



***Bay of Plenty***

***Electoral Candidate 2023***

***Md Zakaria Wahed***

***01/09/2023***

## **Introduction**

Kia ora koutou katoa, I am Md Zakaria Wahed but my family, friends, staff and clients know me as Taupo. I was born in Bangladesh and for the last 23 years I have lived and worked in this, the lovely nation of Aotearoa.

My birth place was in the town of Barisal, Bangladesh, on 05/01/1975. I came to New Zealand in 2001 and gained my New Zealand citizenship in 2006. Today I am a happily married father of 4 living locally in the suburb of Papamoa. As a managing director of West Coast Management Ltd (since 2012) I have gained experience in the kiwifruit and stone fruit industry.

While there are a whole host of opportunities regionally, I understand that there are many challenges being faced by all. I suggest the next most important challenge facing you and I is the general election taking place on the 14th of October.

To this point I have put my hat into the political ring and intend to stand as an independent in this year's general election. It is my intention that this bio will give you a reason to stop and think about voting for me and supporting my desire to help improve the state of our nation. Beware this bio is full of shameless plugs for your political vote.

## **Policy**

I believe there are five important areas of government policy that, if addressed, would help the local voter immensely. These are;

*Education*

*Health*

*Regional Housing trends*

*Employment*

*Crime*

## ***Health and Education***

It is my assertion that a successful health care system that New Zealand can provide is one that treats the sick cheaply and in a timely manner regardless if you do not meet a streaming criteria. In the same vein a successful education system is able to teach the unknown to students who are recognised as being different and taught accordingly. Both of these approaches cost money and the debate for the voter is why it should be spent in their region and thus cast your vote accordingly.

These two Ministry's appear to share a number of common issues. Furthermore it may be suggested that multiple government departments (police, corrections, fire service and social service providers found amongst the community) exhibit the same trends.

None of these observations can be pointed to in any recent scientific study but by reading a random selection of national or regional newspapers, one can identify a number of the issues for yourself of which I have detailed the following examples;

*Staff from both ministries are overworked*

*Remuneration packages are poor struggling to even keep pace with the international market*

*Resulting in years of poor recruitment*

*Further to this both ministries are under resourced*

These issues have produced symptoms common again to both ministry's;

*Public service sectors striking*

*Education Teachers, primary and tertiary and pre school*

*Health orderlies, nurses, junior doctors, snr doctors and dentists*

*Pay parity with private providers*

*Increased cost to access health care such as Medication, specialisation, regional preferences, remedial education required*

*Hospital closures have lead to the centralisation of services leading to increased cost to the individual voter*

*Worse case voters not attending the medical treatment*

*Truancy rates*

## ***Employment***

In The Bay of Plenty region like all other regions throughout New Zealand, jobs are needed, Employment is needed locally so we are able to sustain the regional growth we are currently experiencing. Furthermore this growth is needed to sustain the numbers of people moving to this region in search of a better life. While there is a strong and vibrant workforce present, the individual average yearly wage is relatively low. This is not likely to change as the region data suggest the following.

*Average income for the Bay of plenty is a merger 30K-50K*

*Meaning a weekly wage 961.54 before tax? Need to check this*

*20% of weekly earnings in this region is contributed to the region by the payment of NZ Superannuation*

*Healthcare/ Social Assistance sector is the second largest employer locally (10.4%)*

*The Region has an ageing cohort that is driving a service based economy*

Having worked locally as a business owner I suggest new and diverse policies are needed to aspire to in order to stimulate new industries to the region by;

*Addressing the regions stagnant wages*

*Alternative models to reduce staffing shortages*

*Increased employment opportunities*

*Tax relief for industry development and diversification*

This is going to be a further challenge as locally we have a growing population increasing annually above the national medium.

## **Housing**

For many of the region's voters, we find the need to have one's housing requirements provided for by either a commercial or social services provider is a reality. This experience should be a clear and straightforward experience for all voters who have the right to expect a house that is warm, safe, dry, and healthy. I suggest however the most telling factor for kiwis today in relation to where they are living comes back to affordability which truly should not be the leading determining factor. As of September the 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 I did a "Trade Me" search of rental properties in the Bay of Plenty area which highlighted some interesting figures.

	<i>2 bedroom 1 bathroom (sample population 36)</i>	<i>2/3 bedroom 2 bathroom (sample population 52)</i>
<i>Lowest price</i>	<i>\$450 per week</i>	<i>\$450 per week</i>
<i>Highest price</i>	<i>\$675 per week</i>	<i>\$975 per week</i>
<i>Range of cost</i>	<i>\$225 per week</i>	<i>\$525 per week</i>
<i>Mean weekly cost</i>	<i>552.78 per week</i>	<i>\$721.82 per week</i>

I suggest these prices identify an out of control rental market which is reinforced by a limited number of rental properties coming onto the market. The table above gives you a real time snapshot of what it will cost to rent a house in the Bay of Plenty region tomorrow if you were the successful applicant. To think a family of four would have to pay on average 721.82 dollars a week for a house to call home. As shown in the employment section the region's average weekly wage before tax is \$961.54.

The housing market in this region needs;

*New stock to the market*

*New and varied land models*

*Reduced rental costs*

## **Crime**

While we would all love to live in a world free of trouble, hurt, pain and crime, we must all realise that crime in our region will be committed. And depending on how bad it is someone will be incarcerated. But possibly not every crime should result in time behind bars. Today criminal behaviour is impacting on the voters in this region.

