

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE 2025

Annual Report from the Chair For The Year Ending 30th June 2025

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Howick Village Association Inc (HVA) it is my pleasure to provide Members with this report on the performance of Howick Village Association Inc for the year ended 30th June 2025.

The opportunity to take over for Gerald Patterson as Chair mid term has delivered more excitement than I thought possible and has reinforced for me the importance of the strong relationships that exist between HVA, Howick Local Board (HLB), local businesses and our community. We need each other to thrive and making Howick the best little Village in Auckland is not achieved without a lot of hard graft. Our online profile is a vital part of the 'messaging' that connects us to our community. Ella and Marion do a fantastic job, and we do need to be vigilant about the potential for anonymous voices that can undermine this without fear of consequences. We welcome all feedback and suggestions, preferably face to face, and our office premises make us very accessible.

Financial performance:

First and foremost, this year's result shows a remarkable turnaround. As at 30th June 2025 our accounts show a surplus of (\$43,386) This is an incredible result and reflects the professionalism and focus of Katie and her small team have applied to our operational expenses, to ensuring money spent meets with our strategic objectives and every opportunity to generate additional revenue is duly considered.

It has been a very positive year both operationally and financially. We have cash reserves and the incoming Executive Committee will be considering how some of this could be used to enhance our objectives.

Public connections:

Conversations happen every day with members of the public, HVA Members, Local Board Members and other interest Groups, all of whom have a vested interest in the fortunes of Howick Village. Some of these conversations give us a lead on the mood of the village, others occupy time and resources with no tangible result.

One such 'distraction' over recent months has been the BID expansion consultation with Valley businesses / landlords (approx. 200) to identify interest in and the potential viability of expanding our BID zone to include The Terraces and business located in the Valley (embracing Wellington Rd & Moore St to Union Rd).

First steps were to host a series of invitation only meetings to engage with the first tranche of businesses in the affected area. From the get-go it was clear there was a high level of anxiety amongst the targeted businesses and all three meetings held were extremely heated, to the extent HVA Management felt significant reputational damage to HVA could be an unwelcome outcome. The pathway was to consult, engage and share views about how an expansion could benefit the Valley and the Village.

It was disappointing to have this due process stymied by a vocal pressure group who claimed to represent the Valley and circulated a petition to the target businesses before there was anything substantive for them to vote on. The result (110 signatories out of a potential 200 Valley businesses/landlords) was 100% opposed to any further polling or meetings. They simply did not want to engage or consider any possibilities for future alignment. What drove this opposition appears to have been anxiety about an unquantified increase in targeted rates, general ambivalence towards HVA, a perceived lack of synergy between what HVA does for Howick Village vs any future value it might offer Valley businesses, and a disturbing 'them & us' view of local business interests.

HVA's obligations under the Auckland Council BID Expansion programme were to follow due process of consultation but faced with this level of opposition the HVA Management and outgoing Executive Committee do not believe it appropriate to commit further resources to the project. The Executive Committee has therefore recommended that the incoming Committee formally advise Auckland Council and the Howick Local Board that the BID Expansion project will not be progressed in the new term.

The BID Expansion project is not on this AGM agenda for decision.

Lobbying:

The recent furore invoked by Plan Change 78 and Plan 120 foisted into the public arena by Auckland Council (as dictated by Central Government) has got folk asking what the consultation processes of 2023 and 2024 were all for. We might have thought the housing density map had already been redrawn, but now a new version is mandating higher density housing with little consideration of infrastructure capacity or lifestyle. Whilst HVA did not make a formal submission during the very brief public consultation process we did attend a HLB workshop meeting and wrote to the HLB Chair in support of their subsequent submission to AC stating its unanimous opposition to the Plan Change 78.

Regardless, you now know the Plan Change was endorsed and adopted by AC and the planning circus continues.

Of more concern however is another proposal to change the designation of Howick from Village to Town Centre. This enables AC to impose different regulatory regimes. While there is nothing concrete to react to at this stage HVA is committed to doing whatever it can to preserve and enhance Howick's unique village vibe.

Achievements:

The Village Market has again been a stellar performer, achieving solid income growth and with a growing waiting list of vendors. Rachel's management of this 'interesting' band of traders ensured a smooth and harmonious operation, and the amazing mix of foods and artisan crafts has built the profile of our Market into one of the most sought-after sites in greater Auckland.

Our new Market Manager Rochelle has picked up the reins with confidence and business has continued to thrive.

Our calendar of events has gone from strength to strength, thank you Jane.

The Village HOP, Cultural Food Festival, Christmas Fair continue to attract record crowds. Jane is always looking for ways to improve and enhance these events, but it is up to business owners to make the most of the crowds that come to Howick. Entertainment is how we draw the people into the Village, but we can't make folk buy stuff – that is up to you. Visitors to these events come from far and wide, many are first time visitors to Howick, so first impressions count and every business has the opportunity to make itself memorable.

HVA is hugely grateful for the support of our many event sponsors. There is no free ride and every business spending money on sponsorship is looking for exposure and brand building. HVA is committed to delivering value for money.

Thanks:

I would like to thank all the Executive Committee members for their input and support over the past 12 months. All of them are volunteers with their own businesses to run and their varied experience and passions are what makes the place tick. I would encourage any Member to come along to one of our meetings and see the breadth of items we cover and gain some insight into the process by which business matters are prioritised for the Management team to act on.

Thanks to Adele White as the appointed HLB liaison person – her contributions and wisdom are highly valued. Thanks too to HLB for the grants received over the past year – vital in assisting to maintain our security cameras, pay for event road closures and more.

And finally thanks to all Howick businesses and property owners who provide the substance and heart of our Village. Working together is how we will succeed and your engagement with HVA is encouraged and welcome any time. Both brickbats and bouquets will help us to help you succeed in these challenging times.

Tony Moores

Chair HVA