

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



## Welcome and Acknowledgments

It is an honour and privilege to present the Chairman's Report for the Otago Business Association at the Annual General Meeting 2025.

I would like to begin by acknowledging our Executive Committee, whose dedication and hard work have been instrumental in achieving strong results in a challenging year. I also extend heartfelt thanks to our Manager, Rana Judge. His experience, leadership, and commitment have been invaluable to our progress. We are truly fortunate to have him leading the day-to-day operations of the town centre.

To our retailers, business owners, police, Māori Wardens, community groups, and the Otago-Papatōetoe Local Board — your support and collaboration continue to shape Otago into a safe, vibrant, and welcoming community.

## Economic Realities

This past year has been especially difficult for many businesses, with inflation, recession pressures, and rising costs. Retailers across Otago, like much of South Auckland, have felt the strain. However, compared to other town centres in the region, Otago has stood strong and continues to provide a safer and more stable environment for businesses and visitors alike.

The resilience shown by our community highlights the strength of our collective efforts, but we know the journey is not over. Supporting businesses through tough times remains our top priority.

## Security, Safety, and Community Wellbeing

Keeping Otago safe remains at the heart of our mission. This year, we have made significant progress in reducing drug activity and antisocial behaviour, supported by:

- 46 CCTV cameras monitored daily
- Increased collaboration with local police
- Patrols with Māori Wardens and other community safety partners

We continue to address challenges such as homelessness, begging, mental health issues, and illegal street trading. By working closely with enforcement agencies and social services, we aim to ensure Otago remains a friendly, secure, and family-oriented centre.

## Strategic Initiatives and Marketing

Despite challenges, our marketing and promotional initiatives have kept the spotlight on local businesses:

- "Buy Local" and "Shop, Spend, Eat Local" campaigns encouraging community support for our retailers
- Consistent digital outreach via social media and our website, giving businesses valuable exposure
- Community events like Matariki, Easter, and Christmas — building foot traffic, cultural pride, and a sense of belonging

These efforts not only promote sales but also strengthen community spirit.

### **Funding and Future Needs**

Funding through targeted rates remains critical. Last year, \$109,402 allowed us to cover staffing and partially support CCTV operations. To keep pace with inflation and BID policy, we plan a gradual increase in the targeted rate to reach \$120,000 by 2027.

We also hope the new Local Board team will support us in stronger, more effective ways, recognising the important role OBA plays in maintaining safety, promoting business, and delivering community outcomes in Otara.

### **Looking Forward**

Our focus for the year ahead is clear:

- Maintain and enhance safety through CCTV, patrols, and partnerships
- Support businesses through tough economic times with promotions, training, and digital visibility
- Strengthen community connections through inclusive cultural events
- Advocate for greater support from the Local Board to secure resources and recognition

By covering all aspects of town centre management — from safety to marketing — we will continue to ensure Otara is a place where businesses can grow and families feel welcome.

### **Conclusion and Thanks**

In conclusion, I want to once again thank our Executive Committee for their dedication, our Manager Rana Judge for his expertise and tireless efforts, and all our businesses and stakeholders for their trust and collaboration.

Together, we have saved and strengthened our town centre. Compared to many other centres in South Auckland, Otara is safer, more resilient, and more hopeful for the future. With your ongoing support, OBA will continue to deliver positive outcomes for our community.

Warm regards,

**Amit Narchal (Chairperson)**