

2019 Local Elections a mixed bag for Māori in Kapiti and Horowhenua

This year's local government elections have produced a mixed bag for Kapiti and Horowhenua Māori.

The Horowhenua District Council has been heavily criticised in the past by local Māori for its lack of commitment to solving issues such as the continuing pollution at Lake Horowhenua, the environmental catastrophe that is the Hokio landfill and a failure to include Iwi and Māori appropriately in its planning processes and documents.

The 2019 local government elections provided Māori an opportunity to influence future decisions as Councillors. The Horowhenua District Council elections had 19 candidates vying for ten seats across the district (excluding the Foxton Community Board). Four of the 19 candidates were Māori and two were successful in their bid to join the Horowhenua District Council.

Local Māori businesswoman PiriHira Tukapua (Ngāti Turanga, Muaūpoko) has been elected to the Levin Ward for a third term while Robert Ketu (Ngāti Whakarete, Ngāti Takihiku, Ngāti Kuia, Tuwharetoa) is a first-time councillor for the Miranui Ward. Robert is a qualified teacher who is passionate about the environment.



PiriHira Tukapua, Levin Ward



Robert Ketu, Miranui Ward

The Kapiti Coast District Council signed a memorandum of partnership with Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Raukawa (Ngā Hapū o Ōtaki) in 1994. The partnership, named Te Whakaminenga o Kapiti stems from the Council's recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and has two representatives appointed by each of the Iwi as well as the Mayor and one other councillor. Te Whakaminenga oversees the Māori Economic Development strategy and annual fund.

This year, the Kapiti Coast District Council had 27 candidates nominated for ten Council vacancies including five districtwide vacancies. James Cootes (Ngāti Raukawa) is the only

Māori candidate (Ōtaki Ward) who stood, successfully, for the KCDC. James has served Ōtaki and Te Hono for the past 12 years, the last three as Ōtaki Ward Councillor.

“I’ve been a tireless advocate for my community and have been instrumental in ensuring Ōtaki gets its fair share.” Increased social investment funding, a new pool, splashpad, dog walking park and amenity upgrades in Ōtaki are some examples of his work. He instigated the Gateway Sculptures concept and led the campaign to secure the \$16 million Peka Peka to Ōtaki shared pathway.

Of sixteen community board vacancies, only Stephen Carkeek identified himself as Māori citing his Ngāti Raukawa whakapapa. This month Stephen was successfully elected as a new Ōtaki Community Board member. Stephen will bring his skills and experience as a former shearer, a corrections officer and a local government employee to his new role.

During his campaign Stephen said “I have real life skills and knowledge that will enable me to advocate strongly and effectively for the community.”



James Cootes, Otaki Ward

Stephen Carkeek, Otaki Community Board

Te Hono ki Raukawa would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all candidates who offered to serve the public on the local government stage and to advocate for issues they are passionate about. As the tangata whenua navigate their way through the Waitangi Tribunal hearings in the coming years, we will need strong Māori advocates influencing the policy and local infrastructure decisions being made by our two Councils.

Te Hono communications team

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