



Community safety, cultural inclusion

The Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board often seeks the assistance of experienced town centre manager Rana Judge, *pictured*, to deliver an innovative range of socio-economic programmes and events.

We spoke with Rana, manager of the Ōtara and 'Old Papatoetoe' BID programmes, about two of the local board-backed initiatives: April's Cultural Diversity Festival and the Community Safety Action Group (CSAG).

Diversity is a strength of both Ōtara and Papatoetoe.

A melting pot of languages, religions and cultures, this is an accepting, caring and proud community.

The Cultural Diversity Festival celebrated this community.



Rana Judge with Local Board Chair Lotu Fuli.

Organised by Rana's Ōtara Business Association, the ethnically rich, family-friendly festival was held at Manukau's Hayman Park in early April. Rana lead a team of dedicated locals who assembled local cultural groups to perform and create learning stations about each culture.

As Lotu Fuli, Chair of the Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board said, *"the festival is just one of the many ways that our local board hopes to build more connectedness in our community. Events like this can empower our local community by celebrating the diversity of our area."* [READ MORE](#)

Rana said an estimated 5000 people took the opportunity to enjoy a free day out with the family to watch cultural performances, taste exotic foods, take part in traditional games, learn about other cultures and meet other locals.

"Manukau is a very multicultural town and this was an opportunity for people to explore that," said the father-of-three and a respected leader in the Sikh community.

With its \$30,000 support, the local board expects the event won't be a one-off and hopes it will become an annual affair, with the capacity to grow it and invest more into future festivals after this year's premiere.

The Community Safety Action Group (CSAG) is another Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board initiative, with the catch cry, *“Take Back Your Community: Communities in Action!”*

Originally piloted in Ōtara back in 2012, the Papatoetoe-based version is a community-wide effort with the local board and business association partnering with the police, council, church groups and even the World Council of Sikh Affairs.



Officially launched at the Papatoetoe Town Hall in June, CSAG answered the community's call for help in the fight against aggravated robberies and other serious crime.

Town centre vitality and security was at risk, said Rana, wearing his BID manager hat (turban).

He acknowledged the leadership of the Indian business community and the many volunteers, some of whom formed the Indian Wardens, a community safety initiative based on the Maori warden scheme.

“Given that Papatoetoe’s multi-cultural population includes many people of Indian descent, it was only fitting that our people answer the call of the community at large,” Rana said.

“Our Police are so under-resourced and overloaded with their normal duties, so we realised it was time for us to step up and help. The response to our call for volunteers was overwhelming.”

The dozen Indian Wardens patrol at both Old Papatoetoe and Hunters Corner.

Chaired by Rana, the CSAG meets at the town hall on the first Tuesday of the month.

