



‘Toe toughing it out

We visited the slowly regenerating Papatoetoe town centre to catch up with manager, **Rana Judge**, *pictured above left*, and find out how the southern BID’s planning to move onto the front foot following almost three years of upheaval.



“We’re on the back foot,” was Rana’s diplomatic summation of protracted delays in the drive to renew the tired, ‘Old Papatoetoe’ shopping precinct.

Empty shops and minimal shoppers are the result of both a declining streetscape coupled with more than a year-and-a-half of setbacks in the [‘Unlock Old Papatoetoe’](#) project.

Rana, however, retains faith in the benefits that the redevelopment will bring to the south Auckland suburb.

“We’ve lost over a year in the process with things not quite going to plan,” he said in a classic understatement.

Celebrations are planned to promote the re-opening of anchor tenant, New World, around Easter – a major milestone in the project.

“We expect that many shoppers will return (to the town centre) when the new-look supermarket opens its doors.

“As for the other vacant shops, we hope the higher rents won’t prevent retailers from coming back,” he added.

Officially known as the Papatoetoe Central Mainstreet Society, this business association runs one of two BID programmes in Papatoetoe (the other – [Hunters Corner](#) – is managed by Donna Lee.)



Old Papatoetoe's business logo depicts a train; heritage is celebrated and promoted by Rana, who also runs the Ōtara Shopping Centre's BID programme.

"We supported the local historical society's resource consent application for the coffee shop at the heritage railway station (pictured). It's a drawcard and helps symbolise our town centre."

The downturn in Old Papatoetoe's retail scene was exacerbated by increases in crime, numbers of homeless people and intimidating (car) window washers, Rana reports.

Last year, we interviewed [Rana](#) and Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board's [Ross Robertson](#) regarding the strategic alignment and close working relationship between BID and (local) board.

In a local board-funded initiative last year, Rana hired a security officer to monitor CCTV coverage of both Old Papatoetoe and Ōtara.

"We get really good support (from Ō-PLB) for various initiatives, including our Santa Parade – the second biggest such event (after the central city's Farmers-sponsored Christmas parade).

As we reported last July, Rana founded the Indian Wardens (pictured right), a community safety initiative based on the Māori warden scheme.

"Papatoetoe used to be a really good place and, hopefully, it will become so again, with our customers coming back and new shoppers too."

