

First Fifteen Change Team



BayBuzz candidate endorsements:

Wayne Bradshaw

Adele Mohi-McGoverin

Simon Nixon for council

John Roil

Sandra Hazlehurst

David Mackintosh

Tracee Te Huia

Des Ratima for mayor and council

Maxine Boag

Michelle Pyke for council

Robin Gwynn

Liz Remmerswaal

Tom Belford

Tim Tinker

Jeannette Samundsen

It's decision time for Hawke's Bay voters

By TOM BELFORD

In this edition, BayBuzz does what no media have dared to do in Hawke's Bay... endorse some local body candidates for election. We put forward a "First Fifteen Change Team" for your consideration.

Two questions immediately arise: isn't it the job of the media to remain 'objective' about such matters? And, who gives a hoot about what Baybuzz thinks anyway?!

To the first question. BayBuzz has always been a vehicle for investigating, interpreting and prodding. As editor, I've worn my 'biases' on my sleeve - our environment needs better protection; our councils need to manage our rates dollars more prudently; their decision-making needs more scrutiny and transparency; we need to 'raise the bar' for councillor

performance; and we need more innovative thinking and to act more like a region to successfully meet the biggest challenges ahead.

As we follow these issues, we inevitably watch the 'players' in action. Our issue concerns are given higher priority or are more effectively addressed by some than others. In fact, it's impossible to separate the ball from the man or woman.

Election time is when the connections must be made between issues and individual performance. Yes, I look at the candidates through the lens of the issue concerns noted above; and you will have your own lens, which might or might not have the same focus. None of us will bring "objectivity" to our candidate choices.

To the second question. My perspective on the

candidates is based upon three plus years of closely following the issues and the players as Baybuzz editor.

Attending hundreds of council meetings, hearings and issue forums. Reading thousands of pages of staff papers and reports, as well as countless submissions and independent expert material. Interacting with councillors, staff, community leaders and concerned members of the public on a daily basis.

Digesting all this across three councils (HDC, HBRC, NCC). And trying to make some sense of it all for BayBuzz readers.

I hope you might find that perspective informed and useful as you weigh the candidates over your dining table. Add it to any other information you have at hand. Draw your own conclusions, and whatever you do... VOTE!

NAPIER MAYORAL RACE:

Who's the peoples' choice?

BY KATHERINE EDMOND

Napier - a well managed city run by a responsive and trusted council and poised for growth when the upswing comes, or one with a stagnating economy and growing pockets of discontent and disenfranchisement from decision making?

It depends who you talk to. The first description, unsurprisingly, comes from sitting Mayor Barbara Arnott, who is seeking her fourth term at the helm. The second is the view of the sole challenger for the job, community worker Michelle Pyke.

Pyke undoubtedly has a tough job ahead of her.

Arnott has won the last three mayoral elections hands down with her majority rising from just over 8,000 votes in 2001 to 10,480 in 2004, and a solid 12,307 in 2007. She won't say if this is her last term as Mayor but does admit to looking forward to a future with more freedom and time to spend with family.

But that's not because her enthusiasm for the job is waning. "I genuinely enjoy being Mayor," says Arnott.

"I am standing again because the job is a privilege and I still wake up every morning and think 'yes'. I'm as enthusiastic today as I was

eight years ago."

And, on the question of whether there should be a limit to the number of terms local body politicians can serve, she has a strong view - 'it's the people's choice'.

Arnott was the first woman Mayor to be elected in the East Coast region and, while she doesn't draw attention to gender, says women 'are natural mediators and look for consensus. We are used to solving problems and mayors solve problems'.

That style has won her plenty of friends. Even those unhappy about aspects of Napier's development - and most of them aren't prepared to go on the record - are complimentary about Arnott as a person.

She's well liked and seen as a hard worker although, as one business owner put it, 'what Barbara wants to do she does and what she doesn't want to do she doesn't'.

Arnott grew up in Otago in an 'ordinary, working class family' with parents who were committed community workers.

"Dad was always busy, doing bottles drives or sand bagging for floods and my mother baked and baked and baked."

Cont pg 6.

HASTINGS MAYORAL RACE:

Economy tops to do list

BY LAWRENCE GULLERY

Public meetings, radio debates and impromptu appearances at events are on all the cards for the candidates looking to be mayor of Hastings for the next three years.

Voters have four choices this time around, including incumbent Lawrence Yule, 2007 challengers Simon Nixon and Peter Nee Harland both from Havelock North and newcomer, candidate Des Ratima from Whakatu.

Mr Yule was nominated by well-known Hawke's Bay businessmen Kevin Atkinson and John Buck but stopped short of declaring his list of supporters who might be in his election camp.

"There's a mixture of people in my camp, support from right across the board, not just from one part of the community," he said.

Mr Yule said the biggest issue facing the district was its slow economic recovery from the recession and progress towards amalgamation.

"People are finding it difficult at the moment and the council has a role to play in being pragmatic and addressing the issues the economy is facing.

"Our primary, viticulture and farming sectors, which are our key economic drivers, are finding it tough," he said.

Tourism and visitors numbers was also another area which would need work on in the next three years.

"Since we developed the Hawke's Bay Wine Country brand, we have managed to keep up with growth but we haven't pulled ahead of the rest of New Zealand.

"And that's the challenge in the future... we need to up the market efforts of Hawke's Bay to make it a place for people to come," he said.

Mr Yule said his job as Local Government New Zealand president gave him access to cabinet ministers and to the Prime Minister.

"That's of benefit to the region because I'm able to put the issues we face in front of them," he said. Simon Nixon is also keen to put the economy at the top of his campaign list and wanted to work towards removing the red tape when it comes to economic development.

Cont pg 4.

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Banking on election to bring change to the Bay

I have no idea whether it will occur, but I hope this election is about change.

In Hastings, a return to the basics.

In Napier, a renewed commitment to look after the social well-being of the community.

At the Regional Council, a wake-up call that more needs to be done – and more urgently – to protect our environment.

Change surrounds us, and the pace of change steadily quickens. Yet our Councils seem to be functioning on auto-pilot. Councils budget with a built-in assumption that their spending will grow ... an assumption no business or household can make in today's economy. Council borrowing increases steadily because there's effectively no brake on the process. Decision-making that requires urgency, like more precautionary water management, moves at glacial pace.

Slowly developing trends, like the graying and browning of the region's population, or global warming, are more noted than acted upon.

Part of the reason is that our Councils – our Councillors – have become too comfortable and set in their ways. The "same old, same old" is easy ... no heavy lifting required. Whereas change requires energy, curiosity, homework, risk, breaking molds.



TOM BELFORD
editor

Out of 37 individuals, including two mayors, currently serving on the Hastings, Napier and Regional Councils, only five are not seeking re-election. Four are standing unopposed. Of the remaining 28, sixteen have already served *at least* three terms.

Hardly a surprise then, that Councillor Wayne Bradshaw is virtually heckled by fellow Councillors when he raises the issue of three-term limits (nine years). Cries of outrage ... "it's un-democratic!" What is un-democratic are the advantages of twelve and fifteen years of incumbency.

Our Councils suffer from institutional arteriosclerosis. They're old, stiff, lethargic and fat at the waist. They get winded easily. Unfortunately, unlike with humans, the institutional condition is infectious.

That's why BayBuzz has focused primarily on challengers. In the last edition, we profiled seventeen "new faces" who are making a run at the

incumbents. If you haven't seen that **Digest**, you can find their profiles at www.baybuzz.co.nz/archives/3588.

Given my bias toward change, in this edition I naturally lean toward new faces in making recommendations for you to consider ... the **BayBuzz First Fifteen Change Team**. I've listened to these individuals discuss the issues, read all of their online materials, watched most of them "in action" in other roles, and talked to many other people about them.

On that basis, I've made some recommendations, and they are simply that ... the candidates who most impress me personally in terms of being potential change agents.

Three of the First Fifteen are "freshmen" Councillors ending their first term. Each one – Wayne Bradshaw on HDC, Maxine Boag on Napier Council, and Liz Remmerswaal on HBRC – have been virtually isolated on their respective Councils, picking up the occasional supporter here and there, but effectively marginalised. Not because their ideas are unsound; but because they run against the grain.

I am hopeful that after this election, each will enjoy more reliable support.

With respect to the other twelve candidates

constituting the First Fifteen, I tended to bow to the realities of incumbent advantage, and usually made recommendations where there were "open seats" – situations where resigning Councillors (Board member in the case of DHB) have left the door of opportunity open to challengers.

Jeannette Samundsen (for DHB); Des Ratima (HDC-Heretaunga); Tracee Te Huia (HDC-Flaxmere); and Sandra Hazlehurst, John Roil and Simon Nixon (HDC-Hastings) fit the 'open-seat' category. Unfortunately, David Mackintosh (HDC-Kahuraniki) and Adele Mohi-McGoverin (HDC-Havelock) will need to beat incumbents.

Robin Gwynn and Michelle Pyke will need to take one open and one occupied at-large seat if both are to win in Napier. That leaves Tim Tinker (HBRC-Napier) and myself (HBRC-Hastings) bringing up the rear, both of us needing to claw our way in against firmly entrenched incumbents.

I've also recommended Des Ratima for Hastings Mayor. I expect Simon Nixon will get a healthy "protest" vote. But I want my vote for mayor to be an affirmative one, and I feel very positive about Des and what he stands for.

Toss these recommendations if you like, BUT VOTE! Only handfuls of votes separated some winners and losers last time.

Experience and new blood healthy choice for DHB, councils

Getting my vote is easy. If you support amalgamation, I will vote for you. As ratepayers we deserve to know where candidates stand. And for those of you who are afraid to be counted by sitting on the fence and talking of things like "shared services," you are by far Hawke's Bay's weakest link.

Speaking the obvious, the closest I've seen Napier to wearing our region's colours has been over a couple of panda bears. But I am not voting in Napier and therefore the battle there comes after the election.

Before I tell you those I am voting for and why, I must declare my interests, so that you do not think I am being paid to vote. As a director in Attn! marketing pr, I have worked on campaigns and to those candidates I wish them all good luck! For the record, if anyone had asked my help and I didn't believe in them, I would have refused the work,



ANNA LORCK
columnist

as I do have my reputation to protect, if it is still intact!

My all-round Number One is Kevin Atkinson. The reason he's the "one" is simple ... I put health first. Nothing is more important in life than you and your family's health. In my opinion looking after the health of our people, our communities and our region is a huge and important job.

With a decade of experience on the DHB, seven as chairman, Kevin's record speaks for itself. He has a proven that, no matter what, he is willing to stand up for Hawke's Bay. And as we head into this new

decade, where the challenges in health are mighty, I am in no doubt that we will have to make every health dollar count. It won't be easy, and nor should it be. But, what I am looking forward to, as I am sure many others are, is gaining back an elected DHB with the public voice that we lost some three short years ago.

Working with Kevin I'd like to see some fresh faces such as Kirsten Wise and Jeannette Samundsen coming through to learn from the more experienced board members, including Peter Dunkerley.

As a Hastings resident, I will vote Lawrence Yule for mayor. Lawrence is my pick not only because he is backing one region, but because he is prepared to lead from the front row and has the vision to build a better and brighter future for a greater Hawke's Bay. I am a firm believer that you have to learn your trade before earning or

wearing the chains, and frankly, Lawrence is up against three light-weights who have no council experience.

That said it is certainly time to inject new blood and my Hastings votes will go to John Roil, Kevin Smith, Sandra Hazelhurst and Daniel Hoskins (for representing the next generation of leaders) to work with experienced councillors Kevin Watkins and Cynthia Bowers.

And now to the Regional Council, which leaves me in a predicament because, as far as I am concerned, it is merely fighting for survival. So as a fellow feline friend, I must wish Tom "Cat" Belford well.

However, I have to remind you as a member of the fourth estate, the vigilant guardian of the rights of the ordinary citizen, that once you are a politician the line is drawn. No more cat and mouse games, for better or worse, you have entered the lion's den.

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HB Regional Council: Environment first

BY TOM BELFORD

Looking at the Napier, Hastings and Regional Councils, over the next three years, I expect most of the heavy lifting will be done at the Regional Council.

Partly because the Regional Council must repair some significant self-inflicted wounds. And partly because the biggest challenges facing Hawke's Bay will require regional perspective and leadership.

Candidates standing for election to the Regional Council (and I'm one of them) must be evaluated in that context. The Regional Council is no longer your grand-daddy's catchment board, focused on building stopbanks and killing possums ... although these programs certainly remain important.

Indeed, it's unfortunate that voters do not seem to have a very clear idea of what the Regional Council actually does. Ratepayers see their local councils *doing* "stuff" – chasing dogs, inspecting buildings, planting flowers in roundabouts, building sports parks and museums, operating libraries. Much of this happens in more urban areas and is relatively visible to many people.

ENVIRONMENT MISSION #1

The Regional Council, on the other hand, is more of a traffic cop, tending to become visible only when it's telling people (and local authorities) what they *cannot* do – dump crap into rivers, heat with polluting woodburners, use unlimited amounts of water for irrigation. Of course, no one especially likes being told what *not* to do, and so the Regional Council tries to do as little policing as possible ... some would say to the detriment of Hawke's Bay's environment.

Meantime, the "hands-on" work that the Regional Council does undertake, much of it in rural areas – advising farmers on soil erosion or restoration, tree-planting, maintaining the flood control system – tends not to be directly observed by many ratepayers.

Note that all these examples relate to the environment and the Bay's natural resources. There's a clue ... the Regional Council's #1 job is protecting the environment and ensuring wise stewardship of our water and soil.

So whatever else you might ask candidates for

the Regional Council, first and foremost you should satisfy yourself that they acknowledge that priority and can talk concretely about they have done – or will do – to meet that responsibility. Look for more than the lip service in their glowing official candidate statements.

If you are talking to a current councillor, you might ask why they were "asleep at the wheel" on issues like:

Allowing the steady, observable degrading of water quality in our rivers;

Over-allocating water takes from our rivers (and some aquifers);

Failing to prepare for meeting air quality standards first set forth seven years ago;

Stumbling along with a dysfunctional hearings committee dealing with sensitive water issues;

Operating with an outmoded regional resource management plan that the HBRC's own review warned would become an "embarrassment" to the Council;

Doing nothing about toxic contaminated sites in the region until forced to by Official Information Act disclosures.

These are all failures to protect our environment that have occurred over the past ten years that most incumbent Regional Councillors have been on the job. Were they to mishandle such responsibility in the private sector, they'd be sacked by now.

But the environment is not the Regional Council's only responsibility.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promoting the economic development of Hawke's Bay is its second key assignment. This responsibility is implemented primarily through Venture Hawke's Bay (VHB), which, serves as the region's lead economic development agency and our official tourism agency.

VHB's role is complicated by the reality that, while an operating division of the Regional Council, it must satisfy multiple – sometimes conflicting – constituencies ... the tourism sector, other local industry and trading sectors, local councils (with their differing agendas), and central government funding sources.

To say the history of VHB and its predecessors

is uninspiring would be an understatement! Indeed, probably no local government entity in the region – in its successive incarnations – has been more criticized. The Napier and Hastings Councils share some blame for the gruesome history, but for the last two years, responsibility for VHB has resided directly with the Regional Council.

Not helpful, of course, is that HBRC stewardship over the re-born VHB has coincided with the worst national and global recession in decades. Nor is it helpful that VHB has no control over air traffic or exorbitant airfares into Hawke's Bay, putting the region at a very significant disadvantage when it comes to wooing business and conference visitors and tourists.

Nevertheless, when it comes to economic development and tourism, the Regional Council must play the hand it's dealt ... and Hawke's Bay is not short of either natural or economic assets. So voters are justified in seeking explanation as to why the Regional Council has not done more to grow the Bay's prosperity.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

If issues like water stewardship and tourism promotion represent areas where the Regional Council must repair damage, what are the positive opportunities?

Here are three to consider.

Promote "clean growth" – what can the Regional Council do to encourage diversification of our local economy, attracting businesses and entrepreneurs whose work does not further stress our water and land resources ... and might have the additional advantage of paying higher incomes than much of our primary production economy?

Harness Maori wealth and participation – pending Treaty settlements will bring to our Hawke's Bay Maori community both new economic wealth and more substantial participation in regional governance, especially as that relates to natural resource management. Our Regional Council should be prepared to welcome and capitalize on this development as an opportunity.

Promote comprehensive regional planning – the single example of practical regional planning that anyone can proffer today relates

to our regional transportation scheme. That planning model must be adapted to other areas where there is a need for a regional approach. Sport financing and facilities, shared services amongst councils, and tourism marketing are just three examples of where this approach should be applied, led by Regional Council.

BAYBUZZ FIRST FIFTEEN Local Council ELECTIONS 2010

CANDIDATES

I have made my point of view crystal clear – I believe the current Regional Council has been asleep at the wheel, with detrimental environmental and economic consequences.

Unfortunately, not a single incumbent Councillor has chosen to stand down. For the needed change in energy, attitude and direction to occur, some incumbents must be retired.

Recommended for the **First Fifteen Change Team:**

Liz Remmerswaal (Hastings ward): in my opinion, the only "dyed-in-the-wool" environmentalist on the Council now; consistent in her support of the environment, not opportunistically so, like several of her fellow incumbents; a reliable protector of our precious water.



Tim Tinker (Napier ward): someone with practical knowledge of land and water issues needs to represent the Napier constituency; as an experienced hearings commissioner, he can apply his knowledge to fixing the HBRC consenting process, which he recognizes is seriously broken.



Tom Belford (Hastings ward): will carry forward his proven "outside" advocacy for HB's environment to a voting role at the Council table, insisting on integrating environment and economic growth objectives; as the only candidate with professional marketing experience, will provide leadership in promoting Hawke's Bay.



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Would-be mayors reveal campaign plans

From pg 1.

"While millions of ratepayer dollars are being spent on projects, none of these are likely to make any meaningful difference to the things that matter the most: jobs, incomes and standard of living.

"The (Hawke's Bay) airport upgrade is a joke and will do nothing to reduce the costs to the business people of Hawke's Bay or visitors," he said.

Mr Nixon said he had a strong campaign plan heading into the final weeks of voting.

"... but I do not wish to go public on the details."

He said, however, he believed the Hastings District Council needed new people who understood how the economy works, what businesses need to grow and the value of education.

"Hawke's Bay is at a crossroads and could tip into a serious decline. More people are leaving than arriving, our youngest and brightest move elsewhere for higher education," Mr Nixon said.

DES RATIMA

Mr Ratima was nominated by his wife and a friend from his church. He believes Maori are "firmly in my camp" and he can provide an option which has not been available to Maori in the past.

"I also believe that my fellow church members would support me because of the shared values we share. Many of the smaller groups like our Pacific Island and Asian people I believe would support me," he said.

Mr Ratima said the biggest issue facing Hastings is the completion of Treaty of Waitangi settlements.

"I am the only candidate who fully understands the issues of settlements and the changes and benefits that will arrive at the same time," he said.

It was important the council lead the changes

for "Maori aspirations", a view which Mr Ratima said would "get me offside with some constituents".

"... however it is a reality which will face the district. There must be collaboration, consultation and partnering in order to maximise the opportunities that the settlements will bring firstly for Maori then for the region. There is no need to be afraid. There is a need to be prepared."

Mr Ratima is no stranger to politics and has worked as chairman of the Maori/Hastings District Council Joint Committee for five years.

"In this election I am not the novice, I am going into this election knowing that I can hit the road running if required, with good experience and understanding of the requirements of the job," he said.

PETER NEE HARLAND

Mr Harland was nominated by friends and believes a wide range of people support him.

"The mayor needs to be someone with a clear sense of philosophy preferably born of good training, sound qualifications and experience.

"Just as being black does not mean that one is automatically accepted by the brothers, it is my view that the mayor should be able to listen with compassion to different interest groups without being seduced into making decisions just to maintain popularity.

"I have had a wide range of experiences and the privilege of a good education.

"While at first blush I might be seen as having a particular bias toward promoting the interests of the Maori community, in fact I see myself as bound to serve the interests of all sectors without prejudice."

Mr Harland said the council needed to be reminded as policy makers it should be accountable to the community.

"The fact that most of the electorate is not wealthy carries with it a need to exercise judgment with care," he said.

The biggest issues facing Hastings included climate change and improving the district's water quality.

"I firmly believe Hastings must take active and courageous steps to ensure the quality of its water (both on land and in the Bay) is kept to the highest possible standards," Mr Nee Harland said.

PERSONAL VIEW

I believe Hawke's Bay may only become a super council if Mr Yule is voted in for his fourth term as mayor, because the other three candidates are unlikely to pursue the idea with as much vigour.

It also appears the Napier, Wairoa, Central Hawke's Bay and Hawke's Bay Regional councils are not interested in amalgamation, adding weight to the idea it'll only progress through the first gate under Mr Yule.

Publicly the other councils might declare they want more shared services to save money, but no one has said: "we support one council for the Bay".

The Regional Council has tried to distance itself from the debate indicating its primary focus is on the environment and therefore is immune to any formation of a super council.

And one could surmise it is keen to protect its wealthy public assets portfolio from being used on such projects as a regional sports park, if it is swallowed up by amalgamation.

It's not the only issue on the table, however, as the mayoral candidates have indicated.

The slower than predicted economic recovery and the half dozen Treaty of Waitangi settlements coming to fruition over the next three to five years are also at the top of the list.

Hastings' first Maori mayor could be elected if either Mr Ratima or Mr Nee Harland were voted in.

They could be better fitted to understand the changes coming via Treaty settlement which will see Maori be a major economic player in this region for the first time.

Their entry to the election race is likely to be supported by Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated, which is about to launch a campaign to support Maori candidates standing in all councils, community boards and DHBs, from Wairoa to Wairarapa.

Mr Ratima unsuccessfully campaigned as a regional council candidate in 2007 and missed out on selection as the Maori Party's candidate for the Ikaroa-Rawhiti seat for next year's general election.

Politics is not new to Mr Ratima, the former professional soldier was number 13 on the New Zealand Alliance party list in 1999.

Mr Nee Harland is a quiet but articulate speaker and has been busy assisting hapu over Maori Land Court applications, in many cases exploring the legal status of land passed from Maori to European ownership.

But has he done enough to raise his profile since the 2007 elections to warrant being considered as a threat to Mr Yule's popularity?

Mr Nixon largely based his 2007 campaign on the expansion and redevelopment of the Hawke's Bay Airport, but this time has widened his focus.


He says the biggest issues facing Hastings are the economy, unemployment, low wages and visitor industry decline.

His job as contract producer and cameraman for the television networks keeps him up to date with current affairs, so one would say he has his finger on the pulse.

He's also a businessman and no stranger to local newspapers come election time, loudly drumming his campaign beats to editors and reporters.

The big question is, can he close in on Mr Yule's 2007 majority of just under 4000 votes?

The incumbent mayor scored 11,117 votes, Mr Nixon 7147 and Mr Nee Harland 1875 votes at the last election.



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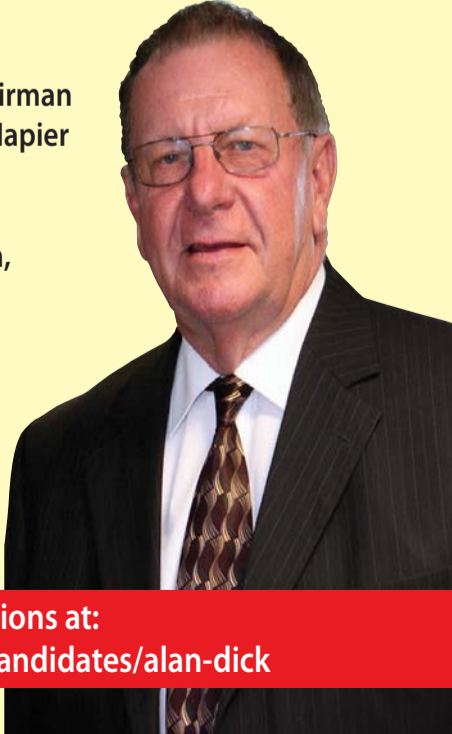
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Authorised by A. J. Dick, 3 Newbury Place, Taradale, Napier

Hastings Council: Back to basics

BY TOM BELFORD

In his official candidate statement, Lawrence Yule says: "The current economic conditions are probably the most difficult in 20 years. This requires leadership that balances prudence and vision."

Then the assertion: "Our infrastructure and Council finances are in good shape." And then the future promise: "We need to use this base to increase our population, jobs and economic diversity while protecting the environment."

Those few sentences fairly tee-up the issues Hastings District voters need to consider as they size-up candidates for this year's Council seats, as well as the mayoralty. I'd translate them as: Leadership style and focus ... Managing the basics ... and Future direction.

LEADERSHIP

Arguably, the issue of leadership is more important with respect to mayoralty candidates than to the back-benchers who will sit around the Council table. Whichever candidate wins, the mayor sets the agenda and defines the ambitions he will try to drive the Council to achieve during the term.

As Mayor Yule puts it, leadership must balance prudence and vision.

Some critics believe Lawrence Yule has been all vision – costly vision – at the expense of prudence. He bought the vision to develop Ocean Beach. He re-built an opera house. He bought Sam Kelt's vision of a sports park. His newest vision is amalgamation. These critics say his "big picture" focus has distracted attention from the day-to-day matters that most ratepayers care about ... maintaining footpaths, providing ample local playgrounds, providing clean public toilets and environmentally-safe wastewater and stormwater systems.

Further, he's pursued his vision amidst dire economic conditions, when some would say spending on basics-only and rates reduction should have been the priority.

With Lawrence Yule, the issue isn't so much leadership ability – "proven," he says on his signs – as it is his style of pursuing his objectives and the direction of his leadership. The questions that arise from his opponents – who must convince voters of their own leadership abilities – are "how" and "where to?"

For Councillor candidates, on the other hand, the "leadership" issue is *being led!* We should be looking for evidence as to their independence of thinking, their commitment to becoming informed without total reliance on Council staff, and their willingness to stand up and be counted when they disagree.

MANAGING THE BASICS

"Our infrastructure and Council finances are in good shape," asserts Mayor Yule. If that's true, he and his supporting Councillors will be duly credited by the voters.

But heaps of voters do not believe it's true. Many are worried about rising Council debt (and especially debt incurred to "catch-up" on deferred maintenance). Many fret over continuing losses at Splash Planet, the Opera House, and now the sports park. Many perceive insufficient, poor quality or poorly maintained footpaths, parks and reserves, playgrounds, and meeting facilities ... the very basics local government is supposed to provide.

For these voters, the rallying cry of "back to basics" will appeal, as will the candidates who voice that commitment. Not too many HDC incumbents can credibly do so. In particular, the Mayor's re-standing "Yes-team"

– Councillors Bowers, Watkins, Twigg, Lester, and Kimber – will have credibility issues if they suddenly seek election year redemption in 'back to basics,' generally resisting even the most modest of Councillor Bradshaw's budget reduction initiatives.

The challengers have perhaps their greatest opportunity for in-roads here. They have no past spending baggage to carry. No pet programs or patches to protect.

Given their public statements, it's hard to imagine challengers like Simon Nixon, John Roil, David Mackintosh or Adele Mohi-McGovern, if elected, not resisting the spending momentum and priorities of the current Council.

FUTURE DIRECTION

Looking to the future, Lawrence Yule says we need to "increase our population, jobs and economic diversity while protecting the environment." Not much to dispute (or chew on) on there.

At times recently, Lawrence has indicated his "big project" days are over, saying, other than seeing the sports park to whatever conclusion, his focus will be amalgamation if given another term.

However his campaign website promises more projects – "We need two more key pieces of infrastructure, a city hotel and a new swimming pool. Both should be a priority in the next five years."

Simon Nixon seems focused on increasing visitors to the Bay. He hopes that lower air fares will "make Hawke's Bay more competitive, boosting tourism," and he supports "substantial council investments in conferences, sports, and events" seeing this as the best near-term way to bolster the economy.

And Des Ratima would focus on "improving conditions for small/medium entrepreneurial businesses" and "building a healthy tourism environment based on culture, social and emotional capital" ... what he calls "feel good tourism."

