

ISSUE 24. APRIL / MAY 2018

# Central Park Henderson NEWS

A portrait of Leah Brown, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a white t-shirt with a floral pattern and a black blazer. The background is a blurred office setting with blue and grey panels.

Leah Brown  
from running the phone  
to running the firm





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Waitakere Central Office Park, 2-4 Henderson Valley Road, Henderson

# FROM THE TOP



Danielle Hancock,  
Chairperson

- Deputation to the Henderson-Massey Local Board
- Lincoln Road Upgrade
- Change of Guard

On a cold night after Auckland was hit with one of its most fierce storms, we held our AGM. The members who were present, farewelled our departing Chair John Schipper, who was instrumental in taking the Association to where it is now and navigating the quagmire of restructuring and starting again.

On behalf of the committee and our members we thank John for his outstanding contribution, and to Davis Funerals for allowing us to have John for two years and to use their facilities when they were needed.

We welcome Lesa Davis to the board. Lesa is Managing Director of award winning Nitrogenx Ltd, a medical supply company based here in Henderson. Lesa is passionate about local businesses and believes a holistic approach to business and community initiatives, leads to the most successful outcome for West Aucklanders.

The committee is full steam ahead, and this comes hot on the heels of an AGM that highlighted what this small association has accomplished in the last year on the smell of an oily rag.

We are gearing up to become a Business Improvement District, to enable us more capacity to improve our local business environment, to boost the area's economy and add more benefit to you our members. The team is in the middle of strategizing how those benefits will be rolled out over the next 12 months and into 2020.

Check out the article about the 'Lincoln Road Upgrade' on pages 14 & 15, we have formed an exclusive relationship with Auckland Transport, where we are now their main pathway for communicating

updates to our business, and wider community about the project.

We are also hosting a forum for members to come and learn about the upgrade from the project team, to be hosted in June, details will be in your inboxes in May. Following this, AT will attend a Public Forum for the whole works area.

We will be hearing from Panuku who will give us an update on the progress of Unlock Henderson, the kitchen project, the future of the Council building, and where the service centre and Local Board offices will be relocated to.

The committee made a successful deputation to the Henderson Massey Local Board about our need to partner with the board to deliver joint economic development outcomes, and we now have the Economic Development Portfolio-holder, Shane Henderson, meet with the committee where we are working on delivering better outcomes.

Make sure you keep in touch, we need to hear your views, as one of the biggest questions we are asked is "What's in it for me?" The business association is all about member benefits and 'one voice', with our push to become a Business Improvement District we will be delivering more.

I look forward to meeting you all over time, please don't be a stranger.

**Danielle Hancock, Chair CPBA**

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**Cover:** Leah Brown - from running the phone to running the firm  
Photography by LFHQ Studios

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## How to provide your feedback

You can provide your feedback by:

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- Completing the online feedback form at **AT.govt.nz/haveyoursay**
- Coming to our drop in session at Waitakere Central Library, 3 Ratanui Street, Henderson  
**Thursday 3 May 2018 from 4pm-7pm**

## Further information

- Call us on **(09) 355 3553**
- Go online to **AT.govt.nz/haveyoursay**
- Copies of the consultation brochure are available at your local library, AT service centre or local board office



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## Dinner invite Barack Obama

What does it take to be invited to dinner with the 44th President of the United States of America?



Dajah McIver with fellow prefect Nishan Shrestha

I spoke with successful invitee, Dajah McIver, a student of Waitakere College, who was personally invited to be a guest at an exclusive dinner for the former US President Obama's, speech and facilitated question and answer session.

It was held at the Viaduct Events Centre in the Waiheke room on Thursday night 22nd March 2018 and hosted by actor Sam Neil. A banquet dinner was served cooked by Internationally renowned chef, Peter Gordon, who especially flew in from London to oversee the meals for 1000 guests.

Labour deputy leader Kelvin Davis visited Waitakere College to request their top student to attend this special event. Minister Davis asked Principal Mark Shanahan 'who is your top student of Maori heritage, who will represent your school well?' To her great surprise, Dajah was handpicked above 1300 students, by the school's Principal and Head Teachers, to be

the school's representative at this special event.

