

# MANAGER'S ANNUAL REPORT



Ladies and gentlemen,

Kia Ora, Malo e Lelei, Talofa Lava, and Namaste. Welcome to our Annual General Meeting, and thank you for being here. It has been my privilege to serve another year as the Town Centre Manager for the Otara Business Association (OBA), and I'm pleased to share our achievements, challenges, and goals with you.

First, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board, BID Officers, retailers, community members, our Senior Committee, and local police officers. Your dedication to fostering strong business relationships in Otara has been invaluable, and I deeply appreciate your continued support for our shared vision of a vibrant town centre.

## Vision and Initiatives

The Otara Business Association envisions a thriving town centre that provides quality products and enriching experiences to meet the community's needs. We aim to establish Otara as a retail destination known for quality, cultural diversity, and a family-friendly atmosphere. Halfway through our five-year business plan, we continue to balance long-term growth with responsible financial management. Although we face budgetary constraints, we are committed to making the most of our resources to achieve our objectives.

One of our core initiatives is the "Buy Local" campaign, a significant part of our marketing strategy. This campaign promotes local businesses and encourages spending within the community, boosting the visibility of small businesses and supporting economic health in Otara. Our marketing efforts include online advertising, community events, and local partnerships, all geared towards building a sustainable business environment.

## Digital Outreach: Website and Social Media

Recognizing the importance of digital communication, we have expanded our online presence on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, where we maintain active engagement with our stakeholders. We share weekly updates on government policies, community news, and opportunities for businesses, strengthening connections with local businesses and encouraging them to establish their own digital footprints. This increased online visibility helps them reach a broader audience and boost customer engagement.

## Community Events

Our events calendar brought the community together with celebrations for Easter, Matariki, and Christmas. For Christmas, New Year, and Easter, we introduced "Shop & Win" vouchers, adding excitement and reward to the shopping experience. These events have driven foot traffic, enhanced the local shopping experience, and supported community engagement. By aligning events with local cultural celebrations, we create an inclusive environment that reflects Otara's diverse heritage.

## Community Safety Initiatives

Community safety remains a top priority. We are committed to addressing safety challenges, including drug-related issues, antisocial behavior, begging, and shoplifting. Despite limited resources, we actively collaborate with law enforcement, retailers, and community groups to maintain a secure environment in Otara Town Centre. By using technology, we monitor and report disruptive activities, helping to deter issues like window washing, biking, and other antisocial behaviors. Our partnership with the Maori Wardens further strengthens these efforts, as we work together to establish patrols and hold community safety meetings. This proactive approach creates a positive environment for visitors and businesses.

### **Challenges: Adapting to Market Dynamics**

Adapting to evolving customer expectations is a key challenge. With competition from nearby shopping centers like Hunter Plaza, Manukau, Botany, and Otahuhu, Otara Town Centre must work harder to retain its customer base. Additionally, the rise of online shopping has transformed traditional stores into showrooms or pickup points, intensifying competition.

Another ongoing challenge is unlicensed trading within the town centre, creating unfair competition for our legitimate retailers. Addressing this requires coordinated efforts, and we are committed to working with local authorities to enforce fair trading standards in our community.

### **Business Variety and Economic Resilience**

Despite the recession affecting businesses nationwide, Otara has shown resilience through a focused market strategy. Our business landscape, predominantly in food, hospitality, and personal services, has helped maintain a stable customer base. However, limited retail diversity presents a challenge to further growth. Expanding into other sectors would increase Otara's economic resilience and appeal, attracting a wider demographic and helping us remain competitive. We are actively exploring opportunities to encourage new types of businesses to set up in Otara, enhancing the variety of options available to customers and strengthening our economic foundation.

### **Navigating Limited Resources**

As a community-driven organization, the Otara Business Association relies on a small voluntary executive committee. These individuals give their time selflessly, driven by a shared goal to uplift Otara's businesses and support the community. Operating with a limited budget poses challenges, especially when competing with other centers that benefit from more substantial funding. This lack of resources affects our ability to attract new businesses and develop the infrastructure needed to compete effectively. Despite these constraints, the committee's commitment and strategic planning have allowed us to maximize our impact and make Otara a welcoming shopping destination.

Political interference and community safety concerns also add to our challenges. Political pressures can shift focus from our objectives, requiring careful negotiation to balance community needs with external expectations. Addressing drug-related issues and antisocial behavior demands ongoing collaboration with law enforcement and community groups. These challenges are significant, but they do not deter us from our mission. The OBA remains committed to creating a secure, positive environment in Otara Town Centre.

### **Unlocking Otara: The Unitary Plan**

We eagerly await the "Unlocking Otara" initiative, which promises growth and revitalization. While Hunters Corner and Papatoetoe have advanced in similar projects, Otara's unique character and potential make it a prime candidate for development. This initiative will bring new energy and resources into our town centre, creating business opportunities and enhancing the community's experience.

### **Opportunities and Potential for Growth**

Otara Town Centre's rich history and community spirit offer a solid foundation for growth. Our vision includes developing Otara into a retail and dining destination that attracts families, businesses, and visitors. With a well-connected network of primary, intermediate, and secondary schools, Otara offers a family-friendly atmosphere ideal for residents and visitors. The town's affordability enhances its appeal, as it provides quality services and products at accessible prices.

The central location in South Auckland is another key asset, offering ample parking options and accessibility-friendly infrastructure that meets the needs of a diverse customer base. By fostering an inclusive, accessible environment, we ensure everyone can enjoy Otara's offerings.

### **Sustainability and Future Goals**

To secure OBA's sustainability, it's essential to obtain funding and engage in profitable ventures. Given the scarcity of Auckland Council funding, we must focus on generating our own resources and reduce dependency on external

support. Guided by our Chairman, we are actively seeking alternative revenue streams and partnerships that align with our mission and contribute to long-term stability.

### **Acknowledgments**

In closing, I extend heartfelt gratitude to our Chairperson and Executive team for their dedication. Special thanks to Amit Narchal, who, despite it being his first year as Chair, has shown exceptional leadership and commitment. His contributions have been invaluable, and we look forward to building on the progress made under his guidance.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Otara Business Association is unwavering in its commitment to supporting the growth and success of our town centre. Together, with your continued support, we can ensure that Otara remains a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community. Thank you for joining us tonight and for your ongoing partnership in making Otara Town Centre a place of opportunity, heritage, and unity.

Thank you

**Rana Judge** (Manager)