Many Hastings voters care deeply about their environment and where it's headed.

Questioning the evidence of Mayor Yule's commitment, they want to know precisely what he has done in the interest of "protecting the environment" – in the three years since he reversed field on Ocean Beach. His post-2007 election conversion to the environment produced a pledge to charge ahead on sustainability initiatives; but the results have been puny. The Mayor's campaign website calls it 'quiet shifting'; 'quiet snoozing' seems more appropriate.

Still, that gives Mayor Yule a leg up on Simon Nixon, who never talks publicly about the environment, other than to acknowledge that we have "beautiful parks."

Des Ratima would "lead the charge against environmental piracy; protecting our water, our land and our beaches." He has spoken out forcefully and consistently on environmental issues ... and has walked the talk, starting in his home community of Whakatu.

FAULT LINES

These then are the "fault lines" that might determine which candidates Hastings voters will elect:

- Who displays leadership ability, style and direction that you feel most comfortable with?
- Are you more impressed by Council's 'big ticket' projects, or would you rather see Council focus on the basics of local

government and restrain spending?

- If you are a "back to the basics" voter, which candidates do you trust to move in that direction?
- If you have a passion about a particular issue – be it the environment, tourism, growth, community safety, the needs of senior citizens, coastal protection, whatever – who do you trust to advance that issue priority?
- How highly do you value independent thinking as a candidate's qualification?

BAYBUZZ FIRST FIFTEEN Local Council ELECTIONS 2010

THE CANDIDATES

We can all answer differently! However, in the Hastings Council contests, these eight candidates make the **BayBuzz First Fifteen**. Election of these candidates would dramatically change the focus, value set and complexion of the Hastings Council.

Wayne Bradshaw (Havelock ward): No HDC candidate standing for election more deserves to be re-elected; no current Councillor is more persistent in pressing for financial prudence and transparency, or in raising the question "Is there a better way?"



Adele Mohi-McGovern (Havelock ward): Havelock North needs to raise the bar on its other representation at Council; someone who will stay close to her constituency, emphasize basic services, be present, and actively participate around the Council table, where policy is made.



Simon Nixon (Hastings ward): if he loses for mayor, he will nonetheless demonstrate that he speaks for a sizable constituency; he should be raising tough questions for them at the Council table.



John Roil (Hastings ward): a solid, successful, independent-minded business voice; through his many



dealings with Council, knows what needs to be fixed; a major upgrade in Councillor quality.

Sandra Hazlehurst (Hastings ward): the champion of Hastings CBD; will bring needed marketing savvy to the Council; ready to break some molds; knows the Council "system" and would hit stride quickly.



David Mackintosh (Kahuraniki ward): committed to spending restraint and a "back to the basics" role for Council; knows the rural community well; a straight shooter; strong on the environment ... a great package.



Tracee Te Huia (Flaxmere ward): just what Flaxmere needs, a savvy and seasoned manager who can fight the "inside the Council" battles, complementing Henare O'Keefe's values and vision; her professional knowledge of health issues and community partnering brings a needed dimension to Council.



Des Ratima (Mayor and Heretaunga ward): a born leader; military service; thoroughly conversant with Council issues through his HDC/Maori Committee Chairman role; contributes tirelessly to the community at many levels; and committed to the environment. All of these qualities would make Des a superb Councillor.



But I also support Des Ratima's campaign for Mayor of Hastings.

He stands for values I believe in and has abilities I admire – he champions the social well-being of our community; he is a sophisticated, bridge-building representative of Maoridom; he has a deep, spiritual connection to the environment; he's tireless; he has big ideas that don't involve building edifices; he marries conceptual and practical thinking; and he meets the most genuine test of leadership – he inspires people to follow him. He is my First Fifteen Team Captain.

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Who will be mayor of Art Deco capital?

Cont from pg 1.

She trained as a micro-biologist, had her children while working for the World Health Organisation in London, and then relocated to Napier. Before winning the mayoralty, she ran a business in training, governance and management, mainly for the education sector.

The council Arnott heads today is a lot more cohesive than the one she inherited in her first term as Mayor, largely because of her leadership style.

Current city councillor Bill Dalton says: "Because we are not fighting there is a perception we're not doing anything and Barbara is a dictator. That is absolutely not the case. Sure Barbara is a very strong leader but you can disagree with her and win your point."

RESPONSIVE?

Michelle Pyke accuses Arnott of being out of touch with parts of the Napier constituency but the Mayor rejects the criticism, saying one of her greatest achievements is to have branded the Napier City Council as responsive and trustworthy.

She says leadership is about taking people with you.

"Whether it's streets, neighbourhoods or bigger issues, people know what should be happening and they drive what council does. You may put issues in front of them but they decide how it will play out."

Arnott says she has learned to take time to bring people along with her while also understanding that 'pleasing everybody does not necessarily lead to good decision making'.

Another achievement she cites is being instrumental in leading the Napier City Council toward tight fiscal control of its business. While acknowledging the input of councillors and staff, she says 'without any doubt, I have established a financially responsible legacy for the city'.

Certainly, the figures look pretty good. External borrowings are expected to peak at \$23 million in the 2011/12 year and then slowly diminish to around \$7 million by the end of the decade. In the current year, Napier increased rates by 1.98 per cent and predicts average rate rises of

3.56 per cent for the next three years.

Arnott says her cautious approach has seen major projects being delivered on time and on budget. Examples include the McLean Park redevelopment, Taradale Library, Bay View Sewage and the Dickens Street upgrade.

On the environmental front, she is proud of the pathways project in Napier and the \$500,000 the council has put into tree planting and landscaping both along the pathways and around the city.

Napier is sometimes accused of going it alone but Arnott is at pains to point out her own, and the council's, participation in regional initiatives such as the Heretaunga Plains Urban Growth Strategy, which she chaired, the Pettigrew Green Arena and the Regional Sports Park to which Arnott says the Napier City Council will 'consider a contribution' to the velodrome if it gets government go ahead.

But when it comes to tourism, doing its own thing is top of Arnott's agenda.

She says Napier has not had good enough results from involvement with the regional tourism body. "Napier is a tourism city – we know what our product is and we've successfully marketed it ourselves in the past. In the spirit of regionalism, we will continue to support Venture Hawke's Bay, but we're also going to have to manage more of our own marketing again in the future."

MICHELLE PYKE

It's been 12 years since Michelle Pyke threw her hat in the ring for local body politics and she says her personal situation is much better than in 1998, when she stood for the Napier City Council. "My three sons have left home, I've re-partnered and been successfully self employed since 2003." That work involves contracting to Work and Income to transition people off welfare and into employment.

Pyke's community involvement record is impressive. Over 20 years, she's been involved with many Napier social service groups ranging from the Community Law Centre - which she chaired - and the Napier Council of Social Services to the Youth Entertainment Trust and Tough Love, and she was the first welfare beneficiary to be appointed to a Lottery

distribution committee. Her current project is setting up a rape crisis service for Hawke's Bay.

Pyke (who is also standing as an at-large candidate for a council seat) says a key strength is her ability to relate to a wide range of people including many who feel disenfranchised. She's running a 'quiet bet' that none of her election hoardings in Maraenui will be damaged during the campaign.

"The kids in Maraenui know who I am - I have been welcomed into thousands of Napier homes to assist with a huge range of issues. I am able to speak for beneficiaries, sole parents, leaseholders, low income families, people with health issues, all groups who currently don't feel they have a voice in the system.

"Napier deserves a mayor who has a realistic understanding of the multi-faceted issues facing all her citizens and the capability to be proactive as well as reactive to those individual and collective needs."

Leadership is one of Pyke's campaign platforms – she says she has a proven track record in bringing together people with diverse, or opposing, points of view, and identifying where the common ground lies.

Other issues are the lack of youth facilities in Napier and the leasehold land issue. She has spent years campaigning to get rid of leases and says she is 'back to settle this – once and for all'.

"I am absolutely determined that all Napier's residential and commercial leases must be banished to the history books – and not at the over-expense of leaseholders' chequebooks."

It's not something Arnott is putting a lot of time into debating. "Leasehold land is her (Pyke's) platform – I'm not campaigning on that."

SOCIAL ISSUES

Pyke's concern about social issues in Napier, however, does resonate with others. Pilot City Trust Chair Martin Williams sees while it's not an issue for Napier alone, there is a pressing need for community development in the city.

He says community groups are struggling and need resources and a partnership approach by the council.

"I think councils, and Napier is no exception, want to be seen to be doing the work and feel threatened when the community does it itself. Rightly or wrongly for example, there is a perception that the Maraenui Urban Renewal Project has been progressed in the wrong way. The Council came riding in on a white horse saying we'll fix it for the community rather than embracing the groups that have been working in the area for 20 years.

"The new entity created by Council has brought significant benefit but a lot of those working in the community feel left out and disgruntled. They feel they could have done much better if they had been given some of the resources the council has access to."

Other issues facing Napier, according to some in the business community, are poor economic growth, too little industry, a falling population, lack of action over erosion at Westshore, and a tourism industry suffering without the iconic Marineland facility.

As one put it, there is none of the 'build it and they will come' philosophy that has driven development in Dubai - fiscal responsibility has become an aversion to taking risks.

Dalton agrees the council has been risk averse but describes that approach as 'totally appropriate' for the economic climate.

"It is to our credit that we have been fiscally conservative – it has not been the time for bold initiatives - until now. In the next term, I think the Council should open up a bit. You have to be able to change as the economy changes."

So why aren't some of the sideline critics putting their names forward for council seats or the top job?

