



*Gateway to the Waitakeres*

Jennifer Conlon, pictured, took up the part-time contract role to manage Glen Eden's BID programme in 2014.

Two years later, she single-handedly doubled the BID boundary area.

We spoke to Jen about the BID expansion experience and her current challenges.

## BID expansion a DIY job for Jen

From conducting surveys, door-knocking, marketing and liaising with council and electoral agents, Jennifer (Jen) Conlon did it all, successfully expanding Glen Eden's business improvement district while all the while, keeping the BID programme running.

That was 2016 and, two years on, we asked Jen what difference the bigger BID has made to the socio-economic prosperity of the town centre, dubbed the 'Gateway to the Waitākeres'.

"While the BID effectively doubled in size, it's still small in scale and value," said Jen, who works only 20 hours a week.

"The BID now covers all retail premises, but not the industrial area outside the town centre.

"The annual BID targeted rate went from \$42,000 to \$92,000. The extra money funds additional CCTV security and a new annual event, *Wheels Out West*," she said.

In fine 'bogan' tradition, the till-ringing event celebrates westies' love of all things on wheels, from vintage cars and bikes to go karts and skateboards.

Thousands flocked to this April's gig.



“There is a lot of development happening and planned within the town centre with mixed-use developments (2 x 10 storey apartments within the BID boundary), combining affordable, eco-friendly apartments with ground floor retail will bring new businesses and shoppers,” said Jen, who is working with social agencies.

Glen Eden Business Association spends about a quarter of its BID targeted rate on CCTV. An expanded BID area means more CCTV coverage required.

“We installed a 64-channel server in 2017 to cope with the expanded coverage. Later, we installed four new digital cameras into the expanded BID area, with more planned this year. We also have a number of older analogue cameras in the original BID area that are on a replacement programme.”



The Waitākere-Ranges Local Board (WRLB) area extends from Whatipu and Titirangi in the south, to Waitākere and O'Neill Bay in the north. Retail is a minor part of the local economy and Glen Eden is the only BID located within this local board area.

WRLB has a representative, Steve Tollestrup, who attends monthly BID meetings. The local board's chair, Greg Presland, also sits on the committee in his capacity as a local business owner.

While, the Waitākere-Ranges Local Board Plan 2017 understandably prioritises environmental protection over economic development, it supports urban centres (see excerpt below). The amount of \$500,000 has been allocated to a revitalisation programme that will focus on capital works and town square concepts with the idea to progress further as more funds become available.



Glen Eden is our area's only town centre. We are committed to making significant improvements, with a town square following the 2016 upgrade of the library courtyard being planned for the central area.

The town centre already has many assets, including the excellent library, a number of up-and-coming businesses and an active business association, with which we will partner to help the township more actively and attractively promote what it has to offer.

In improving the look and feel of Glen Eden's public spaces, we hope to encourage better use of retail spaces to attract economic growth and support existing businesses to make the most of the opportunities Glen Eden offers.

In 2017 the WRLB funded the development of a business-attracting prospectus, similar to that which Papakura Business Association has produced and are currently undertaking a business attraction survey.

- For more on the Glen Eden BID, visit <http://www.glenedenvillage.co.nz>