

Council

**Wednesday, 28 July 2010
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER AT WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD,
HENDERSON, WAITAKERE, ON WEDNESDAY, 28 JULY 2010,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

6 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council resolve to:

1. **Receive** the Report of the Mayor.
2. **Agree** that people aged over 70 years be given free gym and pool passes to West Wave for use between the hours of 7 am and 10 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and that this commence on 1 September 2010.

Getting on track

Last week I toured the Trusts Stadium with All Black management. There is so much potential for the facility as it prepares to host teams including the All Blacks during the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Players, team staff and thousands of fans will soon descend on the grounds. It is a reminder that this is a place that needs public transport links to the rest of Henderson. A tramline would be the perfect solution.

The idea of a tram circuit through Henderson came from Dave Harré of Oratia. He imported several historic trams from Lisbon, Portugal, in 2003 and has spent the past seven years restoring them to their original condition. His dream is a tramline that will make Henderson into a true destination for Auckland. I want to offer my support. A tramline would be a great way to draw people to the West.

The route I imagine would start at Waitakere Central, run past West Wave, to the stadium and then back via the Corban Estate. I paced it out last week and it is not much more than a kilometre from station to stadium.

There is precedent for it. A similar project is taking shape in Auckland. It is likely that trams will run from Britomart to the Viaduct Basin by 2011. New train lines have already been established to transport people to Eden Park. Iconic and successful tram networks have been set up in Melbourne, Berlin, Amsterdam, Toronto and Helsinki. I know there are concerns about the cost of establishing one here in Waitakere, but it is clear that trams are making a comeback all around the world. The West should get on board.

A welcome decision

It began in April when an elderly man and his disabled grandson were shot dead in their Hokitika home. On July 8, 31-year-old farmer Scott Guy was gunned down in his Fielding driveway on his way to milk the cows, leaving behind a pregnant wife. A week later, two policemen were injured and a police dog shot dead while conducting a routine search in Christchurch. The string of attacks culminated with a shootout in New Lynn just a week ago. This time a man was shot in the chest after threatening police with an air rifle.

Our community has never been more concerned about gun violence. They don't want to see more guns on our streets or in our homes. We have already seen so much harm done, too many lives ruined and families broken apart.



That is why I am so pleased that this Council has decided not to hold another Arms Fair at West Wave in October. It was a show that glorified guns, flick knives, military regalia and Nazi memorabilia in a place where our children were going to learn to swim. Hosting it was the wrong look for a City that prides itself on peace.

I want to thank my fellow Mayors for supporting my stance on this issue. Len Brown, John Banks and Andrew Williams have all said they would not be open to holding the Arms Fair in their cities. Thank you also to all Councillors. I know not all of us have seen eye to eye every step of the way, but I believe together we have achieved the right outcome.

What I did in China

A decade ago Jim He started trying to connect film makers in China and New Zealand. It seemed a distant prospect. The first Lord of the Rings movie had not yet been released. Chinese film was a shadow of the gigantic industry it is today. Still, Jim worked tirelessly to connect a jigsaw of producers, directors and post production companies in what he considers his two homes. Gradually he put together a picture of a co-operative film market that could profit both countries.

The New Zealand Film Festival in China was his brainchild. I led a delegation to the inaugural festival with just three New Zealand film makers alongside me. This year's fifth annual festival featured 10. Businesses including Park Road Post and Weta Workshop were represented. We were accompanied by another delegation headed by the Mayor of Wellington, Kerry Prendergast. Together, we laid the foundations of deals that will bring millions to New Zealand for years to come.

In his introduction to the film programme, Prime Minister John Key said "this year's festival will be a chance to showcase the work of our talented filmmakers and a great opportunity to strengthen then the ties between our two countries." His words rang true.

We had an exceptional line-up of films to show, headlined by actor/director Simone Horrocks' *After the Waterfall* (reviewed later in this report). The powerful drama features a great performance by Outrageous Fortune's Anthony Starr in the lead role. Also at the top of the billing was Taika Waititi's *Boy* – now the number 1 New Zealand film of all time. *Home by Christmas* and *I am not Harry Jenson* rounded out a list of creative and visually stunning projects. All were award winners.

