



One Mahurangi Business Association AGM 25th September 2024 OMBA Co-Chairs' Report – Dave Stott and Bevan Morrison

As we approach the 2024 AGM, it's an appropriate time to reflect on the past year and the challenges and progress we've seen in our local business community. The economic environment has continued to test businesses in our region, yet we have also seen notable developments and advocacy efforts that have made a difference.

Economic Overview

This past year has been marked by ongoing economic challenges. Businesses within our BID have faced difficulties, with the broader economic uncertainty impacting various sectors differently. While the latest Marketview reports suggest some regional growth, it's important to recognise that this growth comes from a low base. Overall, expenditure within our BID area increased by 19.7% from July 2023 to June 2024. However, this increase has not been felt equally across all sectors. Accommodation and general retail have faced significant challenges, while grocery and liquor spending has remained stable.

Looking ahead, the forecasted lower interest rates by the end of 2024 may provide some relief, but we remain cautious about the economic outlook.

Advocacy and Infrastructure Challenges

A major focus for the association this year has been addressing the proposed installation of a new wastewater line through the town centre. Watercare's plan to use open trenching along Elizabeth and Queen Streets has raised concerns about the potential impact on local businesses. In response, One Mahurangi led a campaign to oppose the plan, including a petition that gathered over 3,500 signatures. This petition was presented at a Watercare Board meeting, where we expressed the community's concerns.

Following these efforts, Watercare has agreed to further engage with our community. We have assembled a design team to develop alternative solutions, which have been presented to Watercare's engineers in mid-August. Further discussion with Watercare is planned to finalise an acceptable solution. While some disruption is inevitable, our goal is to minimise the impact on businesses as much as possible.

Events and Community Engagement

Despite the economic challenges, the association has continued to support the local business community through various events. The Mahurangi Winter Festival of Lights and The Santa Parade were both successful in attracting visitors to the town, providing an important boost to local businesses. These events play a key role in supporting the community and driving economic activity on those days.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of our team. General Manager Murray Chapman has continued to provide strong leadership, supported by Communications and Marketing Manager Lauren Kumerich and Claire-Marie Blair. Warkworth Information Centre Manager Alison Hitchcock and our dedicated volunteers have also played crucial roles in our operations and events.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our BID members, associate members, and sponsors. In particular, we would like to thank the Templeton Group for becoming our first Platinum member and for their technical support in developing alternative designs for the Watercare project. The support of our sponsors enables us to continue our work, especially given the limitations of BID member contributions.

Advocacy and Future Planning

Advocacy remains a core part of our work. With the significant growth Warkworth is experiencing, our role in balancing business development with the preservation of the town's character is more important than ever. This year, we have been involved in several key advocacy projects:

- **Watercare Wastewater Line:** Continued engagement with Watercare and the development of alternative designs to mitigate disruption to the town centre.
- **Hill Street Intersection:** Finalised a concept design with Auckland Transport. We are now awaiting government funding to proceed with the project.
- **NOR's:** Despite our efforts, community submissions were largely disregarded by the Environment Court, with minimal changes to the NOR's.
- **Parking Strategy:** Successfully opposed Auckland Transport's proposal for paid parking in the CBD.
- **Industrial Area:** Worked with Auckland Transport to address issues in the Woodcocks Industrial Area, leading to planned improvements in footpaths and parking regulations.

Looking forward, we are collaborating with the Warkworth Area Liaison Group to develop a more coordinated planning strategy for the town. The current disconnect between various Council plans and Private Plan Changes has led to gaps in infrastructure, a situation we aim to address to avoid similar challenges in the future.

Conclusion

This year has underscored the importance of the relationships we've built with local MPs, council representatives, and community organisations. These partnerships have been key to our advocacy efforts and will continue to be vital as we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We appreciate the ongoing support from our members and look forward to continuing our work in the coming year.



Dave Stott and Bevan Morrison
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Wed 25th September
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Warkworth Bridgehouse Back Bar

All welcome. Voting rights for registered OMBA Members only
For more info visit www.onemahurangi.co.nz/agm2024/
or email laurene@onemahurangi.co.nz

