

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Community Services Committee  
**FROM:** Community Services Chair  
**DATE:** 22 November 2006  
**SUBJECT:** Chairperson's Report

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**As we head into discussions on budgets for 2006 – 07** I urge councillors to study the issues and figures carefully. Now that the LTCCP is reviewed every three years, the annual budget round takes on a somewhat different aspect. This is highlighted by the annual meetings held by the Community Boards with their various ratepayer groups. Where once this was an opportunity for a pre-plan discussion on the needs and desires of those communities, it is now a rather pro-forma exercise where the value of the discussions is limited by the fact that so much is already locked into the plan. This is a challenge for full council as well.

**A report on a recent presentation by Helena Catt is programmed for this meeting** regarding the youth elections to be held alongside next year's local government elections. This is also an opportunity for councillors to think about encouraging people to put their names forward for the elections in 2007. In the current climate of negativity towards local government, it is of concern that good quality candidates will re-consider whether they want to be involved.

**In many respects the range of responsibilities of local government** is not well understood. As long as the toilet flushes, the rubbish disappears from the gate on the right day, and the park is mowed in time for weekend sport, thinking about local government usually takes a very low priority.

**Only when these, and any of the other myriad of** tasks carried out by local government, fail to come up to expectations, or when the rate demand hits them between the eyes, do the majority of people take close interest. As this is often a negative interest, sometimes laden with criticism and indignation, it is hard to see what would attract people of high quality into the field. It is up to us, those who do understand the breadth of work and the challenges involved, to recruit new blood. The concepts of community involvement and public service receive little currency in today's world but are still probably the main motivating factor in putting one's name forward. People with these attributes should be sought out and supported in order to ensure ongoing quality decision-making.

**On a positive note, the prizegiving at Motueka High School** was cause to be optimistic about the quality of both education and of young people themselves. A large audience was treated to an impressive parade of

academic and sporting achievements of high calibre, along with obvious support for these 'winners' by their fellow-students. The future is bright if these folk fulfill the promise they have displayed so far.

**Another positive note is the success of the recent programme of workshops** organised by the Motueka Arts Council. These achieved attendance 30% in excess of predicted numbers – this is a programme which has been built up over a number of years and is testament both to the hard work and commitment of the Arts Council and to the high level of interest in arts participation in the community.

Patricia K O'Shea  
Chairperson

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