

ITx Wellington Mayoral forum

Transcript

Andrea Vance: Great. Just to start with a little bit of introduction. Jo Coughlan here, she's Director of Silvereye Communications and provides public relations and government relations advice. She was press secretary for Sir Don McKinnon. She's represented the Onslow Western ward since 2007, so she's been a councillor for nine years, and was in charge of economic development for the past six. She says that improving the capital's infrastructure will be her top priority. On the end there we've got Justin Lester, who grew up in Invercargill. He had a financial hardship scholarship in 1996 and spent his seventh form year in a German town near Berlin. He first visited Wellington when he was a kid and was very impressed by the city's skyscrapers and the hustle and bustle of the streets.

He moved to Wellington to raise a family here, and in his mid-twenties he founded Ka Pai, which most of you probably know as a Wellington food enterprise. Justin decided to get involved in the council because he wanted to be a champion for the local community. Last but not least we've got Nicola Young. She was born in Wellington and she grew up in Mt Vic and Kelburn. She was head prefect at Erskine College and went on to study journalism at Wellington Polytech. Her first job was at the former Evening Post as a feature writer and a civic reporter. After her O.E, she returned to Wellington in 1996 and set up a communications and political strategy consultancy.

She is a first term city councillor and she was elected to represent the Lambton ward in 2013. She says that she's fought for arts funding, and that the creative economy is vital to the city. She's an independent councillor.

What I thought we'd do, we've got some questions on this sector that we thought that we would let the candidates answer and then we'll open to the floor, because I'm sure you'll all be anxious to ask some questions. To start with you, Jo, in five minutes or less can you give us a brief overview of your vision for the digital technology sector in Wellington and how you would drive this as mayor.

Jo Coughlan: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks, Andrea. Look, for me I don't see this election as being just about the next three years. I think it's about the next 100 and it's about getting Wellington ready for growth so that future generations here can thrive. I've got a big family here. Between my six children they've got 70 years of a Wellington education. I want them to be able to have the choice to live here. I want them to be able to lead happy and successful lives here, and I really want them to be able to have the choice to get a world-class job in Wellington. As Andrea has explained my background just briefly has been in the Otago University.

I went down to Otago, worked at New Zealand aluminium smelters for a number

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of years. Up to Wellington, worked for the tourism board, for the National bank, ANZ and corporate comms roles, then went to work for Don McKinnon as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He was also the Deputy Prime Minister at the time and then started my own business and I've been in business now for over 10 years. I understand really all the issues around start-ups and the difficulties there. I've been leading the economic development strategy at the council since 2011, really enjoyed that. We've had quite an ambitious range of activities and good news, we've managed to achieve our stretch goal of 10,000 new jobs for the city.

Interestingly, our CBD growth in Wellington has just outstripped that of Auckland's in the last 12 months. Some key things that are happening. Long-haul flights, within 100 days there will be the first long-haul flight out of Wellington to Singapore. We've co-funded the runway extension resource consent, which is exciting. We're hoping to tick off the Convention Centre and Film Museum in the next month for Wellington which will be quite a game-changer, a very unique tourism offering for the city and internationally. We've set up the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency to promote Wellington as a business investment destination as well as tourism. We've set up the Tech Hub, which is very exciting down on Tory Street.

We've got a number of other initiatives including an urban development agency on the table. In short, over the last few years, we have seen some good results. Tourism is up. Housing consents are up. We've got an improved retail offering in the city with David Jones coming on stream and R&M Williams and apparently Zara potentially coming. There was about \$500 million invested in Wellington last year, and I think if anyone was at the Gold Awards, they would have seen the confidence really that is in the city now with more than 1,000 people attending. Biggest Gold Awards ever and I think that's really heartening. I just wanted to paint a bit of a picture because obviously we're here to talk about our vision.

Really, my vision for Wellington is that it would be New Zealand's first digital city and an internationally recognised testing ground for smart urban innovation. That's my vision for the digital and technology sector. I want to be able to tell the world about that through a concept called Wellington tech field days. Basically, what I want to do is position Wellington to tech as Mystery Creek is to agriculture. I think it's time that Wellington owned this space. It's a very competitive sector and we're up against, not only cities in the rest of New Zealand but the rest of the world for talent and business. I think we need to own this space that we currently rightfully can own. We've got a big industry here. Obviously the tech sector has grown hugely.

We've lost some of our head offices over the years but the back offices have stayed. Certainly even ANZ Bank with more than 3,500 staff here. We know about Datacom, Xero, Trade Me, all of those significant employers still here in Wellington, but then we've got the growth of these other companies like Provoke

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and Intergen and Fronde and PaperKite. All these other companies which are significant employers in the city taking our ICT manpower and womanpower in Wellington to about 15,000 people. I feel we've got good influence here. We should be able to influence government in this space. We're obviously the home of government, massive IT spend. We have the highest population of IT based companies and digital companies per capita.

Wellingtonians are three times as likely to work in ICT as in any other city in New Zealand and we have the opportunity to be a world leader here. I think we have got more people, or we have more people employed in the knowledge economy in Wellington and specifically even in the CBD. Something like 70% of our employees here are employed in knowledge economy jobs compared to the rest of the country which is at about 36%. It's obviously a great place to pilot innovation and smart city innovation. We're already doing that in the city. We've got a partnership with NEC. We're doing a lot of sensor monitoring. Monitoring of everything, from noise pollution, smells, traffic movements, pedestrian movements with sensors.

We've got that good collaboration going, government of course involved in it as well. I think really, why not sensor the whole city and work out what our emissions are and everything else and use this data to help us make good decisions about investment in our assets? What do we need to be the world's best digital city? We need the right physical environment. Infrastructure is key. Access to WiFi, broadband, all of that stuff. We need to have great spaces in places that make the city liveable and a better place to do business. We've already got a lot of it here. We know about this. We're walkable, we're connected, we've got that whole ability to bump into people, from politicians through to other people in the sector. We have the Biz Dojo going.

We've got 60 businesses operating out of there now. Something like 400 start-ups in Wellington. We're absolutely a start-up ecosystem which is fantastic. Creative HQ have been doing a good job, but you know, why not extend this all a little bit and have a bit more of a cashless economy, speaking to Rod Drury. He talks about more snapper, more pay wave, and then things like infrastructure to support the activities that people in the industry love doing, like the mountain biking for example. We've got the tracks right here in the city, very unusual. All unique, I should say. Why not make sure we've got the infrastructure down in the city; showers and bike maintenance places and whatnot so that all of those people can be supported in their recreational pursuits as well?

We want to attract talent. We have got the physical environment, we've got the people. It's absolutely essential that we have got the right talent coming into Wellington. We have established WREDA to be able to promote Wellington as a great place to live and to do business. We need to work with the education sector. Obviously in the paper today, a massive full page ad saying there's issues with talent coming through. We need to do what we can to work with the education

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sector to try and develop more.

Andrea: Okay Jo, I'm going to stop you there because you've well had your five minutes.

Jo: Can I just round up then. I'll just ...

Andrea: Very quickly, yeah.

Jo: ... grab up a quick sentence. The other two things absolutely essential, promotion and procurement. We really need to work a lot harder with government around procurement policies for businesses in this city so that everybody is getting a fair deal and working off the same legal playing field.

Andrea: Great. You've got some fantastic ideas in there. Particularly interested in the Wellington field days for ICT and also the idea of more smart governments. We'll maybe hopefully drill down into that a little bit in the Q&A section. Justin, do you want to give us ... In five minutes or less, do you want to give us your overview of the digital and technology sector in Wellington and how you would drive it if you were mayor?

Justin Lester: Yes. Thank you Andrea, and I'll try to keep the time. Thank you Victoria and Don for organizing today and giving us an opportunity to speak. Clearly, people are busy growing their businesses as well and that's why some of them aren't able to be here. I do want to acknowledge to your team leads that are here however, you are the entrepreneurs, you're the pioneers, the risk-takers. You're the ones waiting on the payroll every week, chasing your dreams. On behalf of the city, thank you. It's my job to support you and to create an environment where you can succeed. Just in terms of the context, you know the stats, but I'm just going to run through some of them because it shows the scale of the opportunity to Wellington, and not only to Wellington, to New Zealand.

In 2015, the digital and technology sector employed 5% of New Zealand's workforce or just under 100,000 people, but it's the highest paid, and this is perhaps the most important thing. You're the highest paid and the highest qualified of all sectors in the economy. Now the 2015 Tin 100 report tells us that sector growth is 7%, far outstripping any other industry in New Zealand and income and revenue up to \$9 billion. Exports, and this is impressive, exports have grown by a compound annual rate of 14% over the last five years. That shows the scale of the opportunity for Wellington. We are New Zealand's technology hub. We do have the highest number of percentage of employees across the country.

ICT accounts for 7.3% of our original GDP currently and we've had, in the last two years, 20 firms feature in the top 100 of Asia Pacific's fastest growing key companies. There are some impressive names on that list; Datacom and Interger, Xero. What excites me most is actually the mix wave of Wellington businesses

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coming through. The Powershops, the Flick Electric Companies, Wipster, Dot Loves Data, Rabid. These are the youngest raptors and they're featuring and forging a new path. Here's one final figure that provides me with some discomfort but again shows the scale of the opportunity. It's where does New Zealand sit in the international rankings of economic contribution from its digital sector? Internationally, we're 26th, and that's not good enough.

What that shows is that the opportunity for growth is enormous. Currently, we're too focused on agriculture, too focused on tourism, but with digital and tech sector investment support and a facilitative environment, we can increase that. What Wellington needs now is experienced, entrepreneurial and aspirational leadership in this area. I'm not going to take on the ICT digital technology portfolio myself, but I will, as mayor, take on economy and arts and I'll have a specific and direct portfolio from a senior councillor to drive this area specifically. I've got experience in setting up my own business. I was working at The Max Planck Institute for International and Comparative Law in Heidelberg.

I just finished my master's degree in law, when I decided to return home and set off on a completely different path in 2005 with no food experience whatsoever, I set up a business called Ka Pai. We had two employees; myself and my business partner, and we've since grown it to stores across Wellington and into Auckland as well. We now employ more than 50 people. Entrepreneurial-ism is not something you just learn. An entrepreneur needs to identify emerging trends and commercialises them to help solve problems that people are facing on a daily basis. My business isn't in the tech or digital sector, but the principles remain the same. The challenges are access to capital, a diverse talent base, and a supportive business environment.

My vision is to make Wellington the digital capital of New Zealand and cement our reputation locally, but also across the world. I'm going to make two announcements today to help achieve this aim. I'll introduce a Chief Innovation Officer to the Wellington City Council Executive Leadership Team and the role will focus on smart city growth and technology-based platforms for local government and infrastructure. There'll be a city growth fund prioritization, this is an existing envelope of funds. I'll take \$500,000 from existing city growth funds to partner with the digital sector over the next three years. That will enable us to create open data provision, advocacy with local government providers for example, and core infrastructure services.

I'll also introduce a 20% local procurement criteria for Wellington City Council tenders for digital and technology services. This will give local providers an opportunity to grow and to provide a fertile testing ground for new technologies in a safe and welcoming environment. I've listened to your feedback. I'm going to embed this entrepreneurial culture across Wellington and start it right within Wellington City Council. I want to give you the tools that you need to succeed and

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to make your business easier. The talk of cultural ...

Andrea: Great. That's five minutes now. Right, okay. Finally, Nicola. Just your vision, in five minutes, and how you would drive it as mayor

Nicola Young: Right. I've always been very wary of the word vision, but that's just a personal hangup having been a journalist. The growth of the digital and technology sector has provided a huge economic boost to Wellington, removing the tyranny of distance that really cursed us for over 100 years. Local companies can now compete against anywhere in the world, something I've experienced with my business having worked for clients in Hong Kong, the UK and the US, many of whom I never actually met. Much of my local work has been in the health sector, in particular around the issues of privacy and data, which I know is an ongoing concern. I want Wellington to be a world-class digital city.

We know we have New Zealand's third largest digital and technology sector with about \$2.4 billion of revenue and over 13,000 jobs. These are the jobs we want to attract to Wellington rather than throwing ratepayers' money at things like call centres using the secret slush fund. Despite the record growth, many of the companies are still struggling to make a profit. I have pledged to freeze the rates at inflation so Wellington remains affordable for businesses and for people. Success in the digital sector can come almost overnight. I know this from a member of my own family. My niece, Gloria Button, switched from commercial law and moved from Wellington to New York where she helped co-found two ground-breaking digital businesses; Massive, which later sold to Microsoft for a reported \$200 to \$400 million.

