2026 Annual General Meeting – Manager's Report

Northcote Town Centre Inc · Highlights for 2025/26 · Oct 7, 2026 · @Gary Holmes

Highlights for 2025/26

This has been the most disruptive year Northcote has traded through, and the year the Association rebuilt itself. Demolition and land acquisition have now removed around a third of the pre-redevelopment business base. Over the same period we lost our Chair, rebuilt the committee, tightened our financial controls, and replaced a five-year strategic plan with a two-year work plan that fits a $130,000 budget.

My thanks go first to Victor Anyanka, who took on the Chair in July when the Association needed someone to step forward, and to Niki Cowie, whose consistent attendance as Treasurer kept the Association functioning through the months when the committee could not reach a quorum. Thanks also to David Perano, Steve Walsh and Bon Chiem for their time around the table, and to Chuck Buckley and Amit Rana, who served during the year before stepping down. Lucia Mataia continues to bring the library's perspective as our community representative, and Raymond Tan has kept the Kāipātiki Local Board connected to our meetings.

Crystal Pan, our Chinese Liaison, makes sure construction notices, Council updates and promotions reach our Chinese-speaking business owners in a form they can use. Nobody else does that work.

Precinct Performance

Marketview shows a strong 2024/25 and a harder 2025/26. In the 12 months to July 2025, Northcote recorded +10.9% growth, the strongest result of any BID in the region while Auckland as a whole contracted by 2.2%. In the 12 months to July 2026, that momentum eased: total spend was down 0.9% and transaction count down 3.6%.

Marketview measure	Result
Growth, 12 months to July 2025	+10.9%, highest in the region (Auckland: −2.2%)

Marketview measure	Result
Total spend, 12 months to July 2026	−0.9% on prior year
Transactions, 12 months to July 2026	−3.6% on prior year
July 2026 spend (single month)	$2.9 million, −14.2% on July 2025
July 2026 average transaction value	$36.65, +2.1% on July 2025

The fall is in the number of visits, not in what people spend once they are here: average transaction value is up. That matches the loss of trading businesses to demolition and land acquisition, not a loss of customer interest in Northcote. Groceries and liquor still make up around three-quarters of precinct spend, and North Shore residents account for 68% of it.

Cafés, restaurants, bars and takeaways were down 13.8% in July 2026. That is the category our dining campaign and the monthly business promotion are aimed at, and I will report it to the committee every month to see whether they are making a difference. From September I have also started a one-page monthly Marketview update.

Town Centre Redevelopment

The redevelopment delivered its first visible result this year. The town centre section of Te Ara Awataha opened on 11 September 2026, with the restored stream, new pathway and green space now open to the public. AUDO marked the opening on 4 October with a community celebration and the launch of the Northcote creative play trail.

Meanwhile, the businesses still trading here have had to work around:

- **Library relocation.** Northcote Library closed in February and reopened from the temporary hub at 1 Ernie Mays Street in March 2026.
- **Community hub construction.** Work on the community hub and Puāwai Cadness Reserve moved into its next stage from late September, with expanded fencing, the lower end of Ernie Mays Street closed, and a small number of car parks removed. The new hub is due to open in late 2027.
- **Da Hua Supermarket.** AUDO has advised that Da Hua will be given notice. The building is scheduled for demolition in April 2027 to make way for the Ernie Mays Street extension. With groceries making up three-quarters of precinct spend, losing a supermarket is the single biggest trading risk we face next year.
- **Markets.** The weekly Northcote market was cancelled for 2026 after the operator found it no longer commercially viable. AUDO is in discussion with a new operator to restart markets over summer.

I have continued to meet AUDO monthly, raising access, visibility and business impacts as standing items. The construction workforce is also a new source of trade: NZ Strong construction staff spent over $2,500 with local businesses between May and July, and on-site numbers are expected to grow from around 25 to 75 a day through peak construction. We are now working with NZ Strong and AUDO to direct more of that spend into the town centre (see Promotion below).

The bigger problem is still unresolved. The Benchmark Masterplan was finalised years ago, but Auckland Council has still not secured a master developer to deliver it. Businesses here are paying market rents and trading through the uncertainty in the meantime.

Governance

The committee was rebuilt during the year, after a period early in 2026 when it could not reach a quorum. The Chairperson's Report sets out the committee changes and the stronger financial controls now in place, including two-person authorisation of every payment.

My thanks to the Auckland Council BID Team, whose attendance at our June meeting helped the committee get back on a sound footing, and to the committee members who have put in the time to make the new arrangements work.

Safety and Security

Security remains the largest single area of BID spending, and this year we cut its cost without reducing cover. In February we restructured the Matrix patrol contract around the crime pattern the data was showing: daytime and bed-down patrols were removed and night patrols extended from 15 to 30 minutes, 14 times a week. That gives longer checks at night, when premises are most exposed, for less money. The saving lets next year's budget to lift the Cultural Day without cutting patrol coverage.

The CrimeWatch CCTV network, with AI remote monitoring, continues to give the precinct after-hours oversight no individual business could fund on its own. In July CrimeWatch installed a camera and public address speaker at the rear of Pearn Place, targeting the illegal dumping that had been an ongoing problem. No further dumping has been reported since. A damaged licence plate recognition camera is also being replaced.

