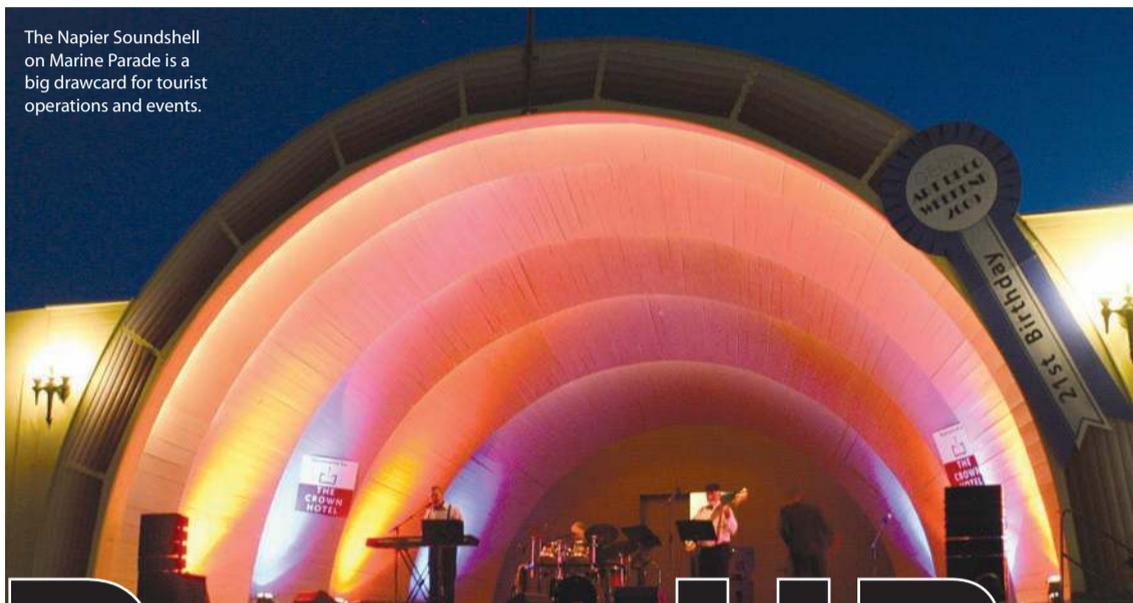


MARKETING SPECIAL EDITION

The Napier Soundshell on Marine Parade is a big drawcard for tourist operations and events.



Does HB Deliver?

“Marketing Hawke’s Bay” means many things to many people. And therein lies one of the key challenges in selling our region as a place to visit, live or invest. Tom Belford reports.

Our various Councils in Hawke’s Bay spend in the neighborhood of \$3-5 million marketing the region, its attractions, events and business potential.

At the Regional Council, \$1.2 million is centered in Venture Hawke’s Bay (VHB), the region’s tourism and economic development agency. At the Hastings Council, nearly \$500,000 is spent on tourism, branding, and event support, in addition to monies spent marketing facilities like Splash Planet, the Opera House, Hastings City Art Gallery and the Holiday Park. Similar amounts would apply to the Napier Council.

And in the case of Hastings and Napier, additional amounts are spent on “economic development” activities ... essentially marketing the Bay to potential relocating businesses, trade partners and investors outside the region.

This represents the public investment in marketing the Bay. It supplements the private sector marketing monies spent by individual businesses, event and attraction promoters.

“Marketing” has a negative connotation to many people. It conjures up “selling stuff” to unwitting customers who don’t really need the products or services on offer, and are being “manipulated” to buy ... maybe even through misleading promotions and advertising.

So when we hear talk about “marketing Hawke’s Bay,” some might be put off. And when we realise that our local Councils spend a significant amount of ratepayer dollars on such marketing, some might be appalled.

Why should ratepayer funds be used at all to aid the marketing of private profit-making enterprises?

Listen to Mayor Yule: “Hawke’s Bay needs to be marketed, marketed and marketed. Our ratepayers may be worried

about the money involved in marketing the region. But we have little choice, our competitors are in our face.”

The reality is that our region’s businesses – the businesses that provide our livelihoods – operate in an intensely competitive environment that extends far beyond the geographic and economic boundaries of Hawke’s Bay. If they don’t present their case aggressively and well – i.e., *market themselves* – they won’t prosper, or even survive.

Beyond what individual businesses and sectors do to market themselves in *their own* self-interest, is the issue of the *community’s* self-interest in helping its private enterprises succeed.

For example, few would dispute the community’s broad interest in providing or subsidizing the first-class infrastructure to support commerce, such as a port, airport, major roads and, lately, broadband service.

While these are not marketing investments per se, such expenditures establish the principle that public monies can support private enterprise.

From there, it’s not such a big leap to public expenditures that support tourism, exporting, or technology innovation. Once that leap is taken, debate shifts to which parts or sectors of the regional economy – because of their dominant importance – should receive the most ratepayer largesse.

Of course, there’s a direct return to local governments from their marketing investments in the form of a larger rating base, which can generate more revenue to finance the projects of politicians and bureaucrats.

So, how, and how well, do our local bodies spend their marketing dollars? We’ll talk first about tourism, and then economic development.

Cont. on Pg 4 and 5

What’s next for Cranford Hospice?

By now, everyone knows about the independent audit of clinical practices and organizational health at Cranford. Here’s the basic conclusion:

“...the status quo at Cranford Hospice is not a viable option. While the standard of care to patients has not been detrimentally impacted by the dysfunction resulting from the change management process to date, there is significant potential for this to occur.

“Communication issues between teams, a dissatisfied workforce and the inability of the management team to manage the situation in the past 12 months, must be addressed, as a matter of the highest priority. The existing personnel have verified that the trust and teamwork essential to this working environment has been lost between the teams ... This has the potential to impact on patient care and safety in the following ways:

- failure to raise clinical concerns with the interdisciplinary team;
- disagreement with methodologies used, resulting in failure to follow other teams’ instructions or appropriate clinical pathways;
- inability to hold constructive discussions on clinical management and issues;
- loss of workforce due to workplace stress.”

Commented DHB Chief Executive Dr Kevin Snee: “...radical action needs to be taken to address the underlying problems that are obviously endemic and require far-reaching action. Cranford needs to be delivering an excellent service – clearly it currently does not.”

Now what?

Hopefully, the DHB itself will follow through with what Dr Snee describes as a very “hands-on” approach to sorting things out at Cranford. He accepts that DHB was not sufficiently involved in the past, noting: “DHB had other things on its mind over the last two years.” He commented further to BayBuzz: “We intend to be very active, down to approving any re-structure proposal.” In his view, all parties need to raise their game. “Nobody got a ‘get out of jail’ card here,” he observed.

The community is rallying behind the nurses of Cranford. They are the employees who actually provide the sensitive care that the community has

treasured over the years.

And there is considerable distress that in-patient care at the Hospice will be suspended for several months while the institution is rejuvenated. As we go to press, those most committed to Cranford and its tradition of nursing care are working hard behind the scenes to avert that step.

But here’s the plain reality.

Each day that current management remains in charge of Cranford Hospice adds one more day of delay to the time Cranford can be successfully operated. Because the recruiting of medical staff must be preceded by the recruitment of a competent management team.

What everyone fondly perceives as “Cranford Hospice” must be removed from the control of the present management team ... ultimately that means removing PSEC entirely from the equation.

Cranford Hospice deserves its own independent supervisory board with directors who understand palliative care, humane management, and represent the community’s deep commitment to this unique institution.

Mayor Yule commented on the BayBuzz website: “The pressure should not be put on Cranford, rather on those that allowed things to get to this point.”

By any conceivable reading of the independent audit, the management of Cranford/PSEC has failed. As the audit report stated: “...the audit team cannot offer the DHB any assurance on the organisational performance of this contracted provider.”

It is managerial failure that has brought Cranford to this regrettable point ... regrettable all the more because these complaints have been on the table for several years, unheeded by PSEC, DHB staff and Board, and other community leaders.

At this point, the defining test of any champion of Cranford is leadership in: 1) keeping the in-patient service functioning at the Hospice, which is only feasible with new management; and 2) effecting the liberation of Cranford from PSEC. Anyone willing to lead that campaign – Mayor Yule, Mayor Arnott, Kevin Atkinson and the elected DHB Board – will earn deep appreciation from the community.

FROM THE EDITOR

Tom Belford



Hawke's Bay Wine Country. Hastings ... Heart of Hawke's Bay. Napier ... Art Deco City. Hawke's Bay ... Everything Under the Sun.

Our region is represented in all of these ways to the rest of New Zealand and the world. The process is called destination marketing when applied to tourism. Just plain marketing when applied to luring new businesses, trade opportunities or investors.

This edition of **BayBuzz Digest** looks at how the region is marketed, and you'll hear from many involved voices. Some say there are too many cooks in the marketing kitchen. Others say marketing resources are too scanty, or mis-applied, or duplicative. Others argue marketing is an expertise like doctoring or carpentry, and those without the relevant experience should back off and button their lips!

The marketers of our region, be they council employees, operators in the hospitality sector, event organizers or professional marketers, love nothing more than Hawke's Bay, and nothing more than arguing about how to market it.

The protagonists assert that there's new commitment in the region to cooperate and jointly strategize ... to get everyone pulling in the same direction. From conversations I've had with many marketing players lately, I'd say that's a fair assessment.

Still, different agendas and rivalries persist, and not all players have confidence in one another.

In terms of the local government coordination, Mayor Yule argues that real synchronicity cannot be achieved without amalgamation. On the other hand, others argue that so long as everyone aggressively sells the locations, events and attractions they are most passionate about, the end

result will define Hawke's Bay as a sum greater than the parts.

Listening to our marketers, apart from the general call for more coordination, I heard the most consensus on two points with respect to tourism. First, we need much better data on our visitors – who they are, why they come, how satisfied they are with the experience. Second, we need an integrated event strategy for the region to drive increased visiting, and this requires additional high profile events. More contentious is the charge of lack of outstanding quality across the "products" on offer to the Bay's visitors.

On the business development side of the marketing challenge, I heard more ambivalence. Some question whether *any* group of public employees has the requisite skills to provide effective help to specific businesses or sectors seeking to grow or attract investment. Others would argue that there are government-organised marketing activities – for example, trade expos, collection and analysis of regional trend data, coordination of sector initiatives – where well-executed programs can lift all boats.

All of these views are represented by our guest authors ... you decide!

Apart from marketing, we've updated you on a wide range of issues ... the most upsetting one to the community being the Cranford situation.

As we go to press, efforts to keep in-patient care alive at Cranford are underway, within the necessary context of repairing the dysfunctional environment that is undermining the institution.

And, as usual, regular columnists Des Ratima, Anna Lorck, Tim Gilbertson and Brendan Webb offer their distinctive "takes" on issues and life in the Bay.

Issue Updates



Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park plans, being built on Percival Rd, Hastings.

Higgins and Sports Park

Even a \$500,000 "donation" from Higgins was not enough to get the netball courts open this season at the sports park. Despite consistently optimistic fundraising projections from the Sports Park Trust and its Chief Executive, Jock Macintosh, the money just isn't rolling in.

The public continues to voice overwhelming opposition to the Higgins deal (82% opposed in BayBuzz survey), in which Higgins Contractors got a \$1.8 million contract for sports park roading without competitive tender, in exchange for a \$500,000 donation. Here are some representative comments from our online survey respondents ...

"One minute it's a modest departure from principle in the name of pragmatism - next we have a banana republic where backhanders and bribery prevail. Once mayors acted a bit like that around here - you could swing a few things if you had contacts. I'm not keen to go back there."

"How can it be said that the Higgins price was at competitive rates when it wasn't put out to tender? Other contractors will be reluctant to put in tenders for work in future knowing that the Council is in bed with Higgins and this will result in higher costs for the ratepayers to meet. The deal stinks !!!"

"The Yule/Higgins deal is a disgrace."

"This is scary stuff. The council is displaying ignorance and/or greed. Ok Higgins might be the usual best option, and in the short term it sounds like 'a gift' for the sports park, however, in my personal experience, when you go for the lucrative shortcut and choose for pragmatism over principal, there is always a price to pay further down the road."

"We should all be very concerned about this. I will be voting for very few of the existing council members this year and hope some with more with principles will stand."

"This sort of pork barrel politics is extraordinary. Where is the sense of propriety and respect for basic rules when deals like this get done. Shame on you who voted for this."

"This is extraordinary... of course contracts should

be competitively tendered for. Anything less looks very dodgy and is indeed a slippery slope. How naive do these guys think we rate payers are! (Hmmm. Well I guess the next elections will answer that one.)"

Celebrated Too Soon

Last month we reported that the Environment Court rejected Hill Country's appeal against paying its full \$300,000 bill to the Hastings Council. These were the costs HDC incurred in reviewing Andy Lowe's proposed private plan change to build 1,000 housing units at Ocean Beach.

Turns out we celebrated too soon. Developers are like pit bulls ... they never give up. Andy has now appealed the Environment Court ruling to the High Court. At this point, it's hard to see how all these appeals are accomplishing anything other than enriching Andy's lawyers. For Andy's sake, he'd better be paying them on a contingency basis! The two previous appeals haven't lowered his Council bill a dime.

Rumour has it that Hill Country, if it fails at the High Court, will appeal the matter to the World Court ... and after that, to the UN Security Council if need be. But that's just a rumour.

Storm Over Stormwater

For ten years (or more in some cases), Hastings has dumped its stormwater into the region's drains and streams without resource consents. During the period from 1998 to 2008 the Regional Council's database shows that 80 complaints were received and investigated by HBRC compliance officers. Among the highlights of those complaints:

- Of those that could be identified, 45 illegal discharges into the HDC stormwater system were from industrial premises;
- Fifteen illegal discharges resulted in fish kills, predominantly eels;
- 29 illegal discharges were into the Ruahapia Stream, seven into the Southland Drain, less than five were from residential dwellings;
- Ammonia spills from industrial sites, such as cool stores, have the most significant impact on aquatic ecosystems.



About BAYBUZZ

BayBuzz Digest is a community focused publication that examines hot button local issues and promotes public awareness and debate. A mix of independent editorial commentary, behind the scenes reporting, and a healthy dose of humor, BayBuzz Digest begins where other newspapers leave off to probe the big issues and tough questions facing our region and shaping our future. You can also find BayBuzz online. Go to www.baybuzz.co.nz to sign up for fresh – and free – daily online articles not available anywhere else, plus background analysis, easy-to-use Take Action features that let you make your views known to Councillors, and much more.

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Des Ratima Columnist



Environmental Issues, The Food Of Politicians

If I were a budding politician, looking for a range of issues that would attract comment and debate, I would not need to go to far past all things environment. Get the debate right and you could attract wide community support. Get it wrong and you could attract wide condemnation.

Maybe that is why many politicians choose to stay away from this type of fray. They leave the community to exhaust itself in frustrated attempts to rectify what they perceive is wrong. And then the politician appears with the arguments clearly spelt out to offer solutions for the majority.

Issues like global warming, whale harvesting, nuclear protests, Waihopai domes, coal and mineral mining, oil exploration, water exploitation, pollution in its many forms, remain the obvious target for environmental outrage.

The recent 40,000 citizen protest in Auckland

will certainly test the resolve of Government to follow through their plans to mine on Schedule 4 lands managed by DOC.

However there are less obvious environmental issues that deserve the attention of both community and politicians.

Issues like visual or odour pollution, structures, signage or vagrants on the streets or, dare I say it, the community probation centre, or Tukituki river. So the issues are many, the solutions varied.

Environmental issues in our region recently have been the wind farm on Maungaharuru, and the Northern Arterial Road (NAR).

Both issues had the support of councils and businesses. They did not have the support of Maori, who argued on the grounds of cultural protection (Kaitiakitanga) and Maori values. Maori took their case all the way to the Privy Council seeking resolution.

The Maori voice in environmental issues

With HBRC's "on complaint" system of monitoring abuses, it is not unfair to imagine that, if eighty complaints were received, significantly more improper discharges have in fact occurred.

Finally in May 2009 HDC submitted a comprehensive application to HBRC for a resource consent. The Regional Council, awakened from its deep sleep on the matter, responded by proposing more stringent conditions on future operation of the HDC stormwater system than Hastings wishes to swallow. And a serious bun fight has ensued ... fortunately in full public view, so the players can be held accountable.

So the matter now stands before a panel of independent commissioners. Both sides have made their arguments and counter-arguments (as of April 30), and await the commissioners' ruling, which might take a month or more.

Neither side smells like a rose on this one. Shame on HDC for ignoring its resource consent and monitoring responsibilities. And shame on HBRC for letting them get away with it for 10+ years. Well done Councillors!

Maori Health Underspend

As we last reported, the DHB will underspend its Maori health budget for the year by \$1 million. However, when the matter was discussed at the Health Board's April meeting, it was high-fives all around. The Board took comfort in the fact that its rate of spending growth on Maori health in recent years (76% increase over five years, to \$11.5 million) was the greatest of all the nation's DHBs.

However, Maori-specific spending still only accounts for less than 3% of DHB's budget, against about 25% of the region's population ... and a segment with the greatest health difficulties. Only our HBDHB could manage to spin *not* spending \$1 million budgeted on Maori health improvement as good news!

Clive Wastewater Treatment

The pipes still stink. The Hastings and Regional Council staffs are deep in discussion over for

over a deadline and solutions for curbing the smell and getting on with life. The Hastings Council insists that the odour problem results from chemical reactions in the sewer pipes before reaching the treatment plant ... and that the Biological Trickling Filter (BTF) treatment system itself works just fine.

Meanwhile, the Napier City Council is probably grateful for a recent decision by the Regional Council requiring NCC to conduct an assessment of the impact on marine life from flushing wastewater from their proposed BTF treatment plant. This will delay Napier's progress toward activating their BTF plant as fish are studied. But another way of looking at this is that the new HBRC requirement will actually give Napier another year to wait and see if Hastings' BTF operation fails to work properly, before committing finally to build their own similar BTF system.

Health Cost Of Alcohol in HB

\$5.4 million! According to DHB's Dr Caroline McElnay, that's the estimated annual cost of treating alcohol-related hospital admissions in Hawke's Bay.

And ACC claims for alcohol-related injuries in HB account for another estimated \$19 million. Of course, you and I pay those bills through our taxes.

At a recent forum sponsored by Alcohol Action Hawke's Bay, Dr McElnay presented a variety of — dare we say it — sobering facts about the health impact of excessive alcohol consumption, both nation-wide and here in the Bay.

A bit over 6% of all Hawke's Bay DHB hospital admissions (more than 1,300) are alcohol-related. Alcohol fuels spikes in Emergency Department presentations each Friday, Saturday and Sunday. 18%-25% of injuries treated in our hospital's ED are alcohol-related ... half of these are individuals under the age of 25. And 41% of HB's fatal car crashes involve alcohol (the NZ average is 30%).

In a similar vein, Napier Councillor Maxine Boag noted Police statistics indicating 30% of all criminal offences in HB involve alcohol.

Alcohol is big business in New Zealand,

is a strong voice. Maori are able to argue strongly against projects which impact on the landscape, drawing from their cultural base of knowledge and understanding.

Often technical arguments are easily countered as experts are engaged and the technical issues are identified and disposed. Advocates of big projects now engage Maori consultants to dispute the validity of cultural redress. Inevitably this approach sets the consultant up for cross examination by Maori ... firstly concerning their whakapapa or genealogy, then their ability to understand the particular issue if they are not from the area. My observation is that this approach is seen for what it is ... a poor attempt to claim an understanding of Maori thinking.

Maori have always asked for consultation. But as understood by Maori, consultation should occur when the idea is still forming. Not when it has been born, growing and someone remembers that they need to include the Maori perspective.

To be fair, I think that some progress has been made, and perhaps a case can be made that Maori themselves are not stepping up to the mark. Maori reject consultation as a final hurdle.

They embrace consultation from the outset. If this pathway is seen as the norm, I am confident that Maori perspectives will be available a lot earlier and last minute pressure points can be avoided.

Environmental issues in general require leadership, not followership. Leadership, which

has the trust and support of its constituents, pursues outcomes that care for and protect the environment and support the economic needs of society. So often the reverse occurs. The rhetoric serves to polarise the community and reduces issues to economy versus environment.

There is a need to understand environmental issues from a Maori perspective. Maori are by nature conservationists. Their culture has processes to protect and monitor the use of the environment, and have had these in place from the beginning.

There is also a need to understand the political nature of environment issues; that nature will inevitably lead to people polarising themselves around those for or against the issue. At this point often the politician becomes engaged. There is the need to understand the means of voicing concerns.

Often this in the form of street marches and protest. This provides a face for protest and allows governments to see the forces being rallied for or against. This is an absolute right of a democratic society.

Environmental issues are indeed the food of the future ... the place where politicians will stand or fall. Everything has an environmental component.

So if I were a budding politician, I guess I might want to go eat somewhere else. Or maybe I would take the issue by the scuff of the neck and see it through to its conclusion. Recently I think that we might be seeing the emergence of this type of politician. Come on Flaxmere!

employing 70,000 people directly. NZ consumers spend \$4-5 billion a year on alcohol beverages. And its marketing spend (about \$200,000 a day) carries the industry's influence much farther, with 50% of that money spent on sponsorships ... the fuel of sport in New Zealand.

As the year progresses, comprehensive legislation will be introduced by Government. Further public input will be invited when the legislation is before a Select Committee.

Meantime, if you want to educate yourself on the issue, try the websites of Alcohol Action or the Alcohol Advisory Council of NZ (ALAC).

Water Harvesting

The Regional Council has underway two feasibility studies to assess potential costs and benefits of putting dams on the Tukituki and

Ngaruroro Rivers. BayBuzz editor Tom Belford has been appointed to a stakeholder group to help assess the proposed project ... and will be reporting from the "inside" as appropriate.

Sustainable Business Workshops

Three free workshops on sustainable business will be offered by Workforce Development on May 18 and 25, and June 1. The programme, sponsored by NZT&E, provides a practical introduction to sustainable business practices, with a focus on the business case for undertaking sustainability initiatives in the areas of energy efficiency, waste minimization, travel planning, procurement and carbon accounting.

Details from Chrissie Manson at 833-5583 or chrissiem@workforce.ac.nz

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MARKET Research



Cont. from P1

TOURISM

Who is the Hawke's Bay tourist?

The fundamental question of marketing is: Who is our target customer? And from that, what does he/she want, and what economic potential does he/she represent?

Unfortunately, on this elemental question, Hawke's Bay is still largely flying blind. While local experts confidently state that 10% of the Bay's economy is tourism-related, there is a surprising lack of data on the Bay's actual visitors/customers. Says VHB Chair Neil Kirton: "Most people in the industry see an urgent need for information on who our visitors are, why they are coming, and what gives them the most satisfaction when they are here."

Clearly this is a prime responsibility of Venture Hawke's Bay. But only now is VHB getting underway the development of a "visitor barometer" to understand who is visiting the Bay and what their level of satisfaction is.

Until more progress is made on measurement, our various players will dispute even the most basic facts of the Bay's visitor status. For example, while "guest nights" is an important measure to the accommodation industry (HB had 1,037,000 in 2009), since an estimated 52% of HB visitors stay with friends and family, "guest nights" grossly understates the potential economic dynamics of our visitor situation. Even the term "visitor" raises "who are we counting" issues versus the narrower "tourist."

Beyond its utility for understanding HB's visitor/customer base, data on individual visitors opens the potential for very effective direct marketing approaches to promoting return visits and generating word-of-mouth promotion of the region.

Who does what?

Virtually every observer of HB marketing notes the overlap and duplication of efforts --and outright competition -- amongst the various local government bodies. Says Mayor Yule: "We have not yet achieved a fully united front in our efforts. Each of the players is still concerned to some degree about patch protection ... To some degree all the players are competing with each other."

Of course, competition amongst various hospitality businesses for the tourist dollar is the essence of private enterprise. But competition and back-biting amongst local bodies is wasteful and intolerable. For example, Hastings, Napier and VHB are each earnestly beavering away on their own "events strategies." One can't help concluding that the Bay would be better off if its collective \$3-5 million marketing budget were in one set of hands. As event impresario Peter Mooney observes: "With so many organizations involved, roles blur, and when that happens, responsibilities and accountability blur."

On the other hand, Peter continues: "We shouldn't blame people for being proud and passionate about where they are. Good marketing requires passion. But too much process, process, process drives the passion away." He adds: "Napier is a different beast from Hastings. Both should promote what they are and have."

What are we anyway?

Leading marketers in the region all agree ... know what you are, and stick to marketing that essence. And hopefully, that essence is unique and differentiating.

Comments Andy Walker at AdPlus Communications: "There's something very relevant and unique about every region. Not enough is done to 'mine' what that truly is." His client Mayor Barbara Arnott says simply: "Know your product." In a similar

vein, GROW's Shaun Lines comments: "Promote what we are, not what we want to be. It seems we promote something we would like Hawke's Bay to be rather than the actual experience on offer here at present."

Should be easy, huh? However, as Mission Estate's Peter Holley notes: "Hawke's Bay is outstanding in every respect, but has no single unique tourism proposition, like Rotorua's Thermal Explorer Highway."

Peter would probably be disputed by architects of the reigning Hawke's Bay Wine Country brand like Kim Thorp and Graeme Avery, who believe they've captured HB's essence in a vivid and suggestive image. As HB Wine Country Tourism Association teases: "Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you are going to spend some time in a region called Wine Country. Imagine the climate. Imagine the places you would stay ..."

To which Art Deco champion Neville Smith responds: "Speaking of wine country, well I thought that was Gisborne? Or should that be Martinborough? Oh no, I mean Marlborough. When will someone realise we are about Architecture!!"

Not prepared to choose between wine, architecture, Maori culture, Hastings, Napier, Wairoa and gannets, Venture Hawke's Bay tags its promotional campaigns with the slogan "Hawke's Bay ... Everything Under the Sun!"

Are you beginning to see the difficulty here?!

How good is our product?

When antagonisms were rather high between VHB and its critics not long ago, the marketers defended their own efforts by counter-attacking tourism sector critics, saying in effect, don't expect us to sell third-rate attractions and accommodations. Ouch!

But even in calmer moments (currently there's a mutual commitment to "play nice"), a variety of observers note that the tourism sector needs to lift the bar in terms of the quality of experience it offers HB visitors. Says Peter Holley: "Product development needs to be executed in conjunction with service delivery criteria --

world-class products with internationally-accepted service levels." More bluntly, Shaun Lines comments: "Focus on quality experiences and training those in the industry to actually be friendly -- it's a crazy thing but many in the so-called hospitality sector just are not very hospitable!" He adds: "Quality should not be interpreted as

'high cost' but instead as positive memorable experiences that will encourage visitors to come again and tell their friends about one of the country's forgotten treasures."

Much of the "product development" focus in Hawke's Bay at this time centers on signature events and a coordinated events strategy. As Neville Smith comments: "Hawke's Bay is about events. BNZ Horse of the Year. Kelt Capital Stakes, GEON Art Deco Weekend, Deco Decantered. Mission Concert. Church Road Concert, Harvest Hawke's Bay. Rugby. Basketball. Golf Masters. Plus business conferences. These events and conferences are what showcase the region. That's the easiest way to get people here."

Says marketing guru Kim Thorp: "We need a strategy to make Hawke's Bay much more newsworthy and much more sexy and exciting as a destination. This should be done through a combination of new events that have the potential to attract global attention and a vibrant PR strategy."

Michael Wan, marketing manager at VHB, also emphasizes events: "Event sector development is a fundamental contributor to continued visitor growth. Currently the events sector is fragmented with many stakeholders working to their own agenda. If we want to be a serious player in this space then it requires a united regional strategy supported by regional funding."

As noted earlier, Hastings, Napier and VHB are each developing "event strategies." Perhaps one day they will be coordinated! But events maven Peter Mooney notes that formulating a comprehensive event strategy for the region is difficult because individual event organizers have "sovereign rights over their events" and often cannot be sure very far in advance that all the pieces (especially funding) will fall into place.

If Hawke's Bay over time delivers a higher quality visitor experience, yes, the payoff will be increased visitor numbers. But more importantly, the benefit will be what Michael Wan calls "increased yield" -- more share of the visitor's wallet, a higher margin for the sector, and more word-of-mouth recommendation.

Or as Mayor Yule puts it: "... we have to deliver on the promises we make when we advertise ourselves, and this involves working with accommodation providers, event organisers and visitor attractions to present an all-round quality visitor experience which makes people want to come back, and to recommend Hastings to their friends and family."

BAYBUZZ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Get and use the right data – know our customers.
- Create one "premium event" calendar, with funding support.
- Leverage our HB "friends & family" and overseas ambassadors.
- Implement a serious, world-standard PR campaign.
- Make memorable service and experiences a marketing advantage.
- Improve quality of local business mentoring – to grow HB from within.
- Upgrade and master online/web-based marketing.
- Adopt the marketing execution focus & discipline recommended herein by Kim Thorp.
- Produce a consolidated budget showing all local body marketing spends & KPIs – so best bang for the buck can be identified.
- Form a "Regional Marketing Council" like Wellington to strategize, coordinate and knock heads.
- And bring competitive air fares to Hawke's Bay!





Friends and Family

Recall the estimate that 52% of HB visitors stay with friends and family. While that reality is often noted, the region's marketers have yet to take full advantage of it. Presently these visitors are "off the radar" when it comes to both statistics and promotional programs designed to identify them and tap their (hopefully) enthusiasm for Hawke's Bay. Around the world, marketers are recognizing that personal referral (or word of mouth) is today's most effective marketing channel.

And with the advent of online social networking tools, identifying and empowering Hawke's Bay "ambassadors" has never been easier or more cost-effective. VHB is reaching out to overseas ambassadors for the Bay through its partnership with Sir Stephen Tindall's Kiwi Expat Association (KEA). And VHB's recent and current visitor promotion campaigns include online features which will build a visitor database and enable VHB to tap the Bay's goodwill ambassadors. But much could be done to deepend and accelerate this process with cooperation from the hospitality businesses, key venues and attractions, and Hastings and Napier I-Sites.

The potential marketing benefits of HB "ambassadors" is not limited to tourism. As the Chamber's CEO Murray Douglas points out in the context of economic development, Hawke's Bay is full of successful people. "Sure a bit of money would help in the promotion," he says, "but let's not stray too much from what makes our story strong ... our people promoting our region."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Compared to high profile and controversial tourism marketing, promoting the region's economic growth seems pretty tame.

In some key respects Hawke's Bay's economic development marketing challenge is one of "supply," not stimulating demand. In interviews for this article, the impression BayBuzz gained is that HB hardly needs to market at all for quality employee prospects or interested investors.

Local headhunters like Red Consulting and RIOT have more out-of region people eager to move into Hawke's Bay than they can possibly handle. And out-of-region investors report having difficulty finding suitable business investment opportunities.

Both of those situations point to job creation and new business development, not marketing, as the challenge. Indeed, Ron Massey, Napier's

economic development manager, contends that there's plenty of opportunity (in the sense of promoting economic growth) if relevant players simply did a better job of helping *existing* HB businesses achieve their full potential.

Murray Douglas talks of attending a jobs expo where "...everyone wanted to come to the Bay. These attendees had a strong view that we in Hawke's Bay had a great climate, great schools, comparatively good house prices and an enviable way of life compared to the Auckland 'rat race'". He adds: "...we might not need to market ourselves; rather we perhaps need to spend more effort on creating the employment markets which will in turn attract and hold new migrants."

To that end, Hastings Councillor Wayne Bradshaw proposes that economic development resources be used to target just a few areas of economic priority – e.g., food processing, tourism, technology – and focus on nurturing those. Both he and Mayor Yule note that Councils can help by ensuring that sufficient industrial land and infrastructure is available. And Mayor Yule touts HDC's "key account" management services to help key businesses navigate Council plan requirements and by-laws.

The bottomline appears to be that, beyond providing suitable infrastructure and a bit of "key account" hand-holding, there's little Councils can do to influence business relocation or outside investor decisions. Indeed, Neville Smith would go further, saying: "I question whether local government agencies like Venture Hawke's Bay have the right skills ... Tell me a business that has come to Hawke's Bay to set up with guidance from VHB. We should let Ray McKimm from the Ahuriri Business Park manage this money as he has done a great job in investing his money to regenerate Hawke's Bay. I believe he will have 1100 people working from that site in about 12 months." Neville is not alone in that view.

Venture Hawke's Bay role

Nevertheless, VHB is chartered as the region's economic development agency. And VHB appears to devote the preponderance of its resources to fostering overall economic development as opposed to tourism. And if tourism indeed accounts for "only" 10% of our region's economy, it would seem that only a proportionately modest level of effort and resource is justified.

Arguably, attracting a business that employs

a dozen or so professionals to Hawke's Bay is worth far more to the Bay's economy than a slight uptick in cruise ship passengers or visiting caravans.

Still, VHB cops plenty of criticism ...

- Too little priority to tourism (Sileni's Graeme Avery argues tourism promotion should have its own organization outside VHB);
- Too much "studying" and not enough "doing" (Out of its \$1.2m budget, how much actually hits the pavement, to paraphrase a number of critics);
- Too much use of "experts" from outside the region as opposed to locally-savvy talent (Clearly there are pluses and minuses to outside consultants);

■ A non-consultative, even adversarial relationship with what should be its core constituencies (Most say this situation is improving).

Adding to its predicament, the task of marketing HB – both its products and as a land of economic opportunity – involves VHB in a variety of, truth be known, inglorious "nuts

& bolts" projects ... orchestrating regional business participation in trade shows (e.g., Expo Shanghai, Wellington and Auckland food shows), sector-specific promotional initiatives (e.g., Apple Futures), seeking Government funding for regional projects (e.g., NZ Cycle Trail, business R&D grants), providing business investment training, developing HB-specific economic performance data, developing case studies of successful HB businesses.

My assessment is that some of the VHB criticism is deserved; some stems from old baggage that should be discarded; some reflects misunderstanding of what the organization should be expected to do (VHB *should* devise programs that lift all boats, *not* provide micro-assistance to individual businesses); and some reflects ignorance of marketing and/or what the organization is actually doing.

In any event, the present team at VHB has had ample time to get grounded, map its strategy and plan its programs. Going forward, the agency should be judged on execution.

More Views?

Have no doubt, as Mayor Yule says, Hawke's Bay will be marketed, marketed, marketed! Smartly or not, for better or worse, several million ratepayer dollars per year will be expended. A wide range of informed perspectives on marketing Hawke's Bay are offered in this **Baybuzz Digest**. I hope you'll take a look at those.



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Tourism and DESTINATION marketing

Hawke's Bay Wine Country Tourism Association gives its views on putting Hawke's Bay on the visitor map.

In the big picture, the visitor industry contributes 10% to this country's GDP, and employs approximately 94,600 people. According to latest figures from the Ministry of Tourism, international tourism is worth \$9.3 billion a year or around 20% of total foreign exchange earnings, about the same as dairying, more than meat (15%), or forestry and wine combined (each under 6%).

Domestic visitors contribute \$12.4 billion, over half the industry total, but growth is less than 1% a year compared to about 4% for international. As a result income from international tourism will soon overtake domestic tourism as the primary source of income.

In Hawke's Bay the visitor industry is also worth about 10% to the economy. The Napier City Council puts a value of \$150 million on their share of tourism, with direct and indirect employment of 3300.

Tourism is undoubtedly one of the fastest growing opportunities worldwide. It is much more responsive to promotion than other areas such as manufacturing or farming. People already want to travel so the trick for New Zealand and Hawke's Bay is to get a bigger share of the cake.

It is not surprising then that tourism attracts so much attention in our region. Growth opportunities provide a very good reason why local authorities currently financially invest in



the industry, and an even better reason why they should increase their investment and support.

Successful tourism promotion provides the numbers necessary to support events and activities in the region that might not otherwise be possible. The Mission Concert and Horse of the Year are two such events. Also the National Aquarium and Splash Planet would not have attracted such substantial council investments if it was not for the potential patronage of visitors. Continued investment in such facilities is essential for them to remain attractive.

Visitors also contribute to the general atmosphere. Think of how exciting it seems during the unique atmosphere of an Art Deco Weekend, or when a cruise ship or two tie up at the wharf spilling thousands of passengers onto our streets. Hawke's Bay seems so much more vibrant when they are here.

Cruise passengers aboard ships already booked to dock for the 2011-12 season are tipped to



top 100,000. They may only be in port for a few hours but can become repeat visitors, with 68% of NZ cruise visitors saying they would like to return as independent travellers. And with 94% saying they are likely to recommend New Zealand to friends and family, they can be great ambassadors for us.

Whilst our regional economy is driven by primary industry - farming, horticulture, viticulture and forestry - several factors, such as land availability and suitability, water, lead times, profitability, markets and a host of other considerations, conspire to limit growth opportunities.

We do however possess significant natural and built assets that make us an attractive place to visit. Our weather is as good as it gets in New Zealand and combined with great food, wine and activities we have a magical combination.

However our visitor industry is showing some serious weaknesses. The recession has hit hard. We are near the bottom in the growth ratings for commercial visitor nights. The growth in our visitor numbers has seen a decline in the past two years, yet other parts of the country are still getting positive growth. The Napier City Council recently reported a 4% fall in total visitor numbers over the 2009 calendar year, a continuation of the declining trend that has taken place since 2006. This may perhaps be cyclical, but nevertheless, cannot be ignored.

Why is this happening?

Is our message being heard above the rest? Ten years ago, when the Wine Country brand was launched, it was our point of difference. Other

regions have upped their game and caught up or overtaken us in the minds of the consumer. In recent times the regional brand has arguably lacked exposure and support, and consequently has become diluted, being sidelined to varying degrees by separate brands from Napier and Hastings for example. We must return to a strong regional brand, as an umbrella for the sub-regional brands and propositions, be consistent with it and walk the talk.

Perhaps we have simply become uncompetitive or unaffordable for our key domestic visitor market against the tempting holiday offers from overseas destinations like Sydney, The Gold Coast, Pacific Islands, Bali and others. Or improved affordability and accessibility between the main population centres of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, leaving regions like Hawke's Bay on the outer.

From an in-bound perspective, Australia provides nearly half the 2.5 million international visitors to New Zealand each year, but for Hawke's Bay the percentage is much smaller. Lack of airline competition is resulting in high fares and poor access, impacting on both domestic and Australian visitors. Our Association fully supports the extension to the airport runway; it is time that our province became affordable to visit by air.

To boost returns from the industry we must increase the numbers visiting, get people to stay longer, spend more and participate in a wider range of our tourism products. We need to encourage operators to work together to provide linked packages which will be attractive to our visitors.

Tourism offers an opportunity for our region to do better, but to achieve this we must all commit ourselves to working together and making it happen.

"Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you are going to spend some time in a region called Wine Country.

Imagine the climate. Imagine the places you would stay, the sort of food and cafes, dining and shopping you would experience. Imagine a game of golf late in the afternoon in Wine Country – or hot air ballooning in the early morning. Imagine taking the kids swimming or fishing or exploring in Wine Country.

Imagine the people you would meet and the interesting lives they would lead. Imagine the artists and the artisans who would also live and work there.

Then on top of all this, imagine if that region also had a rich indigenous culture, superb examples of Spanish Mission architecture and one of the greatest Art Deco cities in the world.

Wine Country. It's wine and so much more – it is Hawke's Bay. Welcome to Wine Country."

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Getting visitors TO THE BAY

By Michael Wan,
marketing manager, VHB.

Visitor numbers

Let's take a moment to put things into perspective. The Ministry of Tourism forecasts provide an outlook on tourism demand in New Zealand over the next seven years. Total visits by travellers to Hawke's Bay are forecast to rise from 2.30m in 2008 to 2.39m in 2015 – an increase of 4.1% (94,100) or 0.6% p.a. Total visitor nights are forecast to rise from 3.43m in 2008 to 3.66m in 2015 – an increase of 6.6% (227,600) or 0.9% p.a.

Our objectives and focus

Our programme of work is aimed at achieving growth targets for visitor nights and arrivals of 1% per annum over the next three years. We have a well managed integrated marketing communications programme that targets growth segments for our visitor market. Australia and the United Kingdom are the biggest contributors to international growth while Auckland and Wellington remain as the two key domestic growth markets.

Sounds simple right? Well it's a little more difficult than you might expect. Research recently released shows that 77% of Australians are not even aware of Hawke's Bay yet they are our biggest international market. We have therefore deliberately chosen a med-long term strategy for visitor growth, choosing to focus on reenergising awareness and appeal. We will strengthen and expand the Hawke's Bay brand and work on creating sustained awareness. This will take time. Having said this, the programme is already showing good results due to the significant investment we have made this year compared to previous years.

In 2009/2010 we have had to focus on promotional marketing given the global recession and the more urgent need to generate visitors to the region. This has been at the expense of brand advertising which focuses on regional positioning and storytelling.

For 2010/11 we will look to create more of a balance between both activities and call on more of an industry presence in the campaign space. January continues to be the peak month for visitors with June being the lowest. Promotional efforts will concentrate on delivering heightened activity in the two shoulder seasons to extend the peak periods. We will also put more emphasis on actively promoting Hawke's Bay as a small event destination, utilising our convention bureau status. This is a lucrative market that can deliver good economic return for the region.

Partnerships

High-level strategic partnerships are an important way to leverage Hawke's Bay's overall



tourism spend, and you can expect to see more of them in the coming year. The Classic New Zealand Wine Trail, the Great New Zealand Touring Route and our relationship with Tourism New Zealand are prime examples of these alliances, with further opportunities of working direct with the travel trade and airlines.

At a regional level we need to partner with industry. At the recent Think Tank workshop hosted by Hawke's Bay Wine Country Tourism Association in conjunction with Venture Hawke's Bay and Napier and Hastings Councils it was agreed that our role is get people to the region and the industries role is to make sure they have a good time and tell others.

Digital marketing

We are planning some major changes to revitalise visitor numbers and the way we communicate to potential visitors. The Web and digital technologies provide new ways to interact and we want to focus on using innovations in digital marketing to enhance our promotional efforts. Digital marketing will allow us to reach the right people more effectively, to get involved in their planning and research, and help convert that interest into bookings. A digital strategy will be one of the core platforms of our 2010/2011 marketing plan and will allow for far better targeting and measurability.

We are already testing this approach as part of our Rugby World Cup (RWC) marketing programme. We are using social media channels to influence the travel plans of RWC followers before they leave home. It is resource intensive so we are looking at ways we can streamline

things to make them more efficient.

Event Development

Event sector development is a fundamental contributor to continued visitor growth. Currently the events sector is fragmented, with many stakeholders working to their own agenda. If we want to be a serious player in this space then it requires a united regional strategy supported by regional funding.

Industry role

Sustainable product and visitor experience development is crucial to the long term success of the visitor industry. It not only affects our brand reputation but it impacts on our ability to attract visitors. The industry must take a stronger leadership role in self managing this process, and this was recognised at the recent Think Tank workshop.

The quality of the current tourism-related product and service offering needs to be assessed regularly to ensure it is in line with visitor demand. The industry also needs to identify new product and facilitate its development in conjunction with service delivery, i.e. world class products with internationally accepted service levels. Consideration should also be given to the support mechanisms available such as Qualmark and the Sustainable Tourism Advisor in Region programme.

The Cruise sector is engaged in this exercise now in preparation for the 110,000 cruise passengers expected in 2012. VHB has initiated Cruise Hawke's Bay, a strategic sector group made up of Port of Napier and local cruise industry experts, to ensure that as a region we are not only prepared, but that we deliver a world-class experience for these visitors.

As the lead marketing agency Venture Hawke's Bay has a responsibility to provide a better understanding of who is coming to the region and the experience our visitors are having. We are therefore developing a visitor barometer in conjunction with the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute that will measure this. What we learn will directly influence not only the delivery of the visitor experience, but it will also influence the future of the destination brand.

If we truly focus on ensuring we maximise the visitor experience then the traditional emphasis on quantity and volume will become a redundant statistic. The industry needs to focus on increased yield in preference to increased volume, and on increased customer satisfaction in preference to increased visitor numbers. Only then will we see true economic growth.

I want to leave you with a final thought. W. L. Bateman once said, "if you keep on doing what you've always done, you'll keep on getting what you've always got." We are making change for the good, but we cannot do it on our own.

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MARKETING

opinions

BayBuzz asked a variety of Hawke's Bay leaders to address this question: *What are the three chief councils, VHB, industry need to "get right" to take the marketing of HB to a higher level of impact and success?*

DAMON HARVEY

DIRECTOR, ATTN! MARKETING PR

The biggest risk facing Hawke's Bay success in capturing tourists is lack of cohesiveness between those that are involved in promoting the Bay.

Venture Hawke's Bay needs to take a lead role, but other councils and tourism organisations need to be in the loop so that their own marketing tactics don't conflict or mix our point of differences ... they should complement each other.

An example recently are murmurings of other tourism websites. Would we not be better to have one great regional website supported by city websites? Why not invest that money into online marketing?

I'm also concerned that we are running the risk of losing the Hawke's Bay Wine Country brand. It may be too narrow in focus (literally), but it tells a great story. We've also invested significantly in the brand and a change will impact on attracting people to the region. Just because it has an emphasis on wine, does not mean the brand can't tell the great story of the Bay.

We also have an opportunity to really capitalize on the Rugby World Cup, as most of the people coming to NZ are high income earners ready and willing to spend. If we can create a unique experience for Hawke's Bay and start marketing this offer to them now – while they're drinking a beer at clubs like Saracens, Cardiff and Toulon – then not only will we lure them to the Bay, but they'll head home and tell others to visit.

PETER HOLLEY

MISSION ESTATE WINERY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Hawke's Bay is outstanding in every respect, but has no single unique tourism proposition, like Rotorua's "Thermal Explorer Highway".

The tourism sector therefore needs to develop sustainable tourism products and integrated promotional plans that deliver an exciting tourism offering. Product development needs to be executed in conjunction with service delivery criteria – that is, world class products with internationally accepted service levels. By effectively developing current and new tourism products we will create diverse activities, encourage longer stays with high levels of consumer satisfaction, but more importantly define the destination.

The destination and its offering can then be promoted both nationally and internationally at selected target markets. The destination or product offering can also be targeted at specific market segments – for example, food and wine, events and inbound operators.



Venture Hawke's Bay needs to work very closely with the tourism sector to assist with new product development, but more importantly, to develop and target promotional activity to raise and maintain awareness. This is particularly difficult given the scope of the target markets and available budgets. In this regard, considerable effort has been placed on leveraging the activities of Tourism NZ inbound programs, and closer associations with the Inbound Tour Operators Council of New Zealand (ITOC), airlines, i-sites, the AA and other regional tourism organizations. But a lot more needs to be done.

In the longer term, we also need significantly improved infrastructure to enhance our product offering – jet-capable airport, broadband, roading and a port capable of handling larger vessels. It is only with time and consistent effort that our tourism sector will grow in size and stature to complement our already-established reputation for food, and more recently, our wine production.

HB the complete visitor experience – "everything under the sun".

SHAUN LINES

DIRECTOR, GROW

1. Promote what we are not what we want to be. It seems that tourism people feel the need to promote something that we would like HB to be, rather than the actual experience on offer here at present. A case in point is marketing HB as a place for adventure tourism. Taupo, Rotorua and Queenstown already do it well and have the high ground, so stop competing and instead promote things like gannets, vineyards and art deco harder.

As we are obviously now the proud owners of a regional sports park, what are we doing to actually market the venue to all the sports codes to secure events etc? And realistically, why focus on events like Rugby World Cup? We will never compete with the big centres' budgets and have only token games here, so imagine if we had spent the same budget on getting other events here and what the value of the domestic tourism spend would have been.

2. Focus on quality experiences and training those in the industry to actually be friendly. It is a crazy thing but many in the so-called "hospitality" sector just are not very hospitable! Those who let the side down are doing huge damage to the sector and undermine any marketing that is put in place.

Quality should not be interpreted as "high-cost" but instead as positive memorable experiences that will encourage visitors to come again and tell their friends about one of the country's forgotten treasures. A good comparison for Hawke's Bay is in fact Taranaki, which is also off the main trunk route but has focused on delivering great times to visitors (in spite of their dodgy weather).

3. Market the differences we offer the visitor with some commitment. I can't help but think that the occasional campaign put out by VHB is a token effort. While I appreciate that the counter argument is "budget", it needs to be questioned why only \$100k is spent on regional marketing when VHB has a budget of almost \$2M. Are they serious about marketing or is tourism an afterthought? Everyone will have an opinion on the content, but the key challenge is how much marketing we really do. There may be an argument for tourism not to be part of VHB as their focus appears to be on other things.

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SIMON NIXON

TELEVISION/VIDEO PRODUCER

The solution lies within.

What is good for Napier or Hastings is good for all of us. We need to put our localised pride aside and realise to the outside world we are one destination with a range of attractions and activities spread over two cities and the surrounding area.

Instead, we market ourselves as quite separate places with little linking the factions. Even our i-sites seem unconnected. This is strange because much of the three Councils' visitor advertising budget is handled by the same advertising agency. One might expect more consistency as a result.

Funding for marketing is provided by distinct groups of ratepayers, leading to separate marketing operations by Napier, Hastings, and the Regional Council's tourism agency, Venture Hawke's Bay.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of trust between those responsible.

Napier justifiably see themselves as experienced and successful marketers because they have developed Art Deco into a recognisable international brand. They have too much to lose to surrender control if they are not confident.

Hastings often seems to dither, but does appear more committed to the concept of a broader Hawke's Bay, and therefore seems in tune with a unified approach.

Venture Hawke's Bay has to prove it is capable of managing tourism. The needs of the visitor sector are very different from its other areas of responsibility. Lack of relevant experience was clearly a problem with its predecessor, Hawke's Bay Inc. Do any of those controlling the direction of VHB tourism activities have a track record relevant to the visitor industry?

Learning by mistake is expensive and time consuming, and time is not on our side. While other parts of the country are going ahead in leaps and bounds, our visitor industry is looking very sluggish.

We need to understand why people come here and why they do not. We need to look ahead and determine the likely environment we will be facing in the future, with particular regard to competition from other destinations, and increases in the price of energy and the effect this might have on transport costs. Then we need to look at ourselves from the outside, because that is where our visitors come from.



ANDY WALKER

MANAGING DIRECTOR, ADPLUS COMMUNICATIONS

My view is that any organisation marketing a region needs to find the true difference that the region has to offer and drive that a hundred miles deep ... and do so in a unique way.

Most region promotions are paper thin in that they take a theme – *The feel of real New Zealand, Well worth the journey, Full of surprises*, etc – put up a few flags, change the region's entry and exit signs, and call that a region campaign. Two years later, those signs disappear and others appear.

It's a constant mistake. There's something very relevant and unique about every region. Not enough is done to 'mine' what that truly is; then often the articulation of it is superficial, as I allude to above.

In other words, people don't truly understand regional marketing.

The other thing is that it's not a quick fix ... people expect it to be a silver bullet and it isn't. It takes time. You take the Napier Life Campaign that we have been running for over 15 years, I think. It's taken time to grow and we have evolved it as we have gone, but now it has become a very integral part of the Napier community.

RACHEL CORNWALL

DIRECTOR, RED CONSULTING GROUP

Director, Red Consulting Group

1. Understand what this region actually has to offer that provides a platform for sustainability and growth. That cannot be sunshine and lifestyle alone ... wine and tourism cannot sit at the heart of our core marketing messages. Get to the heart of the commercial drivers and capabilities of this region, and work to its strengths.

2. Accept that we are predominantly a primary based economy – that is not an embarrassment. Build on this, and look at where the opportunities lie to extend and add value to the existing commercial operations. Bravely, boldly ask for new business. It is out there in other regions; this region can attract more of it, and potentially at a much lower unit cost. We are not land-locked; we have fertile land, open space, and a lot of people looking for work.

3. The reality is that the Hawke's Bay lifestyle does attract and retain a large pool of talented, educated, and often extremely entrepreneurial people. But what really matters is putting in the hard work, dedication and seizing an opportunity that exists as opposed to standing around thinking and talking about possibilities in large political forums.

KIM THORP

ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE

1. Define the roles: Define and agree on the separate roles of the separate entities, both private and public, with the responsibility of marketing Hawke's Bay. Ensure the whole is as seamless as possible and that each has a clear understanding of what their responsibility is – and perhaps just as importantly – what it is not.

2. Define the audience: I think some tough calls need to be made on who we talk to and how. Again, the decision on who we don't spend money on attracting is just as important as who we do. I would suggest for example that the small budget available should 'cross no waters'. In other words, perhaps we focus exclusively on people currently in the north Island or planning to be here – be they New Zealand citizens or international travelers. The audience obviously needs further definition, but at least that strategy would ring fence where to find them.

3. Define the message: This should filter down through points one and two. The further away – physically or emotionally – a potential visitor is from making a decision to visit Hawke's Bay, the more consistent the messaging should be. As they get closer to booking and deciding specifically what to do, they should get increased awareness of the diversity. To start with the diversity is to start with confusion.

Through all the layers, ideally there would still be consistency. And with an increasingly sophisticated and discerning travel market, we should do all we can to avoid looking cheap, childish, amateurish – or average.

If I were allowed a 4th, I would say ...

4. Spend time not spending money: We need a strategy to make Hawke's Bay much more newsworthy and much more sexy and exciting as a destination. This should be done through a combination of new events that have the potential to attract global attention, and a vibrant PR strategy to make it easier to attract the attention of international travel writers, magazines, blogs and programmes. While our budget perhaps should not cross any waters, our story certainly should.

As a final thought, I also would not move to the subsequent step until the preceding one had been completely resolved, agreed and locked in for at least the medium term. This should help avoid both wheel spinning and reinventing it.

NEVILLE SMITH

ART DECO WEEKEND SPONSOR (GEON)

In terms of promoting tourism, Hawke's Bay is about events. BNZ Horse of the Year. Kelt Capital, GEON Art Deco Weekend, Deco Decanted. Mission Concert. Church Road Concert, Harvest Hawke's Bay. Rugby. Basketball. Golf Masters. Plus business conferences.

These events and conferences are what showcase the region. That's the easiest way to get people here. We recently held our GEON conference here. Our executive team from Australia who have never been here before were blown away with what we have to offer ... architecture, food and wine.

Speaking of wine country, well I thought that was Gisborne? Or should that be Martinborough? Oh no, I mean Marlborough. When will someone realise we are about Architecture!! The only thing that is unique about Hawke's Bay was caused by the 1931 earthquake. Out of that rose Spanish Mission in Hastings and Art Deco in Napier. The earthquake molded the Bay, destroying buildings from Dannevirke to Wairoa. Isn't that unique?

But I guess we all push our own barrows, and that's why 20,000 people do the Art Deco Walk each year when they come to Wine Country.

From the standpoint of promoting economic development, I question whether local government agencies like Venture Hawke's Bay have the right skills. Why does Venture Hawke's Bay get involved with business development when none of their staff have been in business? What do these people do? Will Kevin Atkinson let me coach the rugby? Will Sam Kelt let me train his horses?

Tell me a business that has come to Hawke's Bay to set up with guidance from VHB. We should let Ray McKimm from the Ahuriri Business Park manage this money as he has done a great job in investing his money to regenerate Hawke's Bay. I believe he will have 1100 people working from that site in about 12 months.

Meanwhile, there are a lot of Hawke's Bay businesses struggling today. We need to focus on supporting those businesses by buying from local organizations who employ locally.

Similarly, VHB receives a grant from government, around \$90k per year, to promote sustainable tourism ... the STAR programme. Do they belong to the STAR programme? The website for the NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development quotes the use of FSC-accredited paper. Does VHB follow these guidelines, or do they set up their own?

My point in raising these examples is ... as a promoter of business development, does Venture Hawke's Bay itself follow and practise what it advocates to businesses here in the region?



Three community and business leaders put forward their views about how best to market the Bay.

MARKETING voices

Industry players must learn how to work as team

**By Lawrence Yule
Hastings Mayor**

There are two types of markets in our current arrangements in marketing Hawke's Bay. One based on tourism and one based on economic development.

The three players you refer to have different roles. Councils market their own cities and districts, tourism offerings, events and economic opportunities. Venture Hawke's Bay markets the same things on a regional basis, principally to the Wellington/Auckland and overseas markets. The industry, in collaboration with both Councils and VHB, provides the opportunities, product and collateral, and to my mind have a role in helping to market the area through their own marketing activities and through support and participation in regional and district marketing efforts.

Hawke's Bay Wine Country is our regional tourism brand. Does this work? Not as well as it should.

We have not yet achieved a fully united front in

our efforts. Each of the players is still concerned to some degree about patch protection. This is despite us being one of the most favoured destinations and regions in the country. Our lifestyle, weather and schools are key drivers in peoples' decisions to visit or live in our region.

Are we competing well with other regions? No.

While Queenstown and Rotorua are probably in a different category, we should be able to compete with other regions. Wellington, Taranaki and Canterbury all have effective and complete regional approaches. Wellington has a regional strategy lead by a Governance Group of the Mayors and Independent Directors. It is Chaired by Sir John Anderson. All the marketing and future growth plans for the Wellington Region are decided by this group. Taranaki has made an assessment of where it needs to be and has gone for it. Just look at the concerts they now attract.

My criticism of what is happening here is not that people are not trying, it is just the thinking is too small. To some degree all the players are competing with each other. Some industry

members prefer to criticise the efforts of others rather than get stuck in suggesting ideas. We actually need to be competing with other regions and the rest of the world. We have developed a very good regional tourism brand and have some of the best natural tourism conditions in the country. Yet we have struggled to keep up with the national average with tourism numbers.

Hawke's Bay needs to be marketed, marketed and marketed. Hastings and Napier both have their brands and identities. Both should be protected and enhanced. Our ratepayers may be worried about the money involved in marketing the region. But we have little choice, our competitors are in our face. It will come as no surprise that one of my reasons for promoting amalgamation is to try and get a completely united and effective regional strategy where everybody thinks and works for the future of our region. I just can't see that happening under the current arrangements, despite best efforts.

In specifically marketing Hastings, Hastings District Council has created a new visitor, events

and marketing strategy, which dovetails into the business investment strategy, both of which have been adopted by Council. We are in the middle of significant changes to the i-Site which focus on building better relationships with the industry and other stakeholders and providing a much better level of service. We are recruiting specialised staff to ramp up our marketing and events efforts.

And in the economic development area, we are ushering in key account management services and a campaign to attract more business investment. Alongside this, more land is being freed up for investment and employment uses.

However, a lot more than just a brand is required, we have to deliver on the promises we make when we advertise ourselves.

This involves working with accommodation providers, event organisers and visitor attractions to present an all-round quality visitor experience that makes people want to come back, and want to recommend Hastings to their friends and family.

Great climate, great schools, great homes... but no jobs

**By Murray Douglas
HB Chamber of Commerce CEO**

A couple of years ago I was involved in a stand at a Jobs Expo in Auckland. We were there at a time when Hawke's Bay was suffering from some skill shortages, and a number of businesses co-ordinated by the Chamber of Commerce were touting for staff.

Without exception everyone we spoke to wanted to come to the Bay. These attendees had a strong view that we in Hawke's Bay had a great climate, great schools, comparatively good house prices, and an enviable way of life compared to the Auckland 'rat race'. The problem was that they: couldn't find a job to come to, despite our skill shortages; they were worried about career prospects in a smaller economy; they were locked

into Auckland homes or other assets they would find it difficult to quit.

In other words, we may not need to market ourselves. Rather, perhaps we need to spend more effort on creating the employment markets that will in turn attract and hold new migrants.

Which raises another almost systemic observation about Hawke's Bay ... we are often too hard on ourselves and don't realise our real marketing strengths closer to home.

For example, take the case of Dunedin. It has a general reputation of being cooler than other parts of New Zealand, and as a result it seems, perhaps more dour and less go ahead. Indeed, in the 1980's, when Dunedin lost 10,000 jobs in the decade, local people almost lost confidence in themselves.

They set about the marketing of Dunedin in two very distinctive ways. Firstly they started a campaign with a slogan 'Dunedin - It's all right here'. The double meaning to convince locals that everything was in Dunedin, and in fact it was a great 'right' place. The students of course affectionately corrupted this to 'Dunedin - It's all riot here'.

But the aim of the campaign was not external. It was aimed at Dunedin's own citizens. We had to make ourselves feel confident and positive about our own town. When this was in place, then the campaign could go further afield.

The second aspect of the Dunedin campaign was then to use Dunedin people to promote Dunedin. These were not fancy campaigns. Rather, it was prominent people talking about

why they loved the place and why they felt visitors and migrants should come to Dunedin and enjoy what they liked and valued.

The campaign was enormously successful and built around some of the key building blocks of Dunedin's strong heritage, tertiary education and old manufacturing strengths. The population started growing strongly and the economy in the early 1990's was very positive.

So Hawke's Bay with its strong regional identity, successful people and pretty good public image has the same ability to leverage these 'iconic' assets into marketing.

Sure a bit of money would help in the promotion. But let's not stray too much from what makes our story strong ... our people promoting our region.

Create more opportunities

**By Wayne Bradshaw
Hastings District Councillor**

Currently the Hawke's Bay population receives some of the nation's lowest average wages and this helps reinforce some of the social issues that need to change.

To improve this we need to market the region in a more coordinated manner that will create more jobs and opportunity. Here are the necessary steps:

1. Identify three major areas of "Economic Priority" that have substantial growth potential – for example food processing, tourism, technology – and nurture these so that sufficient scale is reached to achieve economic benefit.

2. Ensure that sufficient industrial land and infrastructure is available to assist in this.

3. Councils must remember that private capital and innovation are the drivers for long-term economic growth and benefits. It is Council's role is to put in place regulations and rules that protect the environment and foster Community Plans and aspirations, while balancing the need for economic growth to sustain the community itself. This balance is one of the things that needs to be got right.

4. With climate, economic and market changes, the potential crops to be produced on the Heretaunga Plains will change. What are the new crops of the future? There needs to be a "New Crop Centre" approach to identify these, working with the technology providers, landowners, processors and marketers.

The key is to market Hawke's Bay as a forward thinking region that adopts realistic and collaborative ways for doing business. But first we must ensure that we are indeed just that.



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Elizabeth Sisson Columnist



Struggling Families

The world might be coming out of recession, but it's leaving some people behind, like flotsam on the beach.

And not just people on fixed incomes – pensioners and state beneficiaries – are affected. It's also the people who have been working, raising a family, paying their mortgage and generally treading water. As prices for housing, power and food rise, they all are finding it harder to get by. For working people, when the job that supported them is lost, they are stranded.

These are the people who are calling the Citizens Advice Bureau, Budget Advisory Services and Napier Family Centre in greater numbers. They also are lining up at food banks, which are seeing a major increase in demand.

To be sure, MSD offers help with the costs of housing, working, health, study, even funeral costs. In emergencies, MSD provides special needs grants, temporary additional support, recoverable assistance payment and advance payment of benefits ... all geared to help recipients pay for such things as emergency medical and dental care, food and bedding, power reconnection fees and even hire purchase, debt and loan repayments. The MSD's hardship assistance can be obtained in 24 hours.

So what's the problem?

First, according to Chris Morgan of the Salvation Army, increases in benefits are not keeping pace with increases in costs of food, utilities, housing and even firewood. The price of food alone is up about 12% over the past couple of years and the government's increase in GST is still to come.

Second, there are impediments to getting help. One is pride: when you've been self-sustaining, it's hard to apply for a benefit. And benefit administrators don't always tell applicants about all the benefits for which they might be eligible.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Hastings does. They field all kinds of questions and respond with information, everything from how to cook to the ins and outs of bankruptcy. It's a confidential service and you can speak to them anonymously.

Sandra Giffkin, the CAB coordinator in Hastings, said, "Three years ago we had very simple bad debt problems. We're starting to get much more complex issues: not just violence but drugs and alcohol and violence and mental health issues altogether. It has all compounded over time.

Most who ask for help are at the lower income level, but others are just keeping their heads above water. People have way overcommitted themselves at all economic levels. And now seasonal work is ending and people are calling in to say they've lost their jobs."

Napier's People's Advocacy Society helps people get the public benefits to which they are entitled. Most of their clients are on benefits already, said Carol Olsen, one of three volunteers who work with up to 2,500 clients a year.

Olsen estimates the Society is seeing about an 80% increase in people experiencing

difficulties. "Some have lost employment and some have been on benefits for a while, but it's getting harder to make ends meet," Olsen said.

The volunteers often act as advocates for their clients when they go to the MSD's Work and Income (WINZ) offices to apply for benefits.

The caseworkers at WINZ "are supposed to explain to people what they're entitled to, but it doesn't always happen," Olsen said.

Some of the applicants for food parcels at the Salvation Army in Hastings have used up all their entitlements from WINZ before the end of the month and simply "don't have anything more," said Kathy Willers.

Requests for help have risen almost 100 percent over the past year, she said. "People who are laid off or working part-time aren't coping with the cost of living... people who, through no fault of their own, are struggling."

"We're seeing more people who could manage previously but have lost their job, usually a long-term job," said Greta Wham, who has been with the Hastings Budget Advice Service for more than two decades.

"They're devastated by it. Their income might be fully committed and suddenly they can't meet these commitments."

The Napier Family Centre offers budgeting, counselling and a family support service with teams of social and youth workers. All have substantial increases in clientele over last year. "We try to have no barriers to entry," said Roydon Day, CEO.

They tell their clients about entitlements and will go with them to WINZ to sign up for benefits. Three quarters of their clients are solo parents, usually mothers with young children. Most rent rather than own their home.

Funding for these organisations can include contracts with the MSD and grants from the Hastings and Napier Councils. Naturally they would welcome more volunteers and more funding to hire more staff to meet the growing demand for their services.

Should local government do more to help struggling families in their communities?

"The issue for us is what level of social responsibility to fund and what are ratepayers comfortable with," said Hastings Councillor Cynthia Bowers.

"Councils don't have unlimited funds to solve everybody's problems," agrees Napier Councillor Maxine Boag. "Council responsibility is limited; it's up to the ratepayer."

If you or someone you know is having a hard time financially, give them these phone numbers:

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU, Hastings, 878 0525; Napier: 835 9664; Call free: 0800 367 222.

BUDGET ADVICE SERVICES, Napier: 835 5344; Hastings: 878 0530; Central Hawkes Bay: 858 8196; Also at the Napier Family Centre: 843 7280.

PEOPLE'S ADVOCACY SOCIETY, Napier: 834 0206

Anna Lorck Columnist



I've Never Had It So Good

Growing up I was always asked what I wanted to be. The answer was never expected to be "a mother" ... that was a given. No, the women in my life wanted to know what "career ambitions" I had.

It was instilled in me that I would work from an early age.

My grandmothers – both career women – worked all their lives, one in health and the other in education. My mother and my mother-in-law also worked – one in health and the other in education, respectively. And while they still work in their 60s and 70s, they also manage to juggle children – not just their own but also their grandchildren. To them, that's life, no complaints or "poor me" ... it's what they've always done.

Today, as a working woman I know I've never had it so good.

Unlike my forbears, everything around me is made to make my life easier.

From the washing machine and dryer to the dishwasher, heat pump and microwave, cleaning, heating, cooking and feeding the household almost take care of themselves. I can complete these basic tasks within about an hour before I leave for work or after I arrive home.

At the end of the day, if nothing is out for dinner, I can whip to the supermarket, pick up everything we need – spend another hour cooking, bathing and feeding the children and they are ready for bed.

When things go pear shape, it has nothing to do with children, or work or the man of the house, it has to do with me and being slack. All could easily be fixed if I gave myself an hour before the household woke to get myself sorted.

Today, childcare is a breeze. Having gone back to work after each of the girls was six weeks old, I have used the in-home model, finding wonderful grandmothers to care for my babies

in their own houses. Perfect. No little feet racing around all day causing havoc at home ... they do it somewhere else!

At work, I enjoy flexible hours, which means that as long as I do my time and my job well, I can, within reason, do all the things a mum has to do during "normal working hours".

There are sacrifices – no tennis mornings, coffee groups or days out shopping, and spending someone else's money.

So what have I missed? Nothing. My children don't call anyone else "mum". No one has taken my place because I haven't been there during their day.

What have I gained? An exceptionally busy household full of strong-willed, independent, ambitious and determined girls who are now more organised than their mother. Post-it notes and text messages are very popular for reminding me what's on and where I have to be.

What have I lost? My ability to stay up late during the working week, as my eyes literally begin to close at 9pm as my battery runs flat. Even when we have guests for dinner I'll fall asleep on the couch!

What do I wish for? That my generation stopped complaining about how hard it is to juggle work and children ... that we lack sleep and have no time to ourselves.

That we acknowledge and show more appreciation for what our mothers and grandmothers really do ... how exceptionally hard they worked and still work. Because, when we need help, who comes to our rescue?

They do.

And who fought so hard for our rights to make our life as working mothers so much easier.

They did.

So what don't I want? I don't want to have it any other way because life should be easier for working women ... heaven knows we earn it.

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Buzzing With The Blowflies

In *Mustn't Grumble*, columnist and writer Joe Bennett's wonderful romp around Britain, he recalls a gang of motorcyclists "buzzing up the lane like flies" and clustering around his borrowed Audi convertible in their black leathers as if it were rotting meat.

He returns anxiously to the car only to find the motorcycle gang consists of a group of middle-aged and extremely polite Dutchmen.

I know Joe doesn't like motorcycles and motorcyclists. Nor, I imagine, do most people. Motorbikes are usually noisy, recklessly fast on open roads and menacing in large numbers.

Seeing a motorbike in your rear-vision mirror is like spotting an enemy fighter plane on your tail. One second the road behind was empty. Now there's a blowfly coming at you fast.

Motorcyclists on the open road are like avenging robots, swooping out of nowhere to shatter the calm of drivers cocooned in their cars. The rider inside the helmet is as anonymous as The Stig. Hunched over the machine like a sprinter crouched at the starting blocks, it could be a robot. You can't even tell what sex it is.

Then it's gone, roaring past in a burst of noise that makes you flinch. In seconds the blowfly has flown away down the highway, diving in and out of the traffic until gone from view.

I'm not a Dutchman but I am middle-aged and often polite. And beneath my tinted visor, I am one of them. Mild-mannered father of four who secretly slips into his super-protective armour and becomes Super Blowfly. Yes, that was me who passed you on the Napier-Taupo Road the other day.

I haven't been a blowfly all my life. In my teenage bluebottle years I cut my motorcycle gearbox teeth on an Italian Vespa, named after the buzzing wasp. I spent hours polishing its paintwork and painting the word Vespa on its rear mudflap.

Laughing in the face of wind tunnels, the same basic Vespa design has been on the road since the end of the Second World War. Its high metal front, designed to protect the rider's legs, has the aerodynamics of a small front-end loader. The high front acted like a steel sail, adding another 5kmh to your top speed in a strong tail wind but halving it in a head wind.

Despite its vague suggestion of the hippie lifestyle being enjoyed by teens everywhere else in the world – except Hastings – in the 1960s, my Vespa was never cool.

Another bike I owned was a two-stroke Suzuki 90cc twin, a bike with pistons the size of cotton reels and a shrill engine note that was beyond the hearing of dogs.

It eventually died in various sheds as we moved houses and I eventually gave it away to someone from Central Hawke's Bay who had ambitious plans to resurrect it. I've never seen it again.

My current bike is the mid-life crisis one, so non-bike riders tell me. They say it with a barely



As anonymous as The Stig.

concealed note of disapproval. They think I should have spent the money on a sensible Honda Civic sedan, with airbags and ABS braking.

My bike is all chrome, metallic paint and grunt. I chose it because it was one of the few I could sit on and touch the ground with my feet. I didn't think trainer wheels would be cool.

And I'm a paid-up member of a bike gang. I have a badge with my name on it, possibly in case I get lost. And when the rest of the gang have finished terrorising motorists and stop for their flat whites at a roadside café, they take off their helmets to reveal a lot of polite, middle-aged people. A couple of them are Dutchmen.

Out on the road, there is a curious culture that determines whether a motorcyclist will be acknowledged by fellow riders. Harley Davidson riders ignore everyone else. So do the hard-core motorcycle gangs with their open-face helmets, long grey beards and black scarves. But couples on touring BMW machines always wave to you, and so do those on enormous Honda Gold Wing tourers with their heated seats, intercom, satellite navigation systems and heated handle grips.

At the other end of the pecking order, nobody waves to the poor souls on their Nifty Fifties, trundling along the cycle lanes in their fluorescent jackets hoping sleep-deprived truckies won't run them over.

Getting ready for a ride is rather like a medieval knight putting his armour on for battle. There are thick protective plates inside your jacket and trousers, the boots are padded and the helmet encloses your head like a soft vice.

You waddle over the gleaming bike, swing your leg over and balance its hefty weight with your legs. No endless kick-starting sessions these days. A single turn of the key, a press of a black button with your right thumb and the gleaming beast rumbles into life.

It's time for Super Blowfly again.

Enforce And Penalise

One of the great privileges of my life is membership on the Hawke's Bay Regional Transport Committee. As its name suggests, it is concerned with transport issues in Hawke's Bay.

One of these issues is road safety. We angst at length about the road toll and how to reduce it. We discuss enforcement, publicity campaigns, engineering solutions to make roads safer, and improve driver awareness. We consider everything under the sun.

The problem is that we don't address the fundamental issue ... the fact that a good proportion of New Zealanders are bad drivers and a reasonable number are appalling.

This would not be of major significance if they were severely penalised for bad driving, and if they failed to reform or improve, were booted off the road permanently.

The truth is that cars and roads are infinitely safer than they were forty years ago. If everyone observed the road rules there would be no accidents. 99.9 % of all accidents are due to human error, with the remainder attributable to acts of God, if he exists, or bad luck if he doesn't.

The problem and solution is exemplified by a recent newspaper report in which a young woman driving at 189 kilometres an hour down the motorway with a breath alcohol reading over the limit was fined \$1,250 and disqualified from driving for eight months.

This is hardly draconian and it sends a clear message: You are a naughty girl! Don't do it again for eight months and, assuming you are on the average wage, you can't go shopping for a fortnight.

The solution might be to confiscate the car, fine the young madame six months pay, and disqualify her from driving for five years.

Current thinking is to attack the symptoms. Reduce the allowable level of alcohol, raise the driving age a token amount, and start collecting unpaid fines.

In parts of Europe they have a system where fines are payable forever, so that when an irresponsible youth becomes a responsible member of the community and gets a house, a job and a mortgage, the fines collector taps him on the shoulder and holds out his hand.

This encourages the now model citizen to encourage his children to observe the law, since they see first hand that actions have long term consequences.

In our system, once the Hoon has clocked up a few thousand in fines there is every incentive to get more fines, since the judge writes them off when they become astronomical.

What really grates, in terms of natural justice, is the ability of the Hoon to have thirty grand worth of fines forgiven, and next day win Lotto.

Any law needs to be sensible and enforced. New Zealand is wonderful at making new laws at the drop of a hat, many of which are unconstitutional, unworkable and/or plain stupid.

The latest classic being the World Rugby Cup Clean Stadium Legislation, which makes it illegal to advertise certain products within one kilometre of a world cup stadium.

This is to protect the advertising exclusivity of the sponsors. If I lived in the zone, I would make a point of breaking the law.

No one in Wellington has the right to tell me what I can or cannot advertise within the limits of public decency.

By contrast the road rules are sensible and well thought out, but the penalties for their infringement are insufficient.

The Transport Committee will continue to sit and pontificate till the cows come home.

Meanwhile, many more people will die and be maimed on our roads, not because the roads are dangerous or the vehicles unsafe, but because our leaders lack the imagination and will to address the fundamental issues and enforce and penalise.

Yet another reason why all thinking people are anarchists and shun committees like the devil, assuming the devil exists, or like the plague, if he doesn't.

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