

# Local Body Elections Porirua City Council 2025

The Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust, Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet and The Friends of Taupō Swamp and Catchment surveyed candidates for the roles of mayor, councillors for the Takapū/Northern General Ward, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Māori ward and Tawa Community Board. Candidates were asked the following three questions:

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour and its catchments?
2. What will you do about these challenges if you are elected?
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

The responses from candidates who replied to the survey are reproduced below in full (in the order which they were received):

## **Mayoral**

### **Anita Baker**

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour and its catchments?
  - Investment from Councils and the new Metro Water to replace leaking pipes and pump stations.
  - Growth ensuring any new subdivisions are not pushing silt into our harbour and streams and keeping up the riparian planting.
2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?
  - Advocate to keep spending on the issues above.
  - Compliance also needs to be tough to ensure people are following the rules set by PCC & GWRC
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?
  - Less talk more action, setting a strong plan that is actually followed and implemented then tested to ensure the work is achieving for the health of the harbour.
  - Reporting back every 3 months to Councils and Iwi.

### **Kathleen Filo**

#### **1. Challenges facing the Harbour**

The first challenge is making sure we have the right approach, one that deals with the root causes, not just surface fixes. The second challenge is ensuring there is enough funding to properly remedy the damage that has already been done. And third, we need to make sure that ongoing pollution is reduced and prevented, especially sedimentation from construction, stormwater contaminants, and wastewater overflows.

## 2. What I would do if elected

If I am elected, I will work closely with iwi and the partners of the Porirua Harbour Accord to tackle these challenges together.

That means holding developers to account on sediment controls and district plan rules, making sure new developments build in proper stormwater solutions, and advocating at the water entity for them to step up with real solutions for wastewater and stormwater impacts. I will also be pushing for funding that does not fall only on ratepayers, looking at central government, innovation, and partnerships, because this mahi cannot be put off.

## 3. Priorities for the Harbour Accord

The priority now is for the Accord partners to agree on a clear and coordinated pathway: what needs to happen first, how it will be funded, and how we will measure progress. That requires innovation, cost-effective solutions, and collective commitment. For iwi, this is not just a technical issue, it is about restoring the mauri of a taonga that has been damaged. The Accord gives us a chance to move beyond business as usual, and I want to see us seize that opportunity.

# **General Wards**

## **Mike Duncan (Onepoto ward)**

### 1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?

The harbour has been under attack for many years now with growth of suburbs in Porirua and northern Wellington along with the construction of Transmission Gully all contributing to sedimentation and the use of unpainted galvanised roofing along with the growing volume of vehicles on roads contributing to heavy metals in the harbour turning that around needs to be a long and determined effort by council.

### 2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?

The harbour health programme is in year 5 and landowner riparian planting agreements are in progress that will see 165,000 plants planted this year. MfE funding will end in 2027 but I'll be keen to see council pressing them to continue to help us build on the great work done so far.

The wetland in Elsdon is proving a real game-changer as will the Waitangirua wetland to be built by Kainga Ora. Riparian planting along streams feeding into the harbour has great momentum.

The Bothamley Park sewer upgrade along with the new wastewater storage tank alongside SH59 will prevent the majority of sewage spills into the harbour in heavy rainfall events. Building code changes requiring the use of Coloursteel on roofing has already made an impact on heavy metals washed into the harbour.

### 3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

The Harbour Accord with Ngāti Toa, WCC, Greater Wellington, Wellington Water and PCC was signed on Waitangi Day. These councils all committed to work together to improve outcomes for Te Awarua o Porirua. It's a commitment that has been embedded in the Water Services Delivery Plan to ensure the new water entity has a sharp focus on our harbour's health

## **Yan Zhang (Onepoto ward)**

### **1. Challenges facing the Harbour:**

- Sedimentation from land development and erosion.
- Pollution from stormwater runoff, litter, and industrial discharge.
- Habitat degradation affecting marine biodiversity.
- Climate change impacts, including sea-level rise and increased extreme weather events.

### **2. Actions if elected:**

- Strengthen stormwater management and enforce compliance with pollution controls.
- Support community-led riparian planting and erosion control projects.
- Advocate for sustainable land-use practices to reduce sedimentation.
- Partner with schools, community groups, and mana whenua to raise awareness and promote stewardship.
- Support key infrastructure projects such as the Bothamley Park stormwater and water retention initiative, which can help reduce runoff pollution and improve water quality in the harbour.

### **3. Priorities for the Harbour Accord:**

- Ensure clear, measurable goals and timelines for all signatories.
- Secure ongoing funding for restoration projects.
- Regular public reporting on progress to maintain transparency and accountability.
- Foster collaboration between council, iwi, environmental groups, and local businesses to create long-term, shared responsibility.

## **Josh Trlin (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

### **1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?**

Our harbour (and its catchment) is a nationally significant ecological area, and it faces 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 would you do about these challenges if you are elected?

