

2022 Local Body Elections

Porirua City Council candidates (Mayor, Onepoto General Ward, Pairirua Māori Ward, Pāuatahanui General Ward) responses to survey related to the health of Te Awarua o Porirua harbour and catchments -

Candidates were asked three questions:

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?
2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?
3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

Mayoral candidates

ANITA BAKER

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

Our harbour is a top priority for the current Council. In the past 3 years we have: Significantly increased the investment in our wastewater infrastructure including upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, improvements in the wastewater network that takes wastewater to the plant, a proposed new tank to handle the increased capacity in heavy rain events, and investment in a roving drainage crew to identify faults in the private and public network. This combined investment reduces the incidence of overflows into our harbour and coastal environment. We have developed a 20-year riparian planting programme that will improve water quality by filtering run off in our high priority catchments. We have installed a new wetland at Elsdon that strips toxins such as coliforms and heavy metals from stormwater runoff – these natural solutions will be more and more a feature of our investment.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

Tightened up our enforcement approach so that we can control sediment issues at source with restrictions over new development – this involves a stronger bylaw and more enforcement action. We have Made changes to our proposed District Plan to ensure that the right controls are in place for land use, earthworks and new development including water-sensitive design and nature-based solutions

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

Considering an improved governance arrangement with key organisations (Ngāti Toa, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council) recognising the place of community organisations with a long history of advocacy for our harbour (including PHT and

Sustainable Coastlines). My aim is to restore the harbour and its catchments to health. I think we've made a good start.

Onepoto General Ward candidates

MIKE DUNCAN

1.What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

Sedimentation in the harbour and degraded saltmarshes are a real cause for concern and with anticipated exponential growth in housing in particular around the city. Climate change is resulting in erratic storm events resulting in river and stream flow degradation. Storm events are bringing increased flood flows and when combined with extended dry periods and extremes of low flows this creates erosion and further degradation of water quality and the harbour and catchments.

2.What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

The priorities over the past three years have been to continually up our game in monitoring of resource consents for development sites and the new streamside planting programme partnership of Council and Ngati Toa and other agencies will make a good deal of difference to the state of our streams, saltmarshes and harbour.

The work to correct erosion and create a sandy foreshore along Titahi Bay Road from Onepoto to Wi Neera Drive while planning for the new walkway/cycleway will do a lot to enhance the quality of the harbour as well. And the planned stormwater tank near Porirua rail Station will cut back if not cut out the number of overflows from the Porirua Stream pumpstation.

3.What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

I'll be a positive voice In council to see that all efforts are made to continue the good work that's already started.

DENNIS MAKALIO JNR

1.What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

My biggest concern of what our harbour is currently facing would be with the rubbish, failure of recycling, what enters our waters and disturbs it's potential for the bigger picture.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

I am a person who prefers to pick my watercress than purchase it, I am always a person who tries to educate my children on the harms of drinking tap water as opposed to filtered water so in my own personal agenda the quality of water will always be important.

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

My belief is education towards prevention for many of our more harmful issues, To encourage workshops and educational sessions such as the Para Kore services in which gift new perspectives, understandings, and a sense of self management towards our habits.

Outside of that, I believe that the community closest to the areas are the people that have the answers and should be heard and supported firstly, community led projects for prevention should always come before business.

I'll put on gumboots and get my hands dirty with or without the council.

GEOFF HAYWARD

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

- Our city name is defined by Parirua: Onepoto me Pāuatahanui. It is an intrinsic part of our city and I know it is a source of mana for Ngāti Toa.
- Both harbours (and the Bays) are all bearing the consequences of sedimentation and the discharge of untreated effluent when it rains.
- While there are solutions, we simply are not moving fast enough. Tighter rules on trade waste and resource consents that are supposed to reduce loose soil rolling into the harbour are only as good as their enforcement.
- Likewise, continued underinvestment in repairs to the public and private networks will only exacerbate the problem of I&I.
- Finally, climate change will mean additional pressure on the coastlines, especially where infrastructure like roads will be in harm's way.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

- First of all we need to keep up the pace with riparian planting in the waterways across Te Awarua o Parirua.
- Secondly we need to back soft engineering solutions on places like the Wineera to Onepoto pathway.
- Thirdly, we need strong leadership that starts with our relationship with our Te Tiriti partner and mana whenua, Ngāti Toa Rangatira. We need to share the accountability.

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

- I will advocate for a revised MOU (or stronger) with Ngāti Toa that focuses on moving to a shared model of leadership and implementation on improvements to Te Awarua.
- Continue to support the riparian planting program as well as the coastal resilience work between Wineera and Onepoto (as part of the shared pathway project)
- Continue to hold GWRC to account, we need them to be more proactive in investigating and prosecuting those responsible as an example to others who do not hold up their obligations.

