

## LGNZ Conference 2022

Kaupapa | Theme: Te Wā Heke Mai - The Future

This was my first attendance at a LGNZ Conference, and am grateful to have been able to attend on behalf of our Council. Prior to the pōhiri for Te Maruata, we were alerted of a planned protest which saw a small vocal group protesting outside the venue. Police and security were heightened to ensure the safety of the delegates, guests and Minister Mahuta. There were five of us in attendance at Te Maruata from Rotorua|Te Arawa including Cr Trevor Maxwell, Jude Pani (Te Tatau), Geoff Rolleston (Te Tatau) and Te Taru White (BOPRC). Cr Dave Donaldson, Mayor Steve Chadwick and CEO Geoff Williams were in attendance at the Conference, representing Rotorua Lakes Council. Cr Tania Tapsell was also in attendance in her capacity as the Deputy Chairman of the Community Boards Executive Committee.

### Te Maruata

The pōhiri for Te Maruata was held the day before the Conference officially started. Ngāti Rangitāne supported by their rangatahi hosted with mana and manaaki tāngata.

The conference name for 2022 was *Te Wā Heke Mai - The Future*, and a statement that resonated with me after attending Te Maruata was “Kia kawea ngā wāwata o ērā kei te haere tonu mai” meaning that as elected members of our Councils, we are charged with “Conveying the aspirations of future generations” in all that we do. *Mokopuna Decisions*.



Te Maruata was attended by its largest contingent of Māori elected delegates in history. And the mood of the room became even more ecstatic knowing that there will be even more Māori at the table, come 8 October 2022. Te Maruata Chair, Cr Bonita Bigham informed the delegation that Te Maruata will welcome dual chairmanship roles this year, having Mana Wahine and Mana Tane Chairs. Te Āhuru Mōwai (A Safe Haven) was also announced as a new kaupapa to help support new incoming elected members.

Dame Karen Poutasi and Cr Tipa Mahuta briefed the delegation about Taumata Arowai, and described it as the rule book of the wai sector. Dame Karen said it is ambitious, as everyone should have access to safe drinking water. It is a collective exercise where the regulator works with the people. Kei te ora te wai, kei te ora te tangata. If the water is healthy, the people are healthy.

Minister Mahuta spoke about the challenging and exciting time that lies ahead. And encouraged delegates to not be afraid of the challenges and be brave enough to look for solutions and give it a go. Mokopuna Decisions are important, we need to be great Ancestors!

Creative NZ - Toi Aotearoa followed Minister Mahuta and highlighted the fact that Local Government are the largest funders of art in communities. This came as a surprise to many in the room who thought it was Central Government.

### Ko Tātou LGNZ Conference 2022 Day 1

As a first term elected attendee it further demonstrated the importance of attending the annual LGNZ Conference, especially for newly elected members. This form of professional development is immeasurable, especially on a national scale.

The president of LGNZ, Stuart Crosby spoke about the stark reality of losing institutional knowledge with a large turnover of elected members. Some of the early findings from the Local Govt review, have found that new Councils will require modern leadership that can demonstrate high trust, a sense of belonging, and effective partnerships such as honouring Te Tiriti: Partnership, Participation + Protection.

The highlight of Day 1 was Keynote speaker Melissa Clark-Reynolds ONZM - a Futurist | Anthropologist. She was gold! Her simple statements such as; Food Production - Do less worse.



The choices that we make today will impact future generations and whether or not they will even be born. Beautiful things take time - We need to make sure we build for beauty and have multiple plans for the future. And finally another key take away - We have to strive to live a legacy and leave a legacy - Building for Futures.

### Ko Tātou LGNZ Conference 2022 Day 2

Day 2 started with the Opposition Speaker, MP Simon Watts encouraged localism and openly opposed privatisation, but then got called out for being doom and gloom by the Young Elected Members (YEM). YEM came with clear messages for local government to make Mokopuna Decisions. They stood firm with their position to Honour Te Tiriti, to empower regional governance with Māori, to demonstrate intergenerational care + respect and to realise that our new normal isn't about anyone losing but everyone gaining.

The Reimagining Local Govt Panel discussed if we believe in democracy, hand the power over to communities. And in order to unlock this potential, it should be by partnering to maximise potential. Co-governance was a topic discussed by another panel which highlighted the fact that co-governance means different things to different communities. The panel also spoke more about partnership and once again the necessity to Honour Te Tiriti and concluded that bespoke solutions were needed. Furthermore the need for Councils to know about tribal history was also emphasised. Tūwhita te hopo, mairangatia te angitū! - Feel the fear and do it anyway!

That afternoon I attended the Social Well-Being Workshop and visited the social housing project that **Palmerston North Council** have invested in. The Council owns self-contained flats in convenient locations around Palmerston North and Ashhurst. The rent is subsidised for super-annuitants and people receiving supported living payments.



### Ko Tātou LGNZ Conference 2022 Day 3

LGNZ CE - Susan Freeman-Greene spoke about when the community talk about water issues, they are really talking about the health of the community. From a cultural perspective we understand this explicitly as was mentioned by Dame Karen at Te Matuata, *Kei te ora te wai, kei te ora te tangata*.

The workshop tour I chose for Day 3 was a visit to **Food HQ**, Food Pilot + Fonterra Tour. This left me feeling immensely proud of the innovation that happens in our own backyard, connecting the science and business of food.

Professor Meihana Durie, reminded delegates that our generations of the future shouldn't inherit the burdens of the past. Cr Donaldson shared a photograph in his report that summed up this session perfectly. This session led into the Conference Dinner and Excellence Awards where Rotorua Lakes Council were highly commended in the Environment Wellbeing Category for Te Puna a Pekehaua - joint consenting with Ngāti Rangiwewehi. As a descendant of Rangiwewehi I was extremely proud to be there with Cr Maxwell, my Uncle, to represent our iwi with this acknowledgement. Ka nui te mihi ki ngā ringa raupā i hāpai i te kaupapa nei.

Cr Mercia Yates