



**Far North
District Council**



TŪHONOTANGA MINITI ATTACHMENTS MINUTES

**Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board
Meeting**

20 September 2024

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Re-Localization. Globallocalism, by Wally Hicks

"Provision must also be made to ensure that everyone who really has something to say, expressing new ideas or giving new form or basis to known ideas, shall be given a hearing [in the right quarters]."

~ Frankie 'Future of Man' Warner ~ (London 1944)

I wish to tautoko Cnr John Vujcich's column (Age 12 September) about the "Super-Local focus" needed by Councils and Community Boards. I thoroughly agree with the premise "people and communities". I tautoko nui several of John's details, ie "not one or two communities based on priorities, but all of them and all at once," and John's precision use of the expression, "wellbeing outcomes". Things like "basics", prosperity and even "thrive" amount to little without "wellbeing". If the pursuit of prosperity causes harm, it cannot be wellbeing, other than what might be required for healing? Return to wellbeing function.

My 'feedback' aka challenge is that wellbeing must be for everyone who can possibly be reached, and therefore requires a big, philosophical overview, along with ways of communicating it. A clear definition of "wellbeing", akin to the definition of "harm" that the absolute freedom-of-speech movement people are demanding via their Free Speech Union and Voices For Freedom lobbies. The "freedom" to do harm is not wellbeing. It's not really even freedom.

Secondly, I disagree that Community Boards are "super-local". In some cases they are far from it. My own North Hokianga is an ideal example. 400 square kilometers, 1700 people, with one Community Board representative. This might seem generous per capita?

The 'reality' I observe is that Hokianga-ki-te-raki is comprised of at least seven distinct 'communities', in the Kāwanatanga ā-rohe/Local Government sense. I call these Kainga Rohe 'Settlement Areas'. Pawarenga, Manganuiowae/Broadwood, Mangataipa/Mangamuka, Kohukohu, Rangī Point, Panguru and Matihitehi/Mitimiti.

Community Board doesn't come close to consulting and representing all of these 'places' and the communities-of-interest within them. This would be more than a full-time job for more than one person and, conversely, it cannot really be a job.

Communities thrive on involuntary volunteerism, like breathing. We 'commune' on the grounds upon which we agree, some hopefully absolute, ie the sanctity of life and "self-preservation by all".

"Community boards are the front face of local government" appears to me to be the amalgamation abdication statement. An LGNZ, NZInitiative and other lobby group's prescriptive maxim. Local governance shall not go beyond this point. Yet it must do

exactly that to reach as many of the people as possible, ie in consultation processes to achieve "wellbeing outcomes".

Community boards are by dint of amalgamation spread too thin. This means that their statistically-measured basics and ethically-essential 'wellbeing' engagement with communities is highly skewed; as is all our so-called 'Democracy' IMHO. It's based on complaints; on whatever public who do engage feel is not working. Reacting to RFSs. Reacting to 'crises'. Future visioning strategy and future-proofing action is where community wellbeing can be found. Climate change is annually making this more urgent.

Synchronously, Climate change weather events have made the need for 'community resilience' at a more local level than Community Boards immediate, morally imperative and legally required; the most local level. Plus have provided the mechanism by which a new "kind" of 'Super-Local Governance' can be naturally eased into being: Local 'Area' Emergency Planning.

Two distinct 'polities' of local governance already exist more locally than Community Board, at the Kainga Rohe Settlement Area level. The level (as I see it) of real community, the social milieu. Grassroots governance is a useful analogy because this 'community' is far from singular. It branches-out below the surface into many 'roots'. Communities of kinship, care, interest, necessity, vested-interest et al. The micro-social roots will encompass, for instance, the ideological, political, ethnic, church and/or ethical affiliations of each person involved, etc. All aspects of wellbeing in 'The Public Domain', our 'Commons', including the 'Grey Zone' of member-only community noticeboard-type media platforms, yet to be adequately regulated IMHO. The present-day Wild-West of ubiquitous Social Media.

These two existing Kainga Rohe Settlement Area governance 'forums' are Marae Komiti and Town Hall Committee. Marae Komiti have near tino rangatiratanga status under Te Tiriti o Waitangi? Town Hall Committees have 'designated authority' from Council via Community Board, which is required to provide an 'Advisory Only' member to each publicly-elected THC.