Then Victor & Spoils, the first advertising agency built on the principles of crowd sourcing. She's now working with New Zealand companies to help some of them do the same and help them launch into the US and track down the ever-elusive capital, which is an ongoing issue for the sector. As mayor, I will work with our main tertiary institutions and private training organizations to work out at a political level how best the council can assist in boosting our pool of talent. New Zealand needs to get cracking to plug the real shortage of candidates for the information technology sector. It's good that we're supporting start-ups through the tech hub and the Biz Dojo, but we need to find ways to support businesses that already exist.

I'll lobby government to promote digital technology as part of our mainstream educational curriculum rather than bolt it on as a non-academic subject like woodwork, cooking or sewing as it is now. Council, as a policymaker, has the power to help or hinder the adoption of new technologies and ensure policies don't tie up innovation in red tape. We need to use this power more proactively and I promise that as mayor, that is something I will pursue as a top priority.

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- Andrea: Great. Thank you. Just quickly, to all three of you, would you reinstate ICT as a portfolio at council level? Jo?
- Jo: Look, I'll be working through all of that and of course, ICT remains very high up on the agenda, but to me it falls across a range of areas; urban development, economic growth. I don't really see it as being something that's just there on its own. I see it as applying really across the board.
- Andrea: Okay, so that's a no.
- Jo: I hadn't quite finished my answer.
- Andrea: All right. I wanted just a quick yes or no ...
- Jo: Okay.
- Andrea: ... because we're not going to get through all the questions on the list.
- Jo: All right. I think what I would be more interested in is having an urban innovation portfolio leader. Somebody that really was looking right across the spectrum in total really.
- Andrea: Justin.
- Justin: An emphatic yes. I will take on the economy and arts portfolio as mayor, and sitting beneath it, I'll have a senior councillor on digital and ICT.
- Andrea: Okay, so that's a yes from you?
- Justin: An emphatic yes.
- Andrea: Nicola.
- Nicola: I have a slightly longer answer because my first one was really brief. I have publicly committed to reinstate this portfolio, ensuring the digital sector has a champion at the council table. Inexplicably, this role was dumped by the current mayor. I've already stated publicly that I will open the council data sets to provide innovation and increase transparency by putting greater scrutiny on council's performance and I will push for the greater Wellington regional council to do the same with their transport data sets. We need the council to champion open data as technology can do so much to assist the running of our city. Yes, I will be reinstating the ICT portfolio.
- Andrea: Okay. Jo, could you just talk about how you see a smart city. What is it? How would it work, and what would be your key initiatives if you were mayor?

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Jo: Yeah. Obviously using data to inform decision-making around asset management is really the hub of I think a smart city. I think we need to keep in mind the end result that tech and data is an enabler, it's not actually a means in itself. We already do have a very rich data policy. We're doing a lot of work in that space already. I will be continuing to encourage developing all of that so that we can create a more liveable city and it be the place to do business. Technology is a very important part of the built environment. At the moment, as I've already explained through our partnership with NEC, just one example, using all of that monitoring of noise and congestion and traffic modes and we can go to greenhouse gas emissions.

We can monitor whatever we want to make optimal decisions for the benefit of the city. Energy is a big issue. How are we going to deal with it going forward. This is happening, not just in Wellington, but all over the world. Everybody is going as fast as they can in this space to achieve the best results. Look, we've got apps for parking, sensors for traffic movement. I think we are living it, we are doing it. Mapping, there has been a lot of work being done in that space as well. I think the other point now to note with the smart city is around public participation. I think that the dial is shifting a little bit as well, or a lot. Certainly, mobile apps, open data, crowd sourcing, virtual design of minted reality all offer efficient and practical ways for citizens to engage with local government to identify and offer solutions to problems.

I think that's the new way forward of influencing and engaging in policy-making and consenting and service provision and this whole concept of distributed democracy, Enspirial talk about that. I think that's a new way forward and that's something that a smart city needs to embrace along with using the data to ensure a more liveable in a more business-friendly city.

Andrea: Justin, smart city, how do you see it, and what would be your initiatives?

Justin: The mantra for me is something that was coined and used by Sir Paul Callaghan before he passed away. That's around New Zealand utilising their knowledge economy that does exist and getting off the grass, getting away from agriculture, getting away from tourism.

Justin: What does a smart city look like? It's open data provision to solve their problems and it's not just to our council, it's advocating to all councils across the country to provide data to solve problems around traffic, around transport. Some of the analysis we're doing currently with NEC for example, real time information around intersections with the pedestrians, motorcyclists and cars and how they interact in the city. It's local procurement to help grow local businesses. It's access to capital investment, it's a start-up incubation which we've started and commenced which been helping leading.

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The slush fund that Jo and I were involved in that provided \$3 million over three years towards setting up Collider a technology hub which has had its money very well spent because again it's incubating those local entities. That is the smart economy that I'll be focusing on. Supporting local business, using information, analysing information to invest in our core services as well.

Andrea: Okay. Nicola, what about you? How do you see a smart city and what are your initiatives?

Nicola: Smart cities use information and technology to manage assets, run more efficiently and effectively and improve people's quality of life. I'm thinking about things like transport and ticketing. The greater Wellington regional council is slowly grinding towards integrated ticketing. Better late than never. It's also things like street lighting, water supply and infrastructure. Smart cities use technology to respond to challenges faster, including emergencies. Last election I campaigned on the need for buildings to show unique street address numbers. Many thought of it as a really trivial point, but it's an essential for GPS and for emergency services as I found out after the Christchurch earthquake.

The work in Wellington has been really successful. We've now gone from 50% of buildings with the right street number to over 85%. Wellington has a head start as a smart city with a highly educated population that embraces change and really advanced work in our infrastructure; things like sewage and water, but we need to investigate faster, more reliable free WiFi in the central city which, subject to cost, could be rolled out further into the suburbs. Improved broadband and mobile infrastructure will encourage business productivity towards a range of local sectors and industries, improve service deliver and increase social connectivity.

We need to lift our game as a sustainable city too. I'm campaigning for street side recycling bins and collection points for used batteries. I'll come on with a couple of other points later on.

Andrea: Great. Thank you. All right. Specifically, how would you support locally owned digital and technology growth companies to create jobs in Wellington, and that would be as opposed to choosing to grow in other cities, maybe in New Zealand or in Australia or other places?

