

ELECTIONS
2010

Mayoral candidates ponder first step

Whangarei residents will be able to watch a repeat screening tonight of *Elections 10* on Channel North television. *Elections 10* is a six-episode series and will screen again tonight at 7pm. *Elections 10* is a joint venture with the *Northern Advocate* and will cover key local government issues in the Whangarei district. Whangarei's mayoral candidates have also been invited to sit in the *Elections 10* hot seat, and answer six questions. One question per episode will screen. In tonight's episode, the last of the series, the mayoral candidates' are asked, "What's the first thing you're going to do when elected as mayor?"

Terry Burkhardt

"The first thing I'm going to do if elected is to pass a resolution to council to adopt appendix G and appendix G of standing orders for meetings. This will allow you, the public, to attend a meeting and speak directly with your councillor. This current council, our Whangarei District Council, is the only council in Northland that does not allow its community to have public forums. The situation that's evolved is that council has the ability to operate under the "emperor's new clothes" syndrome. Without any fresh voices being heard there is no need for change. This council seeks to keep that status quo going while the community has sent a clear message that they want this participate."



Morris Cutforth

"I'm going to elect a deputy mayor that I can work with. I'm going to elect chairmen of various committees who have a vision for Whangarei, councillors who have a good idea as to the direction Whangarei needs to go toward. And the other thing is to come and talk with me. I want to make it an open day at least once a month where people can come and see me, sit down have a cup of tea or coffee and chat about their concerns and make it an open approachable council. I'd really like that."



Paul Jeeves

"If I'm elected, the first thing that I'm going to do is—I guess as has been taught from my previous experience—to do a review of all our systems, our finances, our subcommittees to get a fair idea of where we are at before we can look at where are going. And that also includes getting on board and talking with the fellow councillors and creating open pathways to the regional council and the district health board because I think they're all an integral part of moving Whangarei forward. And so my first thing is to take a review and plan to move forward."



Isopo Samu

"I would look at our council's interfacing with the public. Quite often we have people coming to the council and you have to remember that the council is only a concept. It's a body. We're talking about the people that actually interface and it becomes a personal issue. And that seems to be the relationship. Building relationships with our communities not just a few, looking at how we implement an open-door policy so people actually feel that this is their council they're going to actually approach us and talk about their problems that are being shunted backward or passed on from pillar to post. I would look at the systems we have in place, the processes that we have in place, the governance in general to make sure that the council is being governed properly."



Warren Slater

"The first thing I'm going to do is have a look at the team that I've drawn out of this barrel. And I don't know until after the elections who I'm going to be working with. I've always worked with people well and I'll be looking at the qualities that those people can offer our community and I'll be working out the ones who are genuinely there to listen. We've been watching council for a long time and there's some that I don't think really do listen or have been dictated to. I will be looking at the team. There's a bad culture in council. I said that last election and I still say it and sometimes it comes from the top to the bottom and it's got to be seriously looked at. And sorry, if changes have to be made I'm the person to make those changes. I'm prepared to have the courage to look forward for Whangarei's future. It's my home too."



Wince Cooperullo

"The most important thing is that I've got to select a good team and councillors coming on board. I'll be phoning them to start with, getting them in and actually having a chat with them and trying to work out which positions they want to hold, where they're best placed because, as every council knows, after an election you get a new group of people. You can't rely on the old ones you've had and you need to be able to get the future going forward. So it's getting the team together, getting them sorted in their positions and actually then getting the portfolios going because every councillor will have a distinct portfolio and that portfolio will relate back to the government. So that's going to be the first aim. Yes, I'm also probably going to thank my wife. We were going to have a nice party but that will be normal."



Don Hedges

"The first thing I think will be to review and necessary and under the Local Government Act and rather than seeking to amalgamate the council, the regional council and the district councils of Northland. Where, no doubt there will be savings in the bureaucracy and the management of all the councils in Northland. And especially, with all the technology that's available today in video conference between centres and shared knowledge..."



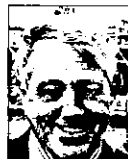
Mita Kayal Ruri

"I elected mayor I certainly will address the pollution problems that we have with rubbish and human waste there. I believe that we need to bring in technology—there is technology there and we have those advances there and we'd like to put that to the forefront. I always believe that prevention is better than the cure. Now I am also a product and I fell by the wayside so therefore I'm coming here because I can see that that problem is still there."



Stan Semennoff

"Reform that council of old days to create a more harmonious council which I've had in the last three years. This last three years is the best council I've chaired within 20 years of council chairmanship or I've had anything to do with local government. We've got to reform it. This last mark that finishes everything that's needed in the district at large and that's in the rural area in regards to rural roading to the CBD and the Town Basin."



Simon Vallings

"The first thing I'd do if I was elected is to look through the books and see where the money is going and try to get the council to be living within its budget—in other words within the amount of rates that are coming in each year so that we're not relying on debt. I would also look at the return that council is getting on its investments. I think the return is sometimes very low and the investments are being held for a potential future capital gain that may not happen. And those assets could be perhaps turned into better use like paying back debt. And I'd look at the budget primarily and look at the books and look at where the money's being spent."

