



“Look high, look long” – that’s the governance mantra of Rupert Ross, pictured, who has chaired the BID - operating Pukekohe Business Association’s governing committee since 2019.

Rupert’s no governance novice: he currently sits on three other boards, a property trust, church board and New Foundations Trust encouraging mentoring and education for at risk youth.

We asked Pukekohe’s President to share his story and ambitions for the fertile, fast-growing southern centre.

Look high, look long. . .

“My career has taken me from corporate for profit, through government public service into charity and for purpose,” said Rupert.

“I started off in fast food, managing Georgie Pie then McDonalds Restaurants. After losing my social/family life, I made the change to IRD which I really enjoyed.

“After some more study and being a youth pastor, I did 10 years at World Vision before leaving that to own my own business.”

As PBA president, Rupert works with the BID management team of Kendyl Sullivan (currently on parental leave), Shawna Coleman and Chenay Douglas – pictured above right.

Celebrating success is reflected in the PBA’s Best in Business Awards, see right.



Shawna, Chenay and Kendyl.



In his President’s Report (2020 AGM), Rupert acknowledged the number of vacancies on the committee. We asked him what PBA had done to fill those vacancies and induct the newcomers.

“In the last year, we had three new board members. We were fortunate to have a wide range of business represented. We will continue to promote the opportunity of being on the board and also approach individuals who are a good fit,” he said.



An aerial shot of Pukekohe illustrates growth in the area.

On its website, the council's urban regeneration agency, Eke Panuku says *"Urban regeneration is coming to Pukekohe. Responding to growth taking hold in south Auckland, Panuku has plans to boost Pukekohe's attractiveness as an employment destination and town centre."*

We asked Rupert what role PBA had played in ensuring Panuku added Pukekohe to its list of priority locations.

"The Franklin Local Board applied for Pukekohe to be considered for the Innovating Streets for People project. The PBA was invited to be consultants on the working group once the project had been awarded to Pukekohe," he said.

So, what does PBA want Panuku to achieve?

"One of our family favourite places in Auckland is Silo Park. When I met the Panuku team leader who oversaw that project, I was hopeful that great outcomes could be achieved for Pukekohe.

"Many residents have been here since we were a quiet country service town - no traffic lights, always getting a park outside your shop etc. We have seen huge growth and those days will never return. At the same time, much development is going on all around us: Tuakau, Pokeno, Waiuku, Glenbrook and especially Drury.

"I believe we have a few short years to find our identity and establish ourselves as a destination or we could face an empty main road and shoppers going elsewhere.

"I hope Panuku, the (Franklin) local board, PBA and community groups can work to engage the local community and plot a path forward for an exciting and prosperous town where people want to live, learn, play, and spend."



TE MAHERE Ā-ROHE O FRANKLIN 2020

Franklin Local Board Plan 2020

Outcome 1: Our strengths generate local opportunity and prosperity

Our goal is to support our people to create and access new job opportunities, advocate for regional, national and third party investment in infrastructure, and invest in initiatives that develop, leverage from and promote our local strengths as we anticipate changes to our economy, environment and population.

The Franklin Local Board Plan 2020 states: “Areas facing the greatest change, such as the wider Pukekohe area, Drury, Clevedon, and the Pōhutukawa Coast, must be positioned to cope with and benefit from change.”

In terms of the PBA’s advocacy efforts, we asked Rupert what support they had sought from the local board to help position Pukekohe to benefit for change.

“We have an excellent working relationship with the local board. They have a rep on our committee, and we have frequent interactions with different board members. We have called on their insight and experience when making submissions on local and national plans and advocating for our local businesses,” he said.

The Franklin Local Board Plan 2020 prioritises economic development (“our strengths generate local opportunity and prosperity”)

So, what does PBA’s president see as Pukekohe’s strengths and opportunities?

“Traditionally, we have been strong in a few areas - agriculture as the food bowl for Auckland, the race track and AMP showground are all well known. We can continue to grow these areas as well as adding new strings to our bow. We have recently had several amazing restaurants open, with people traveling from as far as Whangarei and Taupo to dine in Pukekohe. We have many industries and an innovation hub in the pipeline.

“I would like Pukekohe to better define our uniqueness, we can’t compete with the massive retail that is coming down the road. Are we like Parnell with interesting shops and eateries? Are we a dining destination or a race track town? We have had some great concerts in our stadium. Are we a festival district?”

The local board has funded a local economic development broker position. What involvement has PBA had with her so far?

“We have had her ([Christina Rogstad](#), pictured) in to share with the committee and worked with her in meetings with Panuku.

“We would support the ideas she is working through to build capacity in our local businesses.”

