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Waihi Ward Reflections

Thursday, 30 November 2017

Young leaders get together

He's not quite an endangered species, but Waihi Ward Councillor Austin Rattray isn't all that common either.

One of only a small number of elected members aged under 30 in New Zealand, he recently attended a special retreat designed to connect our most youthful decision makers. The first of its kind, the retreat was held in the Selwyn District and attended by 25 councillors from around the country. Elected to Council last year, Austin says the depth and breadth of what the Council actually does has been a real eye opener, and meeting other young councillors getting their heads around the same stuff is reassuring.

"It's (being a councillor) been a massive learning curve and I'm still learning. When I was on the other side, I never really thought about all the stuff that sits in behind something as simple as turning on the tap and filling a glass of water. Let alone the complexity of managing budgets to meet the needs of the community now, while trying to imagine what the world's going to be like in the future," he said.

Topics covered at the retreat included community engagement, the promotion of new ideas and technology, and encouraging more young people into the world of Local Government.

Austin's interest in the sector began with a desire to stay in the town he grew up in. Leaving Waihi College and studying Business Management via BOP Polytech, he didn't want to move away for work so set up an I.T solutions business instead.

"One of the reasons I started the business was to offer employment options for young people. I know first-hand how difficult it can be to find meaningful employment here."

One thing led to another and his interest soon expanded from growing his own business to growing business throughout the region.

"I got involved in a few community projects, and from there became interested in Council's role in promoting economic development to ensure a bright and prosperous future," he said.

Since his election, this has resulted in an interesting change of topic in party conversations and more understanding of Local Government among his peers.

He says not fully understanding what councillors actually do, is one of the reasons young people shy away from Local Government. Another, is the relatively low pay offered. One of the councillors on the retreat is devoting more than 40 hours a week to council work while holding down an evening job to make ends meet. It was agreed that more could be done to open the door for younger people who want to know more.

"It's not that younger people are any better or worse than their older colleagues, they simply bring a different perspective. It's all about diversity and balance - what creates a good panel for discussion effectively. Having people around the council table that reflect the different genders, ethnicities and ages that make up our communities is something we really need to work on as a sector."

Back at home, Austin says Hauraki District Councillors are incredibly supportive of having a younger person in the mix.

"It was a nice feeling to have that support as a young person going into a scary new world. I didn't know if I'd be treated equally, or perceived as 'just a youth' but this Council has impressed me with how valid they've made me feel from day one."

Looking further afield he's keen to continue the momentum started at the retreat, and a committee will be formed with a representative from each zone. In the meantime, the group has taken matters into its own youthful hands.

"We've all added each other on Facebook, so that's a good start," he says

"It's not that younger people are any better or worse than their older colleagues, they simply bring a different perspective. It's all about diversity and balance - what creates a good panel for discussion, effectively."

Waihi Ward Councillor, Austin Rattray



Stop the clock!

Holiday season processing timeframes

Building and Resource Consent

If you submit a resource or building consent after Wednesday 20 December 2017 it may take longer than usual to be processed due to the Christmas/ New Year break.

This is because under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Building Act 2004 the statutory processing clock stops over Christmas and New Year.

In other words, **the period between 20 December 2017 and 10 January 2018 is excluded from the 20 working day time-frame** we are required to process consents within.

So if you are thinking about submitting a building or resource consent it would be a good idea to get in touch with us to discuss your needs and avoid disappointments.

LIM (Land information Memorandum) Requests

There may also be delays in the processing of LIM requests between 25 December 2017 and 15 January 2018. This is due to the observation of non-statutory working days in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

If you would like a LIM request processed between now and Christmas you will need to apply for an Urgent LIM before 20 December 2017.

Note: There is an extra charge for an Urgent LIM

Working together for stronger communities

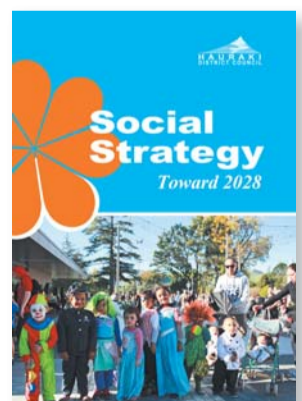
We're proud of our legacy of advocating and supporting social well-being within the district.

This year we've developed a Social Strategy that focuses on four strategic pillars:

- Connected communities
- Safe and healthy communities
- Active and accessible communities
- Creative and proud communities

Our new strategy places emphasis on doing the things we do best; such as delivering on our social infrastructure and advocating for the continued support and provision of existing social services.

To read the full strategy, go to our website www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/ policies



"With these key pillars in mind, we will strive alongside others, to work towards our vision of connected, safe, creative and valued communities for all within Hauraki."
Mayor, John Tregidga