

Local Body Elections Wellington City Council 2025

The Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour and Catchments Community Trust 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 candidates

Rob Goulden

I am not a candidate in Porirua. I am in Wellington.

William Pennywize

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

Some of the key challenges facing Te Awarua o Porirua and its catchment awa are runoff and various forms of pollution. Be it the shopping trolleys which seem to breed in the Porirua stream or run off from roads and rooves. Adding to this problem is the fact that the central city of Porirua is pretty much a giant carpark meaning that there is little space for protecting the waterways.

Ko ētahi o ngā raru nui mō te Awarua o Porirua me āna awa ko te waipiro. E māraakerake ana te kitea nā ngā torore hokomaha i te awa o Porirua ki te waipiro nā ngā rori ngā tuanui hoki. Hei tapiritanga ki tēnei raru ko te mea ko te nuinga o te tāone o Porirua he tūngawaka. Nō reira he mea uaua ki te whai wāhi ki te tiaki i te tai.

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

Under a Pennywize mayoralty we will respect the Porirua Harbour Accord - Te Wai Ora o Parirua, but also want to go much further. A rewilding future where we replace roads with native forest will do wonders to stop things like runoff. The Pāuatahanui wetland reserve is a guiding star for how natural solutions will protect the waterways but can also do wonders to protect us from flooding in extreme weather events which are sadly becoming far too common.

Ki raro i te manaaki a Pennywize ka tū tonu te whakaute ki te Wai Ora

o Parirua, heoi anō ka eke tātou ki te taumata ake. Ki te whaka hoki i te ngahere ki te pokapū tāone o Parirua ka aukātingia ngā rori, ka whakaora i te taiao te wai hoki. Ko te repo o Pāuatahanui he whetū hei arahi i tā tātou mahi. He tauira hoki ia mō te mahi a te taiao ki te tiaki i te wai tiaki i a tātou hoki i ngā aitua ngā āwhā e tipu ana i tēnei ao hurihuri.

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

Te Wai Ora o Parirua is an opportunity to reshape life near the harbour working with iwi and city councils. The Pennywise campaign has a visionary new transport system which could do wonders to allow us to get to where we need to go while also protecting the precious taonga which are our awa and the creatures which call them home. Our proposed system of awa tuna and ara moa will replace the need to use cars and buses thereby freeing up land for our rewilding projects and also reducing the runoff into our precious harbours and waterways. If the parties to the accord agree we would happily work to see a future where you no longer drive alongside the Porirua river but instead zoom along the river itself on the back of a genetically enhanced tuna.

Ka whati te tai ka pao te tōrea. Ko Te Wai Ora o Parirua he ara tērā pea ki te whakapanoni i ngā hāpori ki te taha o te tai. Ka mahitahi te iwi me ngā kaunihera mō te orange o te katoa. Ko te whakaaro o Pennywise ka hangaia he haereinga hou mō te anamata, ka haere tātou ki wīwī ki wawa heoi anō ka tiaki hoki tātou i ngā taonga ki tai, ngā awa me ngā ngarara ki roto. Ko ngā awa tuna me ngā ara moa ngā whakautu ki taua nei raru. Ka aukātingia ngā waka, ka wātea ngā rori mō te mahi whakahoki ngahere mai, ka iti haere te waipiro hoki ki te tai. Mēnā ka whakaāe ngā ringatohu katoa ki Te Wai Ora o Parirua ka mahi tahi tātou mō te wā kāore tātou e taraiwa ki te taha o te awa, ka rere kē tātou mā ngā tuna kaha nui hoki ki roto rā.

Alex Baker

- For me the number one issue is excessive sedimentation and wastewater runoff into the harbour negatively affecting the marine environment and mahinga kai.
- Sedimentation runoff from construction sites and high levels of impermeable surfaces (concrete, roofs, etc) both contribute to harbour quality issues. My land value rates policy will result in substantially more of Wellington's new housing building taking place closer to the central city. I would expect reduced development of housing in greenfield areas in the Porirua harbour catchment area. This will reduce the impact on the harbour of runoff and impermeable surface issues. Adequate sedimentation control before water enters harbour (i.e. Bothamley Park upgrades) and separation of stormwater/ sewerage networks to reduce release of contaminated water into the harbour.

Andrew Little

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

I recognise Porirua Harbour as a nationally significant ecological area and the largest estuary in the lower-north island. It has important cultural, economic and recreational values. The harbour has historically been an important source of kaimoana and the location of pā, tauranga waka, marae, urupā and papakainga.

The Harbour has been threatened by deforestation, farming and particularly by urban development and industrial practices. This has led to significant siltation of the Harbour, the introduction of noxious compounds and the loss of habitat for indigenous biodiversity.

The bigger challenges are:

- Addressing the state of Porirua Harbour as it is currently – reducing further siltation and addressing the siltation build-up in the Harbour.
- Greater consideration of the Harbour in the WCC District Plan and future planning instruments (e.g. tightening up subdivision and soil removal controls, particularly on land use classes that are susceptible to erosion.
- Greater co-operation between the parties with responsibilities and interests in the Porirua Harbour.

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

Actively engage with the parties with responsibilities and interests in the Porirua Harbour. While WCC can make headway on some issues, a collaborative – Whole of Catchment approach, is really required. One which works in with the local community, but also fundamentally challenges us all on some of the ways in which we have approached development in the past. The Harbour needs much more prominence in WCC thinking. As things stand, it is really much more our back room than front room!

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

Te Awarua o Porirua, the Porirua Whaitua Implementation Plan and Ngāti Toa Statement provide the partners, stakeholders, community groups and other organisations with a clear focus to help prioritise and drive actions which will improve harbour health. The key priority now is to follow through on the actions that have been identified in these planning documents, including revisiting past decisions that have in some cases led to the degradation of the Harbour.

Joan Shi

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

Porirua Harbour faces several challenges. Sedimentation from land development and erosion is reducing water depth and threatening marine habitats. Pollution from stormwater, wastewater overflows, and litter continues to affect water quality, limiting safe recreation and damaging the health of the ecosystem. Climate change adds further pressure through rising sea levels and more intense rainfall, which increases run-off and flooding risks. The challenge is to manage growth and infrastructure needs while restoring and protecting the Harbour. This will require stronger collaboration with mana whenua, community groups, and government to improve catchment management, upgrade infrastructure, and adopt more sustainable land use practices.

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

If elected, I would prioritise practical, affordable, and community-driven solutions to improve the health of Porirua Harbour. This includes investing in better stormwater and wastewater infrastructure, promoting sustainable land use to reduce sedimentation, and supporting catchment restoration projects led by mana whenua and community groups. I would also ensure that growth is balanced with environmental protection by requiring stronger environmental standards in new developments. Most importantly, I would work to align council, central government, and community efforts so that every dollar spent delivers real results for both the Harbour and the people who rely on it.

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 positive step forward, but the key will be turning commitments into tangible outcomes. I see three main priorities. First, improving water quality by reducing sedimentation and pollution at the source - through better land management, stormwater controls, and stronger collaboration with developers. Second, restoring ecological health by protecting and replanting wetlands, stream banks, and native habitats that act as natural filters and buffers. Third, ensuring accountability and transparency - the signatories must set measurable targets, regularly report progress, and keep the community engaged.

If these priorities are followed, the Accord can build real momentum to restore the Harbour for future generations while balancing environmental, social, and economic needs.

Takapū/Northern General Ward

Andrea Crompton

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

Sedimentation build up caused by land clearance, urban development and roading.

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

Continue with the restoration and planting in and around the harbour. In conjunction, work with the other partners in the Porirua Harbour accord to support better erosion and sediment control at source.

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

3. Improving water quality through sedimentation control at source and in the harbour itself.

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Ben McNulty

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

Can only speak from my knowledge representing the Porirua Stream catchment - impact of increased severity weather events on stream pollution, flooding and sediment which makes its way into the harbour as well as run off from Urban development in Churton Park, Glenside West and Grenada Village.

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

This term I ensured that the newly established Porirua Harbour Accord would review the Porirua Stream watercourse agreement. This out-of-date agreement is unclear about the responsibilities of relative councils to address the aforementioned issues. Without clear responsibilities, action cannot be taken. I want to see through the review of this agreement and then ensure appropriate resourcing to both the accord and responsible council enforcement teams.

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

As above, sorting out responsibilities under the watercourse agreement and then having sufficient funding to bring the accord to life. Regional buy-in and my work to inform other councillors at WCC of the importance of the Porirua Stream will be essential.

Te Whanganui-a-Tara Māori ward

Te Paea Paringatai

This taonga is vital to our environment, culture, and community, and its care must be a shared priority.

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

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour is a taonga with customary, cultural, ecological, and community significance, and it faces serious pressures. Sedimentation from land use and development continues to smother habitats, particularly seagrass beds and shellfish beds. Stormwater pollution, including plastics, heavy metals, and household chemicals, flows into the harbour during heavy rain. Historic reclamation and shoreline modification have reduced saltmarsh and wetland areas, limiting their natural filtering and buffering capacity.

Changes to our climate is intensifying these issues through more frequent heavy rain events, sea level rise, and coastal erosion. These environmental challenges threaten biodiversity, and mana whenua customary rights, mahinga kai, and the harbour's role as a place for recreation and community wellbeing.

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

If elected, I will champion a kaupapa that treats the harbour as taonga, requiring both care and restoration. That means:

- **Embedding Te Ao Māori in decision-making** — ensuring mana whenua leadership and participation is central in all harbour-related planning, monitoring, and funding decisions.
- **Strengthening environmental regulations** — pushing for more robust sediment and stormwater controls, including better enforcement on developers and industrial operators.