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. In particular, we need to ensure that progress does not slow down on our planting, regardless of whether or not government funding is renewed in 2027 – if it isn't then council will need to either find new sources of funding, or make up the shortfall through reprioritising other projects.
- Prioritise delivering projects with multiple environmental co-benefits, such as the Wi Neera to Onepoto Shared Pathway & Coastal Resilience Project
- Increase the number of wetlands feeding into the harbour. Elsdon and Bothamley Park are a good start, but we need to look at other opportunities around the city – Whitby Lakes is an obvious starting point.
- 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 priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

The Porirua Harbour Accord is a significant and important step in the right direction, and we must ensure that it delivers on the key focus areas of improving the water quality of the harbour, restoring biodiversity, integrating sustainable water management with urban development, and addressing climate change impacts. In my view, the key priorities for the Accord and its signatories are:

- Assisting with implementation of the Porirua Whaitua Implementation Plan and Ngāti Toa Statement
- Working with the new regional water entity, currently known as "Metro Water", to ensure that the direction of travel set out by the Accord and its signatories is maintained
- Building on current work programs that are improving harbour health such as the streamside planting project
- Working together to establish, implement, and monitor new, well-resourced work programmes to further improve harbour health, such as new wetlands and coastal erosion and resilience projects in key locations – a major priority is improving coastal resilience from Wi Neera to Onepoto

- Honouring the partnership model in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

## **Moira Lawler (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

### **1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?**

We have active local volunteer groups and an important riparian planting programme. Greater Wellington's Natural Resource Plan Change 1 will be useful and Council continues to identify the harbour as a priority. The Harbour Accord is important. Despite this however, run-off and sedimentation remain a problem, and contamination from our waters infrastructure, and from the Porirua stream. A significant problem is a sense of resignation from city residents that the harbour will never be restored.

### **2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?**

Ensure monitoring and reporting on infrastructure discharge and fight to get our pipe replacements prioritised to minimise contamination. Work constructively with private landowners in the rural catchment to grow their support. Work with Ngāti Toa Rangatira, PHACCT, GOPI, Friends of Taupo Swamp, and local organisations and communities to champion the harbour and its importance local and nationally. Longer term Porirua needs to do better with its residential development, prioritising brownfields development over greenfields - this is an important priority for me.

### **3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?**

The Accord needs a clear plan of action, based on recent evidence, with strong measures and regular reporting. What accountability is there if the indicators are not improving? How will we know we are making a difference? How will local organisations be involved and residents celebrate our progress? There is an opportunity with the Accord to get Greater Wellington and Council much more effectively joined up in the consenting, monitoring, and abatement work. It still feels like there's a gap between the agencies. Committed leadership from Ngāti Toa is a real opportunity to learn from their experience. We should take the opportunity to do things differently to get a better result.

## **Ross Leggett (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

### **1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?**

- Ensuring that new developments are not exacerbating existing problems with silt and other contaminants flowing into our harbour
- Keeping up appropriate riparian planting around the harbour edge and in vulnerable catchments to help ameliorate the above
- Ongoing and appropriate investment from councils and the new water entity to prevent waste-water overflows and address stormwater where possible

### **2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?**

- Work within council to maintain priority and spending on the above points, particularly using combined resources where possible
- Ensure that staffing is also focused on compliance to ensure that developers et al are following the planning rules and bylaws set down by Porirua City Council and GWRC
- Make sure that the new water entity becomes a partner to the Harbour Accord
- Ensuring that there is continuing pressure from Council through the channels available to it once the new water entity is up and running, so that it does not lose focus on harbour health and what is required to address this in the short and long term

- Ensure that Council communications reinforce to ratepayers the things they can do to contribute to harbour health (e.g washing of cars, disposal of paint and chemicals, reducing litter etc)
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?
- The Accord relies heavily on each partner working together to set a plan to achieve the results we want for the health of the harbour. Let's pick off some more low hanging fruit to show progress
  - Requiring regular reporting back to Council and Iwi (maybe more than 6 monthly if required) will be what I will be seeking so that we are kept well informed and better positioned to assess whether changes can be made.

### **Angel Domingo (Oneopoto Ward)**

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the harbour?  
Sedimentation from urban development, stormwater pollution, sewage leaks from aging pipes and climate change and flooding.
2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?  
I would prioritise upgrading critical stormwater and wastewater systems, support iwi and community restoration work and plan long term to address climate change issues.
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?  
The Accord should deliver measurable results for the challenges facing our harbour, ensure all partners are accountable and keep residents informed.

### **Brent Ching (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?  
I see water health, Marine Ecology and Biodiversity as the challenges. However, there is a need to communicate these issues to the community, and we need a method to illustrate measurable results of each element.  
A total community vision is required with result monitoring to keep the council accountable.
2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?  
Recognise land developers must put into place mitigating practices to control silt movement from site, solutions like silt fencing throughout the earthworks and build which council inspectors monitor and help promote best practices.
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?  
I would like to see the CE's implementation plan for councils' response to the Porirua Harbour Accord, open for community feedback and implementation plans put into place with measurable outcomes and monitored for community buy-in

## **Kathleen Filo (Onepoto Ward)**

### **1. Challenges facing the Harbour**

The first challenge is making sure we have the right approach, one that deals with the root causes, not just surface fixes. The second challenge is ensuring there is enough funding to properly remedy the damage that has already been done. And third, we need to make sure that ongoing pollution is reduced and prevented, especially sedimentation from construction, stormwater contaminants, and wastewater overflows.

