

15.11.16 - Living by the Water\_Part 3.mp3

[Commence 01.43.47]

Q: We've had a fantastic conversation. I'm not gonna give you a big long summary. Suffice to say that I think you've seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of the expertise that's been assembled here in Auckland for these few days. We're very committed to sharing knowledge and we're very committed to making sure that knowledge is available to Auckland as well. So please remember to look at the Water Edge website where a lot of the material that these wonderful people have been talking about is. No more conclusion from me because I want to invite Councillor Chris Darby, who's the Chairman of the Planning Committee of Auckland Council, to come and close the seminar.

A: Thanks, Greg. That's great. I'm Chris Darby, an Auckland councillor, and we're just four weeks into our new Auckland Council. Mayor Phil Goff sends his apologies, he was here at the opening, and greeting for you all on the stage and many in the audience earlier in the day. He sends his greetings but could not be here tonight.

My remit as Chair of the Planning Committee is in the space of transport. It's with water; it's with waterfronts; it's with healthy waters, aka stormwater; the port future; central wharves and urban regeneration and the list goes on.

So, tonight's discussion on Living On The Water is totally apt to us and we all understand that and get that I'm sure. It brings together two very important threads that Auckland is grappling with and we will be grappling with this for some decades I imagine - housing and our growing population. Without sacrificing the very things that bring us all here and that we value and love about this place in our waterfront and waterfronts, plural, they are. And I think it is critical that we understand and grab the two G's as one of the Ngāti Whātua members who I met recently at a pōwhiri reminded me of - and I do acknowledge all the mana whenua that are here if not present in spirit who have long occupied this place and who will be guiding us in our governance of it - but he said to me, "Look Chris, just when you embark on this Planning Committee role just remember the two G's." I thought he was referring to some Ngāti Whātua investments in equine or something like that. But he was referring to growth and guardianship and he was referring to the guardianship of people and guardianship of the environment and not growth at all costs. And I think we all get that but it was a very timely reminder and I think we're being reminded of that here today as well.

# TANDEM

AUDIO & VIDEO PRODUCTION

Firstly, I'd like to thank Greg again for moderating this session. Enlivening it has been. Another somewhat provocative. I like the way you ask those questions and you oblige people to put hands up or down or hold on. That was quite revealing. I'll refer to one of those in a minute.

Greg is a long-time chair leader for Auckland. He plays here and away and it's good to have him back. Tonight, he's managed to lift the engagement and debate and lift the international learnings out of today and here tonight on the stage and apply those experiences to our challenges and especially our context. It's one thing to look at these international examples but I think we all need to recognise that they are from other cities and other lands and we're in a different hemisphere, in a different part of the world and we have got to understand our context and make it for ourselves. Take those learnings but it's not about just a quick translation and inserting those learnings purely into this place. This place is absolutely unique. And the people of Tamaki Makaurau, particularly mana whenua reminds us of that. So, context is everything and that's our point of distinction going forward.

Māori came here 1,000 years ago and they arrived by the water and they saw this harbour, the Waitemata, and they created their place here and they gifted a lot of this place to us, the former governors of this city. It is a very special place. They discovered the headlands, they discovered the fertile volcanic basins, they retreated to maunga for defence, but they also retreated to the maunga for variation and living as well. But they relied on those waterways and the harbours for movement and for harvest.

Those harbours they found were absolutely prolific. They are not prolific today. Far from it. And that's something that I probably want to stress is the challenge we've got in the environmental space in the water area. They were life-sustaining for numerous hapū and many, many tribes in the Auckland area. It was so healthy here.

Now we reside in a very special place. Our context is a city that is gripped by two oceans. Not many places have that. But that city is also punctured by three great harbours, not one - the Waitemata, the Kaipara, one of the biggest harbours in the world, and the Manukau. Those three harbours are all magnificent. It is not just about the Waitemata and this little part of all the waterfronts. We have 3,200 kilometres of coastline. It's immense. We have 600 beaches, 21,000 kilometres of inland waterways. That's the whole of the Auckland region. Seventy-two freshwater lakes. It's incredible. And we have six million people that are traversing the water by ferry, just approaching six million in two weeks' time in fact, we are bound to track six million people going by ferry across our waterways mainly in the Waitemata per annum. And to cap it all off we've got 1200 millimetres coming from up there as we heard I think it was during Richard's presentation. Don't take that too personally Richard!

# TANDEM

AUDIO & VIDEO PRODUCTION

So, we are well-endowed in the natural assets. We haven't done well in the built assets overall. We've done pretty poorly and that has to be faced up to. So, those numbers sound pretty impressive but the health of our natural systems we have got work to do, tremendous work to do. We are still piping natural systems in Auckland at the rate of kilometres per year. We hope to be reversing that.

The Waitemata and Hauraki Gulf overall, the fish biomass is in massive decline. It's at an all-time low. All-time low. Huge challenge for us. The estuary sediments just in this harbour of the Waitemata are laden with zinc and copper from building materials and from brake linings. That's what the research tells us. That is the bare-boned facts of it all. And then we have got a certain President-elect who describes the small issue of sea-level rise. We've got that to challenge as well.

So tonight, we've heard some great input from Rita from Copenhagen, a beautiful city that I visited about eight years ago and was really struck by and a city that is wrapped by waterways, similar but different to ours, a city that I noticed when I was there I wasn't aware of Paper Island at that time eight years ago, probably it was still in the planning stage, but a city that I noticed was very proud in the juxtaposition of contemporary architecture with its historic architecture. And I think by the look of Paper Island I can see unashamed modern architecture just over the water from the historic core of old Copenhagen. Something to learn from there.

Jürgen, Hamburg, it's a beautiful city. I was there recently as well and way, way up the river there. It took me some time to come to terms with the proximity of the ocean to the city, 100 plus kilometres yet it is a water edge city and very proud city state with a lot of its own special legislation. Wonderful concert hall there, and in Copenhagen a magnificent opera house - I think the Maersk family may have funded that, was the Maersk dynasty - and the concert hall there in Hamburg as well through philanthropy.

Glasgow. I haven't been there of recent, many decades back for me, but lovely to hear that the Clyde is being rediscovered by Glaswegians. Thank you, Richard.

Carl, over in New York there I think we've got a lot of learnings on affordable housing and how we need to deal with that issue in Auckland. We're only just touching it at the moment and that is gonna be an enormous challenge for us.

One thing I did get, and I had a nice take away, and Greg, you provoked the no hands up on who likes a waterfront stadium. I couldn't help but look at, at least a couple of cities and probably all four, but particularly Hamburg and Copenhagen where the great anchors of their waterfronts are cultural institutions and we very quickly defer to a footie stadium as the solution. I was encouraged to see no hands go up for that tonight. Let's have that debate please.



[Applause]

So, we have the opportunity to start to transition from a port city to a city that is about its people and about its environment. I'm not suggesting we're not going to be a port city any more. We'll still have an active port on this edge. And then there's the possibility that we might relocate some of our freight or all of our freight to the Manukau Harbour and that could be an airport harbour and a sea freight harbour. But we'll get through that as we progress our port future study recommendations.

I think we've got some challenges in reaching this part of our harbour, our waterfront. As I came down here from the town hall I had to navigate first Custom Street, the sewer of cars on Custom Street, and then I got across that one, got through Lower Queen Street and then I had to navigate the new sewer of cars which was Quay Street. I think that's something that we need to look at, look at all those barriers that are stopping us be linked to this waterfront and to other waterfronts.

I imagine our city centre waterfront is not just something that we come down to and visually connect. I want to come here and immerse myself in this city waterfront. I want to come down here and see others come down at lunchtime and immerse themselves maybe off diving platforms, swimming platforms, not just treat the water as something that is to be looked out onto. We need to improve the health of this water, to clean up our storm water and actually have it be worthy of diving into in our lunchtimes. I used to fish at the end of this wharf as a kid. I used to come from Papatoetoe with my mates and I used to catch black snapper at the end of this wharf. Parore is the Māori word and I'm sure some others in this room have too. I would like to see that be a possible and not be 30 years away but let's make it five and 10 years away.

I imagine a city centre with localised energy systems that is prolific with life and natural life that reflects our biculturalism as well and also reflects the diversity of Auckland of the other 200+ cultures, ethnicities and nationalities that make us all up, but particularly to reflect our biculturalism, and I'm emphasising a Māori presence and a real recognition on this waterfront and our others.

And I think our waterfront needs to be connected by active and public transport not private transport. Private transport is ruining our access to this waterfront.

We've talked about affordable housing here today and I think it's going to be very important that we keep the question of equitable access to waterfronts. These can't be just gentrified places for those that can afford to come here. We need to think about a whole of society in designing our waterfronts and ensuring that they can all come here.



So, what's ahead for us in Auckland? Well, we've got a new council and this new council is ambitious in really rediscovering not just this waterfront but all of our waterfronts. There's been some great work done, Panuku, Richard, your Panuku Development Auckland has been doing some great work. The Viaduct Harbour of course, we got a glimpse of that possibility back in the late nineties. Wynyard Quarter, tremendous work being done there. North Wharf, ASB Waterfront Theatre just opened. Go and explore that. Grid Auckland. The technology that's coming out of Grid Auckland. Two significant residential projects over in the Wynyard Quarter unfolding now.

The new council wants to progress the Port Future Study recommendations. We've already talked about it informally and Mayor Phil Goff is ambitious in that area. We want to look at the triggers for relocation of the commercial port. It won't be something that's gonna be happening any time near soon but we need to be looking long on that one.

We need to further consider the locations for that future commercial port, be it the Firth of Thames or the Manukau, and we probably need to examine the need for an upper North Island port strategy which a number of governments have resisted. We cannot afford to just keep pushing that one out.

There will be no more Bledisloe debacles on the watch of this council. We will not allow that to happen again. That was an embarrassment for Auckland but didn't it wake us all up? That was one good outcome of that.

So, the ferry basin redevelopment is something we'll be looking at, but that will be on the back of a central wharves strategy re-scope and refresh, and looking at the whole of waterfront rather than in parts. I think we've failed in some respects by looking at it in parts and not looking at whole of waterfront from freight to the east right through to Skypath and Harbour Bridge in the west. And so maybe a single entity rather than multiple entities that we've had to date.

That's just a glimpse of some of the things. There was a question about the East West Link and we've mandated Panuku Development Auckland to open up the Onehunga wharf and there are some negotiations with the port company proceeding right now. We're looking at a project on the headland at Wynyard but that will all be socialised with you and you will help inform those outcomes. It will not be council doing it alone.

The East West Link is an interesting example and I think our guests today need to share with that one because there is an example where we are walling off the waterfront, doing something that most cities in the world are reversing - taking roads like that out. And it is almost a major motorway severing off the estuary or the Manukau Harbour in that part. Quite the opposite is happening in other cities. I think we've got a challenge there and we can't let that one just get ahead of us at the moment.



So, there's a glimpse of some of the things that we're doing. The Water Edge Symposium continues tomorrow and I wish you all well in that. Go to the website there - [advancewateredge.com](http://advancewateredge.com) and you'll learn more.

I want to thank Auckland Conversations, our council team, Panuku Development Auckland. Thank you very much for putting this together, inviting our guests and allowing them to share the ideas. This is the last event, last Auckland Conversations for the year and we've had some great ones. We'll have more next year. We've got more planned so keep an eye out on our website there. In the meantime, I encourage you to start thinking not just this waterfront but all those waterways that I mentioned, all the coastline, the 3,200 kilometres of coastline, those 72 freshwater bodies, all those opportunities that we also need to turn and face the sun on because there is more than just this waterfront as you well know.

So, keep your finger on the pulse and stay with us and let's build our Auckland together and face all of those waterfronts together. Keep an eye on Conversations next year. I implore you to have a wonderful summer and I'm sure a lot of that's gonna be out on the water. And I thank Rita and Jürgen and Richard and Carl and Greg for a very stimulating evening. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

[End of recording 02.02.45]