CPHB member Waitakere College was the 2017 winner and recipient of the Prime Minister award for excellence in teaching and learning. Dajah McIver has attended the College since year 9, and amongst her many schooling achievements is being a prefect.

Dajah explained how she chose Waitakere College, "The schools where I live, favour and promote sports whereas Waitakere College has a performing arts academy for year 9 and 10 students. Here we could try an array of art disciplines such as painting, sculpture, music, dancing, singing, and acting. This included technical experience such as stage lighting, sound engineering and more; from all areas on stage, back of stage, production, promoting a whole learning experience". It's a beacon for others who are invested in performing arts

to cultivate and come together.

Dajah travels from Kelston to Henderson to attend school. Her work ethic plus excellence in the performing arts and academia has seen her develop into an accomplished student. Dajah views Waitakere College as the platform that has allowed her to pursue her talents and cultivate her natural abilities.

Being in creative arts, she found her groove at Waitakere College along with being able to excel in Maths. Dajah has been recognised as a student who excels in all areas because of the support network of likeminded students who are equally focused on performing arts, which is refreshing.

Dajah is currently finalising her year 13 (7th form) and feels that being committed to school is so worthwhile. For her it is a regular routine of putting 100% into everything she does. Being dedicated and consistent, embracing all aspects of what must be done (including the non-glamorous jobs) is the enduring feature that has won Dajah respect and accolades.

Dajah embodies the House values of 'Aroha' and school values of Waitakere College 'being the best you can be' along with caring, respect and learning.

Dajah McIver is of Celtic heritage from Scotland fjords of 'The Firth of Forth' and Māori descent; Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāpuhi.

Everyone was so proud of her, especially her parents.

Michelle Coughlan,  
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## The Waipu Car & Bike Show, this month's 'Goods from Garry'

On Easter Sunday I was invited by friend & former Westie, Ron Cave, to attend and judge a category, at the Waipu Car and Bike Show an event which proved a magnificent success for the Waipu Lions Inc.

Ron is a past president of the American Muscle Car Club, which was started by a group of predominantly West Aucklanders, and is now one of the larger clubs of its type in NZ.

What a fabulous turn out! The weather was perfect, the organisers & guests were amazing, and people came from Wellington to Kaitia. The local community enjoyed the

opportunity to host and share this awesome array of cars and bikes.

There was a huge spectrum of vehicles across many countries of origin, makes and models. 600 cars and 100 bikes made the journey to present at the show, which also included an interesting array of militaria.

The event raised \$24,000 for the Lions, which will be used for the Rescue Helicopter and Community.

It's obvious I'm into Americana by the selection of photos, see if you can pick the makes & models.



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# Leah Brown

## from running the phone to running the firm

By Tony Potter

Flashback to August, 2000: fresh-faced and straight out of high school, Leah Jones (18) lands the receptionist's job at Soil & Rock Consultants, in New Lynn.

Fast forward to April, 2018: Leah Brown as she now is, and 36, sits in Soil & Rock's Rangitoto Room - its boardroom - as the company's national operations manager, and a shareholder to boot, to discuss the firm's story with Central Park Henderson News.

Remark that this is some sort of receptionist-to-riches saga and she

smiles. "It's nice to know that my personal story is interesting but I've never really thought about it like that. I just keep going."

So does Soil & Rock. From its small beginnings in 1987 the company has moved from New Lynn, to Henderson, and now to Lincoln Road. It also has branches in Christchurch, Wellington and Whangarei.

It employs about 55 people and the average age of them is Leah's age - 36. But she is quick to point out that those with silver hair are

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not neglected.

"We have a handful of people whose combined technical experience in the job totals 200 years. And then there are the younger graduates - it's a fine mix."

Leah is a quintessential Westie. She grew up in Glen Eden, moved to Glendene and now lives in Te Atatu South with her school days sweetheart from Kelston High, Davey Brown.

Davey is the stay-at-home dad, looking after sons Dallas (5) and Marshall (2) and taking Dallas to football and athletics. "We are not allowed to refer to soccer," says Leah.

