



Laila Harré

[UPTOWN](#)

Neil O'Connor

[PAPAKURA](#)

From the chairs

For a governance perspective on the BID programme, Paul Thompson will be interviewing several business association chairs during 2017.

He travelled to Papakura and Eden Terrace (Uptown) this month to interview Neil O'Connor and Laila Harré to gain their respective insights.

From *Proud Papakura, Proud to Up for it Uptown*, read about what they had to say.

Progressive BID builds brand

Laila Harré is starting her second year as Chair of the emerging Uptown business improvement district, a year when plans are put into action.

The well-known politician is putting her governance skills to good use leading a progressive executive committee that's committed to building the Uptown brand.



“For an area like ours, our role is to be proactive about developing our identity,” says the businesswoman whose restaurant Ika faces the vibrant *Magma* mural at the top of Mt Eden Road (*see separate story*).

“The Sara Hughes mural over the road had been talked about for years and it’s finally happened thanks to a great team effort. We’ve got a fantastic committee on board with a great range of skills and a shared focus,” says Laila.

“Auckland’s growth presents opportunities and challenges. As a business district, we’re growing in a deliberate and strategic way and we welcome the new businesses – and residents – that Uptown attracts.

“No longer a ‘drive through’, we’re a destination with a progressive, innovative outlook reflected in our brand – *Uptown, up for it.*”

Laila acknowledges the strong relationship with the Waitemata Local Board which she says has consistently and positively engaged with Uptown. With Uptown’s proposed expansion due to go to a ballot in early March, the BID programme’s expansion would include new members located in the area defined by Dominion Rd, Brentwood Ave, Sylvan Ave, Mt Eden Rd, Normanby Rd and the Southern Motorway, which crosses over and includes the neighbouring Albert-Eden Local Board area.

Proud Papakura, Proud

Neil O’Connor is beginning his second year as Chair of the [Papakura Business Association](#), a rare achievement for the entity that’s recovering well from a turbulent past.



Like everyone else who serves on a business association committee, Neil’s is a voluntary position which, during four years on the board has, at times, felt more like a tour of duty than a labour of love.

Neil is rightly proud of the association’s turnaround and the strong performance of the southern town centre’s BID programme under the management of Tracy Shackleton.

“We’re achieving consistency at the governance level with a more stable committee and a more positive relationship with our new local board and the council’s governing body,” says the long-time business owner and community volunteer.

“As a committee, we’ve recently completed the annual review of our strategic plan, the key theme of which is *Safe and Welcoming Papakura*. Following extensive community engagement last year, including a series of workshops with key stakeholders, we launched a new initiative called *Proud*

Papakura, Proud. We're working closely with our local businesses and community partners including the Police, Papakura Marae, our local board members, city councillors and MP.

"We're close to signing an MOU with the Police, sealing a closer relationship which includes relocating our business association-owned CCTV surveillance system to the Wood St police station and involving local Crimewatch volunteers.

"Papakura is a growing, increasingly urban district although we're keen to celebrate our rural roots and the rich military history of the town.

"We're also keen to promote our cultural diversity with a Spring Carnival-themed street party, including having local youth hip-hop and rap artists performing. We're currently working closely with the council on a pre-cursor event on the eighth of April promoting shared space use within our town centre.

"Respect is a two-way street and we're working hard to connect with our young people, our strong and proactive Maori community and migrants.

"We're Proud Papakura, Proud," says Neil.