

## Chris Mitchell – Mayoral Candidate

### Economic Development

- 1. What is your understanding of the Kotahitanga Board and the role that they play? Should they be independent?** My understanding is based on its website. It should be independent of Council and privately funded. I do not support the Council making or participating in decisions on strategy or priorities for economic development in the broad sense. The Council's involvement should be limited to enabling and or removing barriers to development which brings benefits to the communities it serves. It should not be in the business of picking winners or investing in private initiatives.
- 2. Kāpiti Chamber values town centres as vital contributors to our local economic system. What examples of benefits have you seen from town centres?** I agree that the potential for town centres to contribute to vibrant local communities and economies is high, and something which should be supported by Council enabling renewal and redevelopment through good regulatory policies (eg zoning) and appropriate network and community infrastructure. However, with the partial exceptions of Otaki, Paraparaumu Beach and possibly Raumati our town centres are in relative decline, with little evidence of new investment. I do not regard the Coastlands precinct as a town centre, though it is a dominant retail and service centre.
- 3. How do you plan to support and grow town centres, and their relationship to the economic development team and wider business community?** These are fundamentally business decisions. I see the Council's main contributions to town centres as providing good infrastructure and attractive and welcoming public spaces. In some cases mixed use zoning (leveraging intensification zoning) will be a good way of bringing people into the town centres. This will include Council participation in major greenfield developments to ensure provision for local businesses to operate.
- 4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the Tourist Advisory Board and their relationship with Wellington NZ and KCDC?** My comments above apply. I do not see a major role for Council in tourism promotion. Again, doing its core functions to a high standard, removing unnecessary obstacles, and encouraging dialogue are things the Council should do.
- 5. What are the opportunities around tourism in Kāpiti?** In my view, Kapiti's greatest attractions are natural and highly accessible. It has the best and safest beaches south of the Bay of Plenty, and great walking, cycling and outdoor opportunities. The more social infrastructure there is (good public transport, accommodation and food) the more tourism will grow.

### Better Infrastructure

- 6. What role do you think KCDC plays in the Peka Peka Interchange?** As part of its partnership with NZTA/WK Council should be insisting on the Pekapeka interchange.

Apart from servicing growing local communities, it unlocks the potential for growth in the Waikanae North area.

- 7. KCDC has been making strategic housing purchases. What are your thoughts on KCDC as a housing provider or facilitator? What does intensification mean to you, and how do you think it could change Kāpiti?** I do not think that Council should be providing housing or buying land for housing. Social housing is a Government responsibility. The increases in rates that will be required for Council to become a financial backer will end up hurting the very people (those on limited incomes) it is designed to help.
- 8. As it stands, KCDC has funding to move forward with Te Uruhi. This has been a big talking point in our business community and membership. Assuming it goes ahead, what impact do you foresee the gateway having on business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region?** If elected I will work to ensure that this project does not go ahead. It is a symptom of everything wrong with Council governance – ideologically driven, lacking community support, poorly planned and unaffordable.
- 9. What do you think are the opportunities for business if the Kāpiti Airport stays an airport, or if it gets developed?** I do not see any likelihood that the airport will remain in operation. Its commercial viability is entirely a matter for the private owners of the land, and they have presented compelling evidence that there is no business case for the retention of the airport. Once the airport is closed, the future development of the land (which Council has so far chosen to ignore) creates huge opportunities for the Kapiti Coast District, and the Council should be closely involved in the Templeton proposals.

## Future thinking

- 10. What actions should KCDC be taking to support businesses to become climate friendly?** I don't see this as a Council responsibility. Of course the Council can contribute to discussions and share information, but incentives, assistance or regulation are off the table.
- 11. How do you envision the relationship between local iwi and KCDC operating in the future?** The current relationship is misconceived. The 'iwi partners' relationship which headlines virtually every communication from Council completely misses the obligation (under the Local Government Act) to enhance the participation of Maori in decision making. The 3 iwi account for barely 15% of the Maori population, the other 85% being largely ignored along with the rest of the population. This doesn't mean that the relationships should be abandoned, but it needs to be kept in the context of an organisation whose statutory purpose is *democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities*. We need to do more to strengthen relationships with all Maori and all communities – not pick and choose who we want to talk to.
- 12. Summarise your understanding of the following reforms: Three Waters Reform and Local Government Reform. How do you plan to keep Kāpiti's voice strong**

**throughout these changes and advocate for our business community?** I don't think it's necessary to summarise these Government proposals, both of which are in flux. In its current form I oppose the 3 waters reforms, and would urge the Government to think again about measures which would assist with the range and variety of different issues around the country, in place of a one size fits all approach delivered by a range of large bureaucracies. In terms of local government reform, both 3 waters and the proposed RMA replacements (currently NBA, SPA and CAA) strongly suggest that the roles of local government will be significantly changed. Recently the PM has stated that reform of local government will only proceed if the sector wants it.

**13. What is your vision for Kāpiti, and how do you intend to implement it? Name three visionary actions you aspire to implement?** I'm not a believer in grand personal visions. I would like to head a Council that is worthy of the wonderful communities it exists to serve: that is, an organisation committed to excellent and affordable services; that listens to and respects the views of all its communities; where a strong service ethic is forefront in all decision making. This may all sound obvious, but many would agree with me that it would be a transformational change.

**14. How do you plan on being a visible and accessible leader for our council and community?** I will be different in this way: I will never refuse to meet with people and community groups who disagree with me, and I will never disparage or disrespect people who have different views or priorities. Being a good leader is foremost about bring people together, resolving differences and being true to the values you preach.