Jo: I think it comes back to some of those pieces again that I've already been talking about. I'll start with procurement, which has also been mentioned today. Look, I think we really do need to look for opportunities to fine tune the procurement model at the local level and also at central government level. I'm sure a lot of you in the audience all have a lot of experience in this space. One of the things that I'll be doing as mayor is to be pulling together a working party very quickly. In fact, it would be good if you had already pulled the working party together before the

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election, come to me, tell me what it is that you have got issues with around procurement, and then I want to use it to inform the conversation that I'll be having with government in the first 100 days.

Where I'm going to be taking my road map and some of the big infrastructure projects that I've got on my road map to the table, because I think it's very important that government and Wellington city need to be aligned on what it is we're trying to achieve for the city and for New Zealand Inc. I think procurement in advocating for it is going to be pretty important. Secondly, people in place. We've talked about Wellington being a place where talent wants to live. We know, and we discovered this back in 2012 when we had our business innovation growth forum or expo at parliament where we had about 50 businesses come together and we showed government ministers what was actually going on here in Wellington.

We know that there's really attractive things about Wellington which make people in these industries want to live here. We've alluded to the whole thing about the urban experience with mountain biking in the middle of the city, the connectedness, the closeness, the walkable city, all of those things. The cycling, everybody loves all this stuff. I think it's about the liveability here in Wellington. It's keeping us high on those international rankings. It's making sure as a city that we don't slip down and that we're able to take on these other cities around the world head-to-head on that level. Then of course it's about promotion. As I've already said, I really want to get these tech field days off the ground. The idea is that we really do need to own this space.

We do have an amazing story to tell here in Wellington and really it's all grown organically, but now I think it's time for us to turbo charge it a bit and make sure that the rest of New Zealand know about what is happening here and certainly the rest of the world do. Really that would be my three main points I think on that.

Andrea: Great, thank you. Justin?

Justin: Four points. First of all, core infrastructure services that help you grow. We need the fastest possible broadband, reliable, free and fast WiFi, and a complex city where it's easy to get around and do business. Secondly, an open-for-business environment, one that's focused on start-up innovation and incubation. Collider, Creative HQ, Lightning Lab and WREDA, for example all initiatives that have been getting underway in the past 5 to 10 years. Waiting for local government procurement. Access to capital investment.

The biggest curb on innovation and growth is access to capital investment across all businesses but primarily where R&D is at the fore in digital and tech and a case management for building consent, so that when you're setting up a new fit out for your new business in your local office, you don't get to the 19th day of your

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building consignment and be told, “Actually, you've got to take all these boxes. We need more information.” Third, a city which everyone wants to live. You talk to Steve O’Connor from Flick Electric, you ask Matt West why he came back to set up Dot Loves Data in Wellington. It's a compact urban form, so they can go for a run around the waterfront at lunch time and finish with a dip in the harbour.

We need to make sure that you've got good lunch time access to nature and recreation. You need, finally, number four, a facilitative and supportive partner. A council that is focused on innovation, and that's why I'm appointing a Chief Innovation Officer, one that's focused on open data provision, that allows international connections to access the city's networks and applies employment pathway programs through the tertiary and through the secondary school sector. One example of that, we have citizenship awards that we provide to local intermediates in the high schools. I'd like to see that rolled out to secondary schools as well for digital sectors. It could be in the form of scholarships for example as part of the city growth fund to encourage awareness within young people about the future career prospects within digital and it's something we can't help with.

Andrea: Nicola.

Nicola: Right. Wellington City Council does have a very capable Head of Innovation, although I suspect he could do with some more resources. Wellington is a very attractive place to live. We know this particularly for this sector because it's compact and walkable so people don't have to spend hours commuting and we have a good quality of life. I've already covered some of this territory. In fact, we've all covered some of this territory, but the council can make this even better. One of the things that Rod Drury has suggested would be a real help would be to have changing sheds at Frank Kitt’s Park so that people can go paddle boating at lunch time and get scrubbed up before they go back to the office.

The central city has had 50% residential growth since 2003. It's the fastest growing residential area in New Zealand and we need to put some real resources into making sure that it remains liveable in the central city. One of the things I've suggested is we should look at pedestrianising areas like Lambton Quay. Third, it becomes more attractive for people who are walking and living in the central city. Coming back to the idea of paddle boating at lunch time, there's something ... I like to go swimming, and often when I'm swimming, I have my best ideas. Often they do come during periods of downtime like this. Wouldn't it be great if Wellington's next great big idea in the digital world was actually born on Wellington Harbour?

Andrea: All right. Last question, and then I'll open up to the floor because I'm sure you guys will have a lot to ask. Local government opening up data sets. Can you guys see the economic benefits of that and what would you do to encourage Wellington City Council to take a leadership role with open data in New Zealand?

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Jo: Absolutely. Again, I think we're ahead of the game and we already are, and we, in 2013 hosted the Digital Earth Summit with LINZ and for example made all of the mapping available. We've done quite a bit of work around infrastructure and pipe mapping and assets as well. I think, look, it's very important, obviously there's going to be issues ongoing for everyone to deal with around privacy and ownership around data, but, look, I think we are already very open. We're doing everything we can. We want to keep encouraging. We're going forward in this space, so I think we are taking a leadership role. We've committed to this and we'll carry on with it.

Andrea: Justin.

Justin: Absolutely. In my world, actions speak louder than words. We have this within our digital strategy from September 2011, but has it actually helped anything, and I say not to the extent that I believe is feasible. Now only does it need to happen within Wellington, we need to advocate to local government New Zealand and to territorial authorities all across the country so we can benchmark across the country to solve problems that currently exist. I'm also going to focus on utilising this data to inform how we operate our infrastructure and our core services. Our transport problems, congestion, and we know for example, school holidays today, I suspect not many people had a problem getting into town because we had fewer cars on the road because people were away on the holidays.

We need to understand the information. Who's traveling where? At what times? How are they moving? That's what we need to invest in, that's where we need to be prioritising our spend.

Jo: Lastly, Nicola.