The first function of the festival was a reception at the New Zealand embassy in Beijing, hosted by Ambassador Carl Worker and the Minister for Economic Development, Gerry Brownlee. Film delegations had a ride into town together. Minister Brownlee was heading a New Zealand aviation delegation to three cities, selling planes and airport potential to Chinese interests. Our very own Sir Ken Stevens was part of another delegation looking at airports and baggage handling.

On the Monday night we opened *After the Waterfall* in a superb theatre complex in the heart of Beijing. The delegation was introduced to the audience and Simone talked about the five year journey of making the film. It was a fantastic experience to see our own images translated to the big screens of Beijing.

The next day was an official visit to the Beijing Studios. There we renewed the friendship with senior members of the Chinese film industry who had visited Waitakere over the last decade. I felt all our investment of time, energy and money had paid off. They were enthusiastic about the progress Waitakere had made in film development and studio space and talked about investing in it.



The scope of the Chinese film industry is massive. It produces 500 to 600 new films a year and is still eager to look at new stories and ideas. The potential is almost limitless. Beijing Studios is massive – one of the largest studio complexes in the world. There are 16 sound studios, with a floor area of 101,182 square feet. That is far larger than any studios you will get in Hollywood, but it is vested into state ownership. The studios are now interested in post production from New Zealand and were anxious to put together an agreement with Weta Workshop and Park Road Post. So the delegation had real firepower for our Chinese hosts.

The rest of the day was spent looking at similar studios before travelling on to Hungzhou to see if a co-production was possible with any of the delegation scripts. It was an amazing reception at the Zhejiang Hengdian World Studios. They are the largest studios in the world at about 330 hectares and the most well equipped in China. There they have recreated five palaces of ancient China – including those of the Qing and Ming Dynasties. A complete ancient Chinese village has also been constructed. They have built an ancient settlement almost to the scale of the Forbidden City in Beijing to film the great epics *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*. As China is still fascinated by the Japanese-Chinese conflicts of the 1930s and 1940s, massive warehouses hold tanks, weapons and costumes for war recreations. Every one of my hotel room TVs featured five or six channels devoted to war soaps produced there. It would take maybe three or four days just to tour the whole facility. This is film on a massive scale.

The owner and developer of the studios Xu Wenrong was wildly enthusiastic about dealing with New Zealand filmmakers and producers. The studio has just produced the first co-production with Australia – a fantasy fable starring Sam Neill called *The Dragon's Pearl*. This film is out of Adelaide and looked a perfect production for New Zealand companies to model their pitches on. It was shot in Australia and China and gave us an indication how such a New Zealand co-production could work. Representatives from the studios came to Auckland to meet with us again on Friday July 9 to advance our conversations about a co-production. If that works out then our trip will have been well worth it.

My purpose was to push the work of the Auckland Film Studios in Henderson. My way was paved by the long work of our International Relationship Manager Richard Duncan, who was greeted warmly by every Chinese host we met. His efforts have gathered a huge array of Chinese contacts for the Council and advanced film here and throughout New Zealand.

That work, along with the efforts of Jim He and the representatives on the delegations, culminated in one of the biggest moments in the recent history of New Zealand Film. Just days after we returned from China, John Key followed in our footsteps to Beijing. There he met Premier Wen Jiabao and signed the Film Co-Production Treaty on July 8. It gives New Zealand filmmakers a unique place in the rapidly growing Chinese film market. Their productions will be given the same favoured status as local ones. The deal is expected to bring millions to New Zealand film and boost the number of co-productions we launch with China. I applaud and thank those who have been a part of making it happen.

As Councillors are aware, we are seeking new extended premises for film making in the West. We have been looking at a couple of sites and have enlisted Government support. Gerry Brownlee and Melissa Lee were hosted by studio directors on Thursday, July 15. They were given a tour of the facilities and were briefed on the ambitious projects we have planned for the years ahead. Our hope is that the studios will continue to flourish, with both local and international partners. Film will remain strong in the West.



Saying goodbye to Kakogawa

These coming months are a time for goodbyes. One of the hardest farewells I've had to say came last month in Kakogawa, Japan. It has been our sister city for 20 years. We started out with a friendship agreement. Now we're more like family.

I needed to thank the city for their generosity and the commitment they have shown to us over many years. It was a chance to tell them we were passing on the official relationship to the community of the West. Our people will now be charged with ensuring that the student exchange programmes we run with Kakogawa can continue. I also hope also that students with disabilities will still to be able to visit this city.

I have suggested that Sharon Simiona and Graham Wakefield act as initial contacts for the city of Kakogawa after November. Both have a long lasting connection to the city. I also reassured the Kakogawa officials and Mayor that the Peace Bell gifted to us in 2009 will continue to be a monument to the friendship and goodwill between Japan and New Zealand. A number of excellent suggestions have come in from the Henderson Community Board on how to maintain and respect the bell. It must continue to be rung throughout the City on significant dates for peace. A programme for its use needs to be brought together and approved before this city is dissolved.

Kakogawa was celebrating its 60th anniversary during my visit. It hosted an afternoon concert and awards ceremony to commemorate the occasion. City honours were awarded to prominent citizens. This was the city's highest honour. Our former CEO Harry O'Rourke was invited to receive one of the awards. The Council and city extends our congratulations to Mr O'Rourke on his recognition.

Sustainable Singapore: Why Bilbao won

I was honoured to be an invited guest at the World Cities Summit in Singapore from June 27 to 30. Waitakere was finalist for the inaugural Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize. There were indications we had leapt ahead of some prominent cities and were in the running for a top placing. It was a considerable honour. About \$350,000 was up for grabs. The award was dubbed the 'Nobel Prize for cities'.

Alongside that gala event was a high level platform for Mayors and Governors to share the challenges and trials we have encountered while rejuvenating our cities. I spoke about the transformation of Waitakere into an environmentally friendly city. The forum was chaired by the Singaporean Minister for National Development, Mah Bow Tan. It was an extraordinary experience. Waitakere was clearly on the international radar. Pre-conference material had given every delegate an excellent background to the speakers and their subject. But I was delighted to open Singapore's major newspaper, the Straits Times, on the morning of the conference, to see a half page article on Waitakere.

That evening there was question and answer session with Singapore's legendary Minister/Mentor and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Though he is now 86, he remains a powerful intellect that is vitally interested in world cities and the future of Singapore. Questions from the floor were thoughtful and incisive. His responses revealed a wealth of wisdom, experience and knowledge.

He talked of how his mission in life had been to renew Singapore after World War 2. There was a huge need for someone to take up the massive task of rebuilding the city. It was in dire straights both economically and socially. People died in the streets. They were illiterate and desperately poor.



Much has been written on the transformation of Singapore, but to hear it from the architect himself was extraordinary. Mayors felt his work had been an unqualified success economically. Singapore now boasts an iconic waterfront with one of the biggest ports in the world. Its strong economy has been the backbone of large scale development and investment. Ambitious planning and design have made it one of the most recognisable cityscapes in the world.

It now wishes to be a global leader in water management. A day after the question and answer session, I was joined by our Director: Strategic Planning, Graeme Campbell at a conference on that topic. His fares were also paid by the Singapore Government. It is sparing no expense in its efforts to gain knowledge on this difficult and important area.

But socially there has been a price to pay for all this remarkable progress. Crime is low, the city extraordinarily clean, but long hours of work and stress has taken its toll on young people. Birth rates have dropped and the level of personal happiness in the city has dipped.

The entire time I was in Singapore, I was looked after by two members of the city's parks and reserves management organisation. They were eager to show me a stunning new development on the shoreline. It is known as Gardens by the Bay, and boasts three huge glass houses, each around 20 metres high, as well as 50 acres of gardens from around the world. They invited me to go to its official opening in a year's time, when I return for the 2011 World Cities Summit.

As I wandered around the gardens taking shape, I was reminded of our own concept for a Museum of Gardens at Te Atatu. These green precincts are a great tourist destination and a boost to the local economy. Just as the Eden Garden project is a landmark tourist attraction for the United Kingdom, the Singapore gardens will draw people from around the world. It is a reminder of what we missed out on. This city could have had its own iconic attraction. Instead we have a pony club and some vacant land.

M1-M2 That lack of a big vision is what sets us apart from a city like Bilbao in Spain. It was the eventual winner of the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize. See attached pages M1 to M2. I can't argue with the decision. A six minute video of that city's transformation will be shown after this report is delivered. It has gone from an industrial wasteland to an international art destination, thanks to a 30 year vision and a commitment to the big picture from all its leaders.

