

CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello, and welcome to the 2022 AGM of The Browns Bay Business Association. It is great to reconnect and be in a room with you all again after having to conduct our 2021 AGM online.

I can only describe the year as extremely tough, with many businesses marred by lockdowns and severe limitations on trading, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors. The impact on outlying shopping precincts such as ours has been huge, and the fallout continues. Non-essential businesses were closed between August and November 2021, effectively equating to one quarter of the year lost revenue. Auckland was hit particularly hard, remaining in the red setting of the traffic light system in the lead up to Christmas, with its north and south borders closed. This severely impacted our ability to benefit from pre-Christmas trade. We were again in red from January to April 2022, creating tremendous stress on non-essential businesses. During this period people change their shopping habits to purchase online, and those habits remain with us now. Businesses have had to adapt, and do their best to stay cater to their customers' changing shopping habits.

On a lighter note, the new half basketball court at Freyberg Park attracts a lot of use and keeps many members of our local youth busy. The library re-opened after an extensive refurbishment project in August 2021. Browns Bay town centre landscape continues to evolve with the completion of The Victor, and near completion of Kaura Apartments, bringing more residents into town. Film crews made use of our beautiful beachfront to film Shortland Street and One of Us is Lying.

East Coast Bays beaches experienced an influx of holiday season campers between Christmas and New Year, which served to remind us how lucky we are to be trading in such a beautiful part of the country. However, it also highlighted the inability of Council to enforce its own by-laws. Unfortunately the visitors did not contribute to the local economy, and deterred locals from using the beach with anti-social behaviour.

We are proud to have taken part in the Auckland-wide Whale Tales art trail, with one of the most beautiful tails in the exhibition. The sculpture was designed specifically for Browns Bay by a talented local artist, and we are delighted to have been able to acquire it at auction after the trail ended. It will remain permanently on the boardwalk for the community and visitors to enjoy.

Thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers who assisted us during the year. A special thanks to the Executive Committee members who have volunteered their time and expertise. I also thank Sally Cargill from Heart of the Bays community centre for her support in delivering Christmas events. Our Local Board representative, Alexis Poppelbaum, works tirelessly to advocate for Browns Bay, provide strategic input, and keep us informed. We are grateful to have her on the team. We also acknowledge the financial support and backing of our initiatives by Local Board. Our treasurer, Robinson & Running, have again provided exceptional service with complete transparency. Lastly, thanks to Town Manager, Kim Murdoch, for the energy and enthusiasm she brings to looking after our town centre. She has also initiated collaborations with Torbay and Mairangi Bay Business Associations through shared networking and business development meetings. We are excited to have begun working on joint opportunities to promote East Coast Bays as a beautiful and unique destination.

Malcolm McDonald