

## View from the Chair: Bernard McCrea, Rosebank Business Association



### Stronger together: governance-management bond

**Bernard (Bernie) McCrea, pictured, says the biggest governance challenge he's faced while on the Rosebank Business Association committee is running a small-scale entity that faces most of the same issues and reporting rules of much larger enterprises.**

Bernie joined the committee about three years ago and has chaired it for the past six months.

"The big issue is striking the balance of a business (association) that's small in numbers, but still has the requirements of a large NGO (Non-Government Organisation)," he said.

As General Manager Life & Health of Abbott Insurance, Bernie knows a thing or two about executive leadership and, reflecting Rosebank's 'Stronger Together' theme, the importance of a strong and respectful relationship between management and governance.

In this and other senior executive roles, he has been the person reporting to the board about operations, strategies and compliance.

"For many years I looked at it as the relationships you developed with the board enabled you to implement successful business ventures," said Bernie, a Senior Fellow and Board Member of the Financial Institute of Australasia. FIA is a member-based organisation involved in the wider banking and financial services sectors.

Away from business but still close to governance, Bernie has served as Treasurer for a Not for Profit pre-school for more than 20 years and on the board of his local rugby club.

As Committee Chair, Bernie has formed a great working relationship with experienced BID programme manager, Mike 'Gibo' Gibson, pictured.

RIGHT, an aerial view of the growing Rosebank precinct.



The Rosebank Business Association was established in 2002 when a group of business owners concerned about crime met to do something about it. Upon forming their organisation, they began security patrols.

“Today, this has resulted in Rosebank having one of the lowest crime rates of any commercial area in the Auckland region, with regular security patrols and a zero-tolerance policy on graffiti being established,” says Bernie.

“Over the last decade, the RBA team has worked hard to create services that promote the economic development of our important commercial area, much of which is behind the scenes working with Auckland Council and other stakeholders.

“In 2005, we pushed for the precinct to become a Business Improvement District (BID), giving Rosebank businesses a formal relationship with Auckland Council and the best chance of achieving positive business and economic outcomes,” he said.

### **We asked how, from a governance-to-governance perspective, the business association works with the (Whau) local board.**

Bernie said Rosebank enjoyed a good open relationship with (Whau Local Board Chair) Tracy Mulholland.

“We also have Susan Zhu, a nominated Whau board representative on our board, which I feel gives good information of any issues occurring at a local government level.

“We also have an open invitation to any other Whau or, local government representative, to come along to work with us on any aspect of our business.”

- **Rosebank Business Association was a key stakeholder and contributor to the recently refreshed Whau Local Board Plan 2017, excerpts below.**

#### **Outcome 5: Strong local businesses and more quality local jobs**

The local board's vision is for successful and resilient businesses in Rosebank, New Lynn, Kelston and Avondale, working together to attract new markets and innovate. We want to see more people with higher education achievements gaining well-paid employment and working locally.

Our economic centres require strategies to retain and revitalise, build on current economic activity, create quality local work and attract new business. We will work alongside Avondale, Blockhouse Bay, New Lynn and **Rosebank** Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to help them deliver on their plans. **Rosebank**, New Lynn and Avondale provide the bulk of the local work opportunities.

### **So what induction/training/support do you provide to a newcomer to your board?**

“The people on our board already have substantial commercial experience so the training initially focusses on the technicalities of the BID funding mechanisms. We also look to them to help us with their knowledge and skills with things we can be better at,” Bernie said.

### **What advice would you give to someone who is considering putting their name forward for election to a business association board?**

Don't hesitate and grab the opportunity to put your name forward, he said.

“You will learn so much more about your local business colleagues. Many of the issues you work on are the same issues they face, which gives you good shared experiences. You will also know more about all the pieces of local government and how they interact with the commercial world, as nobody operates in a vacuum.”