



New team taking Remuera forward

Cecilia Ngo and **Shelley McArthur-Dye** joined Remuera Business Association within weeks of each other late last year and have quickly formed a formidable team.

Established in 1997, the town centre's BID programme had been run by Laura Carr for the past seven years.

Business Development Manager Cecilia (*right*) and Administration Officer Shelley (*far right*) faced the busy Christmas-New Year period. They held the first Paws and Santa event in the Remuera Village Green.



This was swiftly followed by the Chinese New Year festival in February. With sponsorship from Barfoot & Thompson and the Ōrākei Local Board, they hosted a colourful array of entertainment to welcome in the Year of the Dog.



More than 500 gathered to watch dragon dancing (*see right*), Kung Fu performances, Asian food stalls all held in St Vincent Avenue to Chinese tea tasting, face painting, lantern making, calligraphy, games and fortune telling held in the Remuera Library.

Cecilia and Shelley had applied some lessons learned from the previous year, repositioning food vendors and others to ensure the event flowed better. During and post-event, they interviewed participants and locals to get their feedback.



They have already started work planning for the mid-year Bastille Day event (*right*), including sourcing sponsorship for travel and other prizes.



In the [Ōrākei Local Board Plan 2017](#), the board promotes a thriving economy which supports local businesses and town centres.

The board says, *“it’s important that these centres maximise their potential, are attractive and continue to offer a diverse range of retail options, services and experiences for residents and visitors to enjoy.”* [SEE ROS RUNDLE’S VIEW.](#)

“We will continue to support BIDs and business associations. We want to work with our business areas to help strengthen our town centres to ensure they thrive and prosper.”

The Remuera retail strip currently has a 7.2% vacancy rate, a figure the business association is keen to reduce.

One of the business association’s initiatives last year was to develop a retail precinct plan, designed to ‘reinvigorate Remuera’. It identified those brands/businesses the RBA wanted to attract and, partnering with property owners, created a vision of what Remuera might become within 5-10 years.

Says Cecilia, “Our current challenge is working with landlords and leasing agents to bring these businesses to the shopping precinct. This is a slow process but we’re positive about regeneration.

“Working alongside Auckland Council and private business people who are investing in Remuera, we will continue to leverage all opportunities to promote the area and improve the experience for locals and visitors,” she says.

Together, Shelley and Cecilia are harnessing the power of social media and more traditional communications channels to market the retail heart of the affluent, leafy suburb.

Their local board, meanwhile, continues to work with Remuera and Ōrākei’s other BIDs on town centre activities and help them evaluate the economic impact of events on these areas.

