

View from the Chair – Margaret Holmes



www.pukekohe.org.nz

Voice of business in Pukekohe

Pukekohe Business Association Chair Margaret Holmes, pictured, says the creation of Auckland Council in 2010 gave the town centre in Auckland’s rural south the impetus to become a BID.

Chartered accountant and IT enthusiast, Margaret was elected to the business association’s board as Chair in 2009. “Back then we were funded by an annual \$30,000 grant from Franklin District Council, plus some sponsorship and members’ fees. Together, these funded Christmas events.

“I was inspired to get involved with the organisation to ensure the interests of business in Pukekohe were properly represented and to ensure local business continued to thrive, particularly as local government reorganisation was under discussion at the time.

“The merger of the councils in 2010 gave us the impetus to become a BID the following year, 2011. It also gave a driving cause, being the voice of businesses in Pukekohe. We were very grateful for the support we got from the council’s BID team in this process,” she says.

Successfully lobbying the new, unified council on a range of regulatory and financial matters has been one of the BID’s significant achievements to date.

Margaret says another highlight has been establishing the [Pukekohe Best in Business Awards](#).

“Our first event was run in 2012, with a cocktail party and 220 attending.

“Our most recent event had 80 businesses nominated, 60 entrants and 420 attendees at our annual black-tie dinner,” she says.



“We were very fortunate to secure Kendyl.”

Margaret Holmes pays tribute to Pukekohe’s BID Manager, Kendyl Sullivan, with whom she’s worked for over six years.



Kendyl Sullivan

“Kendyl’s smart, has a great work ethic and has really grown into the role.

“Her strongest skill is probably the ability to communicate well with everyone, she has built strong relationships with the local board, council, our local constabulary, businesses and the community,” says Margaret.

Another success story has been the strong working relationship with the Franklin Local Board on a variety of issues affecting the town, including CCTV and public transport.

“Being a town centre within a rural area makes Pukekohe a little different from most other business districts and presents a fair share of challenges,” she says.

“One of our biggest is the diversity of the 800 potential members, including retailers, professional services, manufacturing, rural support services, construction and property investors. We work very hard to ensure that they all benefit from the opportunities we offer.

“The distance from the decision-makers in central Auckland creates a risk that they are unaware of the impact of their decisions on the rural sector. We’re fortunate that we have a great local board and councillor to amplify our issues at council.

“A further challenge is ensuring that Pukekohe doesn’t lose its rural roots as it grows.”

Being country at heart hasn’t stopped Pukekohe from becoming city smart.

“One of our early achievements was the provision of free Wi-Fi in the town centre. This was partially driven by the belief that technology was a great way for us to encourage people in to the retail areas and get them to stay longer,” says the self-confessed ‘inner geek’ who will step down at this month’s AGM (October).

“From a strategic perspective, I’ve been fortunate to have a great board over the years who’ve shared a long-term vision for the area and the PBA. We’re all passionate about Pukekohe and ensuring it remains a great place to live.” Pukekohe’s greatest opportunity is where it sits in the triangle framed by Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton, according to Margaret.

“It makes us perfectly positioned to provide support services to the wider rural sector and attract investment for sector support services,” she says.

“With the local population expected to grow to 50,000 by 2030 (up from 30,000 currently), there are many issues facing our business community. These include ensuring as many residents as possible have local employment and do business locally.”

“We’ve produced the [Pukekohe Prospectus](#) which is designed to bring more investment to the area and provide local employment opportunities, for both new residents and our young people.”

The recently refreshed Franklin Local Board Plan 2017-20 acknowledges the importance of a thriving and sustainable local economy.

The Pukekohe Business Association will shortly begin a full review and update of its own strategic plan.

“Our newly elected board will be responsible for driving the latest initiatives,” says Margaret Holmes.



PUKEKOHE
City Smart Country Heart