It is my belief that the New Zealand departments that make up the judicial system like health and education exhibit the same common failings;

*Staff are overworked*

*Staff are under paid*

*Staff are under staffed*

*Staff are under resourced*

*Increased attention locally to organised crime bodies*

*Increasing Alcohol and drug issues*

As a result of crime today in New Zealand an incarcerated person cost the taxpayer \$191,463 per inmate per-annum costing a total of 1.76 billion per-annum. It is my firm belief that If the state is to spend more on these individuals when they were younger then maybe we would spend less on them to be incarcerated. So it is my preference that the government should seek to focus financially on youth and adolescent crime as much as they we do on current and future incarceration costs. We could connect the figure spent on crime prevention could be proportionate to the 1.76 billion spent annually.

## **Discussion**

As a voter like you I would not be surprised if you felt that all the things I have discussed is just too much to take on board. Times are tough with the economic suggestion that the country is heading into a recession. So if you are currently employed then keep your job, I would also suggest paying down any personal debt you may have. With all that in mind it would also pay to try and be fragile with your everyday expenses such, food purchases, power, transportation, re-cycling and rent to suggest some. All the while as a voter locally there are multiply external forces pushing and pulling at your time and finances like;

*Road congestions due to an expanding city boundaries*

*Low wages, competitive job market*

*Restricted stock levels in the rental market*

*Cost of living increases*

So I feel it is easy to conclude that the education and the health ministries could be in a better state of affairs, while much has been done by either side of the political spectrum to do otherwise. Staff of the ministries are overworked, to the point of risking the care of the most vulnerable, the young and old. Long historical issues today need a by partisan approach at the governmental level to hope for intergenerational change. Our electorate needs to be able to create more opportunities for our youth if

we hope to look for real future change for all. Systems and/or programs are needed so the local voter/workforce is able to learn life skills required, to access higher education, and find decent jobs. Further to that the characteristics of the local employment market makes for sobering reading;

*Mean wages levels are low for the region*

*The area needs a bigger and more skill/qualified workforce*

*Town's industries is primarily service driven*

*New Zealand's largest export port is in our region using a number of service providers*

*We have an ageing population which is the reason why Healthcare/ Social Assistance sector is the second largest employer in the region*

*Rapid Increases in the daily cost of living e.g. petrol*

The points highlighted above ask the following questions of the voter on October the 14<sup>th</sup>;

*a, this region's employment market is best described as a service industry?*

*b, does the region have the skilled/knowledgeable individuals available to re-shape the employment market away from being service centric?*

*c, do the industries exist that would allow the region to diversify?*

Next there is a real need to support this region's less resilient voters, business owners, Māori organisations, NGO's and industries alike. In order for our region to continue to prosper changes in one's everyday life needs to occur. This is reinforced recently as national droughts, followed by the recent summer floods, on top of pests and diseases seen locally in the Kiwifruit industry over the last decade have impacted on our local economy and affected the communities financial stability.

Governmental incentives may be a possible way to stimulate organic and regenerative agriculture. By supporting our primary producers with fair prices, access to more market places local or internationally with reduced tariffs possibilities. There is a need to conserve our water and soil while preventing pollution and future soil erosion.

As a tourist destination it is in the region's best to attract tourists and visitors to our beautiful region and showcase our culture and heritage. The density of these activities should not exceed the region's infrastructure and environmental restraints. More to this locally voters need to protect our natural resources and promote renewable energy sources that can reduce our carbon footprint while creating job opportunities.

I consider the local rental properties and housing market to be out of control for the consumers, be they buyers or renters. The local rental market is quickly becoming very expensive. A cost range of \$550 for a 2/3 bedroom 2 bathroom property is staggering. The Government mechanisms are not keeping the market in check. While Nationals current policy to attract international buyers to the domestic property market, does little to help the local voter. This is really because there is not enough stock on the market. So this point first and foremost must be addressed if the housing condition locally is to change.

Crime is always a focus of any political manifesto but as an independent candidate I have one policy that I believe I could best promote and hope to get any traction. This is a 'Zero Tolerance to Violent Crime" of which I feel the voters of the Bay of Plenty should feel supportive of this stance. Like the Health and Education ministries those involved in the deliverance of the countries judicial package of service providers (Police, Fire service, St John, Lifesaving, Social Service Providers, NGO's) need the industry constraints addressed.

## **Recommendations**

If you consider that the next cab off the rank after the general election may choose to stop the current direction of some, all or possibly none of the government departments. Or maybe even choose to change direction altogether. So depending on what you and I choose to do on the 14<sup>th</sup> October, It could be argued that a year from today we won't have moved far from where we are today unless the voters choose to make a change and vote for me.

My hope is that the local community has the appetite to strengthen the social fabric of our region and foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among our people. So vote for me if you believe we share the same vision;

*Improvements by our national health provider for this regions voters*

*Improvements in the delivery of our free education system for this regions voters*

*A housing market that provides safe affordable housing for all of societies sectors*

*Reduction in crimes being committed no just violent crime*

*Reduction in the incarceration rates*

*Achieving work environments which pay a living wage*

Not being a teacher myself but a father of four I suggest that if we were to address these four concerns for education providers then Education provided in the Bay of Plenty may to be improved;

*Classroom ratios*

*Wrap around support of student and teacher*

*Academic and financial Consistency in delivery of services*

*Use of best practice especially when delivering core subject*

I recognise the need to be approachable to all the different ethnicities and hope to always be open to any voter present In deciding to stand in the Bay of Plenty electorate. My final statement to everyone is simply this, I can and work for the greater good of all New Zealanders be it sitting on the side of the crown or that of the opposition benches as your independent member of parliament.

Mauri ora kautau katoa