

## View from the Chair: Peter Lamberton, Business North Harbour



As Executive Committee Chair, Peter forms a strong partnership with General Manager Janine Brinsdon, pictured, and her team.



### Streamlining governance working well

[Business North Harbour](#) streamlined its governance structure at its last AGM, reducing the number of board members from 13 to nine, and retaining just one of its four sub-committees.

ASB Commercial Manager **Peter Lamberton**, *pictured*, was elected to chair the growing business association board in October 2017, just one year after joining the BID's governing body.

Following a stakeholder-backed governance review, Peter says the board structure changed in several ways, enhancing cohesion and developing greater skill-sets for board members.

"We implemented the changes at our last AGM, reducing the number of board members from 13 to the current level of nine and quickly removed the sub-committees, except for finance.

"Thirteen was appropriate when there were four sub-committees meeting regularly, however the sub-committees had the delegated authority of the board to make various decisions and their recommendations were coming to the board for signoff and ratifications," he says.

"If you were passionate about a matter, but not on that particular sub-committee, it felt like you had limited input in some important decision-making. The other drawback as I saw it was you were placed in a sub-committee that matched your strengths, however this was not always developing a wider skill-set for board members.

"My view was that all board members should be across all issues and involved in all governance discussions. The dissolution of the sub-committees occurred as a result.

*"The reduction in the number of board members, which coincided with changes at a board level, was a logical extension. Board meetings are now slightly longer but I know every board member is across every issue and likely to be developing their skill-sets which will benefit all parties."*



The governance-to-governance relationship between the BID-operating business association and the Upper Harbour Local Board is of growing significance.

“While we have been developing our strategic plan over the last six months, I went back into the history of BIDs how they came about and their primary purpose.

“Through that, and the mandate that we operate through with Auckland Council, *it’s clear that any strategic planning of the BID must align with that of the council and their plans must form the basis of our strategic direction.*

“We therefore have a symbiotic relationship but very closely watch the (Upper Harbour) Local Board to understand its strategic direction and how its decisions will impact our community.

“Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to meet with the local board as our diaries have not aligned, however that is to be a priority in the coming months,” Peter says.



*“It’s clear that Janine (Brinsdon) has done an amazing job over a number of years, however what the board had failed to provide her with was any strategic direction of what we would like to be in three, five or ten years.”*

“That places the organisation in a difficult position because if the board can’t articulate the plan, how can management do anything other than what they have previously done? We are still developing the plan but it’s coming along nicely, and that clarity is enlightening for all.”



Business North Harbour’s slogan ‘together stronger’ is a collaborative catch cry.

“I have always loved simplicity and my personal view is if you can’t explain it so a seven-year-old will understand it you probably don’t know it well enough. *Together stronger* reinforces that collectively we can achieve more with better outcomes for all.

“Our role as a BID is to return benefits to businesses in the form of advocacy and enhanced trading space. Specifically, we advocate on key projects affecting business in our BID to Council and Government as the majority of our members don’t have the capability to do so. We speak with a collective voice and are resourced to do so and consult widely to ensure we have the finger on our members’ views. Secondly, we focus business capability training and networking opportunities in their various forms. This comprises about 75% of our resources.”

Transport Minister Phil Twyford is addressing the North Harbour business community at a sold-out lunchtime event this month.

We asked Peter Lamberton what messages BNH wanted the minister to take away.

“We want him to understand that business is generally supportive of initiatives that the government has proposed to address issues within Auckland. Also, that the North Shore strongly contributes to Auckland growth but does have some infrastructural challenges around feeder routes to major transport hubs which will need to be addressed and are holding back our development.”

**HON PHIL TWYFORD**  
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR  
AUCKLAND AND NORTH HARBOUR  
15 June 2018 • 12.30 – 1pm



**The Government’s recent announcement of its \$28B regional transport programme has attracted considerable comment from business groups across Auckland.**

Peter Lamberton takes a city-wide view of Auckland’s biggest issue – and opportunity.

“There are 48 BIDs in Auckland and we all have a slightly jaundiced view of where money should be spent depending on who we are representing and so it’s easy to default into what is in the plan for our own business district.

“I would like to think we take more of a leadership role,” he says.

“Auckland’s transport problems are legacy related issues which have manifested itself over decades due to a lack of this type of vision. This programme shows a commitment to address that issue and start. I think it’s extremely positive and am supportive of the programme.

“Our own submission raised several matters for consideration which are important to our members,” he said.

**What would Peter say to someone thinking of stepping up to serve on a BID board?**

“Go for it. You meet great people all of whom are involved for the right reasons which is to improve the status quo. It’s inspiring to be around people who want to make a difference and are engaged with a community based not on profit,” he says.

“It enhances skill sets. My experience has been overwhelmingly positive, however there are times when you have to make difficult decisions and that is part of the role of governance.”

Peter estimates that the time commitment required of a board member is about five hours a month, and 10 hours for a chair. He points out that it depends a lot on two factors: a competent (BID) manager and a clear demarcation between management and governance.