

July 2024

Tena koutou katoa – members and supporters of Māpua and Districts MDCA – ngā mahana ki a koutou mo te wā o Matariki

This is a letter I have thought long and hard about writing as a member of MDCA since 1999 and one of the 7 chairpersons who have supported and encouraged the diverse kaupapa that have been considered; debated then adopted or abandoned over that timespan

It is essential in any community organisation to accept and work with diverse opinions, suggestions and expectations and enable open debate of these until some level of agreement is reached – not always comfortable or easy but a fundamental requirement and strength of democracy

I have become increasingly concerned over the recent past at how personalized and often exclusive such processes have become at our monthly meetings to the point where some members no longer attend or don't feel comfortable contributing to the korero or the vote.

This was starkly demonstrated for me at our June 2024 Association monthly meeting when the process of debating a motion I had seconded did not provide space for me in that role to speak to the motion and much of the korero was personalized.

I accept that with the wide range of topics and projects the Association could cover that there need to be agreed priorities and time constraints around both kaupapa and korero. However, from my perspective both of these are becoming restricted to a narrower range of topics (based largely on structure) with less emphasis on other possible directions and other community projects or perspectives

I am passionately committed to MDCA promoting and enabling broad areas of interest and debate and recognise that there may not always be agreement on all of these. However, for me our monthly meetings have become focused on an increasingly narrow range of kaupapa with little evident tolerance for diverse/differing viewpoints .

For this reason I am sadly choosing to no longer attend our monthly meetings although I will continue my MDCA membership and my interest and support for the kaupapa of a diverse and vibrant community. Kia kaha – Elena Meredith