Nicola: One of the advantages of opening up data sets is it's providing information for people to work with. Now I'm sure most of you have seen those information boards at bus stops. They cost the regional council \$15 million and they're often ... They have been panned for being so inaccurate. Now for the same amount of money, the regional council could have, one, built an app, and two, given the 50% of people who don't have a smart phone, a smart phone, and then had really good apps that provide useful, up-to-date information. If you go to other countries like I spent a lot of time in London during council recesses, because my daughter is there, amazing information about getting around London is available through apps.

Now at the moment that's a regional council issue transport alas, but that's an example of what you can do with open data sets; really improve the way we live our lives, the accuracy, the amount of time we stop wasting at bus stops in the wet and the rain. I also think by opening data sets, it just gives people like you more

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information to play with and come up with apps that really will make a big difference to the quality of our lives.

Andrea: Lovely. Thank you. All right, that's all the questions that we had, but we wanted to see what the audience thought. You guys obviously heard a lot there about liveability in this city and some of the ideas that the candidates have. Maybe not so much about improving connectedness, and investment and establishing capital, I'd really like to take some questions from the floor. Is anyone ... there's a quick hand up there in the middle.

Male: Ian Taylor touched on it this morning, the difference of being a gigatown has made to Dunedin, and evidently we obviously are going to have to compete with Dunedin. You all touched upon improving connectedness, but what does that tangibly mean? What can you as mayor do in discussions with the likes of Chorus, about improving the patchy UFB through Wellington, and really making the difference to the city's connectivity?

Andrea: Great, okay. Anyone want to kick off?

Nicola: The first thing I would do as I've already said is, we need to have really high quality free broadband in the central city area, and then if we can afford it roll it out further, because that's the quickest way of getting people, improving people's access to this kind of thing.

Jo: I agree. We actually did lead the way with CityLink and with our Wi-Fi through the city, so we do understand that, but again I think that's a conversation that needs to be part of the working group that comes. We need to understand actually what needs to happen, how quickly we need it to happen and then it certainly needs to be on the agenda that we take to government, and have those conversations or to chorus, or whoever we need to go to actually make it happen.

Andrea: Justin.

Justin: Again it comes down to simple capital investment. We've been here before with CityLink. The opportunities coming forward as well with the changes potentially to trolley buses, and a lot of those wires contain the CityLink network as well, and it needs to be a partnership obviously with us and them and provide us new providers into New Zealand economy as well. People like Huawei have the hardware expertise. We need to be doing it but not only for broadband, it needs to be for Wi-Fi, for visitors through the city as well, for tourists and for those who can't access the open data plans. That will be a real focus for me for capital investment.

Andrea: Okay, next question, right down back there in the blue.

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Female: If I had one criticism of the Wellington City Council it would be that we vote every few years, for somebody and then over the remaining three or four years we don't feel involved in any of the decision making, and suddenly stuff is happening and you're thinking, "I didn't really vote for that." You can use I.T to engage with people, in a more democratic way about the decisions the council makes, over the course of the three years that nobody is actually voting. Do the candidates have any plans to increase the engagement with the population on decision making, through things like apps or Twitter or online voting, or any of the other possible options?

Andrea: That's a great question. Justin, you've got your hand up.

Justin: Yes and we're doing it. Apathy is the biggest obstacle for anybody in local government. We only get 40% of people voting. It's not because they're not aware, it's because of the dispassionate who are not interested. A good example, through our long term plan we had approximately six times more engagement, because we had it on our digital platform that was smart, that was easy to use, that was highly functional. We had more than 5,000 pieces of feedback. We also had our interactive sessions on the likes of Facebook. We could go on and do a Q and A session, so we're embracing that change all the time. There's always more you can do, we certainly try and I'm certainly trying. That's my approach to life, it's modern as well, and take that entrepreneurial approach to try and solve problems, rather than things we've done in the past.

Andrea: Jo do you have any thoughts?

Jo: I alluded to that earlier when I said that part of being a smart city, is about having that citizen engagement, and doing that through all of these, the crowd sourcing, the open data, the mobile apps, everything else. Look I think part of it is to do with leadership, and I think if people aren't clear on what the game plan is for the three years, and they don't feel like they've got clear decisive leadership at the helm, then it does get frustrating. I think it's very important to be very clear and articulating your vision for the city, when you go out there and stand for mayor, and make sure that in the first 100 days it's very clear what you've decided that you're actually going to be able to implement, with the council. In my case I'm going to be going to government, because on wanting to secure money as well for roading infrastructure projects, which we really need to be getting on with those double tunnels, at Mt. Vic and terrace and four laneing to the planes. I think we just have to be very clear, about articulating that so that the public actually do know what to expect.

Andrea: No surprises policy from you there. Okay, Nicola!

Nicola: One of the things that have been ongoing around Wellington, I beg people to vote. We had 42% turnout at the last election. I'd preferably ask them to vote for me,

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but who knows... secret ballot. The thing about leadership is it's about clarity, consistency and candour, and I think people have far more faith if they actually know exactly what is going on, rather than going swinging from one side to the other. I'm a very active user of social media. As a former journalist I love communications, and no-one in my life has ever said they've misunderstood me. I think it's really important to have engagement, but also make sure we don't waste money on it. There's no point in having consultations if we don't listen to people, and that's complete waste of money and it's one of the areas that I would really look at, as mayor where we are currently wasting money. The other thing is, it was great that we had so much engagement with the annual plan, but we didn't take on one single idea from the public, so you have to wonder what the point is.

Andrea: Okay, next question.

Female: Thank you very much. I just want to respond directly to some of those points. Justin, Nicola and Jo I think I've met all of you. I'm Kay Jones, I was involved with Save the Basin from NZTA's evils to build a Flyover.

Andrea: Do you have a question?

Female: Question is, how would you actually connect that listening to what people say versus what you're doing? Jo's mentioned talking better, Justin said he wanted an airport runway, I've said what I want and it's not either of those, how would you actually see what is feasible and what are your priorities for tourism, for an innovative Wellington?

Andrea: I'm not sure what that has to do with tech sector, but go.

Jo: Luckily I've got it all laid out here in my road map for Wellington, so you can have a look at one of these. There's quite a few on the seats lying around. I'm also on the web as everybody else here will be, and of course very busy on Facebook and social media. Look I think I've spelled out my vision pretty clearly. Obviously infrastructure, the other thing I want to do is build a ten thousand seat Vector arena for the city, hopefully here, and I've been really clear on my views with regards to cycle ways, and I would really prefer to put the lion's share of the money that's coming from government, to us because we are getting the money through the use of cycle ways programme.

It's about \$26 million. I'd rather put it into a hero cycle way around the harbour, from Miramar into the city, as opposed to piece meal projects. There's some other bits and pieces too, but you can read about them all in here, but I think at the end of the day this is democracy in action. We state what our manifesto and what our plan is to you. You either like it or you don't, and you vote accordingly.

Andrea: Nicola.

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- Nicola: I pretty much agree with that. The thing is if you are elected, then you have a mandate to carry out what you're planning to do. Yes, keep people informed of what you're doing and how you're doing it, but there's no ... one of the problems we've had in the last three years is, the inability to make any decisions. I think when people are elected to lead the city, they should lead but as I said candour, clarity and consistency.
- Justin: We make difficult decisions all of the time, and I've learned over the course of six years, you can't please everybody all of the time, and that's not my aim either. I want to be very clear about the decisions I make ... I mean to the extent that I'm putting my plan for Wellington, in every household and I'll do so three times over the course of the election campaign as well, so it's very clear. Likewise you can engage with me on Twitter and on Facebook. My policies will be all on the website, and shortly after the session you'll receive my digital strategy policies, or it will be emailed to you as, is probably par for the course in this environment. I'm very clear about my policies and they will all be available over the course of the election campaign between now and October, but I'm not aiming to please everybody. I want to please the majority of people, and that every dollar spent by this council is in the best interest of Wellington, not everyone's going to agree.
- Andrea: Okay, thank you. Down at the front there.
- Male: Hi there. My question is internally in your own house, in the Wellington City Council and the staff there, what would you do to ensure that your own tools for the staff that you have are modern, innovative, modelling what you say that we will have outside of the council?
- Andrea: It's a great question, who wants to start?
- Justin: I'm happy to start. As I mentioned one of the stated policies for me, a chief innovation officer, we've got a great team in Phillipa Bowron and Jamie Hayden at the moment, but that's two people Sean [inaudible] chimes in, but] he's seconded to a different unit currently. Sean has shown a particular, with good data and good analysis he can come up with some really insightful work, but three people in an organisation of 2,000 simply isn't enough. A chief innovation officer needs to sit at the executive leadership team level, and that needs to sit across all of the business units within council. I'll implement that, I will lead it, I will be setting the KPIs for the chief executive to monitor, will measure the success. If it's not successful we'll make changes, but it needs to start at the top and that's what leadership and vision requires.
- Andrea: Jo.
- Jo: Yes. Look I just need to make it really clear that as city councillors we have one

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employee, and that is the chief executive ... Actually I'm not interested in deciding who does what in the organisation. I'm interested in leading the policy and the strategy, for the delivery of a liveable Wellington and the best place in the world to do business et cetera, so I'll be having that conversation with the chief executive on day one, once you guys have come to me with your plan that you want me to implement, and once I've been to a few other sectors. I've got my road map in tow, going off to government to get the funding that we need and then it will be up to the chief executive, to be delivering. I feel very strongly about that. I think there's been a few too many people getting down into the detail, sort of crossing the governance line so to speak. I think actually the way we need to run our council is, stepping back and giving the chief executive the opportunity, and as Justin says we do need to manage through a KPI process, and the performance management of our chief executive, and that's what we're able to do.

Andrea: Okay, very different views that what about you Nicola?

Nicola: I'm seeing pretty much the same territory. It's very important that the council and councillors, you know, the political side, the mayor and the councillors remember that their role is governance not management, but as mayor I would set my expectations and make them very clear, concise and consistent to the chief executive and tell him to get on with it. I've already said that I believe that the people that are the law setters, are understaffed and I think that I would set as one of my expectations is, this is such an important area for the city. Why is it that we have an enormous communications department, pumping out little videos about My Wellington Way and endless press releases, when we could be putting those resources into something which is really vital for the future of our economic growth?

Andrea: Okay, from a former journalist less spin doctors, I like that. Okay, all right we've got time for a couple more questions, if we keep it quick. There's lots of hands waving.

Male: Hello candidates, you knew I was going to ask a question didn't you? First of all thanks for turning up. It's really good to see you guys here. It's an important part of the city. I've got a couple of questions. You may be able to help; you may be not able to help. There's a perception with the IT industry in Wellington that, the council talks about supporting the local industry, but doesn't always act as if they are supporting the local industry, and we don't have to go into why that is. Do you think that's an issue, that there's a relationship issue between the council and the local IT industry? If you do how would you solve that or start to build that bridge back?

Andrea: Fantastic question who wants to start?

Jo: Look obviously we'll be discussing it. It's going to be quite a long agenda, the first

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meeting of the working party, but I think what you're getting at potentially is procurement possibly. I think we sing the praises of what's happening in the IT industry in Wellington, loud and far and obviously I'm wanting to make it go global, so certainly very proud of what's happening here. We have obviously tried to do what we can, in terms of supporting start-ups and the whole entrepreneurial ecosystem, through Creative HQ in the Biz Dojo, and certainly now that we've got these 400 odd start-ups in Wellington, I think that's pretty good going.

We've talked about some stats earlier, which reflect the fact that Wellington does seem to be the place where people come to work in this industry now. Certainly all the big offices have ... banks et cetera have their back offices here, which is quite exciting. Look just one thing I would say, and I don't want this to sound less than positive, but I think as sector you are actually quite well supported at government level, and at local government level in many ways. We can always do more. We can always do better and certainly I want to be working with you, very constructively to prioritise what really is required, but I do note that a lot of other sectors and people that are trying to get their business off the ground, myself included with my own company, have never had help from anyone so I am very mindful that we need to do what we can to grow this industry, for the benefit of Wellington and the benefit of New Zealand Inc. but I do feel as a council that we have really tried through the last five or so years, through our economic development strategy, to be supportive to the sector and we will continue to do so.

Andrea: Okay, Justin could you be doing more?

Justin: I absolutely believe we could be doing more. As a business owner I know and you know that ultimately, your business will succeed or fail because of your own ambition, your own motivation and your own hard work, but your local council needs to be a tailwind and not a headwind. We need to provide opportunities and not provide barriers or obstacles, so five things are essentially important. Start-up incubation, having support of incubation environment which we're doing and we're doing with Technology Hub, with Lightning lab, Creative HQ and WREDA.

