

View from the Chair - Vinod Kumar



Chairman a part of Mangere's rich fabric

Clothing retailer Vinod Kumar has been part of the rich fabric that is the Mangere Town Centre for a quarter of a century, serving on the board for 20 of those years - 13 of which as chairman in two spells.

The board includes mostly retailers along with several landlords.

We asked Vinod what did he find were the most challenging aspects in governing a business association.

"It can be challenging to get the retailers interested in the BID programme. There's a lot of apathy and a struggle to get committee members.

"We also have no say in who the shops are leased out to and so we end up with a lot of similar shops. It isn't as good a retail mix as we would want," he says.

Vinod was involved in the establishment of the BID programme back in 2008, a decision that was driven primarily by the need to secure a reliable source of funding to run the growing town centre.

"Too much time was spent before trying to make sure we had enough money. We needed to get stability by receiving the targeted rate directly from the council," he says.

He says the BID programme has been of great benefit to the now, 80-shop town centre.

"Firstly, with the targeted rate coming in we could plan properly and know we are able to carry out those plans. As a result, we have been able to expand our range of services.

"With the partnership with the council, we have been able to work closely with them about the way the BID should develop. There was not much direction when we were on our own."

Vinod acknowledges the important role of the (Mangere-Otahuhu) Local Board in the success of the BID programme.

"Our local board is key to helping improve the area. This last year (2016-17), there's been \$15 million invested in the town centre, including new bus stops and toilet, and the *Future Streets* programme."