



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)*

NEW! Community Advisory Boards

HRL Community has worked on an amazing project in the town of Waratah Tasmania. HRL Community launched its new 2017 design in community governance called the "Community Advisory Board". These community-level governance boards bridge the gap between councils and communities. They are the one place councils go to for advice, input and leadership from that community. The Advisory Boards focus on local community engagement, setting their priorities and board term around an agreed and prioritised Community Plan with their councils, and formalise the relationship with council including support and funding through a "Community Board Charter".

Empowered Community Boards

This is a different model. HRL Director, David Hammond, with a team on the Coromandel of New Zealand and fully backed by the elected members created the most devolved form of local government in New Zealand or Australia where 14 council services including their budget control, levels of service and asset choices went back under local elected Boards of community leadership. The results were exceptional in cost control and citizen engagement in local decisions and choices. The case study is on the "HRL Community" section of the website.

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Offer of Service

Stage	Cost
Initial 1-2 day Council assessment of needs plus presentation 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

Community Governance Solutions:

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

- Development or support for the two models (Community Advisory Board, and, Empowered Community Board)
- Community Plans and community engagement
- Development of community governance agreements with council and working through delegations and scope
- Review of the effectiveness of existing community governance or Board systems
- 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: Empowered Community Board Model in NZ

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. In a series of BBQ meetings supported by the Empowered Community Board 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 governance model – Empowered Community Boards 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. 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. Mayor Leach says,

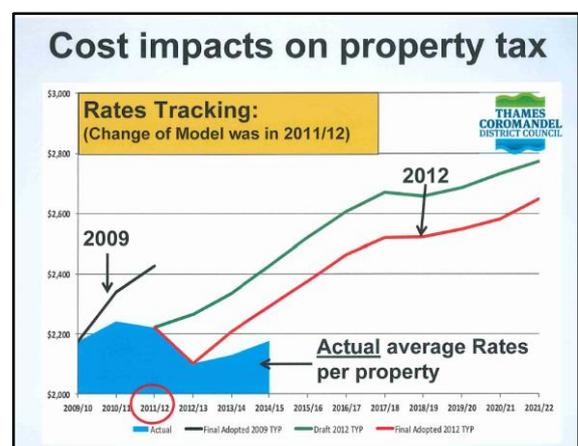
"The Council had moved away from the roots of inclusiveness. Power had to be returned to the people. To do it we had to stay tough at the top because it was a fight to bring change."

The problems were:

- Communities wanted more say about decisions that affected them;
- Communities felt that Council had become a 'glass tower' stymying local growth;
- Partnership with communities was not working;
- Costs seemed not under control;
- Communities disagreed that the typical central model of service delivery was the 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. There were no 'copy and paste' solutions out there."

Central to the model was defining 'Local' versus 'District' services. 14 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.

Listen to David speak about this model more on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T49QcJ8Hs1w>