Open data provision, we've talked about, a question of why we shouldn't be providing this, why should we? Because we want to solve our problems. Local procurement as I mentioned, 20% weighted criteria for digital and technology services, so you've got an opportunity, you still need to manage expectations on cost, expertise, experience and implementation, but being local should have a particular weighting too. Access to capital investment, there is never enough capital. I don't care what people say, "Yes there's availability with foreign direct investment or with investments banks." It's never enough and it's not enough locally.

Unemployment pathways is also a diverse talent pool, two thirds of

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Wellingtonians aren't born here. They come here for a job. We need to attract them to be here, and that's why I'm focused on investment and chief innovation officer role, and it's also I'm focused on investment through our city growth fund directly into the digital sector.

Andrea: Okay, thank you and Nicola?

Nicola: I think you're seeing the results of having no portfolio leader for the sector, which is truly a disgrace for this council. We have portfolios for almost everything, but the one that possibly has most potential importance to our city, there's no one. There's no visible political connection. There may be some unofficial connections, but there's no visible one so it makes the sector feel unloved even though it's unloved as it may feel. I will change that and the ICT sector will be the top priority, coupled with the education sector because the two go hand in hand.

We need to work with the universities and the private training organisations, to encourage people to go into the sector. We need to work really well with the universities, have regular meetings with them. We do have at officer level, but we don't have at political level, instead of political level we're just writing Op Eds against each other, and that's not the way to run a city. I'm also very conscious and we've mentioned it before, there's a real danger when councillors and mayors start to meddle in areas that are not within their realms of expertise.

We have to remember that our role is governance, and setting expectations but what you truly do not want, are councillors who start getting involved in the minutiae of business, in which they think they know a lot and often they're totally ill-equipped for the doing that.

Andrea: Okay, lovely. Thank you. A couple of other quick questions, down here?

Male: I come from the Hutt Valley, and I was wondering what are you going to do in terms of digital ICT and inclusion of Hutt Valley, Porirua to get the whole region working together, for the growth of the whole region?

Jo: I feel very strongly about that, in fact so strongly that that I'm sitting as councillor from Wellington City, on your technology valley start-up board basically, and I think it's incredibly important that we work together. It's ridiculous to think that when we're putting ourselves out to the rest of the world, that it's hard enough to get New Zealand on the map, it's hard enough to get Auckland on the map, it's hard enough to get Wellington on the map, let alone Porirua or Hutt Valley, so I've always been of the view that the Wellington Economic Development Strategy has been about Wellington.

It doesn't matter whether your business is in the Hutt or it's in the CBD, it's all about pushing the benefit of the region really. That's why we've set up the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency, which is in fact representing

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the whole of the region. We're all one ... we are all in it together and we go forward, pushing Wellington as a whole in my view.

Andrea: Justin

Justin: When I first came on to council and part of the reason was I had just started my own business, and my frustrations in dealing with council, rather than sitting outside and throwing stones I said, "I want to get involved. I want to get involved and try and change the culture," and we've done a lot. My personal dealings with Grow Wellington were extremely frustrating. Here I was as a business owner, I wanted to grow, I wanted to get up into Auckland, I wanted to go overseas and we said, "We want better capital access," and I was given a voucher to go off and talk to a consultancy.

It was pointless and pathetic. It was serving as a middleman, I thought at that time and here I was a local business, not born in Wellington, had come here and wanted to grow the local economy. What I did ... set about creating the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency, together with a whole host of other people, but we needed somewhere to start and we set that up and it was driven by Wellington City council, and bringing all of the entities together. We've got five people that sit on the Wellington Regional Strategy.

Councillor Coughlan and I both do, but we drove that to bring the region together to actually say, "We need positively Wellington venues, Grow Wellington," and bring them all together and say, "Look, we need to operate this on a regional basis, because that's the only way we're going to survive." It's all about regional shared services. I'll encourage that and I'll work on that for future. As mayor I am going to ...

Andrea: Okay, I'm going to stop you there. Nicola.

Nicola: I think by the end of this campaign we'll all be claiming to have cloned Karl's, discovered DNA, split the atom. Put that to one side. I must say the Hutt Valley has sent a very clear message that it doesn't really want to be part of Wellington and my focus is absolutely on Wellington, and I'm not into empire building. I would say that my priority would be to get things right in Wellington, and then ask the Hutt, "Would you like to help ..." "Would you like some help with this?" The one thing the Hutt has made very clear, is that they do not want Wellington telling them what to do, so I have to be very cautious about offending our territorial neighbour.

Andrea: Okay, I'm going to go for one last quick pithy question and some last pithy answers.

Male: My question is at the other end of the scale, the community, the parts of the community that are currently IT illiterate, how are you going to engage with them,

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so that they can be more part of the community and use the services that NZRise is trying to advocate.

Andrea: Okay, it's another great question, who wants to kick that one off?

Nicola: I'll just pull out some bits from things I said before, but one is that I think we need to as a council put pressure on the government, work with government, put pressure and lobby, to make sure information technology, the digital world is part of the main stream school curriculum, it's not an add on. When my daughter went to school 20 years ago, I was actually amazed her school said that she had to provide her own Apple laptop. Now I could afford to do that, but a lot of kids can't afford to do that. We have to think about whether the government can ... we should work with the government, to work out a way of funding these little things, so that people do have decent equipment so they can work on that.

The other thing is that, I'm very keen that we should have ... we have Wi-Fi in the centre of the city. It's pretty intermittent. I walked on Taranaki Street and I can't get it in Taranaki Street. We really need to improve the quality of that, especially around areas where we've got social housing, because they don't have the luxury that some of us have of, having it streamed in. We need to have really high quality free broadband, Wi-Fi. Interestingly it's transformed Dannevirke, would you believe it?

Again Dannevirke, place that I would be ... the last place on earth I'd want to live, maybe second to last, and they now have quite a few people moving there to work in the digital economy section, because they have this high speed broadband, which pumped out in the streets. If they can do it in Dannevirke, can't we do it in Wellington.

Andrea: Okay, Jo I see you nodding why there may not be so much about Dannevirke.

Jo: Yeah, not quite. I'm not sure. I'm not sure about the Dannevirke comment, but by and large I agree with the rest of it. I think it's an interesting question, because with the whole development of smart cities ... I was thinking about it the other day, just with regard to the begging issue and the homelessness issue, and imagine if for example you get to the point where, all the way down bus shelters or some locations down Courtenay Place or something, you have some sort of app or some digital screen or something and somebody, who's in a spot of bother or a bit down on their luck, can actually use that to engage somehow with somebody else, who might be in one of the services that available or somebody who's offering beds for the night or something like that.

