

Thursday, 26 June 2014

# Waihi Ward Reflections

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## Need a JP? We're bringing them to YOU

Most of us need the services of a JP (Justice of the Peace) at some time – to certify copies of documents, witness a signature on a document, or perhaps complete an affidavit or declaration. Connecting with JPs in Waihi has just become easier, thanks to a weekly 'clinic' that has started in the Council's service centre and library. Each Monday, two JPs will be available to members of the public between 11.00am and 1.00pm.

The service is free, and people are welcome to drop in, although 30-minute appointments can be made at the service centre or by phoning the Council.

Until now, residents have needed to make direct individual contact with JPs, who may not be available at a given time. So while private arrangements are still an option, the clinics have been initiated by local JPs to establish a regular time and place for their services to be offered and cut the necessity to visit a JP at his or her home or workplace.

"We aim to provide easy access for the community, and at the same time ease the pressure on JPs in town who are quite heavily burdened because they are seen as being so accessible," says Hauraki JP Association Registrar Kris Purden.

The Council venue meets the criteria of being centrally located, physically accessible to all clients, and culturally inclusive. It offers an appropriate degree of privacy, space and comfort for any clients who are waiting, and facilities such as the internet and a photocopier. Importantly, the Council is also able to provide the venue at no cost, as all JPs are volunteers and do not claim any expenses.

"We are grateful for the Council's support for this project, and hope it will prove to be an asset for the Waihi community," says Kris.

Several Association members are sharing the Monday 'roster', with more likely to join in and share the work. Ian Robinson, one of the volunteers, says that as a JP he receives numerous calls at home, and he hopes the clinics will provide a convenient alternative for clients because "they will know someone is there".



Above: Mike Hayden is one of the JPs available each Monday in the Council's Waihi service centre and library.

Des Mulhern, another JP involved, has noticed increasing demand for JP assistance "as more and more things seem to require it", with tertiary education enrolment periods being especially busy. He says the JP clinics are being offered for the first time in Waihi after proving successful in other districts.

Fellow JP Mike Hayden says it will be possible to complete many requests on the spot, while others can be quite complex and may take extra time or require a referral. "We are not judges or lawyers."

However clients using the clinics can help by making simple preparations: for instance by bringing a form of photo ID in case it is needed, and bringing original documents as well as copies if the copies need to be certified. Documents should not be signed beforehand.

Further JP clinics are being planned for Paeroa and Ngatea. Phone appointments for the Waihi JP clinic can be made by calling the Council on 0800 734 834 (free call from within the District) or 07 862 8609.

## Chance to acclaim community heroes

Know of an outstanding community volunteer or a young achiever who deserves recognition? Nominations are now open for the Council's 2014 Citizen and Young Achiever Awards.

The annual Citizen Awards acknowledge the service of Hauraki residents who commit substantial time and effort – often involving personal expense and sacrifice – to benefit their community. Last year's recipients included volunteers who have made a difference through surf lifesaving, Search and Rescue, sport, scouting, and service clubs, to name just a few ways.

"Volunteers are glue that holds our community together," says Mayor John Tregidga.

The awards are presented at a gala evening which since 2006 has also celebrated the achievements of local 13 to 25-year-olds. Candidates for these honours can be nominated by schools, alternative education centres, youth groups, service organisations, or sport, recreation and culture clubs.

Nominations for both sets of awards must be received by July 18, on forms available from our offices or on our website. Don't leave it too late – our judging panel needs time to ensure that any awards given truly reflect the value of the recipients' efforts.

This year's presentations will be made in the Ngatea War Memorial Hall on September 24.

## It's time for you to 'Have your say'

The Council is now seeking submissions (written feedback) supporting or opposing any elements of the draft **Local Approved Products (legal highs) Policy** and the **draft Class 4 Gambling Venue and New Zealand Racing Board Venue Policy**. These documents can be viewed on our website [www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz](http://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz) and are available from our offices. Submissions can be made until July 28, on the forms provided with the proposed policies or simply by writing a letter to the Council. The Hearing of Submissions is scheduled for August 27 (extending to August 28 if necessary).

### Draft Class 4 Gambling Venue and New Zealand Racing Board Venue Policy

Council is currently doing its three yearly review on this policy for pokie machines and TAB venues operating within our District. In March this year, we held a forum with stakeholders such as venue operators and social service agency representatives, to speak on the local effects of gambling. A social impact assessment was then completed to guide the Council during its review.

One benefit of pokies is that some of the net proceeds provide important funding for community organisations. Gambling can also offer employment opportunities and a form of entertainment.

We need to balance these factors against the negatives. According to Ministry of Health research, gambling venues are often located in low-income areas; and there's a strong correlation between increased numbers of electronic gaming machines and the growth of problem gambling. The Ministry's findings indicate that Council policies which "restrict or reduce the density of pokies are likely to play a significant role in reducing gambling related harm".

Council is proposing some changes to the current policy, adopted in 2011. These include:

- reducing the pokie machine 'cap' from 79 down to 69, which would allow the policy to be more in line to the national average of one machine for every 259 people.
- not including provision for venues to relocate pokie machines to other sites within the District, because the present number of machines in the District (119) continues to significantly exceed the national average per head of population.

Although there are currently no stand-alone TAB venues operating in Hauraki, Councils cannot prohibit pubs from running TAB betting. So our draft policy retains a clause advising that we would approve licences for New Zealand Racing Board venues, if they're in the appropriate zones and won't introduce additional gaming machines in to the District.

### Local Approved Products (legal highs) Policy

Last month, a Parliamentary bill, passed under urgency, banned the limited range of 'legal highs' that were still on the market in New Zealand. It became illegal to sell, supply or possess the psychoactive substances which had previously been granted interim approval for sale, due to concerns about their adverse effects.

#### So - what happens now? and what say does the Council have?

The ban is not permanent. It applies until the manufacturer of each product has had it tested in New Zealand, and the substance is proven to be low risk. They can then apply to the Government to be allowed to sell that product. If approved, that product may be sold by licensed retailers as early as mid next year.

A Council working party of three Councillors (one from each ward) has continued to lead the development of a Local Approved Products Policy. This is a set of criteria provided for under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2013. It means that a Council, in consultation with its community, can restrict the location of retail premises in the District that are licensed to sell psychoactive products.

We cannot prohibit the sale of such products and we don't have power to approve or decline any licences. Rather, our policy framework will help guide the Psychoactive Substances Regulatory Authority to make locally appropriate decisions on licence applications. We particularly want to minimise harm that could result from legal high retail outlets in residential and industrial areas, close to the Hauraki Rail Trail, or near sensitive sites such as schools, early childhood centres, playgrounds and other family venues.

Our draft policy, which was adopted by the Council this week, would restrict the locations of approved psychoactive product retailers to town centre zones - fronting onto the main streets of Belmont Road or Normandy Road in Paeroa, and Seddon Street or Rosemont Road in Waihi. Such shops would not be permitted within 50 metres of any sensitive sites existing when the licence application is made, or within 750 metres of another licensed retailer.

## Waihi library top holiday spot



Where are you heading for the school holidays? Make it the Waihi Library, where our holiday programme is on every weekday between 11.00am and noon. The events are aimed for school-age children, with parents encouraged to come along and other family members are also welcome.

There's no cost, and you don't need to register or even be a library member – though kids and grown-ups will be able to join if they wish.

Monday 7 July	Origami
Tuesday 8 July	Story time and craft
Wednesday 9 July	St Johns
Thursday 10 July	Craft - recycle books
Friday 11 July	Puppet show
Monday 14 July	Magic tricks
Tuesday 15 July	Indoor games
Wednesday 16 July	The magic of soil
Thursday 17 July	Story time/Maori myths and legends
Friday 18 July	Art

## Treat for youngest library patrons

Beginning on July 22, the week after the school holidays, the librarians will host a special event for under-5s, based around stories and music. It will run every week during term-time from 11.00am until 11.30am – a period appropriate for the attention span of even the youngest participants. All preschoolers and their parents or caregivers are welcome to drop in.