

# **Council**

**Wednesday, 26 September 2007  
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

**REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT  
WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE,  
ON WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2007, COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

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**PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

**6. REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

**Carpe Diem - Seize the Day**

On Saturday 15 September 2007, the grand and magnificent St Patrick's Cathedral was rededicated after an extensive refurbishment and cleaning. It's a wonderful church and I wish we had one in the west just like it, but then the history of this place has always been rather more sombre in its architecture and our forebears didn't go past interesting hotels when it came to architecture.

As I sat with Dick Hubbard waiting for the service to start, we talked of a mayoral life and indeed a life in politics: His Worship Dick in a very bumpy first term and me in what I view as a triumphant five terms. The secret is in leading and cheering on - it's a delicate art this leadership thing and you have to pick up the music of it very quickly, whether you run a big corporation, a community organisation or a city. Each has its own beat and soul and if you miss it (and a lot do) it's hard to get it back. You have to understand the history of a place, where it has come from and where it might want to go.

I once put my name down to be the Mayor of Auckland City and read about it in the *New Zealand Herald*. After sleeping on it I knew it was wrong. Even though my sponsor of the idea, Dame Catherine Tizard, had done a great job I knew it was wrong for me. Waitakere has been right for me for over five terms. Dick and I did talk of how bumpy it can be, no matter how focused and positive you are, because things can go wrong. As a member of Local Government New Zealand, and more recently as chair of the Metropolitan Mayoral group, I've observed how councils can get it wrong. But they can also be made right if conflict and scrapping are abandoned for leadership and direction. It seems to me unfortunately that natural good instincts, which should be the predominant factor with councillors, are often missing. Going through the media in the last year, the *Herald* has thrived on the woes of Auckland City. And I wonder just how much progress has been lost in the point scoring and divisive politics of that hub city of the region.

As the service continued and as Bishop Dunn paid tribute to those that had given their best to St Pat's, I was conscious of the people who had also given their best to the west in my time. People like Papa Fraser Delamere, Tweeny Hakuria, Jack Wihongi and our own Council colleagues, the wonderful Gordon Sunde and Anne Phipps. Sometimes at council you hear of so many passings you feel you are watching Haydn's "The Farewell Symphony" where the players leave the stage one by one until there is only one left to finish the piece and dash for the wings. This is civic life, I reminded Dick, and politics is a devil's game. It's not about credit or ego, it's about achievement for the future and if there are any good words to be said, it won't be until after you've long left the stage.

This report acknowledges the past three years, which have been one of the great progressive periods of the west and indeed extraordinary achievement for any city in New Zealand. More projects, ideas and vision have been fulfilled and delivered in this time than in any other. And you my Council colleagues have been the architects. I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the huge workload you have taken on and so diligently delivered. You have done it with good heart and grace, with a spirit of goodwill and we've worked together toward a common goal. You have in my opinion delivered everything and more that you set out to do three years ago.



It has been a pleasure and a joy to have led this Council, to see the results, and to experience the guts and courage of the Council in its endeavours. You have not shied away from the hard decisions nor have you walked away from criticism and ill comment. You have justified your decisions with wisdom and you have had the good of the City at heart. I salute you.

As you know, I do tend to read a bit and I've been reading *The Dance of Leadership* by Peter Cammock from Canterbury University, who talks about leadership and the new type of leadership, the type of leadership which I have tried to give this City. It's a leadership with a sense of service and selflessness. And that's why I have resisted opening buildings and unveiling plaques with my name on them.

Leadership bridges all situations and I think my leadership has been a holistic one. I am comfortable putting creative thinking ideas to my colleagues. They are, if you like, new directions on a given journey, a way of suggesting a more open life and public service to our community. And if you look around our City the ideas just flow and happen - Project Twin Streams, the Waitakere City Youth Council, a greater role for our new migrants. And above all - inspiration and an ability to lift the spirit, have fun and cheer people on.

Believe me, these components are too often sadly missing in local government. There is such a propensity to fight, to scrap and to point score. It is sometimes quite depressing to hear around the local government traps just how dysfunctional councils and authorities can become. How inwardly thinking they can be and how destructive that appears in the media.