### **2. What I would do if elected**

If I am elected, I will work closely with iwi and the partners of the Porirua Harbour Accord to tackle these challenges together.

That means holding developers to account on sediment controls and district plan rules, making sure new developments build in proper stormwater solutions, and advocating at the water entity for them to step up with real solutions for wastewater and stormwater impacts. I will also be pushing for funding that does not fall only on ratepayers, looking at central government, innovation, and partnerships, because this mahi cannot be put off.

### **3. Priorities for the Harbour Accord**

The priority now is for the Accord partners to agree on a clear and coordinated pathway: what needs to happen first, how it will be funded, and how we will measure progress. That requires innovation, cost-effective solutions, and collective commitment. For iwi, this is not just a technical issue, it is about restoring the mauri of a taonga that has been damaged. The Accord gives us a chance to move beyond business as usual, and I want to see us seize that opportunity.

## **Zac Painting (Onepoto Ward)**

### **1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?**

- Sedimentation, due to reduced forest cover and land use impacts, is a massive issue and one that becomes visible when it rains. Transmission Gully and the Plimmerton Farm development are recent examples that have had major impacts on the harbour.
- Heavy metal contaminants, particularly from vehicles and roads, and wastewater flowing into the harbour are other major challenges. Steps are being made to address those including restoring wetlands near developments and the wastewater facility going in by the city centre, but we will need to do more.
- Climate change threatens to make all of these impacts worse. More severe storms bring heavier rains which means more land slips which threatens homes and public infrastructure as well as resulting in much more contaminants and sediment going into the harbour.

### **2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?**

- Encourage the council to improve community engagement and education. The health of our harbour frequently comes up as a concern for people in this city, however, it isn't clear to most people what the impacts on the harbour are and what can be done about it.
- Continue and expand the streamside planting programme, including greater volunteer involvement. These efforts could be strengthened by including more community groups and schools. PCC should also build on existing relationships with community groups and increase support for the work they are already doing for our harbour.
- Ensure, through GWRC, that there is greater enforcement of breaches that result in sediment or other pollutants getting into the harbour. Recent RMA changes have introduced more severe penalties that can be used to hold polluters to account and deter others.

3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

- Ensure the new water entity that will be established under the Local Water Done Well regime gives effect to Te Mana o Te Wai. Despite recent changes by the government to the RMA, Te Mana o Te Wai, as originally envisioned, gives us a clear framework to approach water quality, and should guide the entity's decisions.
- Investment in coastal resilience projects. The proposed Onepoto Shared Pathway, which has been stalled, is an example of the sort of investment we need to protect our infrastructure against climate impacts while protecting the quality of our harbour.

I would encourage PCC and GWRC to work in partnership with Ngāti Toa Rangatira to explore innovative ways to restore water quality, drawing on successful examples from around the country. For example, the restoration of mussel beds in the Ōhiwa Harbour was a collaboration with local iwi and hapū and used mātauranga Māori to see massive benefits for water quality. While fisheries of that scale may not be viable in our harbour, it shows the benefits of innovation and the elevation of mātauranga Māori and gives us an example that we should aspire to.

### **Nathan Waddle (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?

The discharge of sediments and pollution in to harbour and inlet

2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?

Continue the current stream of work around riparian planting and ensure that funding is secured before the current stream of funds runs out.

3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

Acting meaningfully towards the purpose of the accord, developing a strategy and plan to address the issues, and not allowing the harbour accord to become "just another document"

### **Aditi Tiwari (Pāuatahanui Ward)**

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour?

Our harbour is struggling with sediment from developments, polluted stormwater, sewage spills, and disappearing wetlands. These issues are not just environmental - they're about the health of our people, our wildlife, and the future we're leaving for rangatahi.

2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?

I'll push for investment in stormwater and wastewater upgrades through Council's funding and direction of Metro Water Services (which will take over in 2026). Porirua deserves its fair share of upgrades to stop sewage spills and stormwater pollution in our harbour. I believe rangatahi deserve a seat at the table, so I'd make sure young voices are included in shaping the solutions.

3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?

The Accord needs to move beyond words into action. Priorities should be clear targets for cleaner water, proper monitoring, protecting and restoring wetlands, and ensuring developers take responsibility. Most importantly, it should be a true partnership between mana whenua, council, community groups, and young people who will inherit this harbour.



## Parirua Māori Ward

### Kylie Wihapi (Parirua Māori Ward)

1. What do you see as the challenges facing the Harbour? Poor infrastructure, high sediment, climate change, ecological risk
2. What would you do about these challenges if you are elected?  
Continue to support decisions around repairing poor pipes and reducing over flow. Would ideally like to work faster in speeding up investment in fixing pipes with stronger advocacy.
3. What priorities do you see for the recently agreed Porirua Harbour Accord and for its signatories in meeting and resolving these challenges?  
I would like to see each entity work together productively.