- **Restoring natural filters** — advocating for large-scale riparian and wetland restoration projects, using native planting to trap sediment and improve water quality.
- **Investing in community stewardship** — supporting schools, local groups, and rangatahi programmes that engage people directly in planting, monitoring, and clean-up efforts.
- **Climate adaptation planning** — ensuring coastal resilience and sea-level rise responses prioritise nature-based solutions over hard infrastructure where possible.

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 is a strong foundation for collective action; and its success will depend on turning commitments into measurable outcomes. Priorities need to be:

1. **Shared accountability** — all signatories must set clear, public targets for sediment reduction, water quality improvement, and habitat restoration.
2. **Integrated catchment management** — addressing issues at their source, from hilltop to harbour, by coordinating land-use planning, transport infrastructure design, and stormwater systems across council boundaries.
3. **Long-term, ring-fenced funding** — securing stable, multi-year investment for restoration projects so they are not dependent on short-term grants.
4. **Cultural health monitoring** — incorporating mātauranga Māori alongside scientific measures so the harbour's mauri is at the heart of decision-making.
5. **Transparent reporting** — establishing regular public reporting and community hui to track progress and adjust actions as needed.

Tawa Community Board

Rob Suisted

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

Sediment and polluted run-off are key challenges, especially with more development of catchments. I understand this in numerous ways, as a farm owner in Takapu Valley (one of our last undeveloped catchment headwaters and majority area of the TCB area), I've studied freshwater and marine ecology, worked in marine conservation and also documented these habitats as a commercial natural heritage photographer. I've been a Porirua Harbour user all my life.

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

Personally, I've already fought hard to stop Takapu Valley (an undeveloped major headwater of Porirua Stream) being bulldozed into a haul road to needlessly duplicate and parallel SH1 access to Transmission Gully, run a plant nursery to raise and plant out my land in native trees, remove pests and weeds, and minimise our impacts on this waterway as much as possible. If I was elected, as someone who understands impacts on natural areas and systems more than most, I would be a champion of this important headwater – which makes up approx. 40% of the TCB area, that hasn't always been well represented in decisions impacting it.

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

I own a book by CS Brees, the NZ Company surveyor, who wrote in the 1840's *'Poerua [sic] harbour teems with fish. The hapuka and the moki are the most esteemed, but much dissatisfaction sometimes ensues, from our fisherman (settlers) taking them at the wrong season'*. This speaks of the massive multifaceted loss of harbour health (sedimentation, overfishing, pollution and habitat loss etc), and the very long history of disunity, loss of knowledge and misunderstandings that perpetuate that loss. The priority seems to me to be the rebuilding of knowledge, collective understandings and working together with stakeholders. The Accord is such an important waka for this journey.

Carla Bates

1. I see the challenges as:

- *Increased erosion and sediment run off from more frequent severe weather events
- *increased sediment loading and runoff flows from more residential development, especially during construction periods
- *increased pest species invasion with a warming climate and potentially some native species loss due to climate change
- *increased pollution and sewerage effluent from aging water infrastructure

2. As part of the Board I would seek to:

- *support community groups to undertake restoration planting to improve erosion and flooding issues
- *ensure that water infrastructure issues and funding always consider water quality and environmental outcomes in decision making
- *support any groups or work seeking to monitor and map quality of the ecosystem in these catchments, including communicating what these eyes and ears are picking up in their work as key concerns or successes
- *ensure that Tawa and its decision makers are joined up with 'whole of catchment' stakeholders in these issues, because they cross council boundary.

3. Priorities are:

- *Understanding current state issues
- *Having an awareness of historic and cultural information that can tell us what the values have been in these catchments past and present, and how they connect with aspirations for the future
- *Raising the profile of this accord with the Tawa community, why it's come about and the development of its actions

Georgia Freeman

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

As a landowner and caretaker of land bordering the Porirua Stream, which flows into the harbour, I've experienced firsthand the challenges of managing waterways that cross multiple properties. These include difficulties coordinating support between stakeholders, long-term underinvestment in maintenance and infrastructure, sediment build-up, pollution issues, and a lack of clear guidance on stream management.

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

I'd prioritize funding upstream erosion control and wetland restoration to stop sediment at its source—much more sustainable than continual harbour dredging. I'd work closely with communities, iwi, both city councils, Wellington Regional Council, Wellington Water, and future water entities to ensure effective coordination and enforcement of environmental protections.

3. What priorities do you see for the Porirua Harbour Accord and its signatories?

The Accord must focus on concrete, measurable actions—reducing sediment, improving stormwater treatment, restoring native vegetation—with transparent public reporting. Addressing poor water health and ensuring the harbour is safe to play in for future generations are critical priorities. I was at the signing with my kids, which makes it even more important to me that the Accord delivers real, on-the-ground results—not just a PR statement.