

## **Social and community issues – what matters to our Tauranga City Council Mayoral and Ward Candidates?**

SocialLink<sup>1</sup> asked all mayoral and ward candidates five questions from a social and community sector perspective. They could leave out any questions they did not want to respond to.

### **Te Awanui Ward Candidates**

There are three people standing for the Te Awanui ward. Two candidates provided the following verbatim unedited answers.

#### ***Suaree Borell***

**1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?**

Marae duties, community gardens in Auckland and serving my family come to me first and foremost. I also listen and engage all kinds of people and share ideas about what contributions we can all make for an inclusive community. I also serve on the local community hall as the booking officer.

**2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?**

this is a critical time to reflect on our collective strengths and assets as a community. Building social cohesion and collaborative action at the decision making table will take time, councillors will do well to close feedback loops and keep residents and ratepayers informed so they feel part of the city's vision.

**3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?**

It should remember that they (council) are a system or institution with power, that needs to shape a shared narrative and purpose for ALL who come to anchor in this city. Te Tauranga o ngā waka, our narrative claims this in the naming of this

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<sup>1</sup> SocialLink is a registered charity managing and based at The Collective in 17th Avenue, a not-for-profit co-working space enabling collaboration. SocialLink is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty. [www.sociallink.org.nz](http://www.sociallink.org.nz)

whenua, it is first and foremost a safe place for those who need it ... tau is to be still, at peace , ranga the woven rope to bind the waka to the shore...

**4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?**

Absolutely Yes ! Because I believe in celebrating all forms of humanity, and applaud the courage it takes to claim it.

Art is a vehicle to explore mediums  
And channels that make humanity amazing - it's the curation of meaning and purpose that all humans seek.

A time to embrace the beauty and wisdom anchored to our collective existence , that although your joy not be the same as mine it is not a threat to you or me ...

**5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?**

By breathing, building and celebrating all that I am, and all that I can be, through my tenacity of purpose and strength to stand, to presence my people and ensure the elected local government of this city never forget who we are and how we contribute to the abundance and prosperity of Tauranga, and we always have.

It was our port long before anyone else's ... we knew it, we named it so and cared for it as one does a parent, this is our home.

Ahakoā uhihi te ngaru Ka whakaea anō te toka a Tirikawa. Irrespective of the waves that crash continuously Tirikawa rock remains resolute. - Kinomoerua

## ***Ashley Hillis***

**1. We have been acknowledging all the unpaid/voluntary work and support that happens in our communities during Volunteer Week June 16 – 22nd. What unpaid/voluntary work have you been involved in?**

I haven't been involved in Voluntary work for sometime, however I'm currently exploring options to get involved in the NGO and NFP space.

**2. What community strengths and assets do you see in Tauranga? How do you think the Council can support them?**

I see a lot of organizations that give freely of their time or supports, push hard for further resources and helping people navigate their way through life. I think it's important that the incoming council fosters strong relationships with these organizations, to explore ways in which they can support and assist them at a local government level. This can take many forms from using the council platform to promote the mahi they're doing, using political pressure to help these organizations leverage further central government funding or advocating for support from the wider community.

Supporting these organizations is multi-faceted and the council should explore any and all options to support the mahi in this space.

### **3. What do you think Council's role should be in supporting vulnerable community members?**

My answer is short, sharp and derived from Te Ao Māori. THESE ARE OUR PEOPLE it is totally our responsibility to ensure they get adequate support. Once again this is multi-faceted but councils efforts should be expansive and exhaustive with all reasonable provisions.

### **4. Following a petition presented to TCC recently, councillors may be asked to vote on the installation of Roadway Art [eg a crossing] celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity. Would you vote in favour of the motion? Could you briefly outline why you would vote that way?**

Unequivocally Yes, visibility for groups that have been otherwise outcast and oppressed can mean more than we will ever be able to understand. Absolutely yes.

### **5. TCC's Vision and Direction includes a Te Ao Māori approach, 'understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities, thereby bringing to life the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi'. As a councillor/mayor how do you see yourself contributing to this?**

I am constantly exploring the Mātauranga of our ancestors and looking to their wisdom for guidance in today's world. I am familiar with Te Ao Māori, I live it, I am still on my own tikanga and reo journey, but this is in practice in my everyday life.