At home, her husband is known as "the professional comper". "In the past five years he has won us four overseas trips." One to Los Angeles, another to Paris, during the Bastille Day Celebrations, another to the

Gold Coast, and lastly to Melbourne for the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

Living in Te Atatu South is great for Leah's work. "It takes me three minutes to drive here each morning - I go home for lunch. There is one set of lights and they're usually green, if it's red I ask myself what's going on?"

Which is fine for Leah, but with Auckland's traffic problems the company is seriously looking at more flexible working arrangements. "Many of our team working in the field need to start at 7am so there may be a case for a 7am-3pm work day."

When she and Davey left school she didn't know what she wanted to do. "I was trolling around for jobs, and everyone said 'You need experience' which is hard when you haven't got a job."

Finally, Davey first job was washing dishes with Planet Hollywood, and Leah had the "come in on Monday" call from Soil & Rock.

In 2002 she trained in word processing and accounts, so she ended up typing up reports on the accounts side of the business. She began studying for a Bachelor of Business and Davey joined the company doing field work.

By 2010 and married, Leah had been at Soil & Rock 10 years and was pushing the 27 mark. Both she and Davey had taken courses with TESOL - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Vienam seemed alluring. "We said let's go there, immerse ourselves in the culture, start there and backpack all over the place from a base in Hanoi.

"But first I had to have a job and a few days before we left Auckland, I saw an ad in *The New Hanoian*, advertising a job at the New Zealand Embassy."

On the way to Vietnam, they stopped over in Malaysia. "I bought a corporate-looking suit in the anticipation of the interview."

The suit must have been pretty snazzy because Leah became executive assistant to the New Zealand Ambassador, Heather Riddell, a lifetime diplomat. As such it was Leah's task to organise banquets when VIPS - like John Key and Foreign Minister Murray McCully visited.

She made travel arrangements for diplomats going here there and everywhere, and did consulate work for Kiwis who were having troubles with illness, or visas, or whatever.

"Having that change from the private sector

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to the public sector was an amazing experience. As well as meeting and eating with fellow workers from other embassies like the US, Canada, Switzerland. You name it, it was just like being in the United Nations.”

Davey worked teaching English several hours a week and also put in more work as a sideline running the Hanoi Dragons touch rugby team.

They returned, stopping over at the Gold Coast when Dallas arrived, “I spent my maternity leave on the beach there at the Gold Coast.

“When he was nine months old, Soil & Rock rang me. They said, ‘We’ve doubled in size, opened a new office in Christchurch where there’s so much work on the post-quake re-build, so how about coming back’?”

Four weeks later she was back at Rock & Soil and very soon national operations manager. The company then had 30-35 staff but she took charge of a re-structuring, to the current number 55 or more.

As its name suggests, the company is one of the leading experts in rock, soil and water. One of its brochures says Soil & Rock engineers have been drilling and sampling “and generally getting our hands dirty since 1987”.

They carry out geotechnical investigation and design, environmental servicing, contaminated land management, advise on storm & waste water design, hydrology and hydrogeology, while also advising on slope stability. “We are committed to providing a quality service, on time and on budget, our thinking is solution-based”.

Some of Soil & Rock’s projects include the Auckland Blues high performance training centre at Alexandra Park, State Highway work for the NZTA, projects for Vector NZ, a grandstand for Christchurch Boys’ High School and the development of a vast site for Auckland Airport.

All of which, of course, keeps Leah PDB - pretty darned busy.

“The job involves logic, commonsense and loyalty,” she says. “You have to take egos right out of it. I have confidence, I go with my gut instincts, and I have ideas.”

The fact that now she’s a shareholder in the company helps. “It was a really important step for me. It was like ‘wow’ finally I’m really a business owner’ and that’s good, because I care about this company so much.”

That care is certainly reciprocated.

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## The 2018 vintage with Babich Wines

Senior Winemaker - Adam Hazeldine



On Monday we finished our harvest at our Marlborough winery, and at our Head Office & Winery in Henderson. We still await the last of the Cabernet Sauvignon from the Gimblett Gravels in Hawke's Bay. This is the culmination of a year of hard work and weather.

