

Ross CLOW

Portage Licensing Trust - Ward 4 (Titirangi/Green Bay)

I've lived in Titirangi for 55 years, co-raising the Pearl clan, loving our beautiful bush environment and warm community vibe.

I am an experienced Independent candidate and able community advocate with a proven track record of achievement in Waitakere community affairs. Community service includes serving on a school board, sports club committees, as well as numerous arts organisations. Previously I have been a city councillor for 12 years and Finance Committee Chair at both Waitakere and Auckland Councils, also long serving Portage Chair. I am a socially responsible businessman who expects profitable financial management of The Trusts businesses.

While I am supportive of our public community ownership of alcohol retailing and taverns, "The Trusts" must lift their game. The bottom line is we need better, more modern bars and hospitality venues. We only need to think about the Hallertau Craft Beer Garden or Little Creatures Hobsonville Point and ask why don't we have venues like these in New Lynn and Avondale. Why don't we have any cosy intimate bistro wine bars in West Auckland?

The introduction of the Liquorland franchise was a positive step. Likewise paying staff the Living Wage was a positive step. The very real benefits of ongoing financial support for many schools, sports clubs and arts/culture organisations is well appreciated. But "The Trusts" must be more transparent and open to public scrutiny if they want to retain their privileged position.

Unlike the rest of Auckland, our community can manage the proliferation of unsuitable liquor/gaming outlets in our suburbs, whilst also gaining direct community benefit from the business profits of these problematic industries. These are good things to preserve, but maybe it is time for another referendum to let the public decide what is best for the West.