There's cynicism, with some taking the view that incumbents are there for the income and the job security.

Says one: "Lots of business people are passionate about Napier but they are very busy and used to making decisions and getting people to carry them out quickly and effectively. The hefty reports and the endless meetings are a turn off."

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Napier: Barbara's way or the highway

BY TOM BELFORD

Everyone "in the know" says that Mayor Barbara Arnott runs a tight ship at the Napier City Council. No signs of dissension in the Councillor ranks ever appear.

Perhaps that's to be expected when the Mayor was last elected with 84% of the vote. As one local wag said to me, her popularity creates an environment where Councillors toe the line and Napier business is done "Barbara's way or the highway!"

Compounding the Mayor's personal dominance is the situation with Napier City Council's chief executive, Neil Taylor. Mr Taylor is a city fixture, having been employed by NCC since 1982, and serving as chief executive since 1992. By now Mr Taylor must have his own way of doing things, and pretty ingrained notions of what's best for the city.

Given that Councillors come and go, perhaps it's more accurate to think in terms of "Neil's way or the highway!"

DOCILITY AND LONGEVITY?

For Napier voters, the question becomes whether docility and longevity are the primary qualities they wish to reward with their ballots this year.

Historically, the Napier Council has been the scene of major contention, serious bun fights and personal vendettas. Mayor Arnott, with professional training in conflict resolution and organizational development, came into office determined to create a more civil, consensual atmosphere.

But perhaps by now the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. Some would argue that the combination of strong Mayor and imbedded chief executive at the controls over many years now has a stultifying effect. A certain amount of Councillor independence – and indeed conflict – is necessary to sharpen policy-making, shed tired baggage, test the status quo and inspire innovation.

At the completion of their present terms, excluding the three "freshmen" (Boag, Price, Dalton), the remaining eight Napier Councillors seeking re-election will have served on NCC for 75 years, averaging 9.4 years each. And of course the Mayor herself is seeking a fourth term.

Depending on your perspective, this profile is a celebration of experience or a testament to the powers of incumbency and inertia.

THE ISSUES

A famous consulting maxim reads: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" In medical circles, that translates to: "Do no harm."

And in the political context, obviously, if voters are happy with the direction of their community, why change course?

Every now and then, a political "nuisance issue" arises in Napier – one that arouses some degree of emotion and debate, but not one of such ferocity and scale that the fate of the Council (or worse, the city itself) hangs in the balance. Three such issues currently are Marineland II, beach protection at Westshore and perhaps leasehold land. Each arouses some passion and ardent advocacy, but no matter the outcome, none will cost any Councillor their job.

Personally, I believe that Napier faces some very significant infrastructure issues with respect to stormwater and wastewater investment and management (including allowing housing development where it shouldn't be), but such matters are far beyond

the radar of most voters ... until someday when they will find themselves literally swimming in the stuff.

The most significant issue that I can detect with any political traction relates to a fundamental priority judgment about which people deserve the greater focus of Napier local government – visitors or residents, and if the latter, which residents?

Some argue that Napier city government – and the "powers that be" swirling around it – are too focused on polishing the city for its visitors. And indeed tourism is important to Napier. But critics say this priority leads to a pre-occupation with such matters as whether penguins, pandas or butterflies will attract more visitors.

Or how to better ferry tourists between Ahuriri and Marine Parade. Is the city properly spiffed-up for cruise ship season, or are too many footpath signs spoiling the ambiance?

Then, once the public gardens have been tended and tourists catered to, are the ocean's threat to beachfront residents in Westshore or an unwanted development on Bluff Hill being addressed?

Meantime, Napier appears hell bent to become one of the violent assault capitals of New Zealand. Which suggests there's another side to the city that needs more than simply Police attention.

In any serious discussion with Mayor Arnott, she will note the incongruence between the decorated side of Napier that tourists experience and the economic and social deprivation that in fact characterizes many of the City's residents.

But this recognition does not appear to be matched with any significant effort on the part of her administration to address the problem.

The statistics are compelling as to the low national ranking of Napier in terms of average income level and the gross disparity in economic well-being within Napier itself, with Maraenui, Onekawa South and Marewa scoring very poorly in terms of socio-economic deprivation according to census

data.

Various community voices have attempted to draw more of NCC's attention and resources to the social and economic well-being mission of local government – Pat Magill and Martin Williams of Napier Pilot City Trust, Councillor Maxine Boag, activist Robin Gwynn, Noel Hendery, among others. And – now in this election – most visibly Michelle Pyke.

As Dr Gwynn puts it: "Three Napier suburbs have marked concentrations of people with particular comparative disadvantage.

"These suburbs need careful monitoring and thought for future planning, or they could easily become unemployment 'black spots' with high crime rates.

"To date Council has given thought to only one of the three areas, and has tended to take a managerial approach. What's needed, here and elsewhere in the city, is to work positively with locals striving to better their community at a grass roots level."

Some would say that NCC (or any local body) is not in the business of addressing fundamental economic or social deprivation. But as Martin Williams noted in the last **BayBuzz Digest**, in fact, councils have a statutory duty to do so, and must become much more committed to partnering with community groups to fulfill this responsibility.

These voices are attempting to define a significant political and social "fault line" for consideration by Napier voters ...

Are you content to beautify Marine Parade, Taradale centre, and Ahuriri, and protect Westshore and Bluff Hill, or do you think the problems in the 'black spots' of the city deserve more attention and resource?

They are testing the city's social conscience.

CANDIDATES

As we've said elsewhere in this edition, incumbents can by and large fend for themselves. And we're happy to let them do so.

With incumbents vying for eleven of Napier's twelve Council seats (only Harry Lawson is

retiring), given the advantages of incumbency, this is not a scenario conducive to change.

Not that there's much evidence that voters want change in Napier.

The two incumbents representing Taradale and the incumbent representing Onekawa-Tamatea are unopposed and, hence, already "re-elected." There's vigorous democracy at work!

That said, with several candidates articulating the need for the Napier Council to elevate its social conscience, perhaps their collective campaign message and advocacy will carry them to victory ... and the opportunity to build a "social partnership caucus" in the new Council.

BAYBUZZ FIRST FIFTEEN Local Council ELECTIONS 2010

If Napier voters want to re-set Council priorities, consider these candidates. Recommended for the **First Fifteen Change Team** are:

Maxine Boag (Nelson Park ward): a dedicated community leader, active in Grey Power, the Marenuui Community Council, and Napier Rotary; but isolated in the current Council ... needs some friends!



Robin Gwynn (At-large): former Councillor; has served as trustee of the Eastern and Central Community Trust, the Napier Community House, Radio Kidnappers, and on the Hawke's Bay Trust for the Elderly; strong advocate on health issues.







Michelle Pyke (At-large): twenty years of experience at every level of community development; skilled team-builder and communicator; hands-on knowledge of the "people issues" that need representation; would be a force to be reckoned with at the Council table.

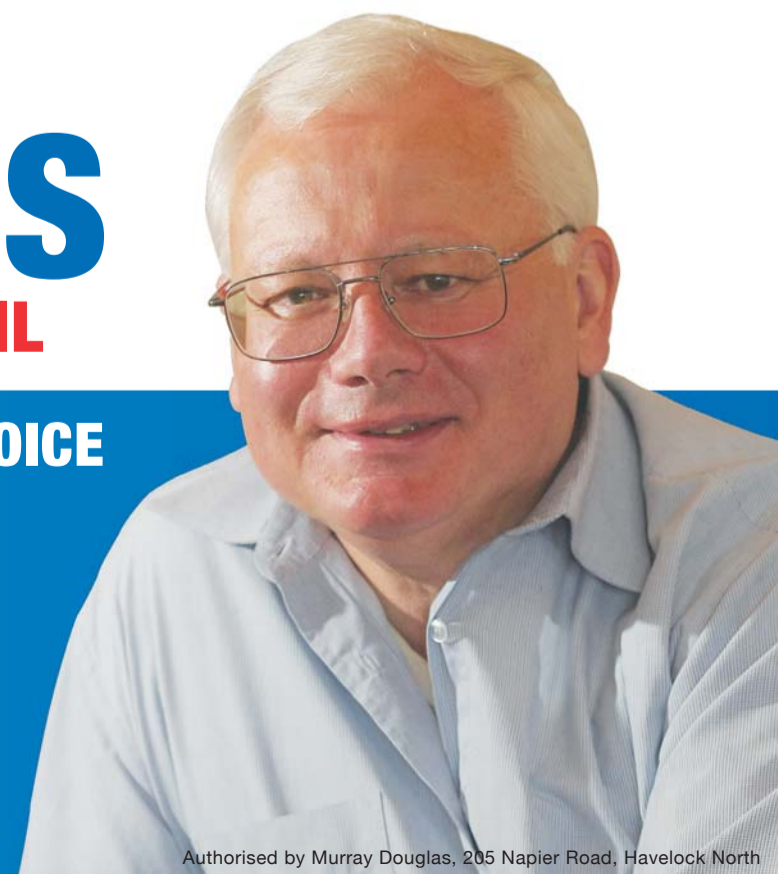


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District Health Board: 60 days a year

By TOM BELFORD

Hawke's Bay voters can hit the "re-set" button for our District Health Board this election year.

Fired by Labour's then-Health Minister David Cunliffe barely five months after being elected to office in October 2007, then eventually restored, in a manner of speaking, by National's Health Minister Tony Ryall, the seven elected DHB board members have spent the last two years waiting for their chance for public reaffirmation.