Construction has also caused problems for the network. In mid-August a roof contractor working on the Da Hua block removed two cameras covering the bus stop and the Pearn Place entrance. When a tenant in that block was robbed on 15 September and Police requested footage, there was no footage to give them. At the time of writing I am pressing Auckland Council Property for a firm reinstatement date and will escalate if one is not confirmed.

Promotion, Events and Communications

This year we added tools that promote members every month, not just on event days. They are built on what sets Northcote apart: 22 restaurants across 14 cuisines on one street, including the only Nigerian restaurant in New Zealand. That is the basis of "14 Countries. One Street."

Northcote Cultural Day. The 2026 Cultural Day on Saturday 21 February, our flagship community event, ran with 12 stalls on a $25,000 budget and returned a surplus of

almost $5,000 against a break-even budget, with external contributions and stallholder income both ahead of forecast.

Northcote Dining Passport. The buy-local passport app at passport.northcote.co.nz is in its final stage of testing before public launch. It runs in English, Chinese and Korean, carries member special offers, and rewards customers with a $250 monthly prize draw and bonuses for visiting multiple eateries.

Mei digital concierge. Mei, at mei.northcote.co.nz, is live and answers questions about the precinct and its businesses in multiple languages.

Supporting the construction workforce. The crews building the community hub are a new group of customers right next door. With NZ Strong and AUDO, we now feature a local restaurant to the on-site workforce, with a special offer for construction staff. Dumpling Ace was first, in September. NZ Strong puts up $50 in prize money each month, and the BID matches it. Crystal and I are visiting each restaurant over the coming weeks to line up offers for the months ahead.

Dining campaign. Phase 1 of the "14 Countries. One Street." campaign covers Google Business Profiles for every restaurant, a Northcote Eats landing page, short-form video and a media pitch for Afroflavours. It is ready to start once the committee gives sign-off.

AUDO events. The opening of the Te Ara Awataha town centre section on 11 September was the most visible milestone of the redevelopment so far. AUDO followed it with a community celebration and the launch of the Northcote creative play trail on 4 October, and through the year also ran Light Up Northcote in July and summer activities including the Northcote Art Station. These events were AUDO-led and funded. The BID supported them by promoting them to members and customers, and encouraging people to shop and eat locally while they were here.

We also continued the Northcote Vouchers programme, putting spend directly into participating businesses.

On communications, we are planning on producing short promotional videos for individual retailers at no cost to the BID, and the first quarterly member newsletter will go out alongside the passport launch so members receive one update rather than two. Crystal continues to manage the Chinese-language channel, and all member-facing material goes out in English and Chinese.

Advocacy

The BID is the only organised body putting the business case to AUDO, Auckland Council and the Local Board during the redevelopment. This year we put that case in writing.

In July we made a full submission to the Kāipātiki Local Board Plan 2026. It asked the Board to:

1. Support a formal business disruption package for the rest of the construction programme, covering access, signage and targeted rate relief, consistent with what City Rail Link businesses received.
2. Support a lighting audit of the town centre, and resolve the outstanding question of who pays the power costs for the under-veranda LED lights the BID funded.
3. Back a standing working group bringing the BID, AUDO and the Local Board together.
4. Make vacant Council-controlled shops available for short-term pop-up use at accessible rents rather than leaving them empty.
5. Keep AUDO's activation programme properly resourced through the regeneration period.
6. Name the Northcote dining precinct as a specific economic development priority.

The committee approved the working group's Terms of Reference in August, and on 5 September I wrote to Kate Cumberpatch at AUDO and Danielle Grant at the Local Board seeking their agreement. Getting it established is still a work in progress, and I will keep pressing until the first meeting is in the diary. Once running, it will meet quarterly and give businesses a regular seat with the people making decisions about the town centre.

From 30 September, Auckland Council took over Auckland Transport's road, footpath and parking functions. Requests about roading, parking and footpaths in the town centre now go to Council, and I am redirecting our open matters accordingly.

Looking Ahead

The next 18 months will change the shape of this precinct again. Da Hua's building comes down in April 2027, the community hub opens in late 2027, and the new households from the Kāinga Ora programme keep arriving. We need the businesses still trading here to share in that growth.

The indicative 2027/28 Business Plan and Budget before members tonight is built on $130,000 of targeted rate funding and a $10,000 Kāipātiki Local Board grant. It lifts the Northcote Cultural Day to $20,000, and Phase 2 of the dining campaign, and keeps CCTV monitoring and patrols at current levels, with a small surplus held for the committee to direct during the year.

The priorities for the incoming committee:

- Launch the Dining Passport and start Phase 1 of the dining campaign, then track the cafés and restaurants category in Marketview each month to test whether it is working.
- Convene the first Northcote Precinct Working Group meeting and use it to pursue a written Council response on construction compensation.
- Plan BID activity around the community hub opening and around Movies in Parks at Greenslade Reserve on 28 February 2027, so those crowds find their way into the town centre.

- Commission the bilingual member survey and the community survey, so we know what members and customers want.
- Decide early on the BID website. The current platform is out of date, cannot be backed up within its hosting space, and needs either a migration or a rebuild.

Five committee members is not enough for this workload. If you run a business in Northcote and want a say in how this precinct comes through the redevelopment, I would appreciate you putting your name forward tonight or speaking to me afterwards.

Recommended resolution: *That Northcote Town Centre Inc receive the 2025/26 Manager's Report, being the report of the operations team's activities for the 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 financial year.*

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