



Auckland's northernmost local board Rodney includes Kawau Island and Kumeu/Huapai, Helensville, Warkworth, Matakana, Muriwai and Wellsford.



North West Country is Rodney's only current business improvement district.



Spanning 40kms, the expansive BID includes the townships of Kumeu/Huapai, Helensville, Waimauku, Parakai, Kaukapakapa and Riverhead.

## Empowering the business community

Rodney Local Board Deputy Chair Phelan Pirrie, *pictured*, represents his colleagues on the Northwest District (SH16) Business Association's committee

The marketer from Muriwai brings a sharp business focus and previous BID governance experience to the role.

Phelan says the business improvement district – branded North West Country – has achieved a lot since it was established in 2014.

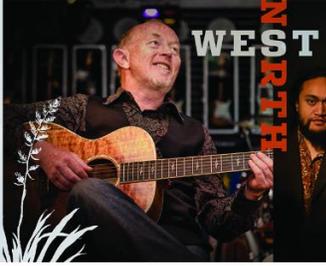
“At just \$180,000 a year, it's not one of the larger BIDs in terms of targeted rate income. To its credit, it has leveraged additional revenue,” he says.

“At a little over three years old, the BID's still finding its feet. It has done some really good things and learned a lot from the challenges it's faced along the way.

“With the BID came the brand and a united voice for the businesses across the six townships.”

### How local boards impact BIDs

- The local board approves establishment and expansion of all BIDs.
- Local boards are delegated the authority to recommend to the governing body to strike the targeted rate for BIDs in its area as part of the Annual Plan process.
- Local boards maintain regular contact with the BIDs to keep their local economic development and other interests aligned.
- The board may appoint a local board representative to the executive committee of each BID/business association to serve as a conduit of information to and from council.



**“The North West Wine, Beer and Food Festival in February was a great success with more than two thousand turning up.”**

– **PHELAN PIRRIE**

North West Country has set itself the goal of *inspiring and enabling businesses to thrive in Auckland’s creative playground*.

Community empowerment is also a key driver for the Rodney Local Board in its own three-yearly strategic plans.

Phelan Pirrie says the local board’s economic development objectives have changed from 2014 when, as part of its first Local Board Plan, its attention and resources were invested in facilitating BID establishments\*

“Three years later we’re reviewing our Local Board Plan and our focus has switched to advocating for, and overseeing, infrastructural upgrades for our townships.

“This year alone, we’ve got a \$700,000 programme of town centre improvements. These will include Helensville and Kumeu which are both part of the North West Country BID.”

He says it is significant that local iwi not only contribute to shaping the local board’s strategic priorities, including economic aspirations, they are also represented around the business association’s board table.

“Iwi such as Nga Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara are major economic entities in their own right and we’ve partnered with them on several initiatives.”

While he stands proudly as an enthusiastic advocate for BIDs as an effective platform for local economic development and identity, Phelan is also a pragmatist who would seek to do things differently when it comes to the proposed establishment and governance of BID programmes.

As most people are aware, a proposal to establish a BID at Warkworth failed in 2016 amid acrimony and recriminations. Phelan believes that to avoid a similar outcome in future, every BID proposal should be subject to a robust, independent poll to measure the business community’s level of support right at the outset.

“We also need to think about how we deal with the situation that many business associations face when a small minority or even an individual takes up an inordinate amount of time with trivial or repetitive issues. Whether it’s a minor point on a constitution or simply the fact that they don’t want to pay the (BID) targeted rate, these issues are rarely resolved and only divert attention from the real business and deplete scarce resources. It’s about time to get off the fence and be more assertive in dealing with the problem and then get on with the job,” he says.