As a close observer of the DHB Board process since the "restoration," I've seen little evidence that the elected members have had much influence under the regime of DHB Chairman Sir John Anderson, who was appointed by Cunliffe to oversee the DHB at the time of the sacking.

Board meetings are entirely perfunctory, rarely lasting even an hour. Substantive presentations are rarely made, let alone closely examined or critiqued by board members in public.

Issues of any significance, which might involve a bit of controversy, are dealt with in public-excluded sessions. But for the most part, the published agendas for those closed sessions seldom suggest matters of great strategic import are being debated.

The main mission of Chairman Anderson and his Board over the past term has been whittling down the DHB's operating budget to meet the expectations of the Health Minister. Not exactly one of the most exhilarating assignments for board members.

THE ISSUES

The challenges facing the HBDHB are daunting. I had a recent conversation with Kevin Atkinson about these.

Meeting central government budget targets will still be the top priority.

To meet the mandated goal of zero deficit for 2010/11, the DHB still needs to identify and achieve about \$7.5 million in savings over the balance of the fiscal year. Atkinson believes these savings can be achieved through

smarter procurement and staff attrition, without service reductions.

"It won't be slash and burn," he says.

The major structural issue facing the DHB might be reorganization of the primary care service, consolidating three existing PHO's (the primary health care providers ... your GPs) and better linking them with both the primary and secondary care offered by the hospital.

And in terms of physical re-structuring, the long-awaited sale of Napier Hospital appears to be on the horizon. Once consummated, this will supply the funds to re-develop a proper in-patient mental health care facility at the hospital, a need championed by board member Diana Kirton. Ideally, this would occur within the framework of a comprehensive plan for long-term site development at the Hawke's Bay Hospital location.

An array of other health care goals are proposed in the DHB's "statement of intent" presented to the Health Ministry, and more will need to be done to achieve many of these outcomes.

For example, one "high visibility" target involves better access in Hawke's Bay to elective surgical services, perhaps addressed through more productive use of existing facilities – e.g., more operating theatre sessions, more days of surgery. "We need to use our technology and assets to the optimum," says Atkinson.

Two key trends stand out as having the most future impact on health care in Hawke's Bay – the rapidly growing proportion of senior citizens, and the incidence of diabetes.

Over the next three decades, Hawke's Bay's age 65+ population – already some 60% of our hospital population – will double, and at that point, about 10% of our region's population will be in their eighties.

This age profile will place huge demands on the Bay's health care delivery system at all levels, in terms of both service delivery and spending.

Says Atkinson: "The new board needs to go out and engage with key stakeholders and develop some strategies and options for how we're going to manage this peak that's coming through the system."

And speaking of care delivery, attention must also be paid to retaining and more flexibly

using the Bay's existing doctors and nurses – an aging workforce in and of itself – and recruiting additional providers.

If there is one "condition" that will most heavily burden the region in coming years, in Kevin Atkinson's judgment it will be diabetes.

"It's just as big an issue as the aging population, but we've made almost no progress on this," he argues.

"We've only identified 50% of the people in our region who have it."

Without more effective, earlier diagnosis and intervention (including preventive measures like proper nutrition), "the costs for care management for those suffering from the disease, which has such serious complications, will kill us."

"Rather than some 'big bang' approach, we need to think outside the square," says Atkinson, proposing that these growing burdens will require significant innovation in care.

For him, that includes new models of service delivery and pilot programs that involve the participation of families themselves (with respite care) and the volunteer sector, as well as greater focus on preventive measures, alternative living arrangements, and technology use.

Observes Atkinson: "There will be no silver bullet; instead a lot of trial and error. But it's got to be done."

What will not be available is significant new dollars. Consequently, says Atkinson, "Over its term, the new board will need to review all key strategies and services to determine which are delivering value for money and which should be abandoned."

All in all, I have the distinct impression that life as a DHB board member would be far more demanding under an Atkinson regime! "60 eight-hour days a year," he says.

In case he's elected, perhaps that's the best "workplan" against which candidates for the DHB should be evaluated.

THE CANDIDATES

Even in the best of governance environments, improving the health condition of our region is a formidable job that must be done in a context of scarce resources and limited local authority.

It's easy to disappoint; nearly impossible to satisfy. Under the circumstances, one

wonders why anyone would actually choose to stand for election to the Health Board!

Indeed, some months ago, in a chat with Lawrence Yule about the situation, the Mayor commented, health boards can "take a hiding for nothing."

Nevertheless, six of the current seven elected DHB board members are standing for re-election to the Board – Kevin Atkinson (the deposed former chairman), David Barry, David Davidson, Peter Dunkerley, Helen Francis, and Diana Kirton. Only incumbent David Ritchie is not standing, leaving one open seat.

Given the difficulty of beating incumbents, especially in comparatively low-profile contests like the DHB, I would be surprised if more than one challenger were elected.

BAYBUZZ FIRST FIFTEEN

Local Council ELECTIONS 2010

The challenger who impresses me most is Jeannette Samundsen (right). She offers a strong business background (and make no mistake, while human lives and welfare is at stake, health care is a big business facing tremendous financial pressures), a history of community involvement, and – as a provider of age-related residential care, respite and day care services in the region – insight into care for the elderly ... a significant advantage given the rate at which HB's population will age over the coming years.



Kevin Atkinson has been re-nominated by Mayors Yule and Arnott, and both have indicated to BayBuzz that if elected, they would like to see him appointed as Chairman (a decision Health Minister Ryall would make).

Despite his frustrations over current DHB governance practices, Atkinson remains deeply informed about the Bay's health challenges ... and passionate about tackling them.

I've had numerous discussions about these issues with him and, personally, believe he should be both re-elected and then re-appointed chairman.

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THE COLOURS of Hawke's Bay

BY TOM BELFORD

Here are some colours for local body candidates and voters to visualize as they ponder their priorities this election season -- Brown, Grey, and Green. These are the colours of Hawke's Bay's future (leaving aside Magpies' black & white for the moment).

BROWN

Brown represents our increasing proportion of Maori. Today, Maori births account for almost half of all births in Hawke's Bay. The Maori population will grow 25% by 2045. At that point, Maori will comprise nearly 30% of the Bay's overall population.

This growth has huge implications — socioeconomic, cultural and political.

A litany of statistics confirms the unfortunate reality is that many in this group will be less healthy, less educated and less economically self-sufficient than the rest of the population, placing more pressure on local government and institutions (including the DHB) to help support their basic needs. Our local bodies will need to re-think their proper role – strategies and resources – with respect to enhancing the social well-being of the entire community.

At the same time, it should be inevitable that with greater numbers, Maori will contribute more and more to the region's cultural richness and diversity. This is something to welcome and enjoy, of course. Both for its intrinsic contribution to our understanding and appreciation of one another and for more "concrete" benefits like increased cultural tourism and alternative approaches to health care.

Politically, Maori will become more engaged in local government decision-making. This will occur as a direct consequence of growth in numbers, including greater numbers of candidates for local bodies. But also because Treaty settlements in the region will further directly empower this growing population.

Back in May 2009, a Lindisfarne alumnus, the Honourable Justice Joseph Williams of the High Court, formerly Chairman of the Waitangi Tribunal, spoke at a HB Regional Council forum. He addressed the growing role of Maori in public affairs, fueled both by aspiration and sheer

population growth.

More specifically, Justice Williams stressed the need for local government to engage Maori in decision-making better than it ever has: "If we have a situation in 2020-2030 with a Maori population that is completely disconnected from local government decision-making, we have a recipe for serious problems. It is a big enough problem now ... in 15-20 years with a population in Hawke's Bay that is one-third Maori and growing, it will be simply unsustainable."

Face it ... Hawke's Bay is ambivalent about this emerging reality. Some people I talk with are joyous and enthusiastic. Some are wary but resigned. Some are downright panicked.

GREY

Grey represents our age 65+ population. This group will more than double from its present size, from about 18,000 in 2009 to 36,000 in 2045. By then, Hawke's Bay will be home to almost 14,000 citizens in their 80's ... nearly 10% of our population.

We've barely begun to realize the implications of this shift in HB's population 'centre of gravity'. And almost no local government planning has been done to prepare for it.

Commenting to BayBuzz columnist Elizabeth Sisson, Hans Christiaans of Hastings, an Age Concern board member and union organizer with members in health and elderly care, observed: "I never expected we would be in a situation like this, seeing around me what's happening, dealing with retirement homes and retirement villages, a social pension that is inadequate given the increase in the cost of living. People will have a long life of poverty ahead of them if they haven't made arrangements."

The Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy flags the issue, chiefly with respect to housing needs, but doesn't pretend to review the broader demands this population segment will place on local government (again, including DHB) in areas like health care, home care, safety, transportation, mobility, recreation and – and very importantly – socialization. Just as challenging will be the stress placed on the voluntary sector ... where will the volunteers, cash resources and organizational skills come from when the population to be served doubles?

And what about the Seniors themselves? How might their (our!) mindsets need to evolve? For example, Marie Dunningham of Grey Power said most older people want to stay in their own homes and should not be pressured to leave them. Fair enough, but will this remain a viable option if in-home support systems cannot keep pace? And on the positive side, how can willing Seniors be better harnessed as a resource for the community?

With Seniors typically voting in greater proportion than younger cohorts, presumably their demands will be felt to a greater extent by local elected officials, pushing local bodies beyond their "roads and rubbish" comfort zones of activity.

GREEN

As years go by, we place more stress, not less, on our natural resources and environment — soil, water, air quality, landscapes and protected areas, wetlands, productive land. Read the Regional Council's *State of the Environment Report, 2004-2008* and you will learn how all of these are degrading or threatened.

