



## Ōrewa – building more than sandcastles

We covered everything from Marketview reports to sandcastle competitions and even the sex of Santa when we ventured north to the Hibiscus Coast to meet up with Ōrewa Town Centre Manager **Hellen Wilkins**, *pictured*.



With nearly six years' experience managing Ōrewa's BID programme, Hellen can speak with authority, including how to get the most from Marketview reports.

And she can fairly offer constructive criticism when the new format doesn't meet her exacting requirements.

"I use the (Marketview) reports extensively," she said. "While they continue to be a great help, the new format doesn't clearly set out the local vs international spend.

"If nothing else (in their current format) they highlight the peaks and troughs, and identify where any seepage of business is going. We can then tailor and target our marketing to bring back business to Ōrewa which is a destination in its own right.

"I couldn't do without Marketview," said Hellen, who closely monitors not only Ōrewa's consumer spending statistics, but those of her neighbouring competition such as the emerging retail areas of Silverdale and Stanmore Bay.

"In addition to our standard members' welcome pack, I share the reports with new businesses to the town centre.

"I also use them to prove the revenue-boosting impact of events and promotions to sceptical business owners. The numbers speak for themselves as the temporary loss of parking spaces outside shops are more than compensated for in ringing tills," said the experienced events manager.

Consumer spending in Ōrewa has risen by 16% during the five-year period between the last two Censuses (2013 and 2018).

The hospitality sector in Ōrewa has grown by 8.9% over the past year. Retail, on the other hand, has fallen 5%.

The professional services share of the total spend is up while online sales are also growing along with the number of digital-based businesses.



Ōrewa has a proud track record of running successful, environmentally friendly programmes despite the escalating costs of delivering 'zero waste' events.

"Our 2018 Boulevard Arts Fiesta was a standout with 87 per cent diversion of waste away from landfill. (see images)

"We traditionally reach out to our community and leverage the power of fund raising volunteers to man the labour-intensive recycling stations," Hellen said.



**Destination Ōrewa Beach plans to factor in the costs of being zero waste-compliant when it renegotiates its partnership funding agreement with the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board next year.**

The "Longest Dinner" promotion in March – a collaborative event featuring local restaurants – also has an understated objective of limiting food waste.



As Ōrewa's iconic sandcastle competition enters its fifth year, the rules are changing to address the fact that it was becoming a victim of its own popularity.

"We're now capping the number of entries after judging last year took an hour and a half!

"We will have two categories: novice and experienced, and there will be plenty of sand available as we'll truck in more."



The Boulevard Buskers Festival, *pictured left*, is another drawcard on Ōrewa's burgeoning events calendar.

"Events are a pivotal part of our strategy to draw visitors from near and far to Ōrewa which is just 20 minutes north of Auckland's harbour bridge," Hellen said.

"Our businesses need foot traffic and we can deliver customers throughout the year with a diverse offering ranging from buskers to building sandcastles and the big man in red at the Santa Parade."

On a final note, we asked Hellen what she looked for in a Santa.

"A man definitely," she replied. "We've got ourselves a good one – local, retired, Police-checked and he donates his time Santa-ering for community group Christmas parties!"