Pairirua Māori Ward candidates

KYLIE WIHAPI

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments? **Poor infrastructure, high sediment, climate change, ecological risk**
2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses? **To repair poor pipes, reduce over flow and address siltation. Work faster to speed up investment in fixing pipes.**
3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected? **Support riparian planting, support local groups and work with Iwi. I would like to see each entity work together productively.**

Pāuatahanui General Ward candidates

BRENT CHING

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

During my 18+ years in Porirua City I have seen much change to the Pāuatahanui arm of the harbour, with extensive silt build up creating large sand banks which are very visible at low tide, along with the smell associated with the build-up and reduction in the natural tidal flow.

Sedimentation build up: Recently walking the dog in the Brookside development next to the stream that was flooded and running high, I could not get over the colour which was the sediment heading to the inlet. My wife and I discussed how this could be stopped and we thought of some type of sediment catch solution using a system of baffles or barriers, with various debris collection / filtration layers. Through my very limited knowledge I am not sure if this is a feasible engineering solution as the debris may include large tree branches, and of course the financial investment required. From my point of view, I need more education and understanding of the solution options.

A quick win could be educating the community to make some simple changes to their property maintenance, for example sweeping driveways and paths instead of hosing them off, and the recommendation of washing vehicles on absorbent surfaces like the front lawn.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

I would like to see the continued native planting around the streams and wetlands. I believe root systems of trees and shrubs reduce erosion by holding the soil. Planting allows the community to participate directly and see the beauty of the environment and the challenges up close, it is also a great educational message platform .

Using planting as a natural filtration process is feasible, with access to the council nurseries along with the nursery within the wetland area itself. With many families and social groups using the inlet for recreational activities it may be that we can get a 'community in action' scheme working with the council providing the safety equipment and tools to clean up and intensify planting.

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

I didn't understand the importance of the Pauatahanui Inlet as the only large estuarine wetlands left in the Lower North Island until reading your website and this messaging needs greater community exposure. Continued support for the strategy in place to address the three major agents causing the damage to the harbour environment must be priority. I would like to see additional educational resources for wider community education. Continuing to promote infrastructure in preparation for growth and maintaining what is currently in place as well maintained stormwater, wastewater and sewer systems will reduce pollution inflow into the harbour and inlet. The monitoring and research undertaken by Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust needs to have strong council support for their evidence based solutions and programs.

DAVID CHRISTENSEN

I've lived in the Pauatahanui area ever since I came to NZ in 1999.

My kids and I spent endless hours kayaking on the Inlet and my wife and daughter still regularly cycle around.

The Inlet has been a part of my life for over 20 years and I've watched all sorts of activities related to it – some of which I've supported and some I haven't.

You'll see and hear from me that I'm not running on any specific Policy Portfolio for this election.

My promise is to provide governance and guidance to council and, most importantly, show them how to be more responsive to changing needs and improve how they communicate with ratepayers.

Realistically, I'll support your organisations to the best of my ability. It may be that "3 Waters" government policies take matters completely out of council's hands – but that's a different discussion.

ROSS LEGGETT

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

Our harbour has been a top priority for the current Council. In the past 3 years we have: Planned a new holding tank near the city centre to significantly reduce overflows into the harbour during heavy rain events; invested in the wastewater network that takes wastewater to the waste water treatment plant; made upgrades to increase throughput in the wastewater treatment plant (ongoing), and invested in a roving drainage crew to identify faults in the private and public waste water networks

Our Award winning 20-year riparian planting programme now underway will also begin to improve the water quality of 280km of streams entering the harbour.

The new wetland at Elsdon is also an example of natural solutions. Another wetland is planned to complement the Eastern Porirua development.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

We have a new Trade waste bylaw and have improved our enforcement so that we can control sediment issues at source with restrictions over new development. We have also made significant changes to our proposed District Plan to ensure that the right controls are in place for land use, earthworks and new development including water-sensitive design and nature-based solutions. This is a great platform for ensuring change.

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

I believe that Porirua City Council has made real progress and is spending money on practical measures that will impact harbour health in a positive way. I will continue to ensure that Porirua City Council honours our commitment to increased spending on our waste water network and riparian planting programme as well as being vigilant in making sure that our monitoring responsibilities to support Bylaws are carried out.