In response, it will become more and more important to protect our natural environment.

Our environment is invaluable for its own sake. Our commitment to it binds us to all life on the planet, grounds us ethically and links us to future generations.

But a protected environment is also crucial for the

primary production it supports as the core of our regional economy. Wise stewardship of our water and soil is an economic imperative, not just a nice thing to do to placate 'greenies'.

Moreover, a protected environment is at the heart of the region's overall ambiance, with the most obvious benefit of attracting tourists ... a further boon to the economy.

But potentially even more valuable is the role that ambiance plays in attracting smart businesses and entrepreneurs who want to enjoy better lifestyles for themselves and their employees, and can bring jobs – often higher paying ones – to the Bay ... hence, lifting our economy on an on-going basis. Often these are businesses – professional, technical, creative, knowledge-based in nature – that hold the additional benefit of not further stressing our natural resource base.

Hopefully, we will recognize as a region that "green" and "growth" are interlocked ... that's what sustainability is all about.

Brown. Grey. Green. An easy frame of reference for the biggest challenges our region will face moving into the future. Ask your council candidates to paint their vision of Hawke's Bay using these colours.

TOM BELFORD

For Regional Council



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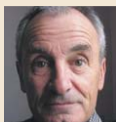
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VOTE **JOHN ROIL** FOR HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL



Authorised by J.Roil, 15 Irongate Road, Hastings

No sign of mayors who made their mark



Brendan Webb
columnist

So you fancy being mayor, do you?

Do you rather like the idea of wearing a bright red robe trimmed with ermine and a great golden chain around your neck, presiding over council meetings and formal civic occasions as the town's number one citizen? The pay's pretty good and you get a ratepayer-supplied car, a flash office and best of all, the key to the mayor's grog cabinet.

After that though, it's all downhill.

You are the face of your council, the person journalists grill about council cock-ups and funding fiascos. You can parry them with torrents of media statements that fill the columns of community papers, but eventually you succumb under torrents of ill-informed letters to the editor and relentless requests for documents under the Official Information Act.

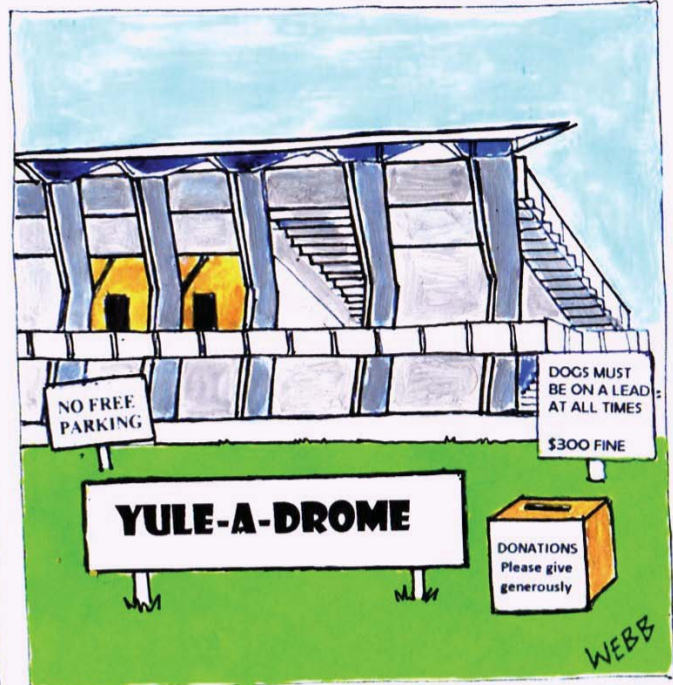
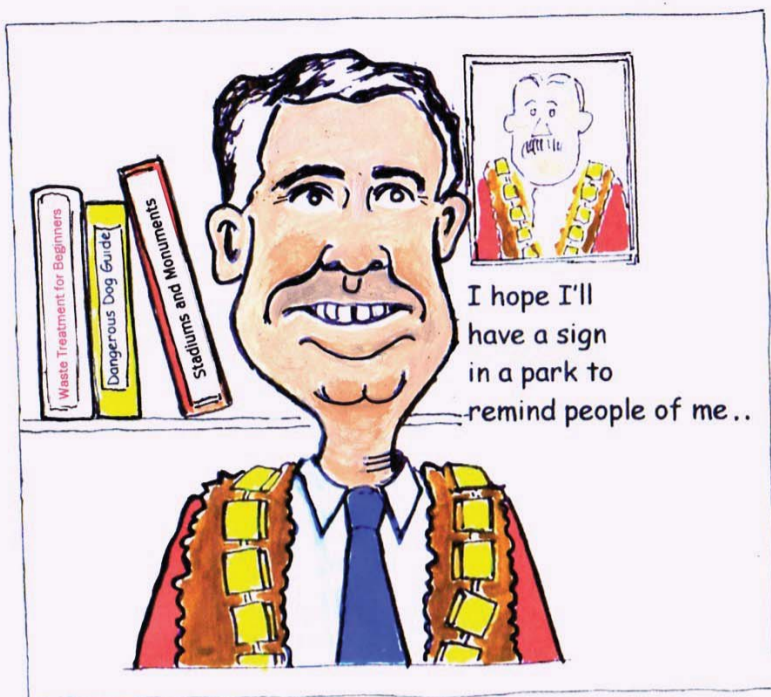
So why would you want to mayor in the first place?

Perhaps you want to be remembered by history. Have some kind of permanent reminder that you once carried that gold mayoral chain on your broad shoulders.

Don't bank on that. I doubt that the residents of the small street not far from my house, named after the first mayor of Hastings, Robert Wellwood, would know of the 23 year-old Irishman who followed the lure of the goldfields across the world to Otago, swagging around New Zealand before ending up as a Hastings sheepfarmer and proud owner of handsome new saleyards in the growing town.

Local brewer and cordial-maker George Ellis got a street named after him, as did Tasmanian-born W Y Dennett, who also followed the gold rush through Victoria and Otago, ending up enlisting in the colonial forces and seeing action during the Maori wars.

There is no trace of one of the town's most colourful early mayors, dairyman and farmer Horace Simson, described as "tall, elegantly



dressed, sporting a cane walking stick, boastful and self-confident" whose spirited oratory attracted big audiences.

Concerns over flooding helped borough councillor James Garnett into the mayoralty for a term, although he died shortly after re-election in 1913. A tiny street now bears his name.

Printer and publisher William Hart saw the town through the early years of the First World War before being narrowly ousted by the flamboyant Horace Simson, whose public speaking reputation soon lost its appeal and he almost lost his deposit when he stood for office again in 1919. Hart's name adorns two streets in Frimley.

Ebbett Park in the Raureka area of Hastings is named after solicitor and amateur ethnologist George Ebbett, who became mayor in 1919. His rare collection of late-19th century Maori carvings and artefacts, bought in Auckland two years earlier, were intended for his own garden. When his wife donated land for the park, some of the carvings formed the gateway of the park and created a scary entrance for youngsters like myself in the 1950s.

His successor, George Maddison, the youngest mayor in the country at the time and the son-in-

law of the town's first mayor, Robert Wellwood, faced the tough years of the post-war 1920s. He had the dubious distinction of having both a street and public baths named after him.

George Roach, who turned his father's drapery store into the province's largest department store, inherited the mayoralty during the Great Depression, and is the only Hastings mayor to have been ordered to vacate office -- not by irate ratepayers but by the Controller and Auditor General, over a contract for carpeting the Municipal Theatre. He was backed by his council and returned unopposed, only to face the disaster of the Hawke's Bay Earthquake in 1931, whose casualties included customers crushed in his store by falling masonry.

Roach tried to get Heretaunga Street widened in the aftermath of the quake, setting his own store further back as an example but lost the bitter battle with other retailers.

George Maddison beat him in 1933 to begin an eight-year mayoral term. His deputy, A. I. Rainbow faced the difficult years of World War 2 and got his name on a street sign; but not accountant R.D. Brown, who took the town into the early 1950s, or lawyer Ed Bate who took office in 1953.

Ron Giorgi, an amiable and popular RSA president, ran both the mayoralty and a prominent retail business from 1959 to 1974. As a young reporter, I would hover in his shop while he fitted out customers before turning his attention to the weighty matters of office.

His successor, Jim O'Connor, was the mayoral nominee for a group of builders keen to overhaul an outdated district scheme and some serious sewerage and drainage issues.

His lack of sophistication and troublesome diction at council meetings concealed a shrewd instinct for dealing with the increasing influence of council officers over council policy. He would often slip me council reports ahead of crucial meetings so that ratepayers got wind of big decisions before they were a fait accompli. I would then be publicly reprimanded by the mayor at council meetings, while the furious town clerk conducted an unsuccessful witch hunt for the source of the council "leaks".

One-time Social Credit deputy leader and teacher Jeremy Dwyer was next in the mayor's seat. He brought a cheerful but dedicated approach to the role. Polio had left him with a shortened leg, which necessitated the wearing of a heavy-soled shoe. It never diminished his cheerful attitude and he would recall, with great amusement, how groups of youngsters would listen politely to the mayor until it was time for questions ... when the



Former Hastings Mayor Jeremy Dwyer during a visit to Hastings' sister city of Guilin, in Southern China. Well remembered and respected in Guilin, there's little public recognition of him in Hastings.



This brass plaque in Cornwall Park's Chinese Osmanthus Garden is the city's token reminder of former Hastings Mayor, Jeremy Dwyer.

main topic of fascination was his large-sized shoe.