The concept of 'Town Hall' is a foundation-stone of Athenian democracy, as is 'Consent to be Governed' and as once were 'Citizens Assemblies'. (One might ask, "What happened?") Community Halls policy is currently being revised by FNDC. A perfect opportunity to re-expand their role and provide them with the support to do so.

As I understand it, these two 'governance entities' also exist in an ideal 'Matike Mai Aotearoa Report' relationship to one another. Two governance spheres, overlapping. Co-Governance. A joint Te whare whakahaere o te rohe; Local Authority ~ incorporating other kinds of representation too, ie business association, residents

and ratepayers, visioning group, interested citizens, some kind of citizens assembly etc ~ would complete the trio of three houses? Or three pillars to one house? Any community might decide to only have two, with 'degrees' of nau mai haere mai all welcome? Marae and Town Hall Committees are going to meet regardless. The meeting of both will require bicultural and multiethnic co-facilitation by Council, using external facilitators if necessary IMHO. It must be made safe for diverse opinions to be openly expressed, including neurodivergent ones, along with the obvious deliberation of facts.

By undertaking Emergency Planning at the settlement area level we are acknowledging that 'life' ultimately depends on genuine Super-Local, and in calling it 'Community Resilience' we are presaging that we all 'belong' to it.

Participation in governance can and must also be made more 'fun'; must tailor itself to our human diversity of learning and communication styles using all the 'workshop techniques' that neoliberalism has utilized to increase corporate and lobby group 'productivity and efficiency', the outcome of which can threaten rather than enhance wellbeing. Many such techniques like 'Action Methods' started-out as therapeutic and consciousness-raising methodologies. We owe them something I'd call Re-Amalgamation with a DIY component. Marae and Town Halls retain considerable "freedom". All the more reason to govern well.

Marae and Town Halls are the ideal place to do real 'Super-Localism' aka 'Re-Localization' because marae and town halls (and in some cases school halls being effectively town halls) will be far-and-away the major providers of Community Lead Centres aka Emergency Hubs. They also coincide, to varying degrees, with self-sufficiency areas ~ in the event of an area needing to feed itself for ten months, for example ~ and potentially coincide with 'Isolation Areas' that any future pandemic emergency may require. Hope for the best, plan for the worst. The worst could conceivably be nuclear war?

Marae and Town Halls are the families-of-origin of our first County Councils, later amalgamated into District Councils under neoliberalism. Town Halls exist for very good reason. Marae, of course, exist without question.

Indeed, since central governments don't seem interested and/or willing, Poari Kainga Rohe could write their own constitutions which, insomuch as a settlement area echoes the nation, might fill-in a whole lot of work and gaps for whichever central government who eventually does the inevitable.

Anything approaching the wellbeing outcome for "communities, all of them all at once" will require the natural re-expansion, re-vision and re-resolution of Kainga Rohe/Settlement Area Governance, aka 'Neighbourhood' or 'Village' re-localized Councils or Poari/Boards, which will need to be 'official' by dint of their Emergency

Planning requirements, ie answerable to 10 Government Departments and NGO, down through Civil Defence and FNDC to marae and town hall. Step down to grassroots level again, as we will need to also step up to global as a species soon IMHO.

Right now, while 'Area Emergency Plans' are being finalized and in some places 'tested', is the perfect opportunity, using the waka of 'Community Resilience', with it's inherent 'future visioning', to navigate the two 'mergent' streams of our 'constitutionality' ~ marae and town hall both.

I admire and commend John Vujcich's work in this field over many years.

"If all Life is sacrosanct aka sacred or holy, with equal rights to and equally worthy of development, then Love requires a ***NATURAL GOOD*** ORDER by which the development of each and every one is possible."

~ Ernst Frankenstein (1881-1959) – Lawyer, philosopher & international jurist – father of Natural Ethics – as Frank E Warner in 'Future of Man' (London 1944) & ***me***

'Once We're Villagers', governance "of the people by the people for the people" may finally germinate in the soil beneath democracy's 'floor', 'Consent to be Governed'.

(TEXT ENDS)

Wally Hicks ~ Waikoneke tata Kohukohu : Te puna o te Ao marama : Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe.