

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

SocialLink¹ 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.

Welcome Bay General Ward

There are six people standing for the Welcome Bay ward. Two candidates provided the following verbatim unedited answers.

Hautapu Baker

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 currently sit on the board for Te Kohanga Reo o Opopoti, and support on a regular basis with the maintenance, HR, and occasionally stepping in as a helper on the floor with the kids for the day.

I play for my local rugby club, Rangataua, and you will regularly find me helping with kai prep for after matches, coaching kids' rugby teams, setting up and packing down the field and clubrooms.

I'm often supporting at the local marae for various events/occasions/tangihanga that occur.

I've spent many weekends (when working in the health and social service sector) supporting providers at various events and whanau days - on the BBQ, MCing, connecting families to primary services etc..

These are most recent examples..

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

¹ 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

Tauranga is resilient: We've seen through events like cyclone Gabrielle that neighbours open their doors to fellow neighbours in times of need, and Marae open their doors to community. I believe council has a roll to play in ensuring that people, families, community, and infrastructure are well prepared, connected and fit for purpose - so when a natural disaster hits again, Tauranga as a city and community won't experience what happened in places like Auckland during Gabrielle, and Christchurch during the 2011 earthquakes.

No one does community better than the Welcome Bay Ward: By in large there is an overwhelming sense of unity across the ward - neighbours know neighbours, kids roam the streets on their bikes and scooters and everyone keeps an eye out for them. In the warmer months you will often find people using our waterways for recreational use too. Places like Rangataua Sports club, Welcome Bay Community Centre, and the various churches within the ward are epicentres of strong, connected communities. Council can enhance this by ensuring that our harbours ecosystem is taken care of so kids can continue to pop bombs, and families can use our waterways for sustenance and recreation. Council can also ensure that public spaces (Opupu-Rotary Park, Tye Park, Waiuna Park, Welcome Bay park) and footpaths etc. are universally designed to ensure that the elderly and tangata whaikaha have equal opportunity to enjoy these spaces - if it's accessible for these communities it's accessible for everyone.

Oranga Taiao - Healthy environment: I believe the greatest assets Tauranga has is its natural environment. Great coastline, safe harbour, rich soil for cultivation, beautiful rivers, waterfalls, and parks. Council needs to take more responsibility in this space and use a joined-up approach with relevant stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups to ensure that our children, and their children inherit a healthy and abundant environment. We can achieve this through a joined up approach, targeted conservation efforts, and a fundamental change in the way we perceive our relationship with the environment - we leave with the land, not on it .

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

*be good to get a definition on vulnerable but kei te pai.

Our people are our priority. Candidates will argue that supporting "vulnerable" communities who are experiencing high deprivation, substance abuse, DV, homelessness etc. are primarily central government problems - while I agree central government has a vital part to play, council also has a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its people and communities. The most efficient way to achieve this is to build meaningful relationships with the various health and social service providers in Tauranga, and support and enhance their current services. We have several incredible providers in Tauranga, many of whom are at capacity and feeling the pinch brought on by job and budget cuts to the sector from central government. As the experts in this field, council can best serve our vulnerable communities by supporting providers who are already doing epic mahi. A new wheel doesn't need to be invented, just a better joined up approach.

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?

Tauranga' means 'safe anchorage', and that inspires my vision for a city where all people, regardless of who you are, where you come from, how you identify, or your religious beliefs, can anchor safely in our city and feel a sense of belonging and purpose.

If roadway art celebrating our Rainbow community and wider diversity groups is going to provide our people with a sense of belonging and purpose, then im all for it.

If we take the rainbow crossing for example its important to be aware of the conditions required in order for a rainbow crossing to meet code. Rainbow crossing fall under the category of curtosy crossings which Waka Kotahi require to be in 30km zones and have traffic lights which turns the project from a \$5-10k sum to potential six figures, so consideration needs to be taken on how a project of this nature s funded. Queenstown has an example of a great work around for this situation, but engagement with the LGBTQI+ community is required if determinants change.

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?

Here ae the three values that ill underpin my approach to being a councillor

1) Kanohi kitea - a face that is seen: This Maori value is critical to effective leadership, because being connected to your community means you are aware of community needs and aspirations and can champion community voice at the decision-making table.

2) Relationship centric: Wananga is a traditional method in which Maori used to reach consensus on significant decisions - to do this effectively you need to build relationship with people (as who they are, not what they are) as this builds trust, respect and reciprocal communication that enhances decision making and provide an avenue for the unheard, overlooked and ignored voice to sit on equal terms with the everyone else. this relationship centric principle also applies to the natural environment, community at place, and individuals.

3) Manaakitanga: An extension of a relationship centric approach means I will endeavour to support/lift up/nurture the mana of every individual, so even when we disagree or a decision doesn't fall in their favour, they will walk away knowing that their voice was heard, respected, and I was transparent and honest throughout the process.

Donna Hannah

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 have always sought ways to help the community and am currently engaged in extensive unpaid volunteer work. I serve on the Katch Katikati Board, the Katikati Steering Group, the Katikati St John Area Committee, the Tu Mai Digital Inclusion Group, and the Katikati Emergency Response Team. I actively volunteer in these organizations as needed, assisting with events such as the Katikati Matariki celebrations, the RSE welcome, and the Festival of Cultures.

I believe I can make a difference in Tauranga

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

Tauranga has many community assets and strengths, including community centers and local agencies that dedicate their time and energy to areas in need. I believe the council can support these efforts through advocacy, even if financial assistance isn't feasible in the near future. However, candidates can volunteer, support, and strongly advocate for their community's needs. Let's get boots on the ground and help where we can.

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

The Council can significantly support vulnerable communities by strongly advocating for their needs to the central government. Through passionate advocacy, we can be the voice and conduit for these communities, ensuring they receive the attention and resources they require.

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?

Yes, I would vote in favor of this. However, I believe that the cost shouldn't fall entirely on ratepayers. We should seek additional funding from NZTA – Waka Kotahi, who could help ensure the project is completed successfully and up to their standards.

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 believe we should actively engage in understanding and applying key Māori concepts to enhance outcomes for our communities in Te Ao Māori. We need to be open, understanding, compassionate, non-judgmental, and willing to listen without prejudice or preconceptions. This approach should extend to all people. I am always willing to learn and grow, as we all should be.

Kia ora

Ko Mauao te maunga

Ko Takitimu te waka

Ko Wairoa te awa
Ko Ngāi Te Ahi te hapū
Ko Hairini te marae
Ko Ngāti Ranginui te iwi
Ko Te Kepara Hikatangata rāua ko Sally ōku mātua
Ko Donna Hannah tōku ingoa

ngā mihi nui