Someone wiser than me in an ancient word said "if the vision is lost the people perish". Well so can councils. Our success has been in a common vision, whether it be the Eco City or a clean and green agenda. We have been inspirational in our thinking as well aspirational and we have brought, dare I say, a certain soul and music to our community. This has been interpreted so well by our staff, and I would like to acknowledge a deep gratitude to them for picking up and laying before us a workable future.

Take for example the anti family violence campaign. If anything touches us at our very core it is this issue, which is complex and almost unfathomable, and one which most councils would not even go near, delegating it to the 'too hard basket'. Here in Waitakere we have aggressively addressed the issue; one of the first cities to do so. We have taken it on with vigour and with a team of people committed to the long hard years ahead. Our timing has been perfect. Government, equally concerned, is matching us with a huge awareness campaign and with its help we are driving the message home. This is an important issue which has so many threads into our societal fabric. Like everything, and you've heard me talking about this for so long, it links and interlinks with our social, cultural and economic viability. I have repeatedly used as an example other cities, where a history of crime and gang warfare simply turns off investment as staff and companies think twice about investing. It's the same with graffiti. Don't underestimate the danger of a city scribbled on because those walls menacingly warn the passer-by, inhabitant, staff member or neighbour that they are in dangerous territory.

So if we experience a city as a whole and a community lifted to a place of pride, of care and family, we can say we have been successful I think. That's what we've done. Is there more to do? Of course, a great deal. We are standing at the crossroads of an enormously successful future for Waitakere; one that we did not envisage a decade ago. There is a new beat in Waitakere, a beat that empowers and gives a sense of worth and performance to our people. It's happened in the creation of new jobs, the energy around our movie and boating cluster projects, our relationships with our tertiary partners and business confidence and all of those factors have been reflected well in the media.



Sometimes when one is in despair about the lack or slowness of progress, it is great to go elsewhere. Let people know you are from Waitakere and watch their faces light up. The people of this country feel something rather important has happened and is happening in Waitakere. Take pride in that Councillors. It's a legacy, whether you are returned to office or not, you can be proud of. You have been part of history in the making and you have had a real, tangible effect.

The last three years need to be acknowledged and people need to be thanked so let me do that.

One of this country's longest running eco-tour operators, our very own Bush and Beach, was recognised last month as the best small tourism business in New Zealand. Bush and Beach won the Tourism Industry Association's Westpac Small Tourism Business Operator Award and I couldn't have been more delighted, because it's the first Waitakere business to get a New Zealand tourism award. To me this award sums up Waitakere's amazing three years and I want to talk about the highlights. Let me start at the beginning.

Just two months after the 2004 election, in December, we had already gelled as a Council. The debate was excellent and the working relationships between Councillors were very good signals for real delivery to our community. Just three months earlier the Prime Minister Helen Clark had opened our magnificent new stadium, one of our finest achievements over the past decade. And the bulldozers were busy on the Carter Holt site in preparation for our new Henderson hub.

In May 2005 we 'signed off' the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Protection Bill. The bill is still going through the (very) lengthy parliamentary process and we remain hopeful future generations will acknowledge and applaud us for our initiative. The following month, June, I set up a working party to plan for and organise the civic event to celebrate the opening of Waitakere Central. But more on that later. Around the same time I announced that the Waitakere Laureates' Programme was underway and plans were well on track to lift the vision of artists and give honour and thanks to artists who had contributed to the City's diversity and fabric. That year we announced 12 laureates and I am pleased to say those laureates are currently considering the next recipient(s).

By July 2005 we were literally tearing our hair out with frustration over the double tracking (or lack of it) situation, and in August I attended the 6<sup>th</sup> General Conference of Mayors for Peace, held to coincide with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima. The same month we were visited by Prince William, and Councillor Pat Booth was awarded a National Press Club lifetime achievement award to mark his long career in journalism. As a Council we were bestowed with two major awards by Creative New Zealand for the Glen Eden Library and our Trash to Fashion Awards.

But if you think it's just about winning awards, it's not. That's the glamour side which adds a 'wow' factor to a city. That's about attracting business, the right kind of business and it's something that helps people, as they sit endlessly in traffic, keep their hope in the future alive. But behind the scenes this Council - staff and officers - work like demons to resolve the bigger issues of infrastructure.

Let me just cite the biggest turnaround of any city's progress, indeed I think almost in living history - the concept of undergrounding transport in New Lynn. Let no-one say we are not capable of delivering the odd miracle or two.