I don't know, I just see there are applications that are going to be beyond what we're currently thinking of, that will apply to everyone, and so yes we do need to educate everybody through the school system, and obviously that's very

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important, and highlighted again by the ad in today's paper. It's also about those disconnected people are going to ... even though they may not have access themselves to a smartphone or whatever, because we'll be a smart city and in I think quite a rapid period of time, they may well be ...

I'm just thinking of those screens that you can touch, and they can somehow all of a sudden they're using that technology to help them live a better life. I think that it's just going to be part of our daily world, really and to those people that have been social disconnected, will have more opportunity to become connected, through us being a smart and more liveable city.

Andrea: Great, thank you. Justin.

Justin: There's only one pathway for people who are financially or digitally illiterate and that's education. I grew up in a family, mum was a beneficiary, had two brothers. I was the first in the family to go to Uni. I ended up getting a Master's degree in Law, and life is pretty good for me now. I've got a brother who's two years older than me, who didn't get school certificate. He works in Countdown for \$15 an hour and he's been doing it for the last 10 years. There's no one thing that you can do to change the path way that people have, and lives but what we can do is support them and create awareness in schools, and that's why I'll focus on things like scholarships like we do for citizenship awards, scholarships and promotion of digital learning within high schools in Wellington.

That's why I support the living wage, for those parents who go home, who can't afford or don't have the ability to provide broadband for their families, that actually we are a city not just for the wealthy that we are also ... it's great that we earn so much in the digital centre, but that everybody earns as well. If you've got a company and you've got cleaners coming in, they get paid a fair wage too because it gives their kids an opportunity to actually break out of their cycle, get educated and give themselves an opportunity to succeed.

Andrea: Nicola, you had something you wanted to add.

Nicola: Just a supplementary, which is that one of the things that's pretty interesting is ... I've got members of my family who are three, and know their way around an iPad like it's part of their cot. Actually the bigger issue is people who are older, who have absolutely no idea about IT, and they're completely cut off from it. When I was training to be a journalist, I learned to touch type which my siblings mocked me for, because they said, "You'll always be a secretary and type the minutes." I'm so grateful I can send emails in the dark once I've found the home keys.

I'm pretty IT literate considering I don't work in the sector, but there are a lot of people in their 70, late 60s, 70s who are completely isolated, because they just don't know how to do it, and that's a problem for us too, especially with people

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becoming increasingly lonely and isolated

Andrea: Okay, all right. I think we probably should finish there. Okay, take on really quick question.

Male: Hey everyone. Firstly thank you very much for joining us today. It's fantastic to hear you. I completely agree with you about the support in Wellington for businesses. I think it's lackadaisical or intermittent getting support from Grow Wellington is like getting support ... blood out of a stone, same with Creative HQ, same with Collider. My question is, who are you actually talking to in the sector in terms of coming up with the solutions, because I have to disagree with you Jo. I don't actually believe that the IT sector gets a lot of love and a lot of support, and the support that you do give, doesn't actually seem to be directed to anyone. Collider is a very expensive solution ...

Andrea: Okay, I'm going to stop you there.

Male: ... and support the program, so who are you talking to, and do you think you're doing a good job with promoting the sector?

Andrea: Jo do you want to take that up?

Jo: Yeah. We're obviously talking to a lot of people, but as we pointed out we have put \$3 million of ratepayers money actually into Collider, and along with a lot of other things that we have been doing as a city, I think do demonstrate a willingness, the support of Creative HQ. All of these things are funded. We fund WREDA 80%, so all of these things are funded by the ratepayer, because we understand that they will go some way to making a difference. Sometimes they work well and sometimes they don't, but actually I'm glad you raised it, because it absolutely again highlights the importance of immediately getting together with the sector, and working out what the priorities are, what you need, what's going to make the difference for you and then we go to central government, have the conversation.

We go to our table first, we go there, we work out what we can do, what's possible, what's not possible, what the priorities are. I think it's just we have to have ongoing engagement and discussion, but I think there has been absolutely a willingness from the city to get on-board and do what we can. We always have to review things, plan and review and we all need to keep doing that ongoing, and look forward to doing that.

Andrea: Okay, thank you Jo, Justin do you agree and who are you talking to?

Justin: I'm talking to the Wellington wave of businesses that I'm talking to, the Flick Electrics, DOT Loves Data, I talk to them why they come back to Wellington, why

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set up here? Because they wanted a good life and they thought in a compact city they could do that. DOT Loves Data, popping up to see those guys it was funny, between 25-30 employees, and I ended knowing seven or eight of them who had come from Kiwibank, that'd come from design and advertising agencies. Like I said every business owner knows you won't succeed or fail, because of the support you get from someone else, ultimately it comes down to you.

My biggest frustration with councils was getting a building consent. I turn up on the day, I had a consented fit out and I was told, "You need a canopy over the serving area," I said, "Hang on, here's my consented plans, it wasn't on there." Someone actually having the power to actually say, "No, you can't do it." I want a council that's focused on being open for business, having an entrepreneurial culture, how can we help you are my customer? As opposed to risk aversion, I'm worried about how this might impact my job.

Andrea: Okay, all right Nicola.

Nicola: I've forgotten the question but I've got my answer, so let's just hope they fit.

Andrea: Living in the CBD, I just live off Taranaki Street I bump into a lot of the guys in the ICT sector formally and informally in cafes, but actually that's not good enough. What we're seeing is the fact that we do not have a portfolio leader. Now compare or contrast it with the art sector. The art sector was also very important to Wellington for similar reasons, and some different reasons, very good council staff and a real warrior at the council table, Ray Ahipene-Mercer who fights for that sector all the time. He's retiring this year. It will be a loss. ICT needs someone ... they need a warrior.

They need a champion at the council table and I think ... sorry council table. What we are seeing is the fact that there is no portfolio leader for this very important sector, and that's why I've pledged that there will absolutely be one under my watch.

Andrea: Okay, lovely. I think that's a great place to finish. I just want to say a huge thank you to the candidates, for fronting up and taking questions today, and thank you for the really thoughtful questions from the audience as well. Enjoy the rest of the conference.