

Chair Report 2022-2023

The year started with supporting our new town manager into her role which she settled into very quickly.

Christmas parade was upon us before we knew it. The evening parade got postponed to the Sunday because of the rain but Waiuku came out on the Sunday to enjoy the festival and parade.

With the Steel n Wheels event back on in April it became clear that Vanessa (Town Manager) was going to need support. So, we undertook hiring an assistant town manager (Michelle) for 15 hours a week for three months leading up to the event and contracted someone to organise the markets and stall holders. We still managed to redeem the cost of the contractor and still made some more on top of that to support the future of the event.

After the Steel n Wheels event it was decided to keep the assistant town manager on, as she was great with social media, with people and encouraging businesses to attend our business resilience workshop and member's connective events in July. Michelle has been doing a great job with our website, social media, organising events and volunteers and bringing on new associate members.

Although lockdowns and Covid-19 are of less importance this year, we are now looking at the downturn of the economy with the reserve bank increasing interest rates, meaning people with mortgages have less fluidity with spending, and the increasing costs of essential living items, which has put a halt on spending.

The economic downturn has not been the only thing affecting our businesses who recovered totally from the previous year's lockdowns. There was the opening of the borders, meaning people were free to travel again, leading to spending overseas opposed to locally, which has also had an effect.

On a positive note, tourism in our town is increasing with the ever growing Castaways Development bringing people out this way for the weekend who frequently come into town for supplies and to shop.

The Landlord maintenance subsidy initiative to clean up building facades was taken up by some. We have also been active with landlords over safety of veranda structures in town.

Council street lighting and under veranda lighting have been a priority, following a few outages, for the safety and security of our businesses and their customers, and to provide good visibility for our town centre cameras. We previously provided an under-veranda lighting subsidy for those needing upgrades, which again was taken up by some.

I would like to thank the Executive Committee for their voluntary time and input in steering the WB&DA team through 2022/2023. We really appreciate your support on the committee, especially when you also had to keep your own businesses ticking along.

I would also like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the Franklin Local Board for their support throughout the year and for the "Community and Placemaking Grant" that has enabled the WB&DA to provide a range of initiatives and events and funding to help keep our town a safe, attractive place to shop.

I would also like to acknowledge Vanessa and Michelle for their dedication to their job advocating for and supporting our business community and the wider community.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with our business community to ensure that Waiuku remains "a great place to shop locally."

Yours Sincerely

Julie Powell

Chair of WBDA