It was at the end of the first year of this term a group of us, and staff, went to visit Subiaco in Perth, Western Australia. We were joined by Auckland Regional Council Councillor Joel Cayford, Waitakere Properties Chief Executive Officer Greg Parker, Enterprise Waitakere Chief Executive Officer John Wadsworth, Auckland Regional Transport Authority Chief Executive Alan Thompson, Auckland City Councillor Richard Simpson, Hamilton City Councillor Maria Westphal, AMP Head of Alternative Assets Murray Gribben and ONTRACK manager Ted Calvert, to see the area's redevelopment project centred around a sunken railway station that had become the hub for an array of successful commercial and residential developments. The trip gave us an amazing insight into what we could achieve if we had undergrounding of the railway in New Lynn and guess what, thanks to \$120 million from the Government, that's going to happen.

That announcement was certainly a huge highlight and we were off running. Within months we finally opened a full-service hospital after a 40-year wait. We still need to add more facilities and this is not forgotten. We still need to be totally committed to our health and hospital services and this will need to be re-energised in the next term of Council. But we can certainly take pride in progress to date and the excellent board made up of local people who have advocated on our behalf. Let me thank Councillors Neeson and Flaunty and the former MP Brian Neeson. Thank you all.

From undergrounding and hospitals we had a high international profile at the Chelsea Flower Show in London, with Waitakere taking on its rightful environmental green place on the world stage. New Zealand's entry was inspired by our wonderful wild west coast and took out a silver medal at the prestigious competition after being visited by royalty.

In 2005 we said goodbye to some MPs, hello to some new ones and hello again to others, with our own Dr Pita Sharples becoming the co-leader of the Maori Party. The Going West Literary Festival and Trash to Fashion celebrated ten years of existence, we opened two fabulous jetties on Henderson Creek and we officially named Studio One at the Henderson Valley Studios as the Cameron Duncan Studio, after our brilliant young filmmaker Cameron Duncan who died from cancer in 2003.

And so we went in to 2006 buoyed by our successes but immediately saddened by the death of our much loved and respected Fraser Delamere. In my February Mayoral Report I said 2006 was a watershed year for Waitakere and I quote: "It will see agreement on the final elements of the strategic skeleton of the 21<sup>st</sup> century modern city - the Waitakere Ranges protected, the urban limits redefined, urban growth concentrated on intensified town centres at Henderson, New Lynn and Westgate and the emergence of a CBD in Henderson."

Our first council meeting was held here in the stunning new chambers in August 2006 and it was a historic moment, as was leaving Number 6 Waipareira Ave. As that era came to an end I foreshadowed a new era for Waitakere. This new building lifted our vision and our agenda. It signalled this City was now a major player in the region for business development, retail and enterprise. It meant we had the premier council building in New Zealand - beautifully designed and sustainable - and of course we've won several awards since then to reinforce just how well we'd done.

But we hadn't just done well with our building and our art. Waitakere was the most 'liveable city' in the world. On 13 November 2006, Waitakere was declared the winner of the "Liveable Community" award in the United Nations-backed LivCom Awards at a ceremony in Hangzhou, China. As well as receiving the gold medal on "liveable", Waitakere was also a silver medallist in the Environmentally Sustainable Project Award for our work on the legislation designed to protect the Waitakere Ranges from further unsustainable development. The two medals were a huge endorsement for the policies and programmes we had delivered over a decade, which were all about smart thinking and innovative ways of dealing with the effects of population growth, crime, increasing waste volumes, stormwater, traffic etc. The awards recognised the fact Waitakere was a world leader in sustainability.



Meanwhile closer to home we joined with Rodney District Council, North Shore City Council and Infratil to form an airport company to progress our Whenuapai proposal. For that we owe them our thanks. Whenuapai is already a functioning airport with hundreds of military flights every year but it is under utilised. There are many examples here in New Zealand and overseas where military operations run side by side with commercial flights, and forming the airport company meant this option could be fully explored. As well as economic benefits for the north west of the region, commercial flights at Whenuapai would bring airline competition and cheaper travel. It's a no-brainer but we've certainly had trouble convincing some. Joint use at Whenuapai hasn't happened yet but it will eventually. With the Auckland region promoting itself as a 'world-class' city it must have more than one airport and with 500,000 people living within 15 km of Whenuapai, there's a very logical answer.

