Community Governance Solutions

"Community empowerment is one of the best things this council has put in place! It utilises the top-down and bottom-up talents. I want to thank this council. There are some teething problems but it is allowing our communities to partner." (*Strat Peters, a New Zealand Community Board Chairman, 2016*)

HAMMOND ROBERTSON

Why is there so much tension in my area between council and the people?

Community Governance specialist, David Hammond, comments, "Communities across Australia and New Zealand are asking their councils for more say in how decisions and choices which affect them are made. This tension will only increase. Rightly or wrongly many feel alienated, and the good news is that they can be re-engaged. I would love to work with your council to identify together the governance and organisational change solutions needed.

Offer of Service

Stage	Cost
Initial 1-2 day Council assessment of needs plus prsentation to Full Council and/or Staff	NZ$1,850 plus the cost of airfares, transfers, accommodation. No GST in Australia
Investigation report & recommendations	Cost to be determined from the initial Assessment Report

+64 27 444 6368

Email: david@hammondrobertson.co.nz
Website: www.hammondrobertson.co.nz

Recent Projects:
- Governance training of FEBC in South Korea
- Strategic Planning workshops with St John National HQ, WEC International
- Developed the 5-Year Strategic Plan for St John Community Health Services
- Organised the Peter Kenyon ABCD training, and Community Planning in Whakatane and Central Otago.

Community Governance Solutions:

David offers to assist councils to achieve the following outcomes for their communities.

- Development of Community Board systems
- Development of Community Board Charters with councils
- Review of the effectiveness of Community Board, or community governance, systems
- Community Workshops held in an engaging and fun style that inspire communities and anchor Community Planning
- Advising the design of, or doing, Community Plans
- Transforming council operational models into ones which engage communities and build community leadership
- Not-for-profit and faith-based Strategic Planning and workshops
- Governance strategic workshopping

Read more in the Case Study

Endorsement: Mayor G. Leach 2016

"We have nothing but appreciation and respect for David's input on the Coromandel. We inherited a Council that had lost touch with its community, and was crippled under high rates and debt. With David's passion for Community Empowerment we have turned this around and what's been achieved is huge."

Case Study:
Devolved Governance in New Zealand

All was not well in the Coromandel when a small dairying community south of Thames learned of their Council's plan to spend $16M on their water.

Mayor Leach of Thames Coromandel District Council still shakes his head about it, "A bill of $35,000 each for the 1,100 ratepayers out there - It was nuts! But with Community Empowerment in place we went to them with our staff and asked what they needed first, rather than putting up an engineering solution and asking later when the rates bill was about to hit."

In a series of BBQ meetings at the local Puriri Hall a group of farmers and Council water engineers redesigned a solution at only one-third the price.

The innovative new model - developed by Community Governance Specialist David Hammond and a talented council team with elected Members - had to work financially. Mr Hammond comments, "Our change had to deliver on the balance sheet too. Community Empowerment increases costs because you resource local areas more. So I restructured staff to ensure a fit-for-purpose structure to support the new model and to reduce costs. We brought expenditure under what the council was previously achieving. It was a genuine surprise to many who expected this to be a free-for-all of funding community 'wish lists'." *(See the graph for the extraordinary cost saving made)*

Coromandel's journey toward improving local democracy began at the 2010 elections. The community wanted a big change to how council operated and voted to get that. Mayor Leach says,

Council and schools planting partnership 2015

"The Council had moved away from the roots of inclusiveness. Power had to be returned to the people. To do it we had to stay tough at the top because it was a fight to bring change."

The elected council saw the problems as:

- Communities wanted more say about decisions that affected them;
- Communities felt that Council had become a 'glass tower' distant from them and stymying local growth;
- Partnership with communities was not working well across council;
- Costs seemed not under control;
- Communities disagreed that the typical central model of service delivery was the best and most efficient.

Hammond comments, "The change could never have happened if elected council wasn't committed to localism. The hardest job was turning what we wanted into a workable operational model. We were doing something not done before to this extent, so there were no 'copy and paste' solutions out there."

Central to the model was defining 'Local' versus 'District' services. Some 11 activities including Parks and Libraries went back to local elected Community Board leadership. The Boards had the ability to choose funding methods, levels of service, and even who they contracted with to deliver services.
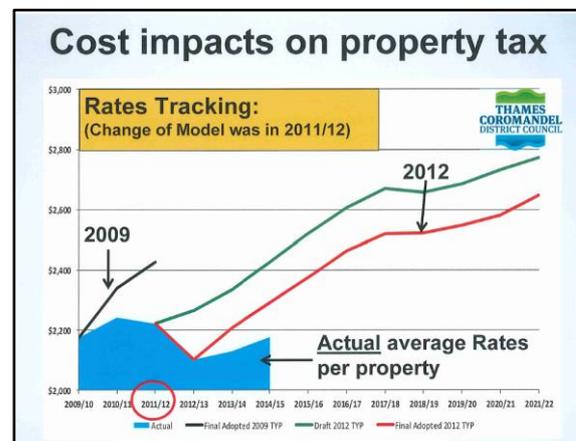
Has it worked? Yes. And spectacularly so.