
ASHLEIGH BRIGHTWELL



PORIRUA RESIDENT

Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti
Pahauwera, Ngāti Raukawa

IDENTITY OF PORIRUA IN KEY
WORDS

Whānau & Connection
Good vibes- safe friendly, good
place to be

WHO AM I AND WHAT IS MY CONNECTION TO PORIRUA

Ashleigh was born and grew up in Porirua, and can trace several generations of her family who have also lived their entire lives in the city. She lives in Porirua with her partner and son and is passionate about the city she calls home. She works in Porirua at the Whittakers Chocolate Factory, and is heavily engaged in the community, particularly surrounding sporting and children's events.

WHAT I LIKE OR VALUE IN THE CITY

Ashleigh highlighted the sense of community in Porirua City, and explained how easy it is to make connections within the community due to Porirua's residents being generally friendly and relaxed. She mentioned various ways in which the community bands together to help those in need and commented that she hadn't witnessed this level of community elsewhere. She also talked about the beautiful landscape in Porirua City and its "hidden gems" such as Titahi Bay, Colonial Knob, and even the view of the harbour entering the city from the motorway. She likes the current attempts by the council to raise the awareness of the various walking tracks and events occurring in Porirua City.

MY FAVOURITE PLACE IN PORIRUA

Despite struggling to choose, Ashleigh named the Aotea lagoon as one of the best places in Porirua "because it's good for everyone". She explains that at the lagoon there is a variety of activities to do such as visiting the rose garden, or running through the area and a place for kids to play. Yet it isn't fully utilised. She also spoke of the beauty of the harbour as the focal point of Porirua City but that it needed to be cleaned up.

HOW THE CITY INFORMS MY PERSONAL/ WHĀNAU IDENTITY

Ashleigh is incredibly proud of her city and wants her son to identify himself as being from Porirua. It is also important that he "grows up being part of Porirua" and recognises that it is a city in itself and not a part of Wellington City. The history and culture of the city are also important factors that she wants him to know and understand in order to better shape who he is as a person as he grows older. Her partner also switched to playing rugby for Porirua instead of his previous team in the Hutt, in order to cement their family connections to the area.

CHALLENGES FOR PORIRUA

Ashleigh mentioned the negative perception that some people have of Porirua - that it is 'unsafe' or 'scary' and attributes this to the media's portrayal of issues in the city. However, she emphasised how safe she feels in the city and the fact that she never worries about the safety of her whānau in Porirua.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PORIRUA

Ashleigh was full of ideas regarding the multiple opportunities she sees in the future for Porirua City. One of the things she is passionate about is community events and how Porirua often has a lot on offer yet people don't know what is going on. She believes greater publicity of these events and an emphasis on celebrating all the achievements in Porirua would be a great opportunity for both residents to engage more in their city, as well as act to gradually change outsiders perceptions of Porirua.

She also mentioned the significance of signs at each entrance point to the city, in order to physically demonstrate Porirua as a city and community. This could be a simple welcome or quotes and images from community members - "just something to recognise us a bit more".

In terms of physical design she imagines a complete change in the urban structure and greater utilisation of the harbour area. "It's all sort of turned in where as it should be turned out, to the water".

HOW TO MAKE THESE OPPORTUNITIES HAPPEN

Ashleigh acknowledges the local newspaper Kapi Mana, as a good community media outlet, however feels that there needs to be more opportunities to advertise the good things occurring in Porirua. She feels that Porirua is missing a community place, or a central site to access information such as local events, things to do, the history of the area (this is present in many smaller towns but not in Porirua City). She imagines that the area both inside and around Pātaka and Te Rauparaha Centre could be better utilised to house this information and that interactive touch screens could be a great tool to distribute this. It would allow locals as well as visitors to engage more fully in Porirua, its history, culture and community.

WHAT SHOULD COMPETITION ENTRANTS KEEP IN MIND?

Porirua is an area with a lot of history, and even as a local Ashleigh states it has been a long time since she has been exposed to that history. She emphasised how great it would be for this history to be at the forefront so that people could know where they were visiting (residents and visitors alike).

