

## COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER'S REPORT

**Report to Community Board:** Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board

**Member Name:** Dave 'Bear' Hookway-Kopa

**Subdivision:** Kerikeri

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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### REPORT

#### Meetings

I have attended numerous meetings throughout 2021.

Kerikeri Domain Project – we have held regular fortnightly/monthly meetings as this project has progresses.

Community Issues – have met and liaised with a number of community groups and individuals who have had local concerns and issues.

My redeployment to the COVID\_19 response at my Northland DHB work and a period of ill health during 2021 meant that I did miss a couple of meetings and workshops.

#### Issues

**Reports.** The ability to provide reports directly to the Community Board was unilaterally changed last year without the consent of the Board members. This meant that we would essentially furnish a report which was already out of date – given that it would cover a period of just 2 weeks since the previous meeting. This had been the modus operandi during previous terms of the Community Board. I don't consider this to be effective and having been told by the Chair that reporting on the day, including verbal reports would not be minuted, I have chosen largely to protest this decision by not furnishing short-dated reports.

**Levels of Service.** Earlier in 2021, we had a staff member present on procurement to the CB. We raised concerns at the levels of service currently being achieved locally. This followed some Requests for Service made via the CEOs office around issues of safety with palm tree branches falling onto pedestrians in central Kerikeri streets and the length of time taken to respond to multiple requests made by other parties such as WINZ and Community Fitness Kerikeri.

We requested information on the current contracts as they relate to Kerikeri and other parts of the Ward, the levels of service currently contracted and a diary of the contracts which would be coming up for renewal in the coming year. This would enable the Board to consider what community wanted and feed back onto the procurement process. THIS NEVER HAPPENED.

**Maintenance of trees and other vegetation** is a frequent issue locally. I raised the issue with the CEO in one meeting, inquiring about the Heritage By-Pass and the degree to which weeds were more of a feature than the landscaped plants. I also noted the degree to which vegetation has been encroaching the pedestrian and cycle ways on the By-pass. Work did happen on each of the roundabouts – removal of weeds in particular. However – no new plantings were made to fill the increasing numbers of gaps created by dead plants.

Moreover, on the Kerikeri Rd end, none of the vegetation on the periphery of the roundabout has been weeded. Rubbish also has accumulated along the cycle way on the By-pass, but this is removed very rarely. Obvious solution is to know what level of service is contracted and revise if necessary.

In central Kerikeri, I (and others) have placed repeated RFSs for the gardens in the alleyway between #82 and #84 Kerikeri Rd to be cut back. The vegetation is not suited to the location and impedes pedestrians (more than 1 at a time) and in particular strikes users of mobility scooters in the face. Again, this is usually attended to per request and not as a regular maintenance requirement.

The flowering of some of the larger trees in Kerikeri, particularly the Jacarandas caused some localised rotting vegetation on the pavements. I slipped and fell, and a number of work colleagues also noted this problem on Fairway Drive. The issue was DEALT WITH PROMPTLY 😊 It does, however, raise the question of how such issues will be captured in the levels of service contracted by council as previously noted.

**Potholes** at the end of the driveway from The Doctors alongside Bunnings alleyway have posed serious health and safety issues for pedestrians and ambulances departing the medical centre. This issue took months to 'fix' the first time last year, repairs lasted less than a couple of weeks and took till the end of the year to be resolved again when this was raised again. This shows that the 'old style' of council works was more effective when you could send out a team on the day. Part of the issue here was it was referred to Fulton Hogan, who didn't know who owned the strip, then had to wait for the work to be scheduled in with other work being done.

**Health and Safety** is a key concern and as a Board. We have requested that a separate part of the RFS system account for RFSs made about these issues. This would allow monitoring of the Council response time and contractor performance where appropriate. To date, this request HAD NOT BEEN ENACTED on the online portal.

**Kerikeri Domain Refurbishment** Many will no doubt comment that before the Provincial Growth Fund grant of \$3 million, Kerikeri already had a skateboard park, children's playground and basketball court – and that when finished, we will have a 'kick-ass' skateboard park, children's playground and basketball court. As a member of the working group, we had very early on, prioritised the including on additional items such as drinking water fountains, Wi-Fi, seating throughout the park, shade areas and even shade covering over the children's areas. Progress has been much slower than anticipated and I have serious concerns that the budget remaining will cover those early items that the working group was in agreement about (and prioritised). As recommended by the Reserve Management Plan, Council has engaged a consultant to consider the business case for multi-use building on the Domain. It is hoped the report for this will be completed soon. To note, whilst there have been a number of predetermined ideas about this unique building, options also included not having anything or having something like an open-air performance pavilion to facilitate more equitable use of this park space by all of the community.

**Rangitane Boat Ramp** The application and approval of funding for this project was in my opinion not very transparent and it took a number of Official Information Requests by a number of parties to clarify who had applied and for what. I note for this report that when the Rangitane Recreational Association tended a report to the CB, I asked that my name be removed from the document as they did not have my support for this project. However- my name was still included in the document presented to the Council during the long term plan. THIS WAS DISAPPOINTING.

**Action not happening.** The CB has had a number of individuals and groups who have taken valuable time to present to us. Many have had issues which they would like to have resolved. For many, this has been a waste of time, as there have been few processes if any for their requests to make it through to Council action. Democracy services staff have been extremely helpful in working alongside the CB with action sheets and the

like. However, for some, like the residents of Oakridge Villas Retirement Village, issues with the pedestrian crossing on Kerikeri Rd outside Hunting and Fishing have not been progressed at all.

More concerning is the number of RFSs which I have made over the past year to which no response has yet been received. Some go as far back as 2020 and remain in limbo. I do acknowledge the awesome work from Melissa in the CEOS office in responding to some of these during the year and suspect that the hold up sits elsewhere in the organisation.

**Waipapa West Rd/Ness Rd.** Safety issues have been raised for some time with Council staff over several portions of these roads. In particular, 'duck bend' has seen multiple car and truck crashes, as well as a number of duck deaths as they attempt to cross to the stream on the other side. It is clear that for a part of Ness Rd, the Council Rd is on private land and that there is NO pedestrian walkway at all in this location as well as at the beginning of Waipapa West (bends) and on the Waipapa West Extension as well. The issues are of critical safety for those pedestrians and horse riders who use Ness Rd. Council has admitted to having a walkway (not footpath) fund so this wouldn't be an issue. These matters were raised several times with Northland Transportation Alliance staff who have attended our meetings. NO FOLLOW-UP HAS HAPPENED FROM THEM.

**Wellbeing.** One issue which has permeated much of our discussions through the past year was that of wellbeing. Given that the purpose of the Local Government Act was amended to include the four wellbeing's, this has opened our discussions to how we might better enhance this for our communities. One way we were able to do this was requiring the provision of free drinking water at events we provided funding for. We also advocated for healthier events, noting some like those held in Kaeo achieved goals of being fizzy-free, drug and alcohol-free and smoke-free. These were also aims of local organisations such as Health Families and our work alongside them has been encouraging.

**Equity.** The concept of equity has proved challenging for the CB. Equity is a far different concept to equality and necessitates at times affording more resources to individuals or groups in order to counter existing systemic bias. We have had funding applications from a number of commercial operators and businesses, and I have frequently challenged why we would subsidise businesses when they stand to profit from ratepayer money. Similar issues have arisen over well established events which continue to look only to the CB for funding. The global pandemic has opened our eyes to the huge degree of local deprivation and inequities associated with our current systems. I'm looking forward to further opportunities for the Board to explore how we can better address issues of equity in the coming year.

**\$\$\$\$** Surprisingly, we concluded the 2020-2021 financial year with unallocated funding. For this current year, our funding has doubled, and I would strongly encourage community groups and individuals to apply for our grants. If we don't spend it, Council will reduce our discretionary funding.

**Pandemic.** There is no doubt that the last couple of years have been extremely challenging. We watched the plans of many groups/organisations be cancelled or deferred, disappointing for us and them. As a District Health Board worker, I was redeployed to working on the community based testing centres and more lately, to the national contact tracing efforts. For many of us, we have had to take up working outside the terms of our employment, often working weekends and public holidays. For those frontline workers across the district, I acknowledge and applaud the huge efforts you have personally put in to serve and support our community. Whilst many now feel they have gone from hero to zero, I know a silent majority still support you. Kia kaha.