



The BID-operating Avondale Business Association has achieved a remarkable turnaround in its governance and operation over the past couple of years.

We asked the BID's Town Centre Manager, Cynthia Crosse, *pictured*, about how it went about engaging and communicating with members to achieve the acclaimed transformation.

The backstory:

- 1. Avondale's BID targeted rate withheld in 2019 – [what went wrong](#)
- 2. Avondale's funding reinstated – [what did it take to achieve the turnaround](#) – [read the report](#)
- 3. Avondale – overpromised for more than 20 years, now's time to change – [read more](#)

1. What attracted you to work for ABA after such a turbulent period in the organisation's history?

It's hard to answer that question without being too pointed. Suffice to say, the poor reputation of the business association had long since spilt over into the general community and everybody wanted change. As a resident, and having previously worked for business associations, I knew that Avondale deserved better.

2. How did you apply the findings of the 2019 membership survey to ensure the BID programme changed to meet the needs of its members?

The most disturbing result of the survey, in my mind, was that 74% of business owners were not even aware that a business association existed. Such, I guess, was the previous level of communication.

So, that was a relatively easy fix – we updated our database, rebranded, and introduced the communications channels one would expect from a business association - a fortnightly email newsletter, a new website, an annual report, a quarterly magazine and so on ...



Also, I take the opportunity to be on the street and talking to business owners as much as I can - it's easier than other associations in that we only have 150 trading businesses. We've also held an AGM to which everyone was warmly welcomed, networking events, workshops and public events as Covid has allowed.



Recently, I had the opportunity to walk the street with our local MP Deborah Russell, to check in with several businesses on how Covid has hit them. It was really appreciated, and Deborah received important feedback about supply chain difficulties that can be relayed right to the top.

3. Describe the feedback you’ve had from members since the changed approach?

Overall, and given that it has been a Covid year with 17 weeks of lockdown whereby business owners have had to really look inward, engagement has been greatly improved and the business owners grateful for the work we are doing.

The testament to me is that I know most business owners by name, and they know both myself and our Chairman Marcus Amosa to say hello to.

4. What would you say are the biggest achievements of the BID programme during your time as manager?

1. Firming up board-level processes and creating transparency. Delivering a printed annual report available to each of our members, so that they can keep us on track.
2. Establishing best-practice communications and marketing.
3. Creating an improved culture whereby business owners understand that we are here to serve them.



Annual Accountability Agreement: 5 March 2021

Avondale Business Improvement District Programme

The signing of an annual accountability agreement by the chair of the business association board is a requirement of the BID Policy (2016). Its purpose is to confirm baseline accountability mechanisms are in place.

Please confirm each requirement has been achieved by ticking AND attaching evidence of completion of each action.

Requirement	Completed
<p>1. Incorporated Societies Act 1908 – all requirements as per the Act and your business association constitution have been completed (note: this is an ongoing annual requirement for all incorporated societies) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial statements filed: Please see link to Societies Office filing • Annual General Meeting undertaken. Please find draft AGM Minutes attached. 	<p>✓</p>

Requirement	Completed
<p>2. All information required by Auckland Council as per the BID Policy (2016) has been forwarded to bids@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz on <i>(insert date)</i> – <i>(attach printed copy of e-mail as proof)</i>. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) audited accounts b) the proposed budget for the upcoming year c) report reviewing actions in annual business plan (by chair or manager) d) annual plan for upcoming financial year e) strategic plan (if not already with council). <p>Please find PDF attached.</p>	✓
<p>3. Current public liability and indemnity insurances are in place <i>(attach a copy of the insurance certificates)</i>.</p> <p>Please find PDF attached.</p>	✓
<p>4. Confirmation by the chair that appropriate governance and induction training has been provided to all newly elected board members.</p> <p>We have just one newly elected board member this year, Denise Te Tai, who attended a governance workshop held for the board on 26 February 2021.</p>	✓
<p>5. Confirmation by the chair that there is a current signed Auckland Council BID programme agreement between the business association and Auckland Council that will be in place until the date of the next AGM.</p> <p>Confirmed. Please find PDF attached.</p>	✓
<p>6. Confirmation by the manager of the processes taken to ensure the membership database is as up-to-date as possible <i>(add details below or attach process)</i></p> <p>Member details maintained on an online database, Wild Apricot and updated as new information arises. It is also backed up monthly to our Google Drive. Excel version attached, FYI.</p> <p>Member details available for respective members to view at any time.</p>	✓
<p>7. Confirmation by the chair that a board charter is operative and signed by all board members for the current term.</p> <p>Confirmed and PDF attached.</p>	✓
<p>8. Confirmation that the business association board has had the annual reporting and alignment discussion with the local board(s). Please outline outcome of this discussion: Meeting held 3 March 2021</p> <p>Takeaways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a suggestion that we might like to pull together a focus group to discuss business needs with regard to Covid/lockdown and how we think the Government could practically assist, as these discussions are currently taking place. • They were pleased to hear that Panuku is presenting to the networking breakfast and highlighted the need for keeping businesses informed/educated during this period of massive change/development in Avondale. • We were asked to be mindful to help keep development people-friendly and at the forefront of planning as we enter this period of change in Avondale. • It was recommended we put in a submission to the board's 10 year budget. • The Chair and Manager were asked specifically to extend congratulations and thanks to the board for the work done to date. 	✓