

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER'S REPORT

Report to: Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board
Member Name: Manuwai (Pronounced Mah Noo Why) Wells
Subdivision: Moerewa Kawakawa
Date: January 2020

Tena koutou,

I hope the kumara you voted for were elected! Thank you to everyone who participated, candidates and voters, nga mihi.

For those of you out there who may not know me, my name is Manuwai Wells. My Dad was George Wells, he grew up in Punaruku with his parents Joe Wells and Mihi TeRina Piripi before moving to Moerewa at age 16 to work for the P & T (Post and Telegraph). He later married our mum Maria Kawiti, moving on to Waiomio to live with her and her parents- Te Tawai Kawiti and Matekino Wynyard, before settling to raise me and my sisters Wanda and Tracey in our whanau home here in Kawakawa.

Our role as board members centre around being effective connectors and conduits between our communities and council (and vice versa). We have been asked to file regular reports on our activities- with an aim to provide insight, understanding, accountability and transparency to the people in our subdivision and the wider Bay of Islands-Whangaroa ward.

This month's report will begin with a review of the previous term and end with a brief outline of the aspirations identified for the current term. To keep things user focussed and friendly- meeting attendance and request for service items for January will be included as part of next month's report in the March agenda.

What I did

I was by-elected on to the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community board in the last half of the previous term, representing the Kawakawa Moerewa subdivision from May 2018 to September 2019. During this time, most of my elected member mahi focused on:

1. Receiving rate payer/resident grievances
2. Helping people understand what local government is and what it does
3. Following up on unresolved Request for service (RFS) items
4. Attending community events and hui, board hui and workshops
5. Reviewing community grant funding applications

I was also tasked to progress the following:

1. Look into how CCTV footage gathered in Kawakawa is monitored and managed
2. Support correct pronunciation of our Maori words and place names
3. Look into pathways for building capacity and succession into roles like board chair
4. Look into extending the current Kawakawa Library opening hours (M to F, 8.30-4.30) to include a late night or weekend day so families can access library services outside of regular working hours.

Update:

1. CCTV: The Kawakawa Moerewa Police Advisory Group, Local Police and the Kawakawa Business Association have been working on funding applications and plans to upgrade and link into the Kaitaia CCTV monitoring system based at the Kaitaia Police Station. This upgrade was partially and conditionally funded by our board in 2019, with additional funding being sought via an application to the Proceeds of crime fund.

2. Correct pronunciation of our Maori words and place names: Councillors and Community Board Members are still mispronouncing our common words and names like Waitangi (often mispronounced Why Tang E, instead of Why Tah Ngee); Waipapa (said Why Pap Ah instead of Why Pah Pah), Kaikohe (said Kai Caughey instead of Kai Caw Heh), Hokianga (said Hokey Ang Ah instead of Haw Key Ah Ngah) or a failure to roll the R's in Kerikeri. It has been an observation that people invest time and effort where they perceive value. If elected members do not value our maori words and names, no individual time or effort will be put into correct pronunciation.

3. Building capacity and succession. After a year and a half of discussing this item in relation to exploring the option of an annual rotation of our chairperson role, our new board resolved to try annual rotation, voting in a chair and deputy chair for one year until October 2020.

4. Extension of Kawakawa Library opening hours. After repeated requests and a lot of work by council staff, Kawakawa Library opening hours were extended in July 2019, to include Saturdays 9am-1pm.

What I learned

People do not trust council.

Attempting to be a connector/conduit in an environment where there is little or no trust, and where council is often perceived as an organisation that "takes things away" from people without clearly communicating when it will happen and why- has been a challenge.

In the May 2018 by-election, our Kawakawa-Moerewa ratepayers and residents were able to special vote and ballot box vote at the Kawakawa service centre inside the Kawakawa Library. A year and a half later, during the October 2019 elections, Kawakawa-Moerewa ratepayers and residents went to the Kawakawa service centre again. This time they were turned away and told they had to travel to Kerikeri or Kaikohe centres to vote.

Coming from one of the most impoverished subdivisions in our ward and district (one where people sacrificed money put aside for groceries and living costs to travel at the last minute, to Kerikeri and Kaikohe to vote), the most significant thing I learned in the last term was that sometimes, council will take things away, and when it does this without warning and clear connective communication, the lack of trust felt in our community is earned.

The most significant thing our community learned in the last term was that here in the far north district, voting is a privilege, not a right.

Goals/Aspirations for the new term 2019-2022

1. Improve internal and external board relationships and communications
2. Continue building capacity and succession via annual chair rotation
3. Edit and refine the board's strategic plan
4. Contribute to the board's submissions to the Remuneration authority and Council's Annual and Long-term plans
5. Find ways to make our people feel more welcome at council

I'm excited for the fresh outlook and opportunities a new term has to offer. I'm looking forward to achieving the goals we set and sharing more of our identity and way of life with elected members, council staff and all of you out there over the next three years.

Nga mihi o te tau hou, Manuwai