Ron Giorgi has a park in Flaxmere named after him but there is no O'Connor Avenue or Dwyer Drive on the maps of Hastings, just the long-forgotten names of British colonial rule in India.

In 1997 I spent two weeks in Hastings' Chinese sister-city of Guilin. One day, while walking past its government offices, I suddenly saw Jeremy Dwyer in a series of photographs on a large display board fronting the street, showing him planting commemorative trees during a visit to Hastings by a Guilin delegation.

But in the city he served with great dedication as mayor from 1986 until 2001, he rates a brief formal mention on a plaque amid the shrubs in the Chinese garden in Cornwall Park. But you have to look pretty hard to find it.

As for his predecessor Jim O'Connor, there's just no sign at all.

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COUNCILLOR FOR NAPIER

Authorised by Tony Jeffery, 3 Sixty-fifth Street, Napier

Timely reminder of council's core priorities

It's not rocket science. Do your core business cheaply and efficiently.

The business is to guard and improve the environment. And to preserve and increase the investments held on behalf of the community. These comprise the Port, some 1,000 leasehold properties (courtesy of the earthquake), and the vast sums of cash wrung from the ratepayer and earned from those assets over the years.

The law used to restrict Councils to a few legislated functions. In 2002 a new act, which was both good and bad.

It was good because there were some things that local government should do, but which were prohibited, and the new act fixed that. But the act also let councils off the leash. This was a mistake, as Councils can now spend money on anything a consultant or economist reports favourably on. Consequently, local government, like central government, has expanded exponentially.

Regional Councils, especially, have become vast bureaucratic machines accountable to no one but themselves, milking the ratepayer and the economy, while hiding behind an impenetrable army of spin doctors,



Tim Gilbertson
columnist

consultants and self styled experts of every shade and colour.

Furthermore, Council chief executives have their salaries set by an independent body, the Higher Salaries Committee.

Salaries are set according to a number of factors. Two of these are the amount of money the council spends and the number of staff employed.

The bigger the beast, the bigger the pay check, regardless of the bottom line. There is not an incentive for any chief executive to stick to the core functions of council and be intensely cost effective and labour efficient. In fact, quite the opposite. CEO's are all nice people, but they are also human.

The budget at HBRC has gone from \$28 million to \$50 million in three years.

The perfect illustration of the spendthrift and

uncontrolled nature of Councils occurred recently when the HB Regional Council granted \$30,000 to an organisation to provide facilities which are duplicated in five locations in the region, all of which are identical, under-utilised, and struggling financially. Brainless. [I'm not naming the organization, because in all fairness, they were perfectly entitled to seek funding. It was our job, in my opinion, to say No!]



Shortly afterwards, the HBRC voted to consider spending \$25,000 per annum removing cow pats from a small section of the council-controlled public walk ways because a few people complained about getting their Reeboks dirty.

Unbelievable.

I am pleased to report that I voted vociferously against both proposals, which

were carried by a majority of 8 to 1.

To be fair, HBRC does a lot of good work reasonably well.

And if you are a fan of the "she'll be right, what's on the telly, hey the beach looks good today" school of thought, you shouldn't worry. We could be living in Rwanda.

But if you want to stop lots of our young and talented leaving permanently for greener pastures, good governance is vital in stemming that stampede. There are fifty million reasons to insist on it.

The function of government is to serve the people. However, over time, organisations evolve to serve themselves. The civil service has the best smoko rooms and the best smokos of anyone in the world.

HBRC has the best smoko room I have seen outside of Bellamy's.

The role of the HBRC is very simple: save the environment and save money.

That's why it's there. But sometimes, like feeding the cat, remembering the wife's birthday, and refusing the seventh whiskey, the simple things are the hardest.

Expecting out of town guests?

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Councillors 'hard of hearing, long-winded'

BY TOM BELFORD

Since July, BayBuzz has worked to secure public release of the so-called 'Cowie Report' evaluating the performance of the Regional Council's Hearings Committee as it has undertaken perhaps its most critical duty – allocating our region's precious water. The report, understood to be critical, was first denied to the public; then released only in edited form. HBRC refused Official Information Act requests to release the full document.

But finally, and only after BayBuzz kept the pressure on, the full un-edited report was leaked anonymously. As you see in the adjoining box, it doesn't tell an inspiring story. Here's how the process of securing accountability unfolds ...

We first published this BayBuzz blog post on 19 July, predicting "one way or the other, this report will see the light of day."

Secrecy won't rescue hearings committee

"The Regional Council commissioned an independent review of its Hearings Committee, which was delivered in September 2009. It has languished unpublished ... The HBRC says that the report will be withheld from the public to 'protect the privacy of natural persons.'

The problem is, the 'natural persons' are Councillors! As elected officials, they have no right of privacy where their public performance is concerned. The Council, apparently believing their Hearings Committee is sick, called in a "doctor" to review the situation, paying him with ratepayer dollars for his diagnosis. Now it appears the HBRC doesn't like his evaluation.

The Hearings Committee is chaired by Councillor Christine Scott and includes Councillors Eileen von Dadelszen, Ewan McGregor and Liz Remmerswaal.

... The need to ensure the integrity of the process and the accountability of the elected Councillors who run it easily trumps any mis-applied notion of privacy. We're not talking about the Councillors' sex lives or financial affairs here; we're talking about their stewardship of a critical public function. The public has every right to judge them on an informed basis on their execution of this responsibility."

Then, in a 21 July BayBuzz post we updated ...

Regional Council capitulates ... sort of

"...the HB Regional Council decided under duress to release *much* of the independent review of its hearings process and management, mainly in respect to handling water allocation consents.

The key word is 'much' — reportedly the so-called Cowie Report includes appraisals of how individual Councillors on the Hearings Committee handled their responsibilities. BayBuzz has made an Official Information Act request for the full report. We do not regard today's partial disclosure as satisfying the public accountability to which the consent process should be held."

The Council's media release at the time assured us that everything's fixed, not to worry. But as our article continued ...

"What most assuredly is not fixed is the Council's Regional Resource Management Plan, which is faulted in the Cowie Report: *'Existing minimum flows, and particularly allocatable volume provisions in the RRMP need to be reviewed urgently. If this is not resolved by the time the consents granted start to expire in 2013, the council will look incompetent and will face very strong criticism.'*

This is one more example of a Council that has been asleep at the wheel, and is now trying desperately to catch up.

After referring to the fact that science work to provide a 'starting point' for revised minimum flows and allocation volumes is now underway — only as a result of recent public pressure, it should be noted — the report continues: *'... the RMA requires a balance be struck between environmental considerations, and the social and economic needs of the community. This is a political judgment the council will need to make taking account of all relevant considerations, not just what the science inputs recommend.'*

There the report is getting to the nub of the matter — the politics of 'balancing' various interests under the RMA. Where or how the balance should be struck will be a campaign issue for Regional Council candidates."

As predicted, the Cowie Report was leaked, and on 4 September the *DomPost's* Marty Sharpe

From the Cowie Report...

CHRISTINE SCOTT

After calling Councillor Scott "a very experienced commissioner," Cowie says: "One criticism ... is that her chairing of the decision-making process can be quite cumbersome and unnecessarily long. Concerns were also raised that the full council is not kept informed about the implications of the issues raised during hearings that are important to the business of council as a whole."

EWAN MCGREGOR

He "currently sits on most hearings, a role he appears to enjoy. He is hard of hearing and does not contribute strongly to the decision-making process.

He is satisfied with his present role, and has no desire to chair hearings."

LIZ REMMERSWAAL

"She is passionate about the environment and has much empathy with people. While these are admirable qualities they are not well-suited to decision-making on complex consent matters, where both objectivity and a somewhat dispassionate approach are necessary. Councillor Remmerswaal feels marginalised on the committee, and she does not have the full confidence of the chair".

EILEEN VON DADELSZEN

"Has professional qualifications in planning. She does not work well with the chair. She is very capable of chairing complex consent hearings, but is presently not used to do so". Also, Mrs von Dadelszen "should be encouraged to take a much more active role in chairing hearings. She has very good skills and experience in doing so, and these skills are not being utilised fully at present."

published, Councillors 'hard of hearing, long-winded' revealing the assessments of individual Councillors on the Hearings Committee.

This triggered the 5 September BayBuzz post, **Sack the Hearings Committee**, which says in part:

"Previously released sections of the report described a seriously flawed hearings process, sitting atop a seriously deficient regional resource management plan. The further material published by the *DomPost* adds important personal performance context to the earlier analysis of procedure.

And in short, the picture painted is one of a sadly dysfunctional family -- -- pettiness, lack of respect and trust, under-achievers.

The problem is, this Hearings Committee is doling out our precious water, with serious environmental and economic consequences. Reading this report, how could any consent applicant -- or the public -- possibly have confidence that the Regional Council's consenting process should be trusted?"

The three senior members of the Hearings Committee have 30 years of Regional Council experience. Yet, as the report says, their process needs overhaul, they lack personal and professional confidence in one another, they make policy on the hoof, and the water allocation aspects of their resource management plan are so inadequate the report warns that the Council risks looking 'incompetent'.

Thirty years of experience and Councillors Scott, von Dadelszen and McGregor *still* can't get it right. In the private sector, after a performance review like this, this group would be sacked.

This report raises the issue of whether Councillors have any business at all serving on hearings committees. Councillors are elected to make policy, not adjudicate benefits. It's a confusion of roles and they lack the technical expertise. In the next term, HBRC must consider the option of using only independent hearings commissioners."

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