



Christine O'Brien, *pictured*, has represented the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board in liaising with the Ōtāhuhu Business Association since Auckland Council's inception in 2010.

An elected member since 2007 and an Ōtāhuhu resident for 24 years, Christine is proud of her local BID's achievements.



City's first BID's still community lynchpin

"The Ōtāhuhu Business Association (OBA) is a lynchpin of our community," says Christine, who was the local board's economic development lead for several terms.

OBA established Auckland's first official BID programme in 1990 and has sustained success over three decades.

"(OBA) has always long taken the view that community engagement is an asset to the local businesses, raising profile, foot traffic and destination shopping. This approach has made the BID very successful in my view," she says.

"Most recently, the (OBA) team has impressed with its COVID response. It has stayed abreast of all the issues and of the support available to businesses and workers and really went the extra mile to support its members and businesses to weather the storm."

Christine points to OBA's major BID programme expansion in 2014 as a stand-out achievement.

"This took (OBA) from a medium-sized, retail-focused organisation to one with more than 3500 members. The wider catchment of commercial and light industrial firms range from one-man outfits to those with national and sometimes international reach.

"This means the BID is well resourced to offer useful services like security to local businesses to cross-promote activities and to advocate authoritatively.

"Events have offered opportunities for the BID to anchor promotions to particular communities via ethnic and Pacific media among other channels.

"Ōtāhuhu is certainly now a place that Samoan and Tongan communities look to buy clothing and other items, ready for White Sunday celebrations.

"Similarly, a car yard promotion raised the profile of the area as a place to visit to buy and service vehicles, hopefully also providing spill over to local food and hospitality businesses," she says.



Richette Rodger (*fourth from left*) leads Ōtāhuhu's BID programme team.



There's a lot to love about Ōtāhuhu.



[Transformation takes shape in Ōtāhuhu town centre.](#)

Ōtāhuhu now boasts its first shared walking-cycling path in Station Road, wider pavements, new native trees, rain gardens for filtering stormwater and new street furniture, including seating and light columns.



"Promotions which magnify our points of difference have been successful," says Christine.

"The high profile Ōtāhuhu Food Festival grows year-on-year and attracts food providers and visitors from across Auckland, cementing the reputation of a place to visit if you are looking for a range of Asian and Pacific foods, in particular."



Whakaotinga tahi: He ohaoha ā-rohe māia, toitū hoki

Outcome one: A confident and sustainable local economy

Futureproof new developments to sustain economic expansion	Support business improvement districts to promote town centres as safe, unique destinations, and increasing visitors to our lively markets, ethnic eateries and emerging café culture
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The new Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board 2020 lists as an opportunity “Unlock high-quality jobs in our area through aligning with Auckland Unlimited’s strategies in collaboration with The Southern Initiative (TSI).”

We asked Christine O’Brien how she saw this working in practice.

“Our local board area is about 75% Māori and Pasifika and has one of the younger, if not the youngest, population in Auckland.

“Along with the other Manukau Ward local boards, we were a pioneer of the *Youth Connections* programme. We have invested considerable time and money trying to support young people in our area to be well placed for work and for businesses to become youth-friendly,” she said.

“We worked to fund match young people starting on the driver licence journey, for example, and supported Job Fests.

“We have advocated for our young people to government, wider council and community, and continue on those paths albeit in slightly different ways due to changes within the council family.

“We have supported the strategic work of TSI about good incomes and building careers for our young people and are always keen to explore ways to expand the knowledge gained from these pilots. We’re hugely supportive of local procurement and that has been a constant theme for us in discussions with all parties for many years now. It’s been great to see council on that journey.”

We also asked Christine what she expected BID-operating business associations to do to “unlock the potential of the Māori economy by supporting Māori business initiatives and economic aspirations.”

“This is a priority in our local board’s 2020 plan. A key here, I believe, is to build partnerships and genuine relationships with mana whenua and mataawaka, but particularly *te hou kāinga*, to understand their aspirations from the get-go and then work to support those aspirations in practice.

“There has also been some work done, particularly within the former TSI and ATEED ambits, alongside local marae and business planning. Local boards have a role to play making links between all parties, programmes and local BIDs,” she said.



Auckland Transport constructed a new, fully-integrated bus-train station at the existing Ōtāhuhu railway station to provide better connected and more frequent public transport services. Watch the [video](#)



We asked Christine how the local board advocated to central government to improve economic outcomes for the rohe's people - Māori and Pasifika, in particular.

"We take every opportunity offered us," she replied, highlighting the board's collaborative approach.

"These might include those offered by being part of the council family – advocating, submitting on legislation, joining in research that might then be used to attract funding or systemic change.

"For example, we're busy building relationships with government departments and influencing policy or attracting initiatives into our area. We advocate via local MPs and directly to relevant cabinet ministers.

"Also, we seek to ensure that central government changes which might benefit our people, are then made operational here and that locals understand how they might engage directly."

Christine points to the driver licence initiative, *Behind the Wheel*, when the local board worked with government agencies (ACC, Education and Police) and Auckland Transport.

"The programme was funded to prepare young people and their families at little or no cost to get licensed and to drive safely.

"This prepared young people for work and kept them out of the justice system. This was successfully migrated to becoming an entirely community-led programme and a version is still offered in the area."

She explains that the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board keeps abreast of Government developments and then, during planning, members inspect their local board toolkit to see how they might amplify or complement such work.

"We have also supported social enterprise networks, local economic development forums and networks, and local entrepreneurship including in the arts.

"This has included Māori businesses and young Māori entrepreneurship. We are also supportive of local groups, such as the Tongan Business Network."