Of course, PCC is not the only player. Council is also considering an improved governance arrangement with key organisations (Ngāti Toa, Wellington Water, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council) recognising Ngati Toa as Kaitiaki and the the place of community organisations with a long history of advocacy for our harbour. The aim of this would be to agree (amongst other things) a work programme to put in place the things that will actually improve the health of our harbour.

ANDREA NICOL-COULSTON

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

Pollution and sediment.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

Stop the Damage:

- Absolutely make sure that all land development run off is minimised and mitigated.
- Stop pollution (commercial and domestic) into the waterways
- Stop flooding and sewage overflows
- Get bigger teeth – power up the legal enforcement process so that there are real consequences for polluting.

Aid the healing:

- Fund more stream side planting programmes
- Support volunteer groups
- Build awareness of fresh and saltwater fish species
- Education about cockle numbers
- Support lizard habitats
- Amplify beach clean-ups

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

Like you, I am a passionate advocate for our harbour to be healthy - actually beyond healthy. I want our harbour and waterways to be pristine. And I know that we won't get a second chance at this.

There are some great programmes already underway, and there is a heartland core of motivated, caring locals.

As your councillor I can accelerate the wins that you have already achieved, and push through more with strong pragmatic negotiations, courage and tenacious determination.

NATHAN WADDLE

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

The constant pollution of the inlet from land developments and poor quality infrastructure

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

Improve investment in our pipes and waterways to help protect the harbour and inlet from unnecessary pollutants, investigate and be open to further investment in appropriate restoration of the harbour

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

Investment in infrastructure is number 1 for me, if we improve that the benefits will be felt across the city in more ways than one.

JOSH TRLIN

1. What are the challenges facing the harbour and its catchments?

Our harbour and its catchment face a range of issues due to both major pollution and climate change.

In terms of pollution, the harbour is contaminated by silt and sediment runoff accumulating in the inlet at a dramatically accelerated pace due to earthworks within the catchment. Loose, unprotected earth from residential and infrastructure developments are washed into the harbour at a rate much higher than would occur naturally, and this is exacerbated further by the increase in severe rainfall events we are experiencing due to climate change. This means that the harbour takes in more sedimentation than it is able to naturally flush out, resulting in the inlet becoming shallower, and harming the local ecology.

The harbour is also polluted by chemicals and water borne contaminants that are flushed into it by stormwater. Many of these contaminants come from vehicles using the roads close to the harbour, but others also come from other sources found within both the urban and rural environments in the catchment, such as seepage from the sewerage system, agricultural fertilizers, effluent from stock, contamination from galvanised iron roofing, and cleaning chemicals. These pollutants are dangerous to the ecology of the inlet, and also contribute to an increasing concentration of nutrients that result in an increase of algae that greatly threatens much of the wildlife living in and around it.

Rubbish also accumulates on the shore of the inlet. While this does not directly impact the water quality as significantly as silt and other contaminants, it is very harmful to the marine life in the inlet.

Finally, increasing storm surges and rising sea levels and water temperatures due to the climate crisis pose a major risk to the inlet as they are likely to exacerbate and accelerate the other issues it is facing.

2. What are your priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and its catchments, particularly its streams, wetlands and contributing watercourses?

My major priorities for protecting and enhancing the quality of the harbour and catchment are:

- Further ramp up the streamside planting project to better protect the harbour and filter out silt, sediment and other contaminants
- Increase investment in core water infrastructure to reduce leakage and overflows
- Prioritise projects with multiple environmental co-benefits, such as the Wi Neera to Onepoto Shared Pathway & Coastal Resilience Project
- Increase the number of wetlands surrounding the harbour, such as the newly developed wetland at Elsdon Park, Te Kukuwai o Toa

- Reduce / prevent avoidable erosion in the catchment through revegetation and 'soft-engineering' solutions
- Ensure water sensitive design in all developments
- Improve monitoring for compliance on resource consents, and push for central government to enable greater fines for failure to comply

In implementing all of these strategies we need to work closely in partnership with Ngāti Toa as mana whenua to ensure co-design of solutions.

3. What will you do about these challenges and priorities if you're elected?

We've made some good progress this term, especially on the streamside planting project, but we need to go further. If I am elected I will:

- Push for greater funding of harbour protection initiatives, especially the streamside planting project and restoration of natural wetlands
- Prioritise 'soft-engineering' coastal resilience work
- Continue to fight for increasing funding to core water infrastructure, and holding the new waterservices entity (to be implemented in 2024) to account on its investment levels
- Advocate for a new MOU with Ngāti Toa that focuses on moving to a shared model of leadership and implementation on our harbour protection strategy
- Advocate for the major priorities discussed above in Question 2.