And so to my last Mayoral Report of 2006 entitled 2006 - 'A Great Year for the City' surprisingly enough! Indeed 2006 was an absolutely stunning year for the Council and the City. Over and above the happenings I have already talked about, a number of movies and television series were filmed here, Alloy Yachts launched two superyachts and we opened the Unitec/Henderson library.

Sadly we didn't get a very flash start to 2007 either with the High Court decision in favour of Colleen Dicks and the subsequent decision by our insurers to appeal that decision. We were the villain and thankfully RiskPool eventually decided to drop the appeal. Throughout the year this has been the topic at many a meeting and/or Mayoral Forum but sadly not much has changed. We should take our share of the blame but we should not have been copping the flak on our own. The Government needs to continue to look at ways of addressing this issue. Leaky homes is not going to go away. It is ongoing and dire and we are not alone in our concern. Like Mayor Dick Hubbard, I am demanding Government engage with us in an attempt to address the problem. This Government, and future Governments, must deal with councils in resolving what is a true nightmare of epic proportions. At the time of writing, the Government has not set aside any time to meet the Mayors of the region as was promised. Disappointing and unacceptable. I think the simple fact is Government needs to have a package and an answer for the region. I have talked about the devastating effect of this issue in mayoral reports over the past year and the cost varies every time you pick up a newspaper. But I think it's around and/or in excess of \$3.2 billion. Within 10 years we believe it will be catastrophic concern, as it has been in Canada.

As part of my role in Local Government New Zealand throughout the year, Kerry Prendergast, Mayor of Wellington City, and I advocated for Government to work on the issue of rates funding. The 'rates revolt' has galvanised many communities. Well we waited and last month finally the Government's paper on rates was delivered. The panel Chairman, David Shand, said in his address to us "local government was in the business of income redistribution whether it likes it or not". I felt that was a cop out. And to me it signalled Government was not willing or able to address the issue in as much depth as we wanted. Rates now account for about 56 percent of local government revenue and that's forecast to rise to 60 percent by 2016. The report also said many councils were overestimating how much they needed if they were going to lift rates. I felt this report should have indicated that Government was prepared to look seriously at taking GST off rates. I am not going to let this issue go away, and with my fellow mayors around New Zealand we are going to deal with this aggressively to make Government aware the responsibility it has to help the local councils it has been so prepared to dump its excess baggage on.

At the same time in 2008, this Council has got to prepare for its robust assessment of rating in Waitakere and where it goes to next. That's not going to be an easy process or decision and it's not going to be an easy sell to the business community.



In March 2007 I revealed through my Mayoral Report the film industry was worth around \$100 million a year to Waitakere. That's about as much as the local wine and tourism industries and of course just last month we saw the official opening by the Prime Minister of our new film sound studio, the largest in the country. The studio is expected to boost full-time employment for around 250 people and already its booking schedule is very, very healthy. The studio opening was one of a number of successful events that showcased this city to the country. And 2007 has also seen a number of new initiatives, such as the Mayoral Taskforce against Family Violence and our declaration of Waitakere as a City for Peace. We appointed Beatrice Faumuina as the city's inaugural Health and Wellbeing Ambassador, we unveiled the Declaration of Human Rights (the first council in the country to hang it), we welcomed and celebrated the success of local businesses, we unveiled Allie Eagle's heritage painting and we brought the Waitakere City Youth Council to the council chamber, table and agenda.

Another huge success was the mid year trip to China. The success of this trip has been well documented so I won't go over it again here, however I do just want to reiterate the trip saw agreements that have the potential to significantly enhance our education and film sectors and add enormously to the potential of the Waitakere economy.

Perhaps the biggest highlights of 2007 were the Auckland Regional Council's decision to shift the Metropolitan Urban Limit (MUL) in the north, the announcement State Highways 16 and 18 will be extended and that the Hobsonville Marine Cluster is a happening thing. Right up until the last minute we've been making bold decisions. As I was putting the finishing touches on this report, we entered into a partnership with the Auckland University of Technology to develop Shadbolt House for a writers' degree programme.

