet and know one another, are part of a coalescence comprising hundreds of thousands of organisations with no centre, codified beliefs or charismatic leader says Hawken. The movement grows and spreads in every city and country. Virtually every tribe, culture, language and religion is part of it. It is comprised of families in India, students in Australia, farmers in France, the landless in Brazil, the "poors" of Durban, villagers in Irian Jaya, indigenous tribes of Bolivia and housewives in Japan. Its leaders are farmers, zoologists, shoemakers and poets.



The movement can't be divided because it is atomised - small pieces loosely joined. It forms, gathers and dissipates quickly. Many inside and out dismiss it as powerless but it has been known to bring down governments, companies and leaders through witnessing, informing and massing.

Hawken says it has three basic roots - the environmental and social justice movements and indigenous cultures' resistance to globalisation - all of which are intertwining. It arises spontaneously from different economic sectors, cultures, regions and cohorts resulting in a global, classless, diverse and embedded movement spreading worldwide without exception. In a world grown too complex for constrictive ideologies the very word movement may be too small says Hawken for it is the largest coming together of citizens in history.

The author goes on to say this is not a large social movement bound together by an 'ism'. What binds it together is ideas, not ideologies. This unnamed movement's big contribution is the absence of one big idea; in its stead it offers thousands of practical and useful ideas. In place of 'isms' are processes, concerns and compassion. The movement demonstrates a pliable, resonant and generous side of humanity. And it is impossible to pin down. Generalities are largely inaccurate. It is non-violent and grassroots - it has no bombs, armies or helicopters. A charismatic male vertebrate is not in charge. The movement does not agree on everything nor will it ever because that would be an ideology. But it shares a basic set of fundamental understandings about the Earth, how it functions and the necessity of fairness and equity for all people partaking of the planet's life-giving systems.

I think Waitakere is the only city in New Zealand that got there first.

Indeed we are leading the movement in the minds of our people, government and stakeholders. Hawken says the promise of this unnamed movement is to offer solutions to dilemmas - poverty, global climate change, terrorism, ecological degradation, loss of culture. Now those might initially sound way out of our league. But not when you really think about it. In Waitakere we've been banging on about climate change since Al Gore was in nappies. Poverty, affordable housing, clean and green, youth and Maori have long been on this council's social radar. Planting trees and community projects such as the awarding winning Project Twin Streams go a long way in the fight against ecological degradation. In Waitakere we have worked very hard to ensure an equal and working partnership with tangata whenua and more recently our new migrants. That makes me feel incredibly humble as well as proud. Just imagine what a global movement like this can do. Indeed it might even achieve its goal - to create a just society conducive to life on Earth. It will soon suffuse and permeate most institutions. But before then it will change a sufficient number of people so as to begin the reversal of centuries of frenzied self-destruction.

That's my vision for Waitakere. As I said earlier we've spent a decade on infrastructure and while there's more to come there needs to be a renewed focus on people and the ground on which we live. We need to continue to push the sustainability agenda and come up with news ideas so we can ensure the continuation of our extraordinary reputation around the country and indeed the world. After all we may be just a city on the map but we have always set our expectations high. Let's continue to soar.

I will leave you with Hawken's closing comment. *"Inspiration is not garnered from litanies of what is flawed; it resides in humanity's willingness to restore, redress, reform, recover, re-imagine and reconsider. Healing the wounds of the Earth and its people does not require saintliness or a political party. It is not a liberal or conservative activity. It is a sacred act."*



I wish all Councillors and Community Board Members every success for this term including those who stood for election on the licensing trusts and the health board. I would just also like to acknowledge the ones who didn't make the cut. It's not easy putting your name on a voting paper, a billboard or a hoarding. For all of those who, I thought, didn't even know what they were standing for there were those who clearly had a passion for serving the community they live in and to those people I would like to say stay with it. Work for three years to raise your profile, write letters and dream big dreams. There will be a job coming along for you soon in local government.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE