

LOOKING AHEAD  
**TEN** YEARS

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THE BAY?

**WILL**

*Hawke's Bay  
Face the Future?*

**DEFYING**  
OUR POPULATION  
**TRENDS**

**PUBLIC ART**  
WHO NEEDS IT?

**VOICES**

*Trubridge, Hague, Turner,  
Hickton, Nash, Gilbertson*



# BAY BUZZ

ISSUE  
NO

**05**



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political chess**

Will Hawke's Bay reorganise?

KATHY WEBB

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# BAY BUZZ

MAR / APR 2012

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Kathy has been a Hawke's Bay journalist for 25 years. She was the first female chief reporter at the former *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*, and inaugural chief reporter at *Hawke's Bay Today*, moving later to the *Dominion Post* and now freelancing. Hastings has been home for 40 years.



### KEITH NEWMAN

Keith is a journo with nearly 40-years' experience across mainstream and trade media. He's won awards for writing about hi-tech, produces Musical Chairs programmes for Radio NZ and has published four books, one on the internet in New Zealand and three on NZ history.



### MARK SWEET

Napier-born, Mark worked overseas in Hong Kong and Scotland, but returned to Hawke's Bay, launching Pacifica restaurant. Selected for the Māori Literature Trust's Te Papa Tupu programme where he was mentored in refining his just-released novel, *Zhu Mao*. He's published *Portrait & Opinion* with Richard Brimmer.



### TOM BELFORD

Tom's past includes the Carter White House, building Ted Turner's first philanthropic organization, doing heaps of marketing consulting for major nonprofits and corporates. Tom publishes *BayBuzz* and writes an acclaimed blog for professional NGO fundraisers & communicators in North America and Europe.



## FROM THE EDITOR >

**Is local government broken in Hawke's Bay? I suppose the answer depends on your expectations.**

If you don't need to do much business with a local council, don't require a resource consent, can painlessly absorb a rates increase each year, and your toughest challenge in life is finding the perfect merlot, you probably couldn't care less.

If your horizon is limited to what happens on your street or in your neighborhood, then you might have an occasional dispute with your local council, but you win or lose, and life gets back to normal.

If the duties and distractions of doing your job and raising a family – and enjoying your friends and all that Hawke's Bay offers in your scarce leftover leisure time – consumes your attention, then you're probably not even mindful of the ways in which local government might affect your well being.

It seems that only when expectations heighten do people in Hawke's Bay seem to care about whether local government works.

And expectations rise because of personal or business ambition, dire need of relief, stirring social conscience, awareness of damage done or threatened, exposure to greater opportunities or higher standards. Any of these can drive one's attention to local government and how well (or not) it performs.

And when one begins with heightened expectations to look at local government performance more closely, the warts and worse appear.

In his opinion piece in this edition, Stuart Nash comments:

"Times have changed. No longer is the old way of doing things good enough to succeed in the 21st century. In fact, the 'No8 fencing wire' mentality coupled with the 'she'll be right' attitude that Kiwis have prided themselves on for so long simply doesn't cut it any more."

And in her piece, Rebecca Turner, chair of A Better Hawke's Bay and of Hawke's Bay Trust, a re-launched community foundation, says:

"We need to look at where we are today, where our strengths and weaknesses lie, and how we can use this information to sustain our current successes, change what needs changing and further propel us into the future."

Both individuals worry that local government in Hawke's Bay is not up to the task. Both want changes. Their solutions differ, but that's OK, because both are prepared to call the question as they see it. And that's the necessary starting point.

In contrast, some in the community – ostensible leaders – bury their head in the sand.

They say nothing is wrong with local government in Hawke's Bay. Or there is something wrong, but we know the answers (we just haven't acted on them, for some reason). Or if something is wrong, it's some other council's fault or problem, so leave us out of it.

Unfortunately, what I've just described is the attitude of Napier's councillors.

Even a mere inquiry into whether Hawke's Bay's governance could be made better is regarded by these councillors as a dagger thrust at the heart of Napier. Recently, however, they've had to at least go through the motions of publicly agreeing to such an inquiry.

They would have looked foolish to oppose a project – the proposed study of regional performance – aimed at benefitting all of Hawke's Bay. Most councillors admitted as much before their vote on the matter.

So while Napier's mayor and councillors can't bear the proposition that our region, which ranks permanently in the bottom tier of New Zealand, yet has such promise, must re-examine its situation — including how it governs itself — they nevertheless voted to accept the study terms. Better to look hypocritical than foolish, apparently.

At the moment of truth Napier councillors couldn't muster the courage to secede from Hawke's Bay ... at least not publicly. At least not on that day.

**Tom Belford**

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A groundswell of grassroots demand for change and progress in Hawke's Bay has pushed the region's councils reluctantly into a game of political chess. Kathy Webb talks to some of the players.

# POLITICAL BATTLE LINES DRAWN

IT WASN'T EXACTLY OCCUPY WALL Street. There wasn't even any shouting.

Nevertheless, the 'rebels' who launched an advertising campaign demanding far-reaching political change in Hawke's Bay hit their target. They shocked the halls of local government into calling special meetings.

The leadership was unimpressed. The sheer audacity of these people, calling themselves A Better Hawke's Bay. How dare they besmirch the good name of the Garden of Eden by saying it had problems. Traitors, troublemakers. People outside the region might hear of this. It might hurt tourism. Why can't these people focus on the good things we have?

In the end, it was nearly-agreed that the halls of local government should accede to the rebels' demands and commission an independent, objective study of what is being done well, what is being done poorly, and what needs to be done to ensure that Hawke's Bay thrives into the future. This study was to include the thorny issue of how effectively the region's local councils are doing their job.

The rebels, it seemed, had won their battle, but it was never going to be so easy.

Napier has been dragged kicking and screaming into the study, with every councillor recently speaking against it, then voting unanimously to proceed because of the political pressure to at least appear cooperative.

Arnott refused an interview with *BayBuzz*.

The NCC, with its Pollyanna-like insistence that all is very-nearly-well within its own borders, might have hoped that A Better HB was little more than a band of fly-by-night troublemakers. That would be better, in its book, than the alternative as espoused by city councillor Bill Dalton (who also refused an interview with *BayBuzz*), blogging on his site [www.dalton.net.nz](http://www.dalton.net.nz)

"Clearly I disagree vehemently with the whole programme being run by Better HB. It has been an appalling, negative project. We should be concentrating on the positive. It's all going to unwind."

He accuses the group of being a Trojan

horse for Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule.

"So Lawrence Yule and his cohorts came back with Plan B, to support a study on the economic future of HB, which would include governance. Many people have reluctantly agreed to it because they don't want to appear negative."

On the year ahead, Dalton states:

"Why then are there so many people in Hawke's Bay bagging the place? Why do we have people in positions of influence, determined to make Hawke's Bay look like the lawless, economic basket case of New Zealand?"

"Whilst I vehemently disagree with them, Lawrence Yule and his cohorts in Better HB, have taken an understandable position. Appalling, but understandable. They are so determined to force amalgamation on Hawke's Bay that they are prepared to blacken the image of our wonderful province. Their modus operandi is clearly one that endeavours to show that we are such an economic and social failure, that only amalgamation can save us.

"Their argument is lost on many and in my view, only undermines the good work that is going on in the Bay."



On every front, from socio-economic issues to business development, the region is performing below average.

**“We need a massive brainstorming, and it starts with one voice for the whole province. I don’t see any good reason as to why we want to stay separate.”**

**SIMON TREMAIN**

**The Tremains step forward**

Napier MP Chris Tremain took a huge political risk in nailing his colours to the mast before last year’s election, and publicly appealing to the citizens of Hawke’s Bay to support a regional study that might potentially lead to recommendations for amalgamation. His opponent, Napier-based Labour list MP Stuart Nash, was pleased to make capital out of Tremain’s stance, and waged a concerted campaign to rally all loyal Napier citizens to the defence of its borders.

When the votes were counted, Nash was out and Tremain was in once again.

It was a result that heartened many in A Better Hawke’s Bay, including its spokesman, Chris Tremain’s real estate businessman brother, Simon.

Both sons of the late Kel Tremain, an All Black and Hawke’s Bay rugby hero, the Tremain brothers have an inherently high profile and proud family reputation.

It’s a family that has always been based in Napier but is a Hawke’s Bay identity in every way, says Simon Tremain.

For that reason, and the regional opportunities he has seen go begging, he put up his hand for A Better Hawke’s Bay.

Another 1000 citizens, including some of the region’s most successful business people and entrepreneurs, have done the same. They are fed up with how things are, and the unfulfilled potential they see holding back the region.

“It came out of people wanting the region to perform so much better on all scales than we currently are,” says Simon Tremain.

On every front, from socio-economic issues to business development, the region is performing below average.

“I seriously believe that’s because we operate as Napier and Hastings, not as Hawke’s Bay,” he says. “People say it’s not broke, but it is. I have friends who would love to come and live here, but there aren’t any jobs for them. We have everything here in Hawke’s Bay – the climate, you’re five minutes to work and 30 minutes to the beach. Everything is here except the jobs.”

“We need to do whatever it takes to get more businesses here, do things differently to the rest of New Zealand, even if that means giving them a free five-year lease on some land. We need a massive brainstorming, and it starts with one voice for the whole province.”

“I don’t see any good reason as to why we want to stay separate.”

The reality is that Hawke’s Bay does have some serious problems. Its economy is too dependent on tourism and farming, there is no single, co-ordinated long-term grand plan among the councils to



go out and grab economic development or cut the costs of the jobs they do. The population is ageing and barely above stagnation point because young people with talent and skills are leaving for Australia and decent pay packets. Those left behind too often achieve poorly in school before joining a large pool of beneficiaries or an even larger pool slogging for minimum wages in go-nowhere jobs. Bad health is endemic and burgeoning among poor communities.

**A Napier critique**

As businessman and former Napier city councillor John Harrison puts it, “we are down there with Northland and Gisborne”. That being so, private funds will ensure the regional study goes ahead, with or without Napier’s consent or participation, he says.

“And if our representatives on the council go against supporting it, they will be unemployed in 18 months’ time. End of story. They can start heading for the dole queue straight away.”

Harrison, who was chairman of the NCC’s finance committee for six years, still keeps a close eye on it. A stack of council-related papers sits on his desk beside large windows overlooking Westshore beach. The smell of salt water and the lazy swish of gentle waves on the rocky beach drift in through the windows, but Harrison’s focus is elsewhere.

The city he adores is being run by a team of amateurs “who couldn’t get a job anywhere else”, he says. The council – “a \$60 million business” – is losing money hand over fist. The aquarium, which cost more than it should have, and is attracting fewer visitors than it was supposed to, is

*Continued on Page 8 >>*

Bee in the know ~ MAR / APR 2012

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*Current boundaries of local government are irrelevant. They don't cut with us, they don't matter.*

**ALAYNA WATENE**  
*Chief Executive, Te Taiwhenua O Heretaunga*

OTHER VOICES



Alayna Watene works in a world of disadvantage and practical realities. The multi-award-winning chief executive of Te Taiwhenua O Heretaunga, she has led the development of the taiwhenua from the ground up, to the point where it is now the largest non-governmental organisation in Hawke's Bay, employing 155 people and providing an array of health, social and educational services to its Māori constituency.

Watene says Maori are as diverse in their views as any other community, but they have a strong interest in Hawke's Bay's local government, and they want change.

She is keen for a regional study to be done, as a prelude to that change – “we have to do due diligence, we don't want just superficial rhetoric”. The least she is looking for is amalgamation – “of Napier and Hastings at least” – but more importantly, greater political involvement of Māori, particularly its youth, through the establishment of Māori electoral wards.

“More than 50% of our population is aged under 25, and 75% of Flaxmere is brown,” says Watene. “Our young people are telling us in no uncertain terms they can see the need.”

In those terms, current boundaries of local government are “irrelevant”. “They don't cut with us, they don't matter, as far as the way we live.” A streamlined structure of regional administration would produce “triple bottom-line benefits, socially, culturally and strategically,” she says. “We could just hyphenate the name, Napier-Hastings District. Then who says who's leading whom? It's more about the leadership.”

» costing Napier ratepayers \$10,000 a week by the time depreciation is added in, he says.

The new museum, to which Napier is contributing \$18m, has also run over budget, causing substantial changes in the plans. “It'll be nothing like the pretty pictures put out 18 months ago.” And when it's finished, and attendance figures fail to measure up because, unlike most of the other 250 museums around the country, it will charge an entry fee, “the losses on that \$18 million will also be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a week.”

**Can't agree on bus signs**

Regional councillor Neil Kirton says things are so bad that Napier, Hastings and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council can't even agree on where to put bus stop signs.

“Hawke's Bay is unconnected. Everything is haphazard,” he says.

Nevertheless, he is surprised by Napier's obvious reluctance to be involved in the regional study, and the suggestion it might even have opted out. “A more prudent political response would have been to go along with it. It's only a study,” he says.

“To be overtly opposing it is indicative,

*New look for HB Museum & Art Gallery*



Harrison says that thanks to 21-year leases, the commercial leasehold land that the council refuses to sell, because it brings in \$1m-\$2m a year, is actually returning only 1-2% on its value, while businesses shy away from it, with jobs and opportunities lost, because they stand to get a rent shock every 21 years, based on any value they've added.

Then there's the debt. NCC likes to tell everyone it's only \$4.5m, but interest is paid on closer to \$42m when internal borrowings are included, he says. The interest on that combined debt is absorbing 14% of Napier rates. In comparison, the servicing of Hastings debt is costing 9.06% of its rates, while Regional Council debt is costing 10.68% of its rates income.

Harrison produces more papers. These are the results of NCC's own research, and show the city's employment rose 230%, from 923 to 2155, between 2006 and 2011; new vehicle registrations dropped from 2970 to 1617, and visitor nights slumped from 612,445 to 534,773.

All that adds up to reasons that Hastings and other areas might be wary about amalgamating with Napier, rather than the other way around, suggests Harrison.

from my observations, of some deep-seated problems in Hawke's Bay's local government.” Most of those problems stem, says Kirton, from the power in the hands of council chief executives and unelected bureaucrats. They're “calling the shots” and they're “skilled at being manipulative. The last thing they want is for councillors to have an alternative view.”

That is why “shared services have been stoutly resisted at every turn.” Kirton cites two examples of this:

- Some time ago, Wairoa District Council asked NCC for a contract to supply it with planning services. “But the cost quoted by [NCC chief executive] Neil Taylor made it cheaper for Wairoa to run its own planning department.”
- In recent years, Napier, Hastings and the regional council have all renewed their computer systems, at huge expense, but none of them is compatible with the others. “Deliberate decisions have been made for them to be incompatible. Engagements were made with contractors to ensure they were incompatible.”



The disconnection among the councils goes to the heart of almost everything, says Kirton. "They can't agree on the most basic of decisions. The most symptomatic thing to me is that we can't even agree on putting the bus signs up. The regional council is running the service but has trouble getting a bus stop or signs. We can't even agree on what the signs should look like. We've got this absurdity going on."

The response of some within local government to the demands of A Better HB was contemptuous, says Kirton. They were dismissed as fly-by-night troublemakers.

"But those politicians need to understand that it is not a Hastings-based group; the stakes have changed.

"Public thinking is changing. Politicians need to understand that change is coming and they need to get ready for it. The average person in Napier and Hastings is seeing the need for change."

However, having said that, Kirton holds out no great hope that the study will be the catalyst. "The study will be delayed and its outcomes fudged. The most immediate prospect is a change of councillors at the next election, or central government intervention."

Continued on Page 10 >>

#### DES RATIMA 'Mayor' of Whakatu



Des Ratima was stunned to find out, as he banged in the pegs for his Hastings mayoralty-bid hoarding in Bridge Pa, that the residents along one side of the street supported him but wouldn't be able to vote for him. Electorally, they belonged to Central Hawke's Bay.

"Not even the people of Bridge Pa

#### OTHER VOICES

knew they were in CHB," he says.

For Ratima, it pretty much epitomised the way current boundaries, drawn up on the basis of population density rather than communities of interest, work against effective Māori representation in local government.

"Our boundaries are drawn from whakapapa groups. Whakapapa counts for a lot," he says. And those groups, from the Rongomaiwahine of Mahia to Ngati Kahungunu around Hastings, "all have their own needs, aspirations, demographics, language. They are all different," says Ratima.

Another example is the Napier-Hastings boundary. People whose home turf is Te Haroto, on the Napier-Taupo road, have their home address in Hastings District but often live in Napier for work purposes, and have a residential address there.

"So they have two councils to work with. There is a lot of duplication that could go. Communities don't have to lose their identity, we could unify a lot," he says. "But everybody is still busy building their own kingdom."

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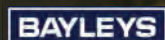
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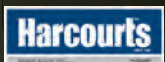
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Failure even to agree on the need for such a study would lead many to conclude the region is dysfunctional.

**GERALDINE TRAVERS**  
Principal, Hastings Girls' High School

OTHER VOICES



Education is a perfect illustration of how fragmentation and lack of cohesion is hurting Hawke's Bay, says Geraldine Travers, principal of Hastings Girls' High School.

Napier and Hastings schools are missing out on what has become essential income from international students because they are not speaking with one voice, says Travers.

Increasingly, it's international students who are bringing in the dollars needed to keep enough teachers on the payroll to maintain optimum class sizes in larger schools. But overseas, Napier or Hastings on their own are regarded as small rural areas and therefore incapable of providing a high quality education.

"That's why most international students go to Auckland or Christchurch. There is a prejudice against rural areas. They can't believe the education will be up to standard," says Travers. "If we had a strong local voice, a Hawke's Bay brand, representing the total population rather than two tinpot towns, we would be able to compete on a much better basis.

"If we could market as a province, there are all sorts of cost-effective things we could do, and with a regional focus we could eliminate competition between the schools as well."

» Indeed, the study's terms of reference are nebulous, and the words "local government" are nowhere to be seen. Reference to it is wrapped up as "analysis of current policies, priorities, interventions, legislative requirements and structural settings in or affecting Hawke's Bay and any apparent gaps, inconsistencies or policy clashes."

Nevertheless, despite the tip-toe language, the sub-text is clear. It's all about the potential for amalgamation, and Napier is upset. All the way through

negotiations for the study's terms of reference, Arnott protested that there was no real need for the study because the councils already had enough information between them, in their incompatible computer systems, on which to base constructive progress and increased service-sharing.

BayBuzz asked regional council chairman Fenton Wilson for an opportunity to share his thoughts about the study, but Wilson said he did not see any "value proposition" in deviating from his long-held policy of refusing to talk to BayBuzz about, well ... anything.

**The Black Knight**

Lawrence Yule, the mayor of Hastings District, president of Local Government NZ, and Black Knight of Arnott's amalgamation nightmares, is fighting a drawn-out campaign for regionalism. His early, upfront approaches to Napier were rebuffed outright, but he believes Hawke's Bay must confront its shortcomings, and develop a co-ordinated, long-term and cohesive regional plan. The first step toward that is the proposed study – to identify where the region is getting it right, and where it's not.

"This is a genuine opportunity to look at ourselves and position ourselves for the next 20 years."

Yule says Hawke's Bay is crying out for a stronger, unified voice from its 150,000 residents. In fact it needs that if it is going to have anything approaching a rosy future.

"We seem to be in this view that somehow everything is going to be all right here. I disagree. We are in hard times. There are structural problems in this community. Low wages are just one example.

"If we don't get our heads around that, and take some aggressive and drastic action, we won't be in a very good space in 20 years.

"If you talk to the average punter on the street, and ask them whether their children see a long-term and viable future with a good income in Hawke's Bay, a lot of parents can't see it. They're



leaving for opportunities in Australia. I hear of it all the time."

Hawke's Bay must find out whether it is thinking along the right lines to maximise its prospects for the long-term. The time has gone for heads in sand, and patch-protection, says Yule.

"If we can't even get somebody of high calibre to do a long-term report to look at ourselves, then I'm at a loss as to the future leadership of this region."

Failure even to agree on the need for such a study would lead many to conclude the region is dysfunctional, he says.

The Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce is itself an example of Napier and Hastings come together, and chief executive Murray Douglas speaks only in regional terms.

"Hawke's Bay is one economic landscape and local government boundaries are largely irrelevant. I say largely, but in truth they are often a problem with different and sometimes baffling differences between close neighbours which add cost and confusion to economic processes and we need growth," he says on the Chamber's website [www.hawkesbaychamber.co.nz](http://www.hawkesbaychamber.co.nz)

"The Chamber's view is that it makes sense to review a local government to ensure it is fit for purpose. There is no doubt that each of our current councils have strengths but it is equally true that they have weaknesses especially when it comes to uniformity of service and function. These can be potentially more expensive when singularly operated and certainly as we have often seen in Hawke's Bay, they can be strategically unaligned and militate against the best interests of all Hawke's Bay."

**National: councils on watch**

Entering from stage left has come another player, one with more than a bit part. The new Minister of Local Government, Nick Smith, delivered his first lines in late January, with a warning to councils nationwide that they were on watch.

Smith said he was worried about their effectiveness and efficiency, and the debt they were racking up on behalf of ratepayers.

During the past decade, councils' collective debt had soared from \$1.8 billion to \$7 billion, and the rates bills they were sending out to property owners had gone up by an average of 6.8% – more than twice the rate of inflation and more than any other basic cost of living. During the same period, food went up 3.3%, transport 2.6%, clothing 0.1%, and housing 5%.



"The 6.8% rates rise figure is just unsustainable," Smith told his Nelson audience.

"I want to stress at the outset Government's view that an efficient, responsive and well-focused local government sector is absolutely vital to New Zealand. Our 78 councils are responsible for \$100 billion worth of public assets, employ 23,000 people, spend \$7.5 billion each year of public money and everyday make thousands of regulatory decisions.

"If they do these jobs well, they can be a turbocharger for New Zealand Incorporated, but poorly and they become a handbrake on this country's success. My ambition is to work with councils to ensure they are a help, not a hindrance to New Zealand getting ahead."

Smith says his review, which will be assisted by Yule and Local Government NZ, would inevitably raise the question of council amalgamations, although "I wish to make it plain that the Government is not going to embark on a central-government-led, nationwide programme of forced change as occurred in the 1980s. Nor do we take the view that bigger is better."

Smith's cautious language is understandable. He doesn't want a repeat of the hysteria whipped up by councils

intent on their own survival during the nationwide 1989 amalgamations.

It is also unlikely he has revealed his full hand for this latest review, given the resentment still lingering in parts of newly and forcibly-amalgamated Auckland.

Whatever his agenda, mere carrots dangled in front of Hawke's Bay council noses are unlikely to achieve the efficiencies and streamlining he seeks. More likely, Smith will need some stout sticks. Yule and Local Government NZ might turn out to be the suppliers.

There will be shouting. 🐝

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Hawke's Bay has five councils – Central Hawke's Bay District, Hastings District, Napier City, Wairoa District, and the over-arching Hawke's Bay Regional Council. Between them they have 150 elected representatives, five chief executives, five planning departments, in fact five of everything. All this to look after 150,000 people.

With such an army of personnel, Hawke's Bay could be exceedingly well led and administered, but there is little cohesion and consistency across the councils. Each is focused on its own patch.

Wairoa is open to discussion about streamlining the region, Central Hawke's Bay is not so much. The biggest clashes are already happening in Napier and Hastings.

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# IS HAWKE'S BAY ORGANISED TO FACE THE FUTURE?

Simmering just below the surface in Hawke's Bay is a debate over how effectively we are governed by our local bodies.

BY ~ TOM BELFORD



**IN A DAY-TO-DAY SENSE, TO THE DEGREE** there's discontent, it tends to focus on quite immediate issues ... we don't like the parking set-up on our street, or simple consents seem too expensive and time-consuming, or our favourite reserve is getting run down.

At the next level, discontent relates to broader policies that seem ineffectual or wrong-headed – how to best develop a CBD, where to allow development, the level of support for our preferred projects (from skate parks to cultural amenities).

And probably in this category belong

concerns about rates, debt and the overall cost of our councils ... and perceived duplication and competition amongst them.

Finally, there's the bigger picture. Some residents anticipate bigger challenges and opportunities for the region and worry about our capacity to address them – lifting incomes, creating jobs, attracting new residents and businesses, meeting the needs of an aging population, protecting an increasingly stressed environment, providing expensive infrastructure and public amenities.

The 'fixes' people mention when they talk about such discontents range as wide as the issues on the table. From fine-tuning or re-thinking this or that policy or decision, to significant axing of council budgets, to demanding far more cooperation and consistency amongst councils, to wholesale restructuring of our local/regional governance structure, to 'throwing the bums out' and starting all over.

This article looks at the 'governance' issue – should our local bodies be somehow consolidated or reorganized ... and the arguments surrounding restructuring.

Some residents anticipate bigger challenges for the region and worry about our capacity to address them.

Why now? Because the prospect has been tabled – amidst much moaning and foot-dragging – by our region's five councils.

They have commissioned an independent inquiry into the overall performance of Hawke's Bay – economic, social, environmental. And that inquiry is to address whether our present governance structure aids or impedes that performance.

According to the terms of reference for this inquiry, the public will be invited to the party. Your views will be welcomed. Anticipating that invitation, here are some issues you might want to think about.

#### Is there a case?

If there is a case for reorganizing our region's five local bodies, which would necessarily involve temporary transition pains and confusion, arguably the 'solution' must offer at least one – and hopefully all – of these benefits:

- **Save us money and time.** Produce cost savings, operational efficiencies, and simplification for those routinely doing business with councils.
- **Yield more bang for our buck.** Deliver better policy outcomes, more effectively implemented, in the numerous areas where councils touch our daily lives – programs for youth, services to the elderly, sport and recreation support, development policies, event planning, maintenance of reserves and so forth.
- **Lift and future-proof our Bay.** Promote more unified, visionary and powerful planning for the region – clear priorities for major infrastructure investments; stronger marketing of the Bay to visitors, potential businesses and investors; meaningful approaches to social

challenges; productive environmental consensus; and more effective advocacy to central government.

Not only must reorganization deliver convincingly against these benefits, it must do so while meeting these tests:

- Be fair to all residents – in terms of rates and representation.
- Protect local community 'identities' and prerogatives – in terms of deciding truly local priorities and outcomes.

#### So let's look at these issues one by one.

##### Save money and time

Frankly, I cannot comprehend arguments that consolidation of councils will not save appreciable money in areas like purchasing, back-room systems (accounting and billing systems, etc), more efficient utilization of assets (cars, buildings), and yes ... personnel.

Indeed, whenever councillors resistant to restructuring speak out, they inevitably claim that precisely these kinds of savings and efficiencies can be accomplished simply through 'better cooperation'.

Less visible than these administrative savings are the even greater savings that would be associated with less redundant work being carried out by staff and by those in the community who must do business with councils.

How many separate plans and policies do we need from councils' staffs on dog licensing, youth strategies, alcohol regulation, state of the environment, local social and economic profiles ... the list goes on and on. All of this consuming many hours of redundant staff time, as

well as consultants fees. Then, when even the multiple staffs themselves reluctantly conclude that some coordination and consistency is required, even more time is consumed as 'working parties' are organized and meet to negotiate the differences ... with these compromises then needing the further attention and endorsement of the respective elected councils.

Unless one regularly engages with councils (*BayBuzz* annually spends hundreds of hours monitoring them), it is difficult to appreciate how much time and resource is wasted in this fashion. We must put a cost on that time to better appreciate the level of savings that might be achieved through consolidation.

Then add the even greater hours that residents, contractors, sports clubs, and community groups spend trudging from council to council in their attempt to influence, understand or comply with these policies! In fact, one might argue that the time cost to the community of duplicative local government is at least as great as the more obvious dollar waste within councils.

This analysis reflects a charitable view of our local councils ... not pitting them as the enemy. We need and want their services. But they are bureaucracies after all, and share the vices of all insulated bureaucracies – they grow inexorably, they fiercely protect turf and prerogatives, they 'know better' than you, they are not routinely measured in ways that force economies and bottom-line thinking.

##### More bang for the buck

But let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that having five 'state of

*Continued on Page 14 >>*

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*The time cost to the community of duplicative local government is at least as great as the more obvious dollar waste within councils.*

» the environment' reports in Hawke's Bay (probably prepared by the same consulting firm), or several social and economic well-being reports, or multiple youth or reserve strategies, or having the director of Hawke's Bay Tourism or the director of Sport Hawke's Bay make the same presentation (thank god for Microsoft Word and Powerpoint) to each of five councils is somehow an efficient use of time and money.

Does this duplication somehow yield better policy-making or outcomes for the people of Hawke's Bay? Better environmental policy? Better social outcomes? Better youth programs? Better maintained reserves? Kick-ass economic growth? A more effective tourism or recreation strategy? If it does (evidence please), then for sure, we should keep paying for it and stop complaining about rates, delays and inconsistencies.

In fact, this duplication of effort does not yield better outcomes for the people of Hawke's Bay. It mostly produces squabbling. Often the various jurisdictions cannot even agree on the underlying factual data ... and how complex can that information be for a region of 150,000 residents?!

The preparation costs for these strategies and programs leaches scarce resources from the implementing of them. Outcomes suffer.

To finance an economic development initiative for the region (like Business Hawke's Bay), business leaders must convince at least three councils that we need to make a stronger effort, and then further convince those councils to put up some money. To better craft a sport strategy for the region, the head of Sport Hawke's Bay must go through the same exercise, then watch helplessly as councils squabble over the terms of reference for the planning committee.

In neither case does the 'design by committee' process yield much improvement to the intellectual capital of the initiatives as they were

originally conceived.

If the analyses that drive our councils' policies and program development reflected a region-wide perspective from the outset and were resourced appropriately, they would be more competently done, more firmly grounded in agreed-upon facts, more easily informed and understood by the public, and ultimately more effectively implemented.

If one talks to sector leaders in sport, arts and culture, economic development, social services in Hawke's Bay, who must live with the programs councils create, it is easy to amass a library of councils' redundant efforts, ignorance of one another's activities, conflicting signals and approaches, missed opportunities and gaps in coverage, and patch protection.

The community deserves better and more consistent outcomes.

#### Lift and future proof the Bay

What has been discussed so far relates mostly to the here and now. Getting better outcomes at better cost in dealing with today's 'mundane' issues.

If councils are not doing so well with these, dealing with tomorrow's challenges will be even more daunting.

A Better Hawke's Bay, which has been advocating for the regional performance study, has taken this future focus, looking at current economic, social and environmental indicators for the Bay and saying we need to do better ... and that our local government structure should be reviewed in that context.

**Economic well being.** It is very clear that our councils have an impact on the region's economic development. Among other activities, councils:

- Build and maintain the infrastructure needed to support the region's economic activity – a roading network, a port and airport, stopbanks that protect from flooding, wastewater and stormwater

systems, and potentially water storage systems to support irrigation.

- Earmark and develop land suitable for commercial and industrial purposes;
- Provide financing to Business Hawke's Bay;
- Sponsor and subsidize (and sometimes own) events and attractions aimed at bringing visitors to the Bay, as well as directly conducting and subsidizing tourism promotion;
- Market their individual communities and Hawke's Bay as a whole to potential relocating businesses and investors; and,
- Facilitate (or not) the consenting processes that businesses must go through as they move, expand or relocate in the Bay.

On its face, it is difficult to see how any of these activities are prudently planned and managed by having leadership, strategies, resources, decision authority and implementation plans divided across five councils. Any significant economic development initiative requires cooperation (if not co-funding) by multiple councils ... at best creating indecision and delays. But at worst triggering determined patch protection, one-upsmanship, and 'go it alone' behavior.

Do we need a regional events strategy, with more 'signature' events? Should we build one or more water storage dams in the region? Should we improve access to and amenities at Lake Waikaremoana? Do we need to replace or upgrade our bridges and stopbanks? Should we lengthen the airport runway? Invest more in the port? Do more to center agricultural research in the region? Do more to diversify the region's economy? Begin to future-proof our economy against climate change?

If we should do any of these, which come first, what are the appropriate strategies, and how will we pay for them? When or to what degree should outside investors (foreigners even!) be involved? Do we have the structures, scale and



Photos courtesy of Tim Whittaker

expertise to manage these projects?

How can five rival councils make these decisions intelligently for the good of Hawke's Bay?

And when major projects require the approval or financial participation of central government, the fragmentation takes an additional toll if regional priorities are not uniformly shared and championed ... and if better organized regions steal the march and the funding.

**Environmental well being.** Likewise, the actions and inactions of five councils have a profound effect on the region's environment. For example...

- The flip side of building all that physical infrastructure is mitigating its environmental impact (or not);
- Getting rid of our waste – sewage, stormwater, residential trash, industrial – is becoming an increasing and costly burden for our councils;
- Which developments and land uses to permit or encourage – whether on farmlands or eroding coastlines – triggers environmental concerns and pits council against council;
- Water management functions extend through each of our councils, just

as the impacts of our water use show no regard for the region's political boundaries and jurisdictions;

- Likewise, the challenge of nurturing our region's biodiversity reaches across our current jurisdictions;
- Councils play a direct role in energy conservation, alternative transportation and adaptation to climate change, as well as educating residents on such matters;
- Toxic waste management, and even the handling of 'routine' pollutants like fine particles from woodburners or assessing the health of waterways cause major disputes among our councils.

And of course the setting of basic environmental standards sits as a core function of the Regional Council, causing some to argue that it should remain independent of other councils. However, the Regional Council has fast become a super-development agency in its own right, championing irrigation and more intensive land use, financing economic development activities, and benefitting from a profitable and expanding port. In practice, it stands just as conflicted as any territorial authority.

Again, it is difficult to see how any of

these activities are optimally planned and managed by a fragmented and often combative five council structure.

**Social well being.** This is perhaps the most difficult area for which to pinpoint the responsibilities and influence of our local councils.

First, we're talking about a very wide range of issues – from the deprivation effects of poverty and joblessness, to crime and domestic violence, to services (including housing) for the elderly, to providing facilities and space for sport and recreation, to nurturing our arts and providing cultural amenities.

Second, with respect to the social deprivation part of the portfolio, arguably the root causes of hardship are beyond the reach of our local bodies. And some would argue that economic health is the universal tonic.

Third, indeed there is a full complement of other institutions in the region – the DHB, the education infrastructure, the Police, a caring NGO and religious sector, and outposts of relevant central government ministries with their programs to address these issues.

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» **So how do local bodies fit in?**

It might be useful to carve 'social well being' into two parts:

1. Enhancing the community amenities that enrich the lives of all residents willing to partake of them – e.g., sport facilities and cultural amenities; and,
2. Helping to support the safety net that should protect the most deprived – and the victims – in our community.

The first area, from councils' standpoints, largely requires prioritization of funding decisions. Firstly, how do these 'social' needs stack up against others, like upgraded bridges or tourism promotion? And second, amongst competing 'social' needs, which facilities, NGOs, activities or amenities deserves highest priority for receiving increasingly scarce ratepayer dollars?

Once again, perhaps these are decisions that in the future can best be made on a regional scale, husbanding the scarce resources that are available and directing them to areas of greatest need, and to entities with the greatest capacity and leverage, following unified strategies.

**Supporting the safety net**

The second area – supporting the safety net – is more challenging for local bodies. On the one hand, the most significant policies, programs and monies to address social deprivation flow from Wellington – income support, health care and education, housing, crime protection, shelters from domestic abuse and violence.

But on the other hand, the consequences of this deprivation confront us and are felt right here in our local community, affecting all of us, and politically putting councils and local elected councillors – not MPs, I daresay – in the hot seat.

It's our local leaders and councils who are called upon to support the hikoi, confront the gangs, contribute to the food banks, and convene and support the community groups. Some councillors respond with a simple ... "It's not our job."

But I suggest that's a head-in-the-sand attitude. Residents expect local government to 'do something' about such problems no less than they expect local bodies to fix potholes, protect rivers and maintain reserves.

Speaking of the increasing numbers of needy people presenting at the Cathedral, Dean Helen Jacobi said to BayBuzz: "People on the ground must be able to respond to the needs that present every day."

And Ria Kersjes at Havelock North

Age Concern predicts a different kind of pressure. Talking about her elderly constituency, she says: "The older people who will be coming along are different ... they won't be as silent ... the coming generation will speak out and demand more."

So perhaps the local government role is chiefly one of political leadership and advocacy. Political leadership in the sense of using the bully pulpit, speaking for the community, convening the many other players involved in social services, insisting on and helping with program coordination, publicizing available programs and services.

And advocacy in terms of independently assessing the efficacy of central government programs and the adequacy of their reach. And advocating loudly to Government when these programs are either not working or plainly inadequate to meet obvious needs. Are food bank shelves empty? Are houses overcrowded to the point of being unsafe or unhealthy? Are domestic violence shelters able to protect all who need escape and respite?



*Dean Helen Jacobi*

For myself, I'd rather see councils employ staff to get into the streets and answer those questions, as opposed to sitting in offices writing youth strategies. Dean Jacobi says our local councils have yet to decide what their role is with respect to these issues, but that what is being done is "not working and not enough".

If this is a legitimate role for councils – and especially elected leaders – to play with respect to our region's social ills, then is it a role more effectively played on a regional scale? I would argue yes, because no less than fostering jobs or protecting waterways, both the problems and the solutions ignore our region's internal political boundaries.

**Fairness**

If local government reorganization might save money and time, deliver better outcomes, and lift our economic,

**"The older people who will be coming along are different ... they won't be as silent ... the coming generation will speak out and demand more."**

**RIA KERSJES**

environmental and social well being, can it be implemented in a manner that is fair to all and preserves strongly felt local identities?

Most often, the fairness issue is raised with respect to rates and councils' varying debt loads. If consolidation were to occur, would the former ratepayers of, say, Napier, be asked to pay for projects that seemed to benefit only residents of faraway Waipukurau – or horrors – Hastings? Or vice versa. Or would one council's 'excessive' debt from years past be thrust upon the ratepayers of a more parsimonious council?

The short answer is that proven 'ways and means' exist to ring-fence specific expenses of a historic or localized nature.

With respect to debt, this is exactly what the Local Government Commission has done in the scheme it has proposed for combining the Nelson City and Tasman District Councils. [This reorganization will be voted up or down by the public in April.] So, should Napier residents be asked to pay the debt on Hastings Council's new office building refurbishment? No. And given established precedents throughout New Zealand since 1999, they would not after any reorganization. It's a non-issue.

And with consolidation, should Hastings residents be asked to pay to operate Art Deco buses running between Ahuriri and Marine Parade? A targeted rate (our councils have plenty of these) could address that.

But at a point, such questions underscore the folly of considering major council expenditures as local ones. If there is a case for, let's say, a sports park or a museum & art gallery or bus service for the region, shouldn't all ratepayers be expected to pay? Yes, is the short answer. And in fact, you already do, through a convoluted, often less-than-transparent, pea-under-the-shell process where, let's say, Hastings Council promises \$1 million to the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery and the Napier Council promises \$1 million to the sports park.

And of course, each one of us pays again when the Regional Council decides, as it has, to fund such projects.

That's the way the system now works. Going forward, would we not all benefit from a governance structure that forced all such projects – certainly all 'big-ticket' expenditures – to be weighed against one another, evaluated against regional needs and priorities, and funded accordingly – and transparently – by all the region's ratepayers?

And that same structure could determine which small-scale projects delivered chiefly localised benefits, and therefore might most fairly be paid via targeted rates.

It's not brain surgery, but it does require a psychology that appreciates that 'we're all in this together' when it comes to the major investments local government must make in Hawke's Bay to deliver the infrastructure and major amenities we demand.

For example, for the good of every resident in our region, we should expect high quality treatment of our wastewater, an assortment of first-class sport and cultural facilities, a transportation system not entirely built around the automobile, relief from a food bank if we need it. And our access to these benefits, and responsibility to pay for them, should not be dependent on where in the Bay we live ... Napier Hill or Waipawa.

Surely, any inquiry into the region's future performance must take into account how major public sector financial investment decisions can best be made, and funded, going forward.

### Protecting localism

Without question, Hawke's Bay has numerous localities proud of their community identities and legitimately interested in deciding public matters that affect their immediate living environment – maintenance of reserves and playgrounds, community halls, village centre and other design issues, parking, and more.

Any reorganization plan must take into account the desires of residents to have a voice in such matters. Councils already recognize the value in this by fostering and recognizing community plans. In the Hastings District, for example, community plans have been developed, by affected residents, for Flaxmere, Whakatu, Camberley, and Clive, and will be getting underway for Havelock North and the district's coastal communities.

But beyond local planning, in any reorganization of governance the commitment to localism could be formally imbedded in the structure by creating

community boards (perhaps appointed upon nomination by local residents) with appropriate local prerogatives and advisory responsibilities.

The desirability and political imperative of nurturing community identities and the spirit behind them underscores the primary objective of any inquiry into Hawke's Bay's governance structure. And that is the need to sort out local government functions and responsibilities and determine – looking into the future – which decisions must truly be addressed, implemented and funded on a regional basis; which matters should be decided centrally but perhaps be funded by users or through targeted rates; and which matters can be handled at the community level.

### What next?

The Napier City Council has recently (quite reluctantly) reaffirmed its support for the regional performance review, joining the region's four other councils.

So an independent study will occur. Whether it leads to any sort of reorganization proposal will be uncertain for some time.

That said, the issue of regional governance is on the table.

In fact, the situation might not be left entirely in local hands. Local Government Minister Nick Smith and Prime Minister Key have both been reported as commenting on rules that permit obstructionists to effectively block majority-supported reorganization initiatives.

In his major speech upon assuming the Local Government portfolio, Minister Smith said:

"I believe the new council in Auckland poses a real challenge for the rest of New Zealand. Its single voice, coordinated planning and efficiency gains are going to give it a competitive edge. Other communities need to start thinking about how their area can do better and what future structure of councils will best assist their regions' prosperity and growth. From the Government's perspective, we want the rest of the country as well as Auckland to be successful and want to facilitate a sensible dialogue on reform."

I take that as a fairly strong signal from Government ... local bodies need to shape up and re-consider their futures.

Whatever your view is today on possible governance reorganization in Hawke's Bay, welcome – indeed demand – the debate, engage in it, learn from it. We need to give our region the best possible capacity to improve its performance, not hamstringing it by acting on old prejudices. 🐝

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# For a better Hawke's Bay

BY ~ REBECCA TURNER  
Chair, A Better Hawke's Bay

**"... the efforts were fragmented and the time duplicated"**

**AS A NEWCOMER TO HAWKE'S BAY** fifteen years ago, I quickly saw the unrealised potential of the region for tourism and economic development. I could also see that there were several groups, organisations and associations all with good intentions, but all doing their own thing, so the efforts were fragmented and a lot of the time duplicated.

In short, there was a lack of collaborative action.

I've never been one to stand back and just be an observer, so I threw myself wholeheartedly into the group behind the Hawke's Bay Wine Country brand and the formation of the Hawke's Bay Wine Country Tourism Association.

Although that group had a focus on regional tourism, there was always an underlying belief that an umbrella strategy for economic development was the key to growth and prosperity for Hawke's Bay.

I learned a lot through that process. Wine Country created a common unity of purpose and defined the type of place Hawke's Bay was. We managed to set up communication and cooperative systems that helped to alleviate the duplication and allowed us to have a coordinated approach to doing things in our region.

It is also fair to say that if it were not being driven by the private sector, it would not have happened.

While the Wine Country brand went on to be a wonderful unifying element for Hawke's Bay, and led to a golden period of increased tourism energy and awareness for the region, momentum was lost; and I feel the region is once again falling short in its performance. There also seems to be a woeful lack of vision for the future.

This was emphatically brought home to me last year when I was interviewing local residents during the research phase of the re-establishment of the Community Foundation Hawke's Bay, soon to be re-launched as Hawke's Bay Trust. Community foundations have become a worldwide phenomenon when it comes to giving at a local level, with the establishment of substantial endowment funds dedicated to supporting the local community.

My discussions as incoming chair of the Trust with a wide range of people uncovered a glaring dissatisfaction with the lack of strategic vision in the region. While some of those I spoke to considered support of a community foundation to be at a more grassroots level, such as sports clubs, planting projects and youth services, others were really looking at the big picture and want to leave their mark through the successful development of lasting and permanent infrastructure.

But where to put their money to work? They are constantly approached by

numerous fundraisers and organisations, all working in isolation on their own particular project. No one denies that these are all good and worthwhile causes, but with a lack of long term strategic vision for the region there is a general feeling that it is all very ad hoc, with no overall plan. When potential contributors are serious about committing funds to a community project or anything in a community, they really want to know what it will be used for and how it fits into the bigger picture. They want to be assured that what it is spent on is not wastefully duplicated 20kms away.

So in the middle of last year, it came about that a random group of concerned members of our community came together to discuss how we could get a movement going to make more people conscious of some of the issues inhibiting regional growth. What evolved was A Better Hawke's Bay. As stakeholders, we felt it was vital for the councils to look at the issues they face and focus on a way forward for the region.

Of course none of this is new thinking. Over the past decade we have seen economic development organisations come and go with little apparent effect. Vision 20/20 was the driving force in the early days of our Wine Country work. This was replaced by Hawke's Bay Incorporated, soon to be morphed into



*We need an independent study into improving regional prosperity.*

“... we have seen economic development organisations come and go with little apparent effect.”

REBECCA TURNER



Venture Hawke's Bay. So much energy was expended on talking around what was needed, getting consultants in to tell us what we already knew, and what was the best structure to achieve it, and

tangible results were few and far between.

I felt like we were back at ground zero, and all the well-meaning effort that people had contributed in the past was for nothing. The group was frustrated with where we were as a Region and understood that change in some form was essential. A Better Hawke's Bay has received wonderful support and this has helped us all to push forward and voluntarily dedicate our time and energy. We have stepped up and stated plainly and clearly that we need an independent study into improving regional prosperity.

And as a group we don't presume any pre-ordained outcomes, such as amalgamation or an extension of shared resources; the study into how we can improve the social and economic performance of Hawke's Bay is exactly that. We need to look at where we are today, where our strengths and weaknesses lie, and how we can use this information to sustain our current successes, change what needs changing and further propel us into the future.

We enjoy a fantastic reputation as a region, we look glamorous to the visitor. However, we are still small, and suffer from a disproportionate number of poor demographic statistics, which in the long

term will undermine our credibility and success. This once-in-a-generation study will hopefully identify why the social and economic performance of Hawke's Bay is at the bottom of the national table, having equal ranking with Northland and Wanganui.

So that is why I am adamant we keep the pressure on all of the councils to develop a soundly researched strategic plan for the whole region. Difficult as it may be for the councils to accept this challenge, a high quality study that learns from the past, looks at emerging trends and translates this into future opportunities is a fundamental part of their function as our elected representatives.

Then having the courage and foresight to act collectively and collaboratively on the outcomes and recommendations of such a study will demonstrate their own commitment to what we all need to buy into as a region. They need to demonstrate the leadership necessary to guide us into a brighter future.

Like you, all I have ever wanted is for Hawke's Bay to be as good as it can be. This is my home and I am committed to being involved in the necessary changes because I want the best future for my family, friends and the people of our region. 🐝

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# Local government ... a non-stop gravy train

BY ~ TIM GILBERTSON, Regional Councillor



## Will Hawke's Bay's five Councils ever be joined in holy or unholy polygamy?

### THE SHORT ANSWER IS NO.

The long answer is that it could happen, but it would be a shotgun wedding. With Wellington being the outraged father of the bride and the multiple bridegrooms being dragged kicking and screaming to the altar using every imaginable (and some unimaginable) reasons as to why the bulge in the belly of the bride had absolutely nothing to do with them.

There are many reasons as to why a sensible approach to local government cooperation has never happened in Hawke's Bay. There are all the usual suspects – selfishness, parochialism and jealousy among others.

Although to be fair, after years of intensive negotiations and high level workshops, Napier City Council has decreed that a book borrowed in Napier may be returned to the library in Hastings. The Cathedral bells rang out that day.

But there is another impediment to good local governance, equally important but seldom acknowledged ... the method used to calculate how both politicians and council staff are paid.

Politicians could never agree on their salaries. At Parliament they still can't, which is why the PM gets paid slightly more than a bus conductor and they top

up their salaries with generous travel allowances, cheap booze and other dubious perks.

Some years ago, politicians tired of the endless bickering and handed the whole problem over to a Higher Salaries Commission. This body sets pay and conditions for politicians and top civil servants by providing an unbiased view of their worth. This works as well as can be expected in a country where everyone in power knows everyone else and deals are done on the golf course or in the Koro lounge, then massaged for public consumption by PR specialists and communication consultancies. However, the Commission served its purpose, since politicians can now plead innocent to all charges since they act on the recommendations of an independent body.

### Slow suicide

The problem is that the Commission assesses the worth of elected officials on the size of the council budget and the value of the council's asset. So the bigger the budget, the fatter the pay packet. The more monuments, the higher the wages. The Mayor of Little Dotsville, proud custodian of three trucks, two shovels and a one-room public library,

is paid one-tenth of the salary of the Mayor of Bigtown, who superintends a vast collection of public utilities and a council building the size of Fiordland National Park. Staff remuneration follows a similar pattern.

You don't need a degree in psychology to see which way the wind blows. Unlike the private sector, where efficiency results in increased rewards to the owners and operators of the business, within local government exactly the opposite applies. The more efficient and effective the council, the less all the participants get paid. Efficiency and cost cutting equate to slow suicide.

In private enterprise, a drop in revenue or a massive increase in costs result in the firm going broke or the shareholders sacking the directors. Councils can be as extravagant as they please. If citizens don't pay the rates, the bailiff comes round and sells their property. A council that is lean and mean and hungry for improvement is a threat to itself and, by example, to its fellows.

In theory, the Audit Office monitors local government. In practice, the Audit Department ensures only that council decisions are made in line with policy arrived at by due process. The Audit



“There are many reasons as to why a sensible approach to local government cooperation has never happened in Hawke’s Bay.”

TIM GILBERTSON



Department will okay a private jet for the dog ranger as long as the decision was made lawfully, and is line with council policy. The Audit Department is a paper tiger.

So it is not surprising that both politicians and council staff oppose anything that threatens their prosperity, much less their survival. It would be strange if they didn't. This is not to demonise politicians or council Staff. They are all (or nearly all) charming, well-meaning and capable. But they are also human, and it is all too easy to equate the public good with personal job security and career advancement. And there is a certain guilty pleasure in spending lots of other people's money.

Naturally, if the politicians are highly paid, their staff must be equally valued. And so over time the County Clerk morphed into Chief Executive Officer, with a six figure salary to match. And it trickled down all the way to the Stop/Go Man who became a Traffic Management Officer and flew off to the annual Lollipop seminar in Sydney.

That is why, within living memory, no local council has ever instigated a budget reduction, cut staffing levels, shared a computer, demolished an office block or downsized a vehicle fleet. Nor has there ever been a well-researched, independently peer-reviewed study of the benefits of sharing services or amalgamation.

#### Five of everything

In fact the opposite applies. Overlapping concerns serve as an excuse for protracted and time consuming negotiations between councils. More resources, bigger budgets and more staff time. Hawke's Bay has five councils that produce five Walking and Cycling Strategies, which generate five Walking and Cycling plans. Five Coastal Strategies spawn five Coastal Plans. Five Asset Management Strategies give birth to five Asset Management Plans.

Five of everything under the sun. All pretty much identical and all requiring input and comment from the other four councils. And most of them have to be reviewed every three years. It is a non-stop gravy train, and anyone who puts a foot on the brake risks losing his job.

And that is why real reform will never happen; although every ten years a joint council initiative will be commissioned to look into scoping a strategic overview of the long term governance of the region with a view to reporting back a mandating concept some time before the next ice age.

There is a way it could change. The Regional Council has a mountain of cash. Every year the three District Councils and Napier City ask them for money for projects – sports parks, hockey fields, museum renovations and theatre refurbishments.

The Regional Council could legitimately refuse their requests on the grounds that they could and should fund their own projects by savings made through sharing services. Savings made by combining roles and functions – such as planning, rating, computers, roading, bulk purchasing – would run into millions of dollars a year. One plan to bind them.

Such an approach would galvanise even Napier City into some form of positive action. But for reason known only to itself, but probably related to the fact that groups under threat unite to fight their common enemy, the Regional Council has always been reluctant to use the big stick.

And possibly because if Hawke's Bay ever did have a highly efficient, brilliantly functioning, unified system of local government, the community would ask: “Why the hell did it take so long?!”

Sadly, the answer is largely that progress was penalised while inefficiency was rewarded. And you the ratepayer accepted it, satisfied that you could return your books to any library. 🐝



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New Farmers building under construction  
Photo courtesy of Tim Whittaker

BY ~ STUART NASH, Former MP

# Marine Parade... A Pale Shadow

**TIMES HAVE CHANGED. NO LONGER IS** the old way of doing things good enough to succeed in the 21st century. In fact, the 'No8 fencing wire' mentality coupled with the 'she'll be right' attitude that Kiwis have prided themselves on for so long simply doesn't cut it any more.

Not only companies, but now countries and cities are striving to understand and harness their competitive advantage in ways that will allow them to optimise their potential in an increasingly crowded global market.

New Zealand's unique global positioning is clean and green. This image is worth billions to us on the global market in terms of exporting foodstuffs, NZ as a tourism destination and even as a place to live for aspiring immigrants. James Cameron is a classic example of someone who has bought (literally) into the NZ image.

The '100% Pure' marketing campaign undertaken by Tourism NZ is fantastic: a success story in terms of encapsulating the essence of a country in a very simple tag line. This is why I am surprised that the man who led Tourism NZ for ten years, George Hickton, now chair of HB Tourism, is yet to inspire the Bay in a way that differentiates us from any number of domestic and overseas destinations.

I am very keen to hear of a strategy that gets people to the Bay in the first place, and not simply encouraging those who are here to stay an extra night. The front page of the *Napier Mail*, under a banner proclaiming 'Vibrant vision for

Bay tourism', reported that Mr Hickton believes the Napier City Council needs to do something about the Marine Parade. Mr Hickton told the HB Regional Council that the Marine Parade "needs to become a vibrant place to visit" and that "the foreshore was an amazing asset". While 100% correct, it is hardly a new bold initiative.

The same article reported that Mr Hickton does want to double tourist numbers to the Bay by 2030 through three initiatives. The problem is that Hawke's Bay Tourism has absolutely no operational or governance control over two of these (Marine Parade and the airport development), and a third, promoting the cycle trails, is hardly something unique to this region.

My plea to Mr Hickton is to deliver a tourism strategy that outlines innovative initiatives, introduces cutting-edge branding, focuses on clever marketing of the region's unique selling points, ties into the strategies of the two main cities, and highlights just how to build strategic partnerships with those who actually control the variables upon which the very success of the strategy rests.

## Beating the drum

I suppose the reason why I am disappointed by Hickton's initiatives is because he is not saying anything new at all. Perhaps I should be thankful that he is beating a drum that a number before him have and, as the noise grows louder, at

some point our Councils will have to listen.

For example, for three years I tried to get the Napier City Council to sit up and take notice of the fact that we have an ocean boulevard that used to be a major tourist attraction, but now languishes as a pale shadow of its former self.

Around 700 trucks rumble up and down the Parade every day, while the Council sits on its hands and commissions study after study, all the while failing to do anything. I have never been to a seaside town or city where the flow between the ocean and the city is so underutilised. This is epitomized by the fact that the Marine Parade side of the new Farmers building will be a single closed wall; not even an entrance to walk through to Hastings Street. This type of construction should never have been allowed by the Council. The fact that it is going ahead is testament to the lack of a vision, or even a plan, for the city.

## Time to go

In fact in my view (and the opinion of many leaders in this city), the Napier city CEO, Neil Taylor, is a large part of the problem. Time to go Mr Taylor. After over 20 years, fresh blood and new ideas are long overdue.

I once heard a city councillor bemoan the fact that Napier was suffering because Ahuriri had developed to the point where it was cannibalising Napier CBD trade and custom. One of the reasons why Ahuriri has taken off is because the Marine Parade has been allowed to deteriorate



*“The ‘No8 fencing wire’ mentality coupled with the ‘she’ll be right’ attitude ... simply doesn’t cut it any more”*

to the point where it is not the preferred spot for day trippers and coffee drinkers.

When meeting for a leisurely lunch or just a quiet drink after work, most of my friends head to Ahuriri. I would, however, much prefer to sit on the Marine Parade in a large café or restaurant marvelling at the uninterrupted views to Cape Kidnappers and listening to the sound of the breakers crashing on the foreshore. The only problem is ... no such place exists.

**Lacking vision**

I have said many times that I believe Napier is a wonderful city. My family has lived here for nearly 150 years and I sing its praises wherever I go and to whomever will listen. I love the city, but I feel it could be so much more. In a way, it epitomizes New Zealand: a wonderful country, the best in the world, but just lacking a common vision and direction that would ensure it performs to its optimum. Just like Napier.

When the opportunity arose to come back to my home town as a Member of Parliament, I jumped at the chance. Here was an opportunity to make a difference, get things going and advocate in a public way for what was right.

Little did I expect that I would end up in an argument in the mayor’s office with the CEO over a proposed solution that would have removed buses from both the Marine Parade and the CBD and returned them to the Napier travel centre. The CEO didn’t want a bar of it. The mayor did. Guess who won ... I left shaking my head in disbelief. I knew things were tough, but the level of official resistance to change I encountered astounded me.

A very successful Napier businessman told me one day that he had given up. I urged him not to, but he felt that he had been banging his head against a brick

wall for years, and all he had to show for it was a headache. Another successful entrepreneur wanted to turn the Firecasts strip club in the old Central Hotel on the corner of Emerson and Dalton Sts into an Art Deco-themed restaurant, but met such resistance from the council that in the end he gave up. He said that if the Council staff would rather have a brothel than a themed restaurant in the middle of their city, then so be it. I think he is back in the States now, spending his considerable fortune somewhere else.

Then after the 2011 election Napier’s re-elected National MP, when asked by the local press what he wanted to achieve, talked about settling Māori grievances. For goodness sake. If I am ever lucky enough to be in the same position, I would be angling for the Regional and Economic Development portfolios, as these are the ones that can really drive growth and create wealth in the provinces.

**Identifying with brand ‘Napier’**

The Eastern District Police Commander, Superintendent Sam Hoyle, has just announced a merger of the Napier and Hastings police regions. There is no longer a Napier police region, just a Hawke’s Bay one. He told the press that this merger would not reduce the number of front line staff. In fact, this move would drive efficiency and free up officers to fight crime.

Well, we all want an efficient police force, but what Sam has failed to identify (as has Lawrence with his ill-conceived amalgamation bid) is that the people of Napier identify very strongly with brand ‘Napier’. Sam could have made these changes, but just kept the names of the Napier and Hastings regions, and all would have been fine. He didn’t, and people are suspicious (and rightly so, but that’s another story).

**“I knew things were tough, but the level of official resistance to change I encountered astounded me.”**

STUART NASH



Why? Because Napier people are fiercely proud of their city. We remember its past glories, we love its history and believe in its future; however, we also despair for its lack of a vision and a plan. I am also very proud to say I am from Hawke’s Bay, but Napier will always be home.

I am not saying I have all the answers. There are many amazing people living in Napier who, for whatever reason, simply haven’t the time to seek a place on the city’s Council, but who believe in Napier as much as any elected councillor. They believe, like I do, that there is no coordinated plan for the city, its development or its future. They also feel as if they are not being listened to. So they either shut up or drift away.

Neither is good for the city of Napier. 🐝

Bee in the know - MAR / APR 2012

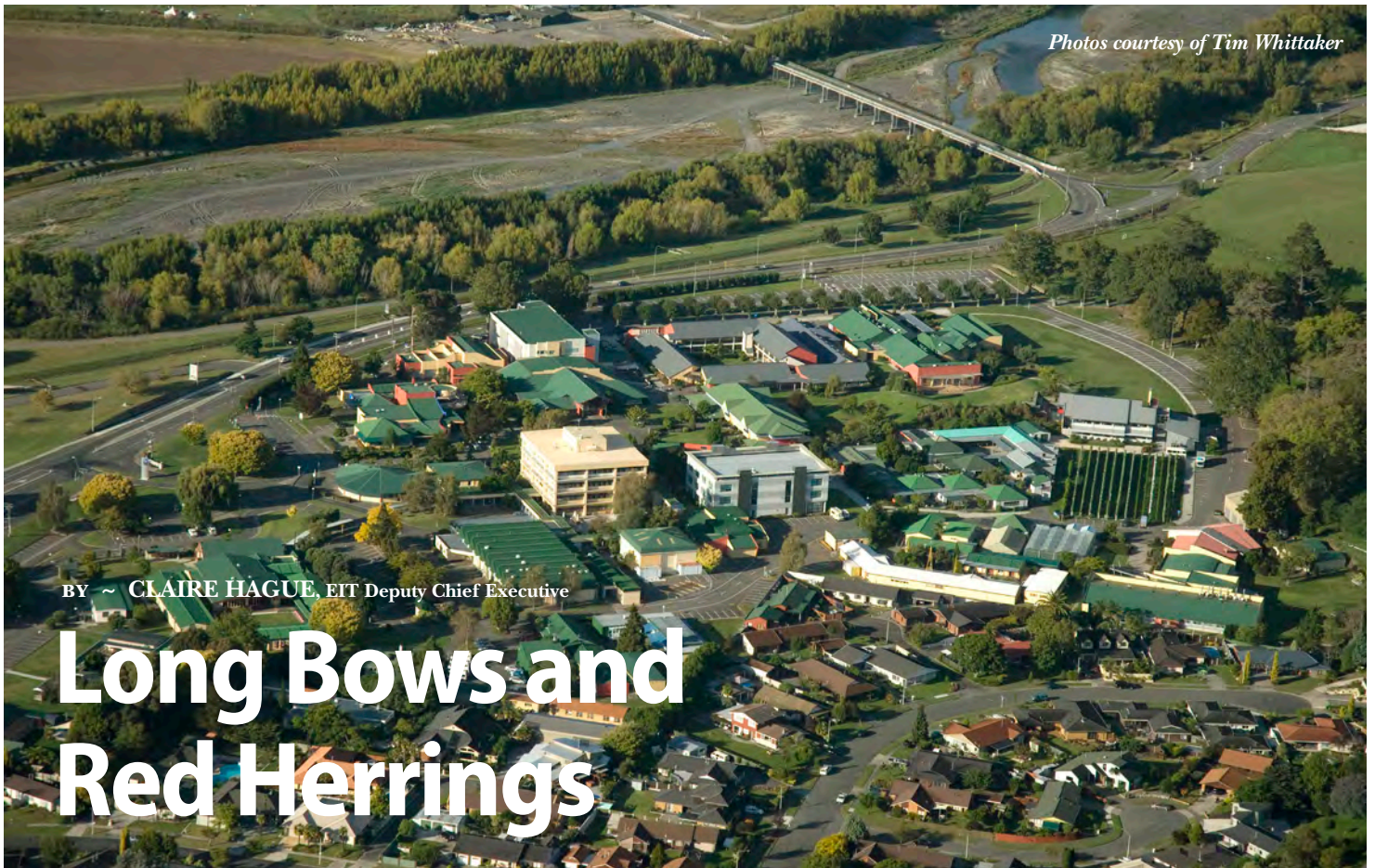


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BY ~ CLAIRE HAGUE, EIT Deputy Chief Executive

# Long Bows and Red Herrings

**GOVERNANCE IS A HOT TOPIC THESE** days in our region. In that context, it's worth considering whether the way our region is governed does or could have an impact on educational outcomes in Hawke's Bay.

Currently, all the councils in our region have some involvement with the education sector, from Early Childhood through schools to tertiary level. From my experience in the secondary and tertiary education sectors, some examples include the Regional Council's support of school environmental groups and activities, along with their partnership with Massey University to link tertiary research activity in the sciences with council environmental responsibilities.

The Central Hawke's Bay and Wairoa councils have been actively involved with tertiary providers in their regions, helping to identify gaps in training and supporting the provision of programmes to their more isolated communities.

The Hastings District Council is currently undertaking some very strategic work to look at how they can contribute to better linkages between education in the school sector and the world of work within our region.

The Napier City Council has among other things championed youth leadership across secondary schools by pulling together a representative group of up and coming young people to have input into council policy around youth initiatives.

And mayors themselves have given generously of their time to mentor



individual students, and provide governance and advice to a number of educational bodies and movements such as the Mayors Task Force that focuses on education, training and jobs for 100% of the country's youth.

These efforts are sometimes co-ordinated across our councils and sometimes not, but on the face of it there would appear to be no reason to doubt the commitment of our current local bodies to educational initiatives in Hawke's Bay.

Would this change, for better or worse, should our region be governed differently? And is it possible to quantify the direct impact that various regional governance models would have on educational outcomes for Hawke's Bay students?

## Governance in education

As a starting point, let's look at what we know about governance in the education system. The so-called "Tomorrow's Schools" initiative introduced in 1989 saw every state school, no matter its size

or location, responsible for electing a Board of Trustees from among its parents to do everything from appointing the Principal to approving curriculum shape and delivery, analysing results, developing property, and fulfilling the myriad other legal obligations required by the government of the day.

The local control that this provided each school probably had many positive benefits. Things got done more quickly, as schools no longer had to wait in a queue for bureaucratic approval and funding of their initiatives. Some schools coped well with this responsibility, and some did not, prompting external interventions when things went wrong. But subsequent studies of the impact of this dramatic change to governance in the New Zealand school system have found little evidence of a quantifiable gain in educational outcomes as a result of that change.

Similarly, the tertiary system underwent a major reform to its governance structures last year. Previously, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic were governed by councils of up to 20 members, with a majority of community representatives mixed with a few ministerial appointees. Now, councils have been reduced to just eight members, four of whom are ministerial appointments and four of whom are selected for a defined set of skills that they would bring to the table.

The move from large representative to small skills-based councils caused some alarm. Hawke's Bay's own EIT had previously been very successfully governed



*The real challenge for local government in the region, as it has always been, is attracting the right people.*

by a large representative council. One year down the track, it appears from my observations (admittedly possibly biased as I am an employee of EIT) to be being equally successfully governed by a group of eight members. Financial and educational outcomes are still tracking very positively as they have always done. So again, the direct relationship between the governance model and educational outcomes has been difficult to quantify.

**So what matters?**

In EIT's experience, while the model of governance changed, the quality of the people and their relationships did not. A previously well-governed organisation continued to be well governed. In the school sector, a similar pattern has emerged. Boards with good people have shown good governance. Government interventions in poorly performing Boards have tended to be prompted by breakdowns in relationships and a lack of key skills within the governance group.

There are some assumptions that underpin any governance structure that any of us might like to champion. Firstly, we assume that we will attract good people with the right skills to that structure. Secondly, we assume that they

will represent a great mix whose skills and backgrounds make them a good fit for the organisation or community that they are governing. And thirdly, we assume that those people will work well together, and with the management of the organisation.

To the extent any of those assumptions is untrue, then governance might not only struggle to be "good", it might have a negative rather than positive effect on organisational performance, with distractions and sideshows detracting from the real business at hand. Again, this is hard to prove scientifically, but is probably something we all feel instinctively.

**The long bow and the red herring**

In summary then, it would be drawing a long bow to speculate that a change of local governance model in Hawke's Bay would have a direct impact on educational outcomes in the region. With the right people, it could potentially provide better co-ordination, stronger advocacy, and a clearer, more unified vision of the education we want for our region's people. With the wrong people, it could also undo the good work currently being done within our multi-council structure.

So maybe the model is a red herring? The real challenge for local government

in the region, as it has always been, is attracting the right people, developing a great team, and getting them working well together and in partnership with staff.

Having said this, it's certainly possible to argue that an overarching vision for education in the Bay would be best achieved as a region-wide initiative. All councils in the region have their own educational interests, plans and relationships. An attempt to bring the strategies that underpin these together under one regional umbrella would help to provide a region-wide statement of intent that may inform and co-ordinate all the good work going on across the local government and education sectors.


The successful development of such a statement, however, would require people in local government who have a region-wide perspective, with the discipline to recognise, but not be derailed by, local needs and wants. They would need to be mindful of the fact that plans should never stifle innovation and well-informed action.

If those people can provide and actively support an overarching regional vision within which our education and other communities will succeed and flourish, good governance will indeed have been achieved in the Bay. 🐝

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# Personal Visions Develop Hawke's Bay



**“A swampy jungle of interlaced flax and cutting grass, taller than a mounted horseman, and so dense it is more practical to go by river than attempt to force a path through it.”**  
Missionary William Colenso describes the Heretaunga Plains in 1844.

BY ~ MARK SWEET

**THE NGARURORO WAS ONE OF THE** rivers Colenso might have navigated, and at that time it ran from Fernhill to Havelock North, along a route where Heretaunga Street runs today. In the great flood of 1867 the Ngaruroro changed course, the swamp was drained, and by the time of Colenso's death in 1899, Hastings was a thriving market town.

Wool was the white gold that saw Hastings prosper, and as the graziers

drained the Plains and stripped the hill country to create pasture, businesses serving the rural community grew rapidly. And the trains passed through the middle of the town carrying wool and meat to the port at Ahuriri for shipping 'back home'.

The first subdivision of land in Hastings was a one hundred acres block offered in 1/4, 1/2 and 1 acre sections by Francis Hicks in 1873. The streets named by Hawke's Bay's first property developer

characterise his background and allegiance – King and Queen, and Nelson, Market and Avenue. And as the son of a prosperous Cornish sheep farmer he may well have visited the English seaside resort of St. Aubyn.

The 'main street', which is the axis between East and West, Hicks named Victoria, of course, until it was found her name was already taken, and it was changed to Heretaunga.



Mackersey's Ahuriri 'block'

### The department store arrives

Francis Hicks lived to see his bare land transformed, and the year before his death in 1911, a 'modern' department store, equal to any in the towns of his beloved England, was built on the northern corner of King and Heretaunga Streets.

Roach's had nineteen departments, a mail order service, and telephone. But in the 1931 earthquake the building was destroyed; to such a degree, the bodies of most of the seventeen people killed within were not recovered.

In its place, an elegant single story building designed by Eric Phillips, was completed by 1934, and along with Westernmans and Farmers, provided for the booming demand in consumer goods. The heydays of the privately owned and operated department store came to an end in the 1980s, when American-style 'big box' retailers like K Mart and The Warehouse killed off the competition. And with the latest trend for clustered bulk store retail – Nelson Park – sited outside the CDB, inner city retailing has suffered badly.

But in a welcome turn of events, Roach's building is being revived and will soon host a modern departmental store, which could set a trend in revitalising retailing in central Hastings – the block subdivided by Francis Hicks 140 years ago.

We have Jonathon Wallace to thank for this.

"He's very good at achieving win/win results for everyone involved," says Development Manager, Mike Walker. "He



knew Farmers were looking to amalgamate their two Hastings stores and we had an existing relationship with them." Wallace owns the Farmers building in Napier. "Negotiations with property owners and existing tenants were very complex."

Wallace saw the potential for creating a single site bounded by Heretaunga, King, and Eastbourne streets. He already owned two titles, but when key existing owners were unwilling to sell, he successfully proposed a joint venture, and existing tenants were offered upgraded shops nearby. TSB, strategically located on the prominent corner, had a long-term lease and wanted to stay, so their needs were met by staying put, while construction takes place around them.

Roach's is a category 2 listed historic building. "The Council had requirements for preservation and Farmers had retail requirements," says Walker. "Council wanted glass frontage, but Farmers prefer built-in racking on the walls, so with the Council design panel we came to a solution which satisfied both parties."

The distinctive rotunda has been preserved, and the wrap-around canopy, supported by struts above, echoes the original design. Detail elements like steel muntin windows and concrete formwork have been replicated.

The \$20m project instigated by Wallace Developments has been on-sold to Augusta Property Funds. The selling agent, Bayley's, say the offer is fully subscribed.

As seems typical of Wallace

"Council wanted glass frontage, but Farmers prefer built-in racking on the walls, so with the Council design panel we came to a solution which satisfied both parties."

MIKE WALKER

Developments, the building owners of the existing Farmers in Heretaunga Street were included in the process. "They're investors not developers," says Walker, "so we approached them and came to an arrangement where we took over their building in exchange for our new Freedom Furniture building on Queen Street. We've already signed up a new long term tenant for 1000 square metres, and we'll develop the other spaces as tenants come on board."

### Start with two cottages

Whereas Jonathon Wallace's strength is in creating buildings for assured tenants, Hawke's Bay's other big developer, David Mackersey, often goes it alone, as in his extensive development on Harding Road in Ahuriri.

At the same time William Colenso was navigating the 'swampy jungle' of Heretaunga, a resourceful Scotsman, Alexander Alexander, was going it alone in establishing the first European trading station in Hawke's Bay, a stone's throw away from where Mackersey's new development is built.

By 1873, when the first town block was subdivided in Hastings, Ahuriri already hosted a dense collection of warehouses, a bank, newspaper office, a Customs House, Pilot's house, many residences, and two hotels.

The original Crown Hotel opened for business in October 1859 but was destroyed by fire in the 1931 earthquake. A new masonry structure in the Art Deco style was built in 1932 for proprietor A.J. Annan. The architect was Ernest Arthur Williams, who also designed the Daily Telegraph Building in Tennyson Street.

David Mackersey's interest in Ahuriri began in 1990 when he purchased two cottages on the corner of Harding Road and Bridge Street. As with many of his projects, Mackersey 'buys and holds,' waiting for the right opportunity to develop.



Cottages Mackersey bought in 1990 since redeveloped into Crown Hotel



*Hawke's Bay's been good to me, and I want to give something back.*

David Mackersey



» That time came in 2003 with the purchase of the Crown Hotel in partnership with Jim Scotland. Several options were considered, but they settled for a bold plan to build a 45-room boutique hotel on the old cottages site, linked to the refurbished Crown.

When adjacent properties became available, Mackersey purchased. He says, "I was offered the Moana Fisheries site and saw the potential to develop the whole block." And that he did. "We completed in time for the Rugby World Cup."

"I wanted a blend of retail, offices, entertainment, and accommodation," says Mackersey.

The result is Navigate – a 26-room, 5-star, luxuriously appointed apartment style hotel; the Globe Theatre – a plush 45-seat movie/function venue; and ground floor retail that include cafes and a hairdresser. There are also suites of offices and three apartments.

"Ahuriri has great potential," says Mackersey. He recently purchased the Price Building on West Quay. "We're looking into the feasibility of what best to do."

Another property David Mackersey has owned for years, now in partnership with the Lowe family (Lowmac), is the 'Happy Tav' site in Havelock North. And its time for redevelopment has come. Plans for a 50-bed boutique hotel are well underway. There will be shops on the ground floor, restaurant and conference rooms. "It's important the building fits with the Village look, and we've been working with the architects and Council to get that right," says Mackersey.

#### Environment changes people's lives

Getting the aesthetic right is the priority of another Bay developer, Andy Coltart. He says, "environment changes peoples lives." And a visit to Black Barn Winery or the Riverside 'cottages' complex is evidence of his attention to the detail of environment.

Coltart's buildings fit snugly into the landscape. Exterior materials are stone, timber (mostly cedar), and corrugated iron, and the colour palette is small – black and white and tones of beige. Interiors



Andy Coltart

are generous in their spaciousness and there are reflections of past Bay architects – adzed beams reminiscent of Chapman-Taylor, and bay window seating in the style of John Scott.

Grape vines are interspersed with hedges, shrubs, and specimen trees. "We're always planting trees," Coltart says. "That's a great thing about living in Hawke's Bay. Everything you plant takes off, and it lessens the visual impact of the buildings."

The Black Barn story started nearly 20 years ago when Andy Coltart purchased

Rush cottage from the Joll family and adjacent Lombardi wines from the Green family. He teamed up with Kim Thorp, a local lad, who was ready to return home to combine a stellar career in Saatchi and Saatchi with a more leisurely lifestyle. Together they have created a winery and cultural complex that includes a concert amphitheatre, art gallery, farmers' produce market, and award-winning restaurant.

And the accommodation side of the business supplements the cultural aspect. "The Riverside owners treat us as family," says the Gallery assistant. "They come and eat and drink here, and chat to everyone."

The ownership aspect is unique, as the Riverside properties are on separate titles, and mostly owned by foreigners, who spend a few months a year in residence, and when not, the houses are let as accommodation. "It's a win/win situation," says Coltart. "The owners can come here whenever they like and it reduces their costs."

What is remarkable about Andy Coltart is that he is self-trained as a designer. He works with 'experts,' but the design initiatives are his, and his attention to overall design detail extends to the furniture, and the employment of a full-time cabinet maker crafting timber he has carefully stored for many years.

Coltart has other 'farm park' developments in the pipeline, and a town-house project in central Havelock North is being considered ... "As an alternative to going into a retirement home, close to all the amenities, where we can create a sense of community."

#### Creating community

It's doubtful that Francis Hicks was thinking about community when he subdivided the first land in Hastings. He arrived on the sailing ship William Watson in 1859, wearing a bell-topper and swallow-tails, and spent his first years living as a gentleman in Auckland and Rotorua, where 'he painted local scenes'.

Whether smitten by the gold fever or cut off from funds 'back home', Hicks prospected in Sydney, then Otago, but to meagre reward. When he came to Hastings, he first worked as a fencing contractor, then in 1871 he purchased a 100 acres off Thomas Tanner for 400 pounds. Two years later he subdivided, and by 1875, when the last section sold, he had multiplied his investment 25 fold.

Francis Hicks spent his profits on leaving Hawke's Bay, buying a farm, and raising a family. He was forty when he married, and his school teacher wife bore him five sons and eight daughters



– making his own community – and he didn't develop land again.

Lex Benson-Cooper is also a 'one-off' developer, but unlike Hicks, creating community is a prime feature of his Endsleigh Park subdivision in Havelock North.

He bought the land 25 years ago for \$100,000. Thousands of trees have been planted over the years, providing habitat for birds, and wetland ecosystems have been formed in the valleys. The sections for sale are around 1000 square metres and occupiers will share 18 hectares of recreational land. "There are walking and bike tracks, and shared orchards, and we'll build pavilions at the tennis court and sports field ... places for people to meet and socialise," says Benson-Cooper.

The massive undertaking of building the subdivision has consumed his life, so much so he's had to put his work as an artist on hold. "I need a continuous block of time to do a painting, but that's not possible while doing this, it's all consuming." And as a newbie in the development business he admits to getting some things wrong. "We're going to reshape these sites," he says, pointing to three sections on a sloping hillside. "By cutting them in there'll be a 2.5 metre elevation between each one, and



**“There are walking and bike tracks, and shared orchards, and we'll build pavilions at the tennis court and sports field ... places for people to meet and socialise”**

**LEX BENSON-COOPER**

those trees are corridors for birds," he says of wide strips of planting.

The view is a panorama from Paki Paki to Mahia. "I love watching the light change," says the artist, "and imagine when all the trees are mature. I'm talking a hundred years."

"I won't be doing any more subdivisions. This is it," says Benson-Cooper, and he gives the impression he's keen to get back into his studio, and to explore his growing interest in architecture.

Unlike our first property developer,

*Continued on Page 30 >>*



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*I won't be doing any more subdivisions. This is it.*

“We’re always planting trees ... everything you plant takes off, and it lessens the visual impact of the buildings.”

**ANDY COLTART**


» Francis Hicks, who left the province for Waikato as soon as his subdivision was sold, Lex Benson-Cooper was born in Hawke’s Bay and intends to stay here.

And today’s most active Bay developers are also deeply embedded.

“My roots are here,” says David Mackersey. “I don’t invest outside Hawke’s Bay. It’s been good to me, and I want to give something back.”

Andy Coltart was born on a farm in central Hawke’s Bay, and says, “it’s the best place to live,” and he will continue creating environments, “that can change people’s lives.”

Jonathon Wallace wasn’t born here, but he spent summers with his teenage sweetheart at Waimarama beach, and stayed here to raise his family with her.

Given their attachment to Hawke’s Bay, there is hope that our current crop of developers will create buildings sympathetic with the past, while embracing the new smart technologies to ensure a sustainable future. 

*Acknowledgements: Thanks to Simon Tremain and Ton Remmerswaal for giving me an overview of the property scene, and I’m grateful for the time given by the interviewees. Historical information is from, A History of Hastings, by M.B. Boyd, and Port to Port by Don Wilkie.*



*Coltart’s Riverside ‘cottages’*



*Endsleigh Park*



*Inside Black Barn Vineyards*

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# Cohesive vision missing in a billion dollar spend up



*Photos courtesy of Tim Whittaker*



## Keith Newman asks how many big ticket items we can afford as Hawke's Bay councils budget for the next decade without a master plan.

**INTER-CITY RIVALRY HANGS IN THE** air, like the smell from the Clive sewage plant before it was capped, as the big three councils gear up to spend more than \$2.5 billion over the next decade without a big picture vision for Hawke's Bay.

Duplication of resources, patch protection and recessionary times make future planning a tense business as Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC), Hastings District (HDC) and Napier city councils disclose their long term spending plans (LTPs) ahead of ratepayer submissions.

Both cities plan to improve road access

to Napier Port and the airport, sharpen up their central business districts and complete iconic developments across arts and culture, sport and recreation.

The focus across all authorities is on addressing our appalling economic performance through preparing for, attracting and sustaining economic development.

In the mix, however, dozens of projects will be artfully buried in bureaucracy despite passionate advocacy, while others, including pet projects, will get the big tick because of it.

Overall spending across councils in 2012-2013 is likely to parallel last year's estimated \$285 million while the 10-year budget is shaping up to overtop the \$2.5 billion dollar mark.

While tough times make rate rises above 3% contentious, any sense of a spending spree can be deflected by spreading the cost over multiple years.

### **Big dam plan**

Water and how to conserve and manage it, particularly through summer droughts, is a major regional concern, particularly for

*It's no good telling businesses there's land available unless they can move in straight away.*

wineries, orchards, croppers and farmers.

The proposed 90 million cubic metre Ruataniwha high country dam, while delivering both environmental and economic outcomes, is a budget killer for HBRC.

The dam will allegedly ensure river flows are optimal, improve water quality and potentially irrigate another 20,000 or more hectares of the Ruataniwha Plains, but it'll also place major demand on HBRC cashflow and inevitably mean a rate increase.

Although the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has put \$1.67 million toward the \$5 million investigation phase, HBRC is going to have to stump up with the bulk of the \$150-\$200 million cost.

To soften that blow it plans to sell down its 100% shareholding in the Port of Napier and possibly signal further investment in water storage assets.

Councillor Neil Kirton says there are compelling long-term management arguments for selling off the Port shares, which he says is too exposed.

"Sea freight is vulnerable to international shipping lines making unilateral decisions where Napier or Wellington ports become irrelevant, regardless of how efficient or strategic shareholders think they are."

All it would take, he says, is for someone in Amsterdam to decide at the stroke of a pen that Tauranga will be only exit point out of New Zealand.

Meanwhile, to remain competitive with Auckland and Tauranga, there's the need to dredge out a greater area at the Port to cope with the growing number of larger container ships and cruise liners.

### Economic development push

One thing all councils agree on is the urgent need to attract and retain new businesses to lift Hawke's Bay from the economic doldrums.

A five council sponsored report on how to improve Hawke's Bay's social and economic performance, as well as the merits of governance reform, is expected to uncomfortably detail the specific challenges ahead.

To date, says Hastings councillor Wayne Bradshaw, too many people have been appointed to Hawke's Bay economic development agencies because they happen to be councillors rather than business people.

However, it seems the newly formed Business Hawke's Bay may have come up with a workable formula. Managing to avoid the parochialism, it has already ensconced itself as a facilitator,

visionary and de facto regional business development agency and secured commitments from each council.

BusinessHB's alter ego, the Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce, wrote to councils in October urging them to make economic development a high priority in their LTPs and to take leadership in getting the infrastructure right to encourage economic growth and new jobs.

It's currently seeking a plan change in the joint council's Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy (HPUDS) so each zone becomes more flexible in respect to the business-related activities.

Chamber and BusinessHB chief executive Murray Douglas says the water storage project, for example, could create huge demand for industrial land for processing facilities.

And he's advocating the region amend the rules and prepare for campus-style training and research centres. "We need to be thinking 40-years ahead about sites that can be easily manageable if the opportunity arises."

BusinessHB is also zealously pursuing new infrastructure-ready business parks. "It's no good telling businesses there's land available unless they can move in straight away. They don't want to wait two years for council processes."

Napier is now at consent stage for infrastructure at its Prebensen Drive business park. While deputy mayor Kathie Furlong isn't clear on the costs, she's confident council will get its money back through a development contribution levy.

### Diverting big rigs

Meanwhile a major effort is now underway to tidy up Whakatu as an industrial and manufacturing hub with landowners and Hastings District Council working with BusinessHB to promote it to Auckland companies.

"We are competing with Tauranga, Palmerston North and Auckland which have brilliant parks that look really good — if you go to Whakatu, it still looks like a farm — it's a mess," says Murray Douglas.

And the Irongate business park south of Hastings is seen as an ideal dry goods area. "We're hoping an announcement is imminent — getting the facilities in place will be part of the long term plan. You can't sell the site unless you've got the facilities in."

A key reason businesses choose these locations will be access to essential resources such as water, infrastructure like high speed broadband and easy access to the airport and the Port of Napier.

**"Some projects in council get moved up the priority list just because it's their turn; but I'm saying where do they fit in the big plan?"**

WAYNE BRADSHAW

To that end there's a \$24 million plan to upgrade the roading network for more direct east-west access from Karamu Rd to Pakowhai through to the expressway and Napier Port. There will also be an extension to Ford Rd and Prebensen Drive will become a four lane state highway.

These proposals were given a high priority in the Regional Transportation Study although everyone's impatiently waiting on New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) endorsement and the release of regional funding. Local councils will also be expected to cough up.

### Knit one, pearl one

And while accommodation and hospitality providers will breathe a sigh of relief that the rumbling of heavy rigs will eventually be diverted from Marine Parade, unresolved issues still plague the iconic waterfront.

Hawke's Bay Tourism wants to see tourism numbers doubled by 2030 with Marine Parade a draw card for events and family focused recreation. A waterfront vision is part of the Napier 10-year plan with new seating, planting and entertainment areas and unspecified developments.

The new plan leverages the decade old "string of pearls" plan with a pathway linking various attractions, but will remain unclear until ongoing court action by the Friends of Marineland is resolved.

Furlong says Friends of Marineland want to go back to the days of the dolphins. "While that may have served us well in the past, marine zoos are not acceptable to DOC and a lot of others."

Meanwhile work is continuing on the penguin enclosure at the Hawke's Bay Aquarium to boost what's on offer there, and efforts are moving apace to open up the CBD to the waterfront recreation area.

Napier council has partnered with private enterprise to create a new mall linking Hastings Street and Dixon St to Marine Parade and its likely Farmers new extension will also provide a link to draw people onto the parade.

After a year's delay waiting for a marine



*Over the last 15 years we planted 440,000 poplar and willow poles, but they're falling over.*

*New HB Museum takes shape*

» life impact survey, Napier's \$30 million sewage treatment plant is proceeding through the resource consent stage and could be operational by late 2013.

Napier sewage is currently milliscreeened but the new plant at Awatoto will use the same biological trickling filter (BTF) technology employed by Hastings before piping the results 1.5 km out to sea.

The other major priority for Napier is to complete \$18 million redevelopment of the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery which is on track for 2013.

**Hastings redesign**

Hastings councillors will be asked to consider a range of projects including new developments in civic square and the CBD, a major investment in aquatic facilities, and whether there's a viable solution to erosion along the Cape Coast.

A proposal for an \$8.5 million redesign around the art gallery and library, as a more connected 'arts, culture and heritage hub' with 'retail possibilities', is in the LTP. A shortlist from 119 designs via an international competition will be revealed in March.

Investigations are underway for a CBD master plan which could end up in the LTP, but not in this round. Included in that is the possibility of reconnecting Heretaunga St east and west across the railway line at around \$3 million.

A 6,000 square metre green park with skating and BMX area is already tabled for the outer CBD and a million dollars is being sought for a new Hastings cemetery.

The council is also looking for an additional \$3-5 million to complete the Hawke's Bay Regional Sport Park – and has just tabled a further \$3.51 million for a hockey park and grandstand extension.

Over a million dollars is budgeted this year for compliance and maintenance issues across four Hastings swimming pools but over the next decade that'll escalate to between \$14.4-\$30.5 million, including a \$14 million District Aquatic Centre to be completed by 2020.

Wayne Bradshaw says projects costing many millions of dollars, largely funded by borrowed money, need to be part of a more cohesive planning process so councillors and ratepayers can prioritise and judge where the value lies and whether the city can afford it.

"Some projects in council get moved up the priority list just because it's their turn; but I'm saying where do they fit in the big plan and do they enable us to achieve our outcomes?"



**Biodiversity big picture**

HBRC's Neil Kirton and others will be pushing for more effective and engaging ways for the council to manage its portfolio of environmental responsibilities.

He wants an immediate commitment to a "long overdue" biodiversity strategy as a "guiding light" to all other investments, including water storage, flood protection, riparian planting and other management regimes.

"Over the last 15 years we planted 440,000 poplar and willow poles, but they're falling over; the plantings were haphazard and in wrong places ... and the Regional Landcare Scheme provided millions of dollars in subsidies for uncertain outcomes."

Unless a biodiversity strategy is put in place he warns HBRC will keep doing what it's always done. This clear prescription for the environment would state which species and habitats need protecting and the desired outcomes when targeting land management or conservation.

Currently he says different groups and individuals within HBRC work in isolation and policies often fail to set the right parameters or measure the right things.

One of the priorities would be beefing up flood control and stop banks to cope with worst case scenarios.

"We have robust protection at present but because of weather extremes and greater climate risks we ought to be moving from 100-year to 500-year protection regimes. That will be a big capital item."

**Coastal erosion concerns**

One of the elephants in the room that seems to be getting bigger, certainly judging by the numbers quoted in diverse reports, is how to deal with the erosion problem along the Cape Coast.

Despite efforts by community group WOW Inc to develop an affordable plan to protect at-risk homes, businesses and infrastructure at the Haumoana end of the coast, numbers have ranged from \$7 million to \$40.8 million this past year.\*

Adding accumulated interest over 25-years and doubling the recommended back fill with enough gravel to fill McLean Park to mitigate minor downstream impacts has made the group wonder if there was ever any serious intent to proceed at all.



*Another day at the beach*



Wayne Bradshaw says people shouldn't be surprised the bulk of feedback on HDC's website is about the erosion issue, as the council's fall back position is 'managed retreat'. "Imagine if someone tried to wipe out Waimarama or any other established community?"

So why is it proving so difficult to get resolution? "Most big organisations have a methodology of taking things they don't want to discuss and putting them in the too hard basket."

Bradshaw insists there have to be other ways of looking at the issue. "We need to get an answer, otherwise its going to continue festering and the community will hold grudges."

Neil Kirton says while erosion is dealt with from a land care and afforestation perspective, there is no reference to developing coastal zone erosion management in any of HBRC's future planning documents.

"Even though there are plenty of signs it's an issue, it has not found itself in the right debate." So why might that be? "The local politicians haven't pursued it enough I suppose," says Kirton.

#### One rule to ring them all?

It is said that millions of dollars could be shaved off annual and long term budgets by putting aside inter-council rivalries, harmonising the paper work and sharing common resources.

Hawke's Bay Regional councillor Neil Kirton believes governance is the biggest hindrance to regional development. He's convinced one Hawke's Bay council with a common structure could deliver economies of scale and strategic thinking around 'one region, one voice'. "Having five councils makes no sense to me at all."

And Hastings councillor Wayne Bradshaw is convinced his lot should stop tinkering around with disparate strategies



*Proposed Te Mata Peak Visitor Centre*

and ideas and devise a master plan to get a better grip on fiscal, developmental and social priorities.

The 10-year plan simply says what the council plans to do with no master vision or connectivity to what the community might want. "Perhaps that's why only 43% of eligible voters actually turn out to vote."

Having such a plan would place Hastings in a better position to understand and interact with Napier, for example, which he says is very good at planning. He claims the various councils should be working on a blueprint to align all rules, by-laws, policies and regulatory processes over a specific timeframe.

"We're all part of the same family so it defies logic that we can't find ways for Hastings and Napier cities and the regional council to work more closely together on fundamental issues."

He says the region-wide waste dump at Omarunui is a perfect example of inter-city co-operation leading to savings of a million dollars over the last three years.

Further co-operative approaches might include shared services such as recycling, curbside rubbish collection, backroom services, along with regional planning, tourism, economic development, urban development and funding for sports and community facilities. 🌱

*\*NB: The author discloses a vested interest as a member of WOW Inc.*

## THE BAY'S BIG TICKET ITEMS

### Hawkes Bay Regional Council

#### Ruataniwha dam

- \$150 - \$200 million

#### Beefing up flood protection

- Unknown

#### Establishing a biodiversity plan

- Unknown

### Hastings District Council

#### District Aquatic Centre

- \$14 million (by 2020)

#### Compliance work on existing pools

- \$16 million

#### Civic Square redesign

- \$8 million

#### Hawke's Bay Sports Park

- \$3 - \$5 million balance (with \$3.51 million added for a hockey park and grandstand extension)

#### Arterial roading plan

- A share of the \$24 million

#### Haumoana coastal protection

- \$7 - \$40.8 million (depending on who you believe)

#### Haumoana managed retreat

- \$4.5 - \$20 million (depending on who you believe)

#### Te Mata Peak Visitor Centre

- \$3 million

### Napier City Council

#### New sewage and wastewater system

- \$30 million (by 2013)

#### Prebensen Business Park

- Unknown

#### Marine Parade redevelopment

- Unknown

#### Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery


- Balance of \$18 million (by 2013)

#### Arterial roading plan:


- A share of the \$24 million



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# Inside Havelock North

BY ~ KAY BAZZARD



Keirunga ... Havelock's creative centre

## Weekend of creativity

The HBS Bank Weekend of Wonderful Workshops is the second such event to be staged, being held at Keirunga Arts and Crafts Society in Pufflett Road from 30 March – 2 April. This year sees a doubling in the number of arts and crafts workshops to forty over four days. For details: [www.keirunga.org.nz](http://www.keirunga.org.nz)

Names such as Wellesley Binding (painter), Kim Morgan (potter), Terrie Reddish (drawing) and Kathy Boyle (printmaker) and many others will tutor workshops in their chosen media.

Keirunga Society president, Barbara Daniel, believes that this is an event that will grow in size with each year and attract new people to Keirunga. She cites the reaction to the inaugural event last year, where 211 people attended the 21 workshops, and of those, 70% were not Keirunga members. That Weekend ran over 2½ days and the feedback from participants was extremely encouraging – they wanted more this year.

Upon reflection, the event seems to mirror Havelock North's interesting cultural past, when during the early twentieth century the 'Havelock Work' flourished in Havelock North offering regular plays, entertainments and social events.

Today, the Keirunga Gardens and the arts centre still provides a sense of purpose and a place to work and learn for the Keirunga Society's 400 active members. Hastings mayor Lawrence Yule describes Keirunga Gardens as "the jewel in the crown" of our parks and this sense of pride and appreciation is shared by all who know it and use its facilities.

It is a fulfilment of the generous gift to the people of Havelock North by George and Elizabeth Nelson, original members of Havelock Work, who gifted

the Keirunga Homestead and grounds as a centre for the cultural growth of the community.

## Hi-Tech in the Village

Sirtrack in Goddard Lane is a good example of the kind of high tech businesses which it is hoped will be attracted into the area under the new 'Village Framework' – due to be formalised into the Hastings District Plan later this year.

Sirtrack, which employs 30 people, has been developing and manufacturing their tiny radio transmitter technology at this location for 26 years. They made the tracking device that was attached to Happy Feet after the displaced, sand-laden penguin had been brought back to health and was released into the sea.

The Havelock North company is a world-leader in terrestrial animal and avian tracking devices, serving New Zealand, Australia and North America and owes its origins to the old DSIR, which developed monitoring technology to track the behaviour of possums to study their role in spreading tuberculosis in cattle. Former DSIR employees, Dave Ward and Kevin May set up the business in the mid-1980s, using this technology as the foundation for a wider purpose – monitoring the behaviour of kiwi and other birds under threat of extinction.

The Sirtrack company has recently been bought by Lotek, a similar business based in Canada, which specialises in tracking undersea mammals and fish. This is a happy union with the two companies offering complementary products and services and merging their research and development knowledge and technology. Their website is [www.sirtrack.com](http://www.sirtrack.com)

## UnisonFibre installation update

The main roads of Havelock North are blobbed with plastic safety barriers, an indicator that UnisonFibre is well on its way to completing its installation of the fibre-optic cables that will transform broadband services for businesses in the area (refer to *Beyond the bandwidth blues* in the Jan/Feb *BayBuzz*).

Some of the network is operational, with Unison customers already experiencing the benefits of fibre – faster speeds, more reliability and consistency of connection, plus the ability to use better services like "cloud" based software.

The UnisonFibre network has been designed and built predominantly for business and the network is covering the majority of the Havelock North business area; but will not be connecting to households. They are building into all of the main business areas in Hawkes Bay and work with Centralines in Waipukurau and Waipawa.

The fibre is being installed using various technologies. Sales and Marketing Manager for Unison, Wayne Baird informs *BayBuzz* that where there are overhead power lines it will be installed on the poles. There are various techniques of undergrounding used from directional drill and thrusting, to open trench for where there are many services in the ground already. Generally the fibre will be "blown" down small ducts to get to customers' premises. This technique allows for easy splicing and maintenance of the network. Here is a link to a video of fibre being blown – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4143NcqxRQ0> and for more information go to: [www.getonit.co.nz](http://www.getonit.co.nz)



Havelock North home to world leader in animal tracking devices.



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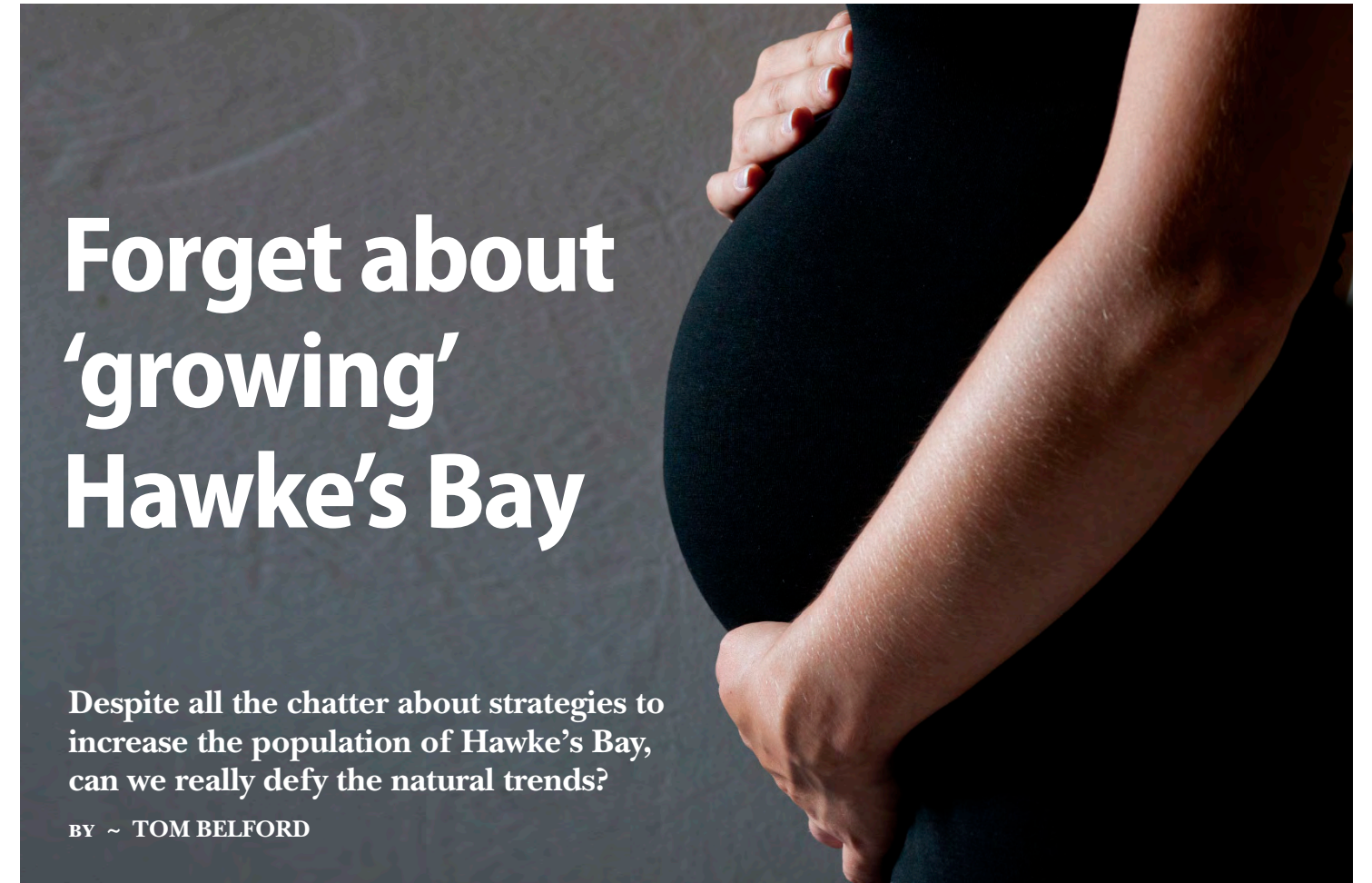


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# Forget about 'growing' Hawke's Bay

Despite all the chatter about strategies to increase the population of Hawke's Bay, can we really defy the natural trends?

BY ~ TOM BELFORD

**THE CURRENT 'BIBLE' FOR ECONOMIC** development in Hawke's Bay is the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), prepared by the Regional Council with the advice of the usual stakeholders – the Chamber, other business voices, EIT, Māori, other council representatives.

In assessing the Bay's overall prognosis, REDS lists these weaknesses and threats with respect to population:

- Low population growth relative to some other regions and decreasing ratio of working age demographic.
- Higher proportion of population without formal qualifications and fewer with post school qualifications than national averages.
- Population projections indicate slow/low growth for the region, which makes the region less attractive and harder to gain the economies of scale needed for service provision.
- Working age population is forecast to reduce 10% between 2011 and 2031, with an increase in the proportion of unskilled Māori population. Young Māori could represent fully half of Hawke's Bay's entire workforce by 2021. These are not the sort of demographic realities that point to a dynamic and prosperous future for Hawke's Bay. And the more deeply one examines the trends and the composition of our population, the bleaker the future looks.

While a blizzard of statistics can be

thrown about, the basic reality is that slow or – god forbid – negative population growth happens for two basic reasons. Natural growth ceases as the area has more elderly than children (the prelude to more deaths than births). And, that reality is not offset by net migration into the area – more people moving in than leaving.

The economic impact of the region's population dynamics depends upon not just more people – potentially translating to more incomes and more consumers – but as importantly upon the composition of the population. Is the emerging population profile one that suggests more children or more elderly, more workers or more retirees, higher job skills and education levels or lower?

The answers to these further questions are not encouraging. For example...

- In Hastings District (where the numbers have been examined most closely in the Bay), there will be more elderly than children somewhere between 2021 and 2026. Currently there are just above six elderly for every ten children.
- Hastings population will grow until 2031, but virtually all of that growth will be at age 65 plus. Nationally, the 65+ population is projected (mid-range) to grow 61% from 2011-2026, while the under-64 population grows just 5.4%. Nationally, the median personal income of those 65+ is \$15,500 – not a lot of consumer spending power there.

- The growth of Māori population in the region has been significant (16% between 1996 and 2006); however it merely offsets the loss of younger Europeans. The median personal income for Māori in Hawke's Bay is \$19,200 – again, not much of an economic driver.

## Given these trends, what can be done? Can local government deliver?

Our political, business and civic leaders pronounce that they will arrest or even reverse the negative trends, which suggests that they can deal with the root causes. Can they actually forestall the inevitable? Collectively, their solutions boil down to four:

First, more and better jobs, both to attract new migrants (and ideally migrants capable of earning higher incomes, not simply more seasonal labourers) and to hold on to current residents who leave to seek better opportunities (including students and young adults).

Second, to further attract those new worker/migrants, enhancing the Bay's 'quality of life' and 'great place to bring up kids' appeal, by creating ample sporting and cultural amenities and delivering on the 'green' image.

Third, marketing Hawke's Bay as an attractive relocation destination for the older, retirement planning, age bracket.

Fourth, to deal with the potential economic 'drag' of a large contingent



Virtually all the Bay's growth will come from the age 65+ segment.

of young, under-educated and under-skilled residents (not exclusively, but predominantly Māori), placing more attention on lifting education qualifications and – perhaps as urgent – relating education to the skills needed to meet actual available or emergent jobs.

Of special interest these days, given the political calls to examine the Bay's economic and social performance, is the extent to which local government can in fact influence or deliver upon such solutions.

**The drag problem**

Let's begin with the 'drag' problem – the present and possible future lack of education and skills in the key segment of the Bay's population that is growing ... our youth.

Of all the areas where local government might intervene, at first glance this seems the least likely area for our local bodies to play a meaningful role. It's plainly the turf of our education establishment, which must deliver both fundamental competence and also work with those in the local workplace to ensure that more advanced skill training is related to real-world job opportunities. As EIT's Claire Hague has noted in her *BayBuzz* columns, most Hawke's Bay

students are not headed for university.

Of Hawke's Bay's Māori population, 36% are under the age of 15. And of those employed, approximately 35% of those age 15 years and over are labourers and 45% have no formal education qualifications. As we asked in an earlier *BayBuzz* article (*Choosing to be poor*), is this a group consigned to provide low wage labour forever, staffing the Bay's fast food outlets and fields?

Breaking this cycle isn't entirely up to Hawke's Bay's (or the nation's) schools. If kids come to school malnourished, otherwise unhealthy, psychologically traumatized by violence in their homes, or absent family role models who prize education, then schools are handicapped in what they can accomplish, to say the least. If local political leaders can use their convening and agenda-setting power to do more to champion the general well-being of youth, especially the youngest, perhaps that's the most we can expect of our local bodies in terms of advancing education (see Claire Hague's column in this edition).

**Job creation**

Looking at the other 'solutions' to stagnant population growth, job creation probably receives the most emphasis.

“New Zealand is facing the permanent end of population growth in many of its regions ... a process which is poorly understood ...”

DEMOGRAPHER NATALIE JACKSON

And this is rightly seen as the task of the business sector.

So what's the role of local government?

Most in the business community would seem content if our local bodies merely better facilitated the entry process for relocating businesses and the expansion of existing ones – things like simplifying the consenting process and ensuring that adequate commercial and industrial land has been set aside.

However, local government has a bigger role to play, chiefly in terms of providing and maintaining transportation infrastructure – from roads to the port and airport, facilitating broadband installation, providing industrial waste disposal – to promoting Hawke's Bay to

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*The problem is not too many old people ... it's too few young people.*

» target markets as a business destination, to providing rates deferral or other incentives to relocating businesses.

The business community itself can provide none of these enablers.

**Promising 'quality of life'**

The 'quality of life' solution to growing the Bay's population involves a significant role for local government, although hopefully in partnership with the private sector. Millions of ratepayer dollars are devoted to building and maintaining 'quality of life' amenities – museums, galleries, as well as sport and recreation facilities from stadiums to playgrounds to cycle trails. And beyond that is the challenge of protecting our environment as a major attraction – from iconic landscapes to world-class fishing rivers.

As noted above, over and above the enjoyment of our current residents, in the context of attracting migrants, there are two target audiences for this investment – the workers who are supposed to fill all those attractive new higher-paying jobs, and the folks (especially the upscale variety) looking for a retirement haven. This requires projecting Hawke's Bay effectively beyond the Bay – premium food and wine events, attracting conferences and sporting events, and of course basic tourism promotion.

So, if we do all of those things, will they come ... or stay? If they do, Hawke's Bay as a rural province will be bucking the tide. And if not, things will get mighty grim around Hawke's Bay.

**It gets worse before better**

In a key study of New Zealand population trends, Natalie Jackson, a professor of demography (Waikato) and director of the National Institute of Demographic and Population Analysis, paints a worrisome picture of rural New Zealand.

In particular, Dr Jackson, who has advised the Hastings Council on the matter, has analyzed the ageing of our population. She's looked at the trends no economic policies will soon reverse, simply because they are built into the nation's overall age profile, because of declining birth rates, greater longevity and the fact of the dominant Baby Boomer cohort working its way through life.

These trends will not change, whatever our political and business leaders decree. And they will be compounded uniquely in New Zealand – and especially non-urban regions – by a net migration loss of young people, especially in the 20-24 years



*Photo courtesy of Tim Whittaker*

cohort, but extending from age 15 to 29 years. This has created a "deep bite" in today's age structure across ages 25-39 (our "reproductive base").

Her conclusion is that rural areas of New Zealand will inevitably lose total population, especially working age population, even while the ageing (and more dependent) population increases. As she puts it: "New Zealand is facing the permanent end of population growth in many of its regions ... a process which is poorly understood and will make responding to baby boomer retirement and ageing even more difficult."

Rural areas like ours will require net inward migration just to maintain population size, let alone grow. Hawke's Bay will face two predicaments...

In Hawke's Bay, Dr Jackson estimates that we still have 10.6 people entering the work force for every 10 at exit age. That is, slightly more workers than non-workers. But this ratio will shift within 15 years, tightening labour supply and lifting costs. A problem for businesses.

At the same time, with most of Hawke's Bay's population growth over the next two decades coming from the 65+ segment, local government will face new challenges.

For one thing, ratepayers less able to foot the bill! How do local bodies increase services when an increasing proportion of the ratepayer base is living on fixed and limited incomes? At the same time, the elderly population will require more servicing of its needs – from mobility services (now provided by the Regional Council at an annual cost of approximately \$500,000) to appropriate housing, recreation and home care options – at least some of which will be ratepayer funded.

Dr Jackson notes that the problem is not too many old people ... it's too few young people (with employment). And in a general comment with special pertinence here in Hawke's Bay, she observes: "Clearly young Māori will play a significant role in New Zealand's future labour force, and attention to their specific educational, training, and social needs must be a paramount consideration."

**How does Hawke's Bay move forward then?**

First, we should sort out the roles of our local government, business and other sectors, and press ahead with all of the 'solutions' described earlier. Not to do so ensures a downward slide.

Second, we must invest in our region's key human asset – our Māori youth.

Third, we should take some advice from Dr Jackson, who offers these ABCs: 🐝

**A** **ACCEPT** that ageing is coming to a region near you.

**B** **BUFFER** in the near term – start revisiting and revising policies, most of which were developed when populations were youthful.

**C** **CELEBRATE** if you attend to A and B in a timely manner, all will be fine. But if you ignore them, there will be enormous difficulties ahead.

*[Note: To some degree, all observers are holding their breath, awaiting release of the 2011 census figures; all stats in this article reflect 2006 census.]*



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*5. Please indicate whether you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements sometimes made about reorganising our local government structure.*

##### Consolidating our various councils would ...

- Save ratepayers' money by reducing duplicate and competitive functions and bureaucracy
- Make my rates go up
- Strengthen our region's clout with central government
- Cause some local communities to lose their voice or have less identity
- Provide one voice and vision for the Bay, helping to better prioritise and focus regional priorities
- Make it easier for contractors, businesses, community groups and others who conduct activities across district lines to get their work done more efficiently
- Enable more effective recruitment of new businesses and jobs to the region
- Burden some communities with the debts of others
- Enable more effective visitor promotion
- Improve the quality of planning decisions made by local officials on issues like infrastructure and regional amenities



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# Re-writing Hawke's Bay's tourism 'software'



What will Hawke's Bay visitors want in 2030 ... how do we respond to these demands and also enhance our community?

BY ~ GEORGE HICKTON  
Chairman, Hawke's Bay Tourism

**TOURISM IS ONE OF THE FASTEST** growing industries in the world, employing millions of people. It is an incredible enabler of communities and people, and generally has the ability to leave people truly fulfilled and generally wanting more!

So where should Hawke's Bay sit with this in mind?

Visitors no longer 'consume tourism products' or 'attend tourist attractions'. Visitors of today and the future are demanding authentic experiences, wanting to understand and interact with the local people, environment and way of life. The reasons people live somewhere are often the very same reasons why people choose to visit. This is why many places around the world are starting to think of their visitors as 'temporary residents'. Natural and man-made attractions are important in the visitor experience, and increasingly so is a rich social fabric.

As a result, the experience of a destination is not merely built around iconic attractions, but also the extent to which visitors can immerse themselves in the local culture, and see and do things that are not available elsewhere. This allows destinations to differentiate

themselves not only with the 'hardware' of their place but also the 'software'.

A successful example of this is the city of Newcastle in Australia. In less than three years and with minimal budget to speak of, the city moved from an "ageing, fading industrial town – suffering from repeated earthquakes and natural

disasters and mass unemployment from the closure of its largest industries" to being voted by *Lonely Planet* as one of 2011's top 10 cities in the world to visit!

### Making the Top 10

Their budget was too limited to address any of the city's real hardware problems. Instead, Newcastle took a different tack. They "engaged the immediacy of enthusiasm and activity and stepped back from the contentious and divisive debates about what should and shouldn't happen in the long term." They started rewriting – or hacking – the software, to change not what the city is, but how it thinks and behaves. They changed the way lease agreements and contracts work to incentivise creatives and entrepreneurs to move in and stimulate a more vibrant city centre.

The Hawke's Bay region has the opportunity to look at both these long-term 'hardware' changes (e.g. infrastructure that will help to create new tourism experiences) as well as 'software' (changes – like creative ways to attract the family market through additional services and information).



Picnic in style ...



Visitors of today and the future are demanding authentic experiences.

Hawke's Bay in the future can look quite different from now. In 2030, we should expect to have doubled the number of visitors if we follow a reasonable growth path. However, for this to happen, improvements will be needed to give visitors new and unique reasons to visit.

So how about Art Deco being firmly entrenched in Hawke's Bay – so it's celebrated 365 days a year with designated precincts around the region themed not only by the architecture but by the activities, attitude, and service that the era represents. Why can't central Napier be like Santa Fe, New Mexico or Bourbon St in New Orleans – open every day and offering something truly unique for the visitor. Napier City Council has started delivering this with much applause from cruise passengers, so let's keep going!

**Venice Beach?**

Marine Parade should be a focal point for events and activities and it should have the right major attraction for families. Why can't we be like Wellington's waterfront and also provide the kind of energy you see on Venice Beach in California – market stalls, coffee stands, deck chairs, bike hire outlets – we have an idyllic climate and stunning backdrop – let's show it off.

The Hawke's Bay Trails should become the best cycling journey in New Zealand. They connect so many visitor experiences – from The National Aquarium to wineries to farmers' markets to boutique villages and farm gates.

What if our airport was a show piece for all that's the best of the Bay? So visitors can not only get a taste of their visit before they start, but can collect a bottle and morsel on the way out as well. Locals can also take a



Get over it!

piece of Hawke's Bay every time they take-off as well.

Our southern gateway in Central Hawke's Bay could soon be home to a very large new dam. What have we planned to enhance that project so visitors can be drawn to stay longer in CHB, utilising the lake and its surrounds?

Year-round events should be synonymous with Hawke's Bay. Whether it's the best place to hold secondary school sports tournaments or the biggest winery concerts, we can be the 'go to' region. We should now make it so easy to have an event in Hawke's Bay ... why wouldn't you pick us?!

Lake Waikaremoana is a unique jewel within our region and better access to it is a necessity. What other tourism services could we develop to open it up to locals and visitors?

Our Māori heritage. We have a significant opportunity to begin presenting our culture and telling our stories in a vibrant, authentic and contemporary manner.

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# Public Art

Who needs it?



*'Kaitiaki' (Hastings Courthouse) ~ Jacob Scott*



*'Karituaehenua Bridge' ~ Jacob Scott*



*'Haukumui Heretaunga' fountain ~ Jacob Scott, William Jamieson, Ricks Terstappen*

You can't eat it, drink it or play golf with it. Well, my beloved Hastings will never be the city of the Seven Hills or Venice of the South but it has been notable for the creativity of its people.

WRITER ~ ROY DUNNINGHAM      PHOTOGRAPHER ~ BILL KEARNS

*There is no reason why the functional things in towns, like buildings and utilities, can't be well designed.*

**I THINK OF SONG WRITER CANON WI** Huata, singer Philip Rhodes, theatre director Ken Keys, designer David Trubridge, artist Sandy Adsett, writer Barbara Anderson, businessman Sir James Wattie, the extraordinary Live Poets and a wonderful list of wine makers.

When I walk past the vibrant array of artworks in the CBD and in Havelock North I am reminded of this endemic creative spirit.

My greatest buzz of home-town pride came on a visit to Paris in 1999. Suspended high above the Pompidou Centre was a sculpture by Hastings boy Neil Dawson. There, alongside one of the world's greatest

faster, but it does say something about the sense of community pride and identity felt by the person who made it.

The Hastings District Council is setting a good example with the thoughtful design of projects like the Te Kahika and Karituwhenua stream bridges and the Napier Road Pumping Station. Bouquets should also go to the delightfully painted power box opposite the Opera House and the attractive mural on the old Awatoto Abattoir building (a mural with no garish colours – amazing!)

Not so good, though, are the brutally blank facades of the Queen Street wall of the Farmers and the Tennis & Squash Club

*“Elements speaks of the earth itself, our relationship with the sun, water (especially our three rivers) as a symbol of emotions, and the understanding of time and space held by the navigators of the Polynesian Triangle.”*

**LIZ EARTH**



*'Elements' - Liz Earth*

art museums, in full view of thousands of art tourists, it looked just fine.

The importance of how things look goes beyond just having a few sculptures around, though. There is no reason why the functional things in towns, like buildings and utilities, can't be well designed. I think of a Māori canoe bailer in the Hawke's Bay Museum. The simple but loving decoration on it does nothing to make it bail water

building in Whitehead Road. It may not be intentional, but the implied message they give us is that the owners don't give a toss about the sensibilities of people living nearby or passing by.

Producing art works for public places poses a special set of problems and demands upon the artists and it is interesting talking to local artists about these problems.

William Jamieson (the Clive Gateway sculpture and 'Resurgence' on the Karamu Rd – Heretaunga St corner) wonders about how public art should be selected. We agree that it is arrogant to ignore public opinion, but sometimes it takes time for people to tune in to the best work. Jamieson cites the example of Antony Gormley's 'Angel of the North' at Gateshead in England. People hated it when it was first installed in 1998, but it has since become an English icon, attracting many thousands of visitors each year. "I would love to do an 'Angel of the South'" he adds.



*William Jamieson*

My own personal opinion is that you get the best person you can to do the job and then trust them.

Jamieson is fortunate that his materials of choice, mainly steel, are appropriately robust and he is highly inventive in his exploration of their possibilities. His lattice-work structures echo Māori taniko and he laments that Jacob Scott's drinking fountain is the only work in the CBD which really acknowledges the significant Māori population of Hastings.

After much thinking, the idea for the Clive gateway came to him when driving over the bridge. "I saw the sunlight on the water and it all came to me," he said. This illustrates an advantage of having good, local people doing these jobs.

Especially valuable, says Jamieson, is the way that local artists have worked in collaboration on projects like the performance stage in Hastings, as well as public commissions outside of Hawke's Bay.

*Continued on Page 46 >>*

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No local artist surpasses Ricks Terstappen for lateral thinking and improvisation.

“My own personal opinion is that you get the best person you can to do the job and then trust them.”

ROY DUNNINGHAM

» Liz Earth, whose set of sculptures – ‘Elements’ – stands near the clock tower in the CBD, talks about the creative process. “I like specific projects,” she says, “they focus my thinking.” Even when she is doing something else like gardening, the ideas are still ticking over in the back of her mind as she works things out. As much as any of our artists, Liz Earth’s work tells stories. ‘Elements’ speaks of the earth itself, our relationship with the sun, water (especially our three rivers) as a symbol of emotions, and the understanding of time and space held by the navigators of the Polynesian Triangle. A sculptor by training and then a ceramicist, she acknowledges the need to bring in specialist tradesmen to attend to specific construction requirements.

Not all public art has to be permanent and Liz was part of a sculpture symposium organised by Keith Thorson, using recycled or waste materials such as grape-vine prunings which led to her distinctive series of ‘Nest’ installations.

No local artist surpasses Ricks Terstappen for lateral thinking and improvisation. His materials of choice are often found objects, discards and trade waste which somehow metamorphose into a sort of parallel existence to delight and intrigue us with their improbability.

“Nothing is wasted,” says Ricks. The cut-out pieces of steel from one filigree-like work are welded together in another. “I have always done this,” he says and points to an artwork made from bottle-tops that he did when he was eight years old. The assorted nature of his materials belies the intelligence behind his creations. His family of figures, north of the clock tower in Hastings, are made from the very history of Hastings: old machinery from Watties, springs from railway wagons, power poles etc.

Terstappen has produced an impressive body of works in public both within and outside of Hawke’s Bay, and the profusion of his ideas exemplifies Picasso’s dictum: “I do not search – I find.”

So, who does need public art? Well, I can’t answer that exactly. But when I see a town with good public art I think: this is a town that acknowledges the intelligence and sensibilities of its people and shows belief in its own vitality and identity.



Ricks Terstappen



'Resurgence' ~ William Jamieson, Ricks Terstappen, Jacob Scott



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# Six in the City

BY ~ JANET LUKE



**IF YOU LIVE IN THE 'WOPS' YOU'RE** lucky, as you can keep as many chooks as you wish. But for the rest of us, don't despair. Those who live cheek by jowl in urbania can still keep some feathered friends.

Generally speaking, you are allowed between six and twelve hens per property, depending on your council. Napier City Council allows six hens, whilst Hastings City Council allows 12 hens. Roosters are not allowed!

If keeping your chickens in a permanent run, you officially need to build the run 2-3 metres off the boundary and 10 metres away from a dwelling. As properties become smaller, Councils are becoming more lenient on these dimensions. The coop floor is required to be easy to clean, such as concrete. If you house your chooks in a moveable chicken tractor you can get around these regulations as the run is being moved around the lawn. Most Councils prefer people to keep chooks in a moveable run as there is less of an issue with odour and buildup of manure and flies.

As with most things, problems only occur when people do not clean their chickens' quarters out regularly or dispose of uneaten food. This only encourages vermin and smells. Poultry 'officially' are not allowed to free range on your property. Of course many chook owners let their girls out for a bit of a run around



Great pets!

in the afternoon, with the chooks putting themselves back to bed come dusk. Be responsible and make sure your chooks can't get over to the neighbours to scratch up their garden.

The secret to successful chicken keeping in town is to inform your neighbours of your intent to keep chickens and offer them some of your free range eggs on occasion. I was the first person to keep

chickens in our street, but now there are three families doing the same and other neighbours drop over food scraps or bring young visitors to pet our chooks.

## Do You Have Enough Space?

Chickens do not require a lot of space if you house them in a moveable run. A good rule of thumb is one square metre for every chicken in a run (less if you keep bantams) or three square metres per chicken in a permanent enclosure. Chickens need to be part of a flock. I recommend you keep at least three chooks together. If the unthinkable happens and you lose one, at least you still have two to keep each other company. A chicken kept by itself will be stressed, never lay and will probably die. Three to four layers will keep a family well-supplied in eggs; have 6-8 hens if you are a baker!

## Which Breed?

There are many breeds of chicken. Actually there are so many to choose from, it is all a bit confusing.

If space is in short supply in your backyard, it may be worth considering a bantam chicken. Bantams are around a third the size of a normal hen. Being cute and docile, they make great pets, especially for kids. They lay less frequently and their eggs are small, but they do eat less. When free ranging they do less damage and



*A chicken kept by itself will be stressed, never lay and will probably die.*

Feeding time



For more simple ideas on how to live more sustainably in the city read Janet's new book, *Green Urban Living* – simple steps to growing food, keeping chickens, worm farming, beekeeping and much more in New Zealand.  
New Holland Publishers:  
[www.greenurbanliving.co.nz](http://www.greenurbanliving.co.nz)



digging than larger breeds. When baking, using bantams eggs, allow one and a half eggs to one normal egg in recipes.

Bantams make great mums and will happily hatch any eggs they can find to sit on, including the occasional golf ball! They are also more susceptible to predators - for instance, crows, magpies and hawks may try and take your bantams. They can be quieter than many standard chicken breeds.

If you want the best possible egg production, limit your search to the laying breeds. I prefer Standards because of their larger eggs and reduced susceptibility to predators. And they make better gardeners.

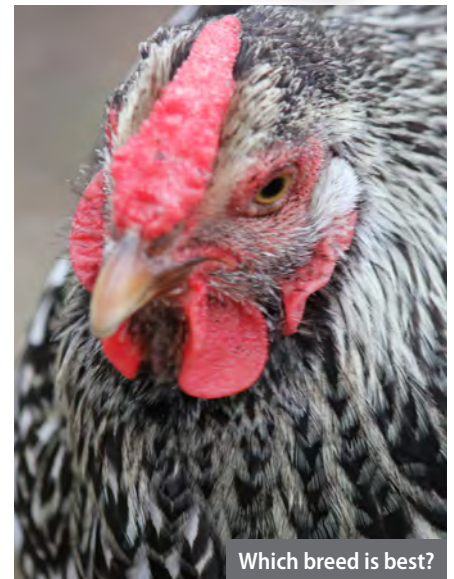
You can go for the bog standard Brown Shavers, which are the breed used in commercial farms. They lay really well for

around two years, then often start having problems such as prolapses or getting egg bound. I prefer the heritage breeds. They still lay well, are quieter than the Brown Shavers and live longer.

These are the Heritage breeds I have kept and find them good in town due to their quiet nature – Light Sussex, Barnevelder, Dorking, Rhode Island Red, Orpington, and Australorp.

Keeping a few hens in your backyard is a wonderful and easy way for us urbanites to reconnect with nature, enjoy fresh healthy eggs, have a simple way to get rid of kitchen scraps, and give our children responsibility by helping to teach them how to nurture and be gentle with small animals.

Chickens are the new black. You should keep some too! 



Which breed is best?

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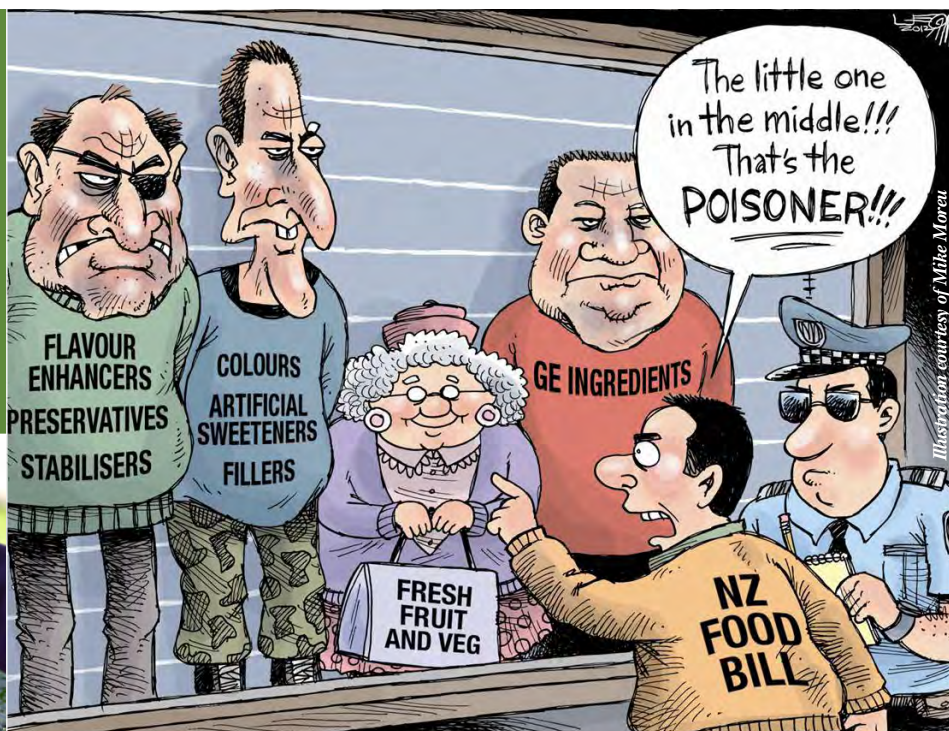
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# The Brat Kids Fight Back

BY ~ DAVID TRUBRIDGE



IN THE LAST EDITION I WROTE ABOUT the way in which we can regain control of our lives and build a strong, mutually supportive local community. I suggested how, in doing so, we can shut out the parasitic multinational businesses that care only for the profit that they extract from us. I characterised them as Brat Kids in my first article for *BayBuzz* because of the way in which they control governments for their own benefit.

To regain this control we have to ensure that as many as possible of the dollars that we spend remain within the community. That dollar in our pocket is mighty powerful, if we all work together. If nobody buys a company's product, then that company is doomed.

Of course, the big businesses are acutely aware that this is their Achilles' heel, and are fighting back. They are doing all they can to influence the law to reduce our ability to resist them. Hence the Food Bill currently before Parliament. Last year it was quietly being worked through the process, until suddenly news of its implications went viral on the internet just before Christmas.

It is inevitable in situations like this that there will be some over-excitable conspiracy theories, but I think that anybody who examines the issue carefully will have some cause for concern. To me it appears as a classic case of "Disaster Capitalism" (as described by Naomi Klein): use an issue about which there is genuine concern or fear (being poisoned by bad food) to shunt through insidious laws that are undemocratic, and which would have no hope of acceptance on their own.

Food Minister Kate Wilkinson disingenuously asks, what is all the fuss about? . . . it is only aimed at protecting us from food poisoning of one sort or another. She comes across as so-oooo concerned about us and our health, with



the added implication that if you oppose the bill you could be responsible for a child being poisoned.

If that is the case, then why were seeds for propagation originally included under the bill, which would have severely limited our home growing of vegetables? (Some people have claimed that the bill is so vague that even water could be included.) Oh, sorry, that was a mistake, Kate Wilkinson claims, admitting it was not so harmless after all . . . the seeds were "inadvertently captured" and that provision is being removed. But if the bill had remained un-noticed and slipped by, that part would have become law too. Who put it in in the first place, and for what reason?

If she is really concerned about public health, then surely there are far more important food issues that need urgent attention, such as:

- The high levels of salt, sugar, fat, and other additives in junk food causing the serious national epidemic of obesity;
- The powerful and unavoidable advertising that promotes such food and drink, especially to children;
- The ease with which dubious food is imported, invariably without being tested (Sue Kedgley says that 0.25% of food imported in to New Zealand is randomly tested, compared to 5-10% in most countries), and with the country of origin never labelled, unlike our main trading partners.
- Genetically modified foods;
- Slaughter houses and factory farms, because these are where the real health scares have come from in the recent past – mad cow disease, pig flu and melamine in milk.

But none of these issues will be addressed by the National government because they all relate to big, usually multinational, businesses making large profits out of us. In the neo-Liberal distorted worldview, ever-bigger companies pumping up economies and GDPs justifies almost any measure. So it is more in the government's interests to go after the small fry, to restrict our autonomy and force us by rule of law to use our dollars to buy from their mates, not from ours.

How can you possibly justify making rules to regulate someone who makes jam or chutney at home then sells it at a market, and not take on the infinitely more serious issues at stake?

If you are concerned about how you will be able to buy your food in the future, check out the food bill and decide for yourself. And watch out for the big seed businesses trying to stop us using the seed we collect from our plants, and coercing the law into forcing us to buy theirs. 🌱



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