The season can be summarised as a warm start, wet February (four times the average rainfall in Marlborough!) and then thankfully a dry and hot final ripening period.

In Henderson we receive the fruit from our Hawke's Bay vineyards: Chardonnay, Viognier, Merlot, Syrah, Malbec and the Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc. With the wet February we were feeling quite anxious as the grapes ripened, (rain and nearly ripe grapes can severely compromise the potential to make great wine).

Luckily the rain stopped, and a series of highs delivered just what we needed - hot and dry weather. The flavour and concentration are the best we seen in several years and has put a smile on everyone's faces.

The Marlborough winery is a new facility that receives ten times the quantity of grapes we do at Henderson. Predominately Sauvignon Blanc but also Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling and Alberino. We designed the winery specifically to be able to pick the entire harvest in ten days - not an ability mirrored in many other wineries in

the area.

This proved its worth again this vintage as a particularly nasty condition called "slip skin" made itself known across the entire region. (Slip skin is a type of botrytis infection that get under the skin of berries and can move through an initially healthy block at truly alarming rate).

Hence, the vintage was fast and furious as we kept one step ahead of trouble and brought in gorgeous and intensely flavoured juice. Another vintage down. It had its challenges but 2018 is a vintage we can anticipate excellent wine from.



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at the Berlin International Wine Competition! Also receiving a gold medal for their 2017 Black Label Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc and Marlborough Pinot Noir Rose. They welcome you to pop in for a wine tasting or purchase these award-winning wines at [babichwines.com/shop](http://babichwines.com/shop)

If you're a red drinker, you may like to try the Hawke's Bay Merlot Cabernet 2016 which just bagged the trophy at the Royal Easter Show wine awards 2018.



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# All you wanted to know about Lincoln Road ... and were too scared to ask.

By Auckland Transport



This is the first of a series of articles (and other forms of information) that we will be producing to explain the Lincoln Road upgrade project, how AT and the community can exchange information and how to best manage the difficulties the re-build will bring.

We know we have to work closely with you to meet the needs of the Lincoln and Henderson business, leisure, education, medical and residential precincts, to the best of our ability. This is because thriving local communities that allow people to live, work and play close to home, are one of the sustainable solutions to congestion. Accordingly, ensuring the vibrancy of the Lincoln and Henderson business sectors is a key outcome for the project.

We have time to ensure that outcome. Physical works don't start for three years (apart from on the motorway interchange) and we will use that time to build solid relationships and networks with the business and other communities. With these, AT and business can exchange as much information as possible to help you be prepared to ride out what will be challenging times and, to help keep the challenges to a minimum.

We're very grateful to the Central Park Henderson Business Association which has offered itself to be a pipeline between Auckland Transport and Lincoln Road/Henderson business communities. Information can flow both ways through this pipeline; we can communicate with you more effectively and we can hear your concerns, suggestions and issues. It will be one of the keys to pre-empting issues and to resolving those we can't pre-empt.

Information is the key to being prepared. So as a starting point, this article gives an overview of the project. Later articles will talk about the detail of the works, how they will be planned and how we propose to carry them out.

## Why must Lincoln Road be upgraded?

Lincoln is already heavily congested with 48,000 thousand vehicles six days a week. If we do nothing, this will only get worse as the population and business sector grow.

Also, Lincoln Road traffic contributes to the regional congestion which costs the city's businesses \$1.5 billion a year in lost productivity<sup>1</sup>. That is unsustainable and it can't be allowed to get worse. So, there's a lot at stake and because Lincoln Rd is part of the city's problem, the upgrade has to be part of the city's solution.

The upgrade, of itself, won't reduce the number of vehicles but it will enable the traffic to flow more efficiently and reduce travel times. After the upgrade, therefore, a more free-flowing Lincoln Road will contribute to a growing and vibrant business sector.

Yes, there will be challenges for business during the upgrade but between us, we can prepare for and manage those challenges. Doing nothing, however, will sooner or later kill the business sector - and we can't manage that.

So that is "why".



## How will we arrest congestion?

Making roads flow better is part of the answer and it can be straightforward.

Lincoln Road is actually big enough, right now, for the traffic it carries. The problem is that small blockages in many places, especially at intersections and the motorway interchange, stop traffic from flowing efficiently. For example, turning traffic and through-traffic, sharing a single lane, hold each other up at intersections, waiting for their phase of lights.

Realigning the intersections where necessary, adding more turning lanes and synchronising the lights better, will make a huge difference. Improving the motorway interchange will also help. This presently acts like a stopper in a bottle, backing traffic up on Lincoln Road and compounding all the other blockages. However, NZTA will start works as early as June or July this year, to improve the interchange. This alone will improve traffic flow immediately and be a big help in managing traffic-flow when we do our works in three years' time.

Nevertheless, facilitating better traffic flow isn't a sustainable solution. Over time the traffic will build up again and the cycle will repeat. To prevent this we have to arrest congestion at source. As the main cause of congestion is many thousands of single occupant commuter vehicles, so we can only arrest congestion at source by enticing solo drivers to leave their cars at home and commute using an alternative.

Lincoln Road is a good example of what AT, NZTA and the council are doing, city-wide, to achieve this, by setting up the arterial roads and motorways to promote the alternatives of Public Transport (PT), car sharing, and walking and cycling.

This is already working spectacularly well. Both PT and cycling are proving that if we "build it, they will come". PT patronage is increasing every year. Last year, 91 million trips were taken on bus, rail and ferry. Even so, cycling has become the second-fastest-growing mode of transport in our city.

The spectacular reduction in congestion in school holidays, when the "school run" isn't happening, shows what a benefit cycling to school can have. There has to be a package of changes in order for cycling to school to "take off" and we will be working on those, but for it to be possible at all, we do need safe cycling spaces.

We can provide off-road cycle-ways beside Lincoln Road, at little cost. We need a four-metre berm on both sides anyway and the cycle-way can be placed there for the cost of the concrete (which is minimal, especially given that NZTA is paying 52% of the project's construction cost).

However, for now, "New Network" bus services are the main "congestion-busting tool". These services provide comfortable, affordable, modern transportation that can be faster and much cheaper than commuting by car and have a reliable on-time performance. But that is only

possible if the buses have their own uncongested lane to run in.

Lincoln doesn't yet justify a bus lane but a T3 lane (with bus priority at intersections) will facilitate a fast run for buses, while vehicles with three or more people aboard will also be rewarded. And, because the T3 will take up to 15% of current traffic, that will leave more space in the other two lanes during peak hours. Off peak, all road users will share three lanes.

## Where will we get the room from to do this?

We have to buy a strip of land off some 84 properties (many with multiple business occupants). This will give us the space for a wider road and, a berm with room for all the underground services (which have to be re-located).

To achieve this, we have to negotiate mutually acceptable individual packages with each property. We must re-establish the front boundaries closer to the properties and reconfigure and re-landscape properties inside the new boundary, to mitigate the impact to the greatest possible extent.

This will be a three year process and our goal is to leave every affected business, resident and community enterprise with the feeling that we have done the very best we can for them.

## What input can you expect to have?

The plan itself is decided. So things can't be changed. The road will be widened, it will have a Transit lane on either side, a raised median barrier (for safety) with lights-controlled U-Turns at the major intersections and, it will have off road cycle lanes. However, a myriad details both in terms of the design and managing the construction, have still to be settled.

We've started the Detailed Design which, in about 18 months, will describe every action we have to take, metre by metre, between Te Pai Place and the motorway. We will be able to discuss this with affected parties. Then, we have to decide on the construction methodology and this too, will have to pay very close attention to the impacts on every single affected property and how to keep these to a minimum.

During these processes, we will listen to you. We will respond. We will explain. We will have an effective complaints and information process. And, where possible, we will make adjustments that improve your experience during the works themselves.

In the next issue of this magazine we will explain some of the massive detail that will go into the upgrade of Lincoln Road.



<sup>1</sup> Treasury estimate and doesn't include the huge social and environmental costs that we all share through rates and taxes