

Vince Cocurullo Your Mayor

Whangarei District Council has critical issues to face which affect our business communities. Chief among these is the awarding of council contracts to local contractors and businesses, and to purchase as much material as is available in the District to carry out these contracts.

It is important in terms of keeping economic advantages in the District, but also in terms of regional pride. We have many of the skills required for District projects and these should be utilised. SHOP Local applies especially to local bodies which have some obligation to the people and business owners they govern, to set an example.

The heart of Whangarei's shopping and business precinct will benefit greatly from the recently announced Urban Design Agenda. A well-developed CBD with adequate parking and smooth traffic flow is necessary to the development of suburban centres where business can establish and grow. Inner city development will extend out with parks.

Integral to our economic viability is the development of services, skills, and resources which are uniquely our own. We see things differently than Aucklanders or Londoners or Vancouverites. We have our own style. If this is not developed and maintained, then Whangarei will become little more than a homogenous collection of people who live in a specific location. We need to explore the range of skills and resources available and to utilise them for our economic development.

As Your Mayor my priorities are:

- To listen to and act on community concerns
- To use only LOCAL contractors
- To improve traffic flow through the District
- To protect our existing assets
- To clean up our Harbour
- To review our rating process
- To promote our District as the Best place to live, work and play

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Putting Whangarei First

Economic development leads to more economic development. Everyone loves success and as we work with local skills and resources, we will become as a by-product, unique, and the world will want to partake, both in business and tourism.

Popular places bring new residents and with these come more new skills, and the capacity for economic development.

One of the key issues to urgently address is the business of Local body governance. It should be treated as a business. Smart business operators look carefully through all their options.

The current council has set up a Property Committee to decide on which land assets might be sold to generate funding for the \$20 million shortfall for the proposed bridge across the harbour near Pohe Island.

I do not believe that selling land to build a bridge is a viable option. Especially when there are cheaper and more effective ways to ease traffic congestion.

With upcoming developments through the Urban Design Agenda, it is imperative that existing business is protected throughout the process. Parking capacity retention, and where possible, extension, as well as maximising access to businesses during any development must be factored in to development plans.

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