M3 The new Auckland Council would do well to take the lessons of Bilbao on board. If anyone thinks that the Queens Wharf delivery is a right and acceptable process for the future, or that ignoring those with a vision is a way to build a city, they should go back to the story of Bilbao and think again (see page attached at M3).

Staying alive

My recent trips have confirmed that cities are honouring their ageing communities with acknowledgement and gratitude. It's time Waitakere followed suit.

We don't have a Museum or Art Gallery to offer free passes to like they do in Melbourne or New York. What we do have is a world class swimming and gym facility in West Wave. It is underperforming in the early mornings when it comes to getting our senior citizens along.

Last month I suggested that we take a proposal to give older people free passes to West Wave to the Auckland Council. But I have made a point of making notes on attendance at the gym in the last few weeks. The average number of people there on any given morning is about ten. As I swimmer, I am always surprised to be able to commandeer my own lane. That wouldn't happen anywhere else in Auckland.



Therefore, I am convinced that this Council can afford to give some help to our older people now. I have had very positive feedback to this idea and I commend it to this Council to offer free gym and pool passes to those over 70 between 7 am and 10 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The underperforming café would well make up any lost income if that is of concern.

After the Waterfall

Written and directed: Simone Horrocks

Producer: Trevor Haysom

Cast: Anthony Starr, Cohen Holloway, Sally Stockwell

This dark and moody film is a harrowing trip into the heart of every parent's worst fear. It opens at Kitekite Falls near Piha. A child's toy is sucked under the water. The father dives down to find it. He returns to the shore to find his child missing.

The film tracks the aftermath of that tragic event. Anthony Starr is absolutely convincing as the distraught and bewildered father. His performance is at the centre of a heart wrenching and beautifully controlled picture. The film locations stretch across Waitakere, from New Lynn to Lincoln Rd and back to wet, wintry Piha. Its themes of repressed emotions and portrayal of a family unravelling are played out with subtlety and bleak resignation.

I was surprised at the excellent reaction to the film from Chinese audiences. They were obviously touched by its portrayal of a family in crisis. I too was deeply moved. It reminded me of the painstaking search through the Piha bush for Iraena Asher. The intense sadness and overwhelming confusion of that search were echoed and amplified.

After the Waterfall was given excellent showings at the recent New Zealand Film Festival. It will be on general release later in the year. Five stars.

The fall of empires

I recently read a great article on the rise and fall of empires. It was written by the visionary Harvard history professor Niall Ferguson. His focus is on the triggers for the downfall of the greatest civilizations in history and his results will surprise you.

It is an article told through the lens of the iconic series of Thomas Cole paintings called *The Course of Empire*. Cole's four pictures show hunter-gatherers arriving in a hostile new land, mastering it through agriculture and religion, establishing a magnificent kingdom and then finally, seeing that kingdom burned to the ground as invading hordes rush through, raping and pillaging the once great society.

Ferguson says that scenario of a sharp decline into a final cataclysmic event has reoccurred throughout history. The Ming Dynasty imploded in a few decades of open rebellion, the British Empire over the course of less than 50 years at the beginning of the 20th Century and the U.S.S.R fell apart within the span of a few years. Even the Roman Empire was finished off by the recurring blight of Civil War after the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180AD, which left it vulnerable to attack from Germanic invaders. They brought the world's greatest empire down in the 50 years after the 406AD invasion of Western Rome.



Now we may be looking at the fall of the American empire. Right now America is clinging to its place in Cole's third picture, but its status as the world's superpower is increasingly under threat. The United States economic deficit was \$1.4 trillion in 2009. Public debt is expected to rise to \$14.3 trillion by 2019 and to absolutely astronomical levels by 2080. And all of it was triggered because many Americans started defaulting on their sub prime mortgage payments, blowing huge holes in the business models of hundreds of seemingly secure financial institutions. Ferguson's message is that the illusion is coming to an end. Countries are no longer buying the idea of the United States as a superpower able to weather any economic storm. We could be looking at the fall of the great empire of our time. And it could be happening soon.

His central idea is that sometimes something like a sharp decline in the economy – a misstep here and there – is all it takes to drive a superpower into chaos. It's not the long game of history he sees as threatening the very existence of societies; it's the short term crises. The analogy he uses is of a train that has crashed through the wall at a railway station and hit the street below. All it takes is a faulty brake or a sleeping driver to send a great system to destruction.

Niall Ferguson's article appears in the March/April issue of Foreign Affairs