

Diane Jennings - Community Waitakere

I have had a diverse career that has included working in fashion design, wearable art, the film industry, community development and community arts.

After completing a degree in Social Practice, with a major in community development, at UNITEC, I cut my teeth at the grass roots as Manager of the Ranui Action Project where I worked with local people to develop a community vision and initiated many projects that were lead by local people. Subsequently, I became involved in partnership work as Manager of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project.

In 2006 I moved to Scotland where I worked for three years on a range of projects including Local People Leading a campaign for strong and independent communities, convened the Cultural Social Enterprise Network, and worked with Fablevision, in Glasgow, on a grass roots cultural planning project that included the development of a Social Return on Investment evaluation.

I returned to New Zealand in 2009. Currently I am working on a range of community projects and my passion continues to be building neighbourhoods with an emphasis on creativity and developing independent income streams to enable sustainability.

I feel strongly that neighbourhood work must be initiated and driven from the grass roots - but partnerships with councils, government and private sector can also be an important part of the mix.