And there you have it colleagues - three years in review. I would like to acknowledge the great working relationship I have had with Chief Executive Officer Harry O'Rourke, who was recently awarded the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers highest honour, the Distinguished Management Award. He is one of only seven people who have been presented with this award.

Harry and I have worked together closely for many years. He is, as you all know, retiring in March next year. I believe he still has much to offer Waitakere and local government and I sincerely hope his talent and ability are recognised for what and all they are worth by the incoming Council and the Government of New Zealand. Harry has brought together a great team of directors and I'd like to thank them on behalf of all of us for their support, analytical wisdom and strategic thinking and advice; John Dragecivich, Wally Thomas, Sue Bidrose, Ross McLeod, Andrew Pollock, Robert Rudd and Graeme Campbell.

In this new complex, I would like to acknowledge the staff of the City of Waitakere, whose support and friendly demeanour in corridors, lifts and the cafeteria has made Elected Members feel welcome and supported. To each and every one of you, may I thank you for working for this great City.

I'd like to acknowledge with gratitude the support I have received from the Deputy Mayor, Carolynne Stone, whose own achievement in advocating for us has simply been outstanding. I thank her on behalf of all of us for the weeks and months she spent on the panel to review the MUL boundary and its subsequent favourable decision. To the Chairs of the Council, Councillors Hulse, Stone, Neeson and Clews - thank you.

I'd like to acknowledge the resignation of Ewen Gilmour, who came to us as a famous Westie comedian and left a committed social commentator and friend. I wish him and his wife Cathy the very best for the future. Pat Booth, who left us earlier in the term, continues to do well says his wife Valerie. He is well rested and in retirement in the north. His columns are as always erudite and thought provoking. Ewen and Pat both stood and became committed Councillors and we were sorry to see them go.



I'd like to also acknowledge the hard working team around the Mayoral Office. Like rust, no-one sleeps. It's been three enormously busy and progressive years through which they have supported me and my endeavours and I am grateful for their advice, strategic thinking and absolute commitment to the workload and getting the job done and done well. The number of letters, emails and phone calls from Waitakere residents is truly phenomenal in size and demand. To Vanessa Sherer, Fiona Cunningham and Irene Wickliffe - thank you.

And so as the election draws near, and this report is delivered to the final council, we look forward to the future with hope and a clear sense of direction. The City is flourishing in its energy and in its widespread positive image. I think because of our unhesitant commitment to the bigger ideals of society in New Zealand and in Waitakere, we have been able to see that good management and smart leadership underpin the individual's potential and brings a city and its many communities to a new level of amazing success and potential.

Finally, as I move around the City, I am finding much goodwill to what has been achieved in the past three years. I consider it the flowering of our City's dreams - the completion of this town centre, in itself a triumph of great organisation and communication between the directors and the huge number of staff that moved seamlessly from one building to the other, and the new projects ahead. There is goodwill abroad not only for this City but for the region. We are at the eve of a commission to look at the affairs of Auckland. I make no apologies for the fact I've felt and still feel that Auckland is over-governed. But I am of the heartfelt belief that Waitakere can triumph in such a review. And indeed expand. I would like that. I made no secret of the fact I think we were done a terrible disservice in the City's founding by not having included in our boundaries the Avondale Peninsula. That decision deprived us of rating and an industrial centre and it's naturally the west. I also feel this City should look seriously at expanding its boundaries northward towards the Kaipara, taking in the communities of interest that border the western seaboard. These will form part of any submission that I make to this commission. I feel very comfortable that the west, with its rich history and a very strong vision, is capable of not only making a strong point for dominance but has in recent years an extraordinary respect for getting things sustainably right. Whoever the commission is, I think they will recognise these strengths. They don't seem to exist in our neighbouring cities. There is no big picture or forward vision. Waitakere certainly owns this and I believe if a robust submission is brought to the commission we might stand an excellent chance of achieving more than we could ever hope under the present system.

I understand a survey by one of our trust partners shows an overwhelming sense of worth and wellbeing in Waitakere. I am sure this is a right interpretation of our community. There are no angry issues as we finish this term. Although one must never take things for granted, I would think many standing Elected Members will be returned and as the Greeks would say: "Jacta est alea - The die is cast", and for the others let me just say "Carpe diem - Seize the day".

Bob Harvey  
MAYOR

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP  
**MAYOR OF WAITAKERE**