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## Home is where the heart is

Ali Howe in her Waihi garden, where her kowhai tree will be a daily reminder of her New Zealand citizenship.

Ex-Londoner Ali Howe received a proposal with a difference from her now-husband Baz: "Don't marry me if you're not willing to live in New Zealand."

That led to two wedding celebrations – one in the UK and one in Baz's home country. Waihi, where Baz has family ties, has been the couple's home for almost eight years, and last week Ali officially became a Kiwi, along with 14 other new citizens. "I've always felt like I belonged, and being sworn in confirmed it," says the 48-year-old. "The ceremony in the Hauraki District Council chambers was very special, with the Mayor and all the Councillors there and each new citizen being given a symbolic kowhai tree."

Ali grew up in Bangor, North Wales, but came from 22 years in London, where she was a director and co-owner of a cleaning and security business that employed 5000 people. "The whole population of Waihi was smaller than the number of people I'd looked after, so it was a huge culture shock," she recalls.

However she loves Waihi – its people, its geographical location with so many natural attractions on the doorstep, the lifestyle it offers, even the weather. So despite Christchurch being the "logical" base for the Howies' national and international tourism business, "we choose to live here, and Baz flies up and down."

Providing accommodation, Harley Davidson tours and guided fly fishing adventures are just some of the ways in which the couple promote the District. Ali has thrown herself into community events like The Nugget adventure race, both as an organiser and a sponsor; and has been enthusiastically involved with the Waihi Information Centre, the Waihi Swimming Club and the St Joseph's School community. "The hardest thing is learning to say 'No'. I am passionate about this place."

Her attitude is obviously infectious. Ali's parents, who said they'd never come to New Zealand, changed their minds and after their first visit bought a house in Waihi where they spend three months a year.

Eleven of Ali's fellow new citizens likewise live in the Waihi area – Sarah Cannell, Anne Marie Spicer, Emma Walters, Joanne and Spencer Devlin, and Miriam, Poppy and Freya Gawith who all have British roots; and Rico, Rio and Erika Serenado from the Phillipines. They were warmly welcomed together with Paeroa residents Julie Curtis from Britain, Andries De Lange from South Africa, and Su Junying from China.

## We're up for the challenge!

What do you get when you mix a senior planner, an application support officer, an information team leader, a design engineer, a community development officer, and a community assets manager?

Answer: a team of Hauraki District Council staff who came close to winning the New Zealand section of the Local Government Australasian Management Challenge recently. Vying with eight other Councils at the one-day event in Trentham, team 'Hauraki Hiko' finished a close second to Tauranga City Council.

The annual challenge of more than 20 years is run by LGMA (Local Government Managers Australia) and SOLGM (the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers) as a hands-on, real-life approach to leadership development.

Teams were given a range of tasks which tested their combined and individual management skills, such as "speed dating" other Council contingents to scope out the possibilities of local strategic alliances.

Another brief was to write a proposal for the Mayor, addressing community priorities to upgrade three local recreational areas. But with budget allocations that meant only one of these projects could be delivered immediately, how would decisions be made on where to assign money and resources?

Teams also had to demonstrate ability to respond to wider local government issues; and to deliver a five-minute pitch for a government innovation grant to facilitate a "big idea", including details of the funding needed.

Apart from one pre-challenge task, the scenarios were only revealed on the day. To make them even more challenging, several tasks had to be completed within the same tight timeframe – as



Members of team Hauraki Hiko attending the Local Government Management Challenge. Pictured from left to right are John McIver, Wendy Harris, Joel Hogan, Rob Ashley, Debbie Clarke, Varsha Shrivastav – and their swamp fox mascot and team mentor Adrian de Laborde.

in real life. One member of the Hauraki team, Joel Hogan, describes the event as an office-based Outward Bound "where you're given tasks that you may not feel confident undertaking, but you tackle things as a team, and come away with new skills and increased confidence".

Although the challenge itself is held over one day, it took several months of preparation for team members to build up their whole-Council knowledge and fuse as a working unit. They shared in briefings, brainstorming, debating, giving presentations, role-playing, report writing, and more. Team leader Wendy Harris says the practical insights and skills gained will have ongoing benefits in daily Council work.

Team member John McIver says the challenge "was an excellent way to enhance our collaboration skills, as there was no way to get through everything unless we did it together. There was a huge development in all of us in a relatively short time, and it was great fun."

Last year, Hauraki placed third in the challenge. So the excellent 2015 result sets an obvious goal for next year!

## Vehicles and sand dunes don't mix!

An attempt to take a 4WD on to Whiritoa Beach via a pedestrian access way ended in trouble on Anzac Day – when the vehicle became stuck, then buried to the sills in sand.

Fortunately, Whiritoa Rural Fire Force members were able to winch it back over the walkway, averting a plan to cut vegetation so it could be pulled straight up the dunes. "The plants protect the dunes and take years to grow," says Council's Parks and Reserves Manager Steve Clark.

The outing proved expensive for the occupants of the 4WD, who have been charged for repairing damage to the walkway. Those responsible (or rather, irresponsible) were visitors to the District, but the incident is a timely reminder to everyone to keep vehicles off our beaches, says Steve.

## Help us win Ultra Fast Broadband for Hauraki

This year the government is spending up to \$360 million on improving broadband and mobile phone services in districts like ours. This is great but this funding is contestable and we have to apply for it along with other Councils.

To put in a GREAT application we need your support.

- Like us on facebook at [www.facebook.com/HaurakiUltraFastBroadband](http://www.facebook.com/HaurakiUltraFastBroadband)
- Fill out our two minute online survey online at [www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/hufb](http://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/hufb)

### What is Ultra Fast Broadband?

Ultrafast Broadband (UFB) uses a new kind of fibre optic technology unaffected by distance and most other interference.

Not so long ago few people could have envisaged the internet, let alone smart phones. In the same way this new technology will pave the way for new ideas we haven't yet dreamed of.

### For Business

- UFB levels the playing field. A massive increase in speed and reliability. A vast increase in productivity. The ability to compete with businesses based in larger cities, both within New Zealand and internationally.

### For Community

- UFB opens a world of opportunity. A more flexible work environment. Better work/life balance. Access to more tertiary providers. Smarter connections with health professionals. Better connectivity and more information. More free time.



## Have your say about Census 2018

Statistics NZ wants to hear your views about the next census and is inviting you to take part in an online discussion forum open from 30 April to 10 June 2015 via [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz).

This is the first time Statistics NZ has engaged online with the public about the content of census, and it is an important step in ensuring the 2018 Census is relevant for New Zealand.

Statistics NZ has developed a 'Preliminary view' of content for the 2018 Census based on its review process to date. The online forum will be structured around these topics, with current thinking – including proposed changes – a starting point for discussion.

Statistics NZ is encouraging people to respond to its initial recommendations, share their views and discuss issues that matter to them with other Kiwis.

The best opportunity to influence census content is to

make a formal submission, via [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz). The formal submission period will be open from 18 May until 30 June.

Statistics NZ welcomes all engagement and will listen carefully to everyone's views, but will need to find the right balance between making changes to better reflect New Zealand today and being able compare data over time. Factors such as the length and complexity of the questionnaire will also need to be considered.

Following consultation, Statistics NZ will analyse the submissions and aim to confirm final content for the 2018 Census in early 2017.

The online discussion forum will be live from Thursday 30 April to Wednesday 10 June.

People can make formal submissions online from Monday 18 May to Tuesday 30 June.

Both tools can be accessed via [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz).