



Rotary Club of Maungakiekie Bulletin Newsletter NL 209

24th March 2025

This week's meeting was Chaired by Craig Jones

Apologies from: Noel Carey, Richard Ryan, Bob Campbell, George Arulanatham, Alan Bannin, Shameen Hyatt, Tony Rayner, Jeanette Thorn, George Varghese, Trevor Mosley.

Visitors. Rotary Club Remuera President Iain Valentine, 19 members present, Shirley Grayson, Gregg Carr, Penny Kestle, Sharyn Williams, Wayne Levick, Stephen Kestle, Shani Hatitio -PA to Greg Fleming.

Acting sergeant Lloyd welcomed the Remuera Rotary Club and the many guests present tonight. He advised that the Guest Speaker Greg needs to catch a flight to Wellington tonight. We will have Greg address us before our meal.

Lloyd called on President Craig for his welcome.

Craig extended a big welcome to Remuera, President Iain and visitors Shirley, Penny, Sharon, Wayne, Steven, and Shani. He thanked them for their presence. He noted that this was an auspicious moment and advised that there will be question time after Greg's address so please start thinking about them now as we want to hammer him.

Craig asked Barry to introduce Greg.

Guest Speaker Greg Fleming MP – Introduction by Barry Stafford.

Greg Fleming at 54 is one of our more mature members of Parliament. He is the same age as Christopher Luxon.- Greg has a good hair.

Our MP is younger than Winston.- All our other MPs are.

Greg is 13 years older than David Seymour, 10 years older than Nicola Willis and Chris Hipkins, and 20 years older than Simeon Brown.

- Most MPs are older than Mr Brown.

Greg grew up in the Wairarapa, attended Victoria University in Wellington, met his wife Kirstin there, and worked in London in accounting and finance.

Greg and his wife have lived in Onehunga for 27 years and have 5 children. Greg's Christian faith is important to him.

He is a student of Te Reo Māori. For many years he has worked for and with charitable entities, and is keenly aware of the significant role they, and other community focused groups, such as Rotary, are to the wellbeing and welfare of our way of life.

Towards the end of Greg's maiden speech in December 2023, he said he entered Parliament with trepidation and knowing that he would be changed by it.

I am pleased to invite Greg Fleming to speak to us. He is of course the National MP for Onehunga and a well-rounded person with a wealth of experience outside of Parliament.

He may be willing to comment on his current levels of trepidation and how he has changed. I now invite you to welcome Greg,

Greg Fleming MP for Maungakeikei electorate.

Thank you very much Barry. Thank you very much for the invitation this evening and thank you very much for agreeing to, turn things around and eat later. Although I have noticed that everyone's carrying on drinking so I'm really looking forward to the questions. And with all that in mind I'll keep my reflections reasonably brief, and we'll get into a bit of to and fro.

It is true that the world has changed a lot in the last nearly eighteen months not just for me in terms of going to politics but just more broadly.

Greg referred one of his favourite media stories that he read in recent weeks was around the school lunches. And this one was actually it was a serious media story. It made him laugh though. There was the principal of one school who was just appalled of the quality of the school lunches. Of the 350 lunches that had been provided to the school, 200 had not been eaten. In fact, the quality of the food is so bad that some students were now bringing food from home. So, the world is truly falling apart.

. In fact, one more lunch story. This was more recent. There was a copy of a letter sent home to the parents that due to the quality of the food provided, they suggested that the students be sent to school with a packed lunch.

Greg said he thought the entire lunch programme was for students who would otherwise go hungry.

Greg then returned to the subject of the 1st eighteen months in and as Barry had said he previously had great trepidation. Greg then gave very briefly some of his background.

Returning from London he decided he would give one year to a charitable organisation that had just started, it was called Parenting with Confidence.

That year became the next twenty-five years. Not at the same charity, but with about 12 different charities. But he never left the charitable sector because he got a taste for what it's like being able to make a real difference in an individual's or in a family's life every day. And that it's a drug he is very much hooked on.

So just in the last month, there was there a family, that had been struggling to get into a decent sized home, with Kainga Ora. Just struggling, struggling against the system. When we ring, we're able to put pressure on those officers in those, often government and sometimes council departments that are there to supposed to help people flourish but all too often the systems get overloaded, they'll get bogged down their own complexity. He can actually move the dial; He can nudge the sludge in the system and actually get them through. And so, they got them into their home.

In that same week there was, there was a young guy who had been born in Australia, to Samoan parents but come to New Zealand as a youngster. His father was spending a crazy amount of money on an unregistered immigration person. Years and years had dragged on. He was able to, in very quick time, be able to progress him through the immigration system. And just a few weeks later he a few weeks ago he became a citizen of New Zealand.

They are, regularly able to help people in terms of IRD and MOE and he just loves it. At an individual and a family level you can really you shift the dial for people, and there's nothing quite as gratifying.

And so, he reckons that that the MP at the end of the email signature or at the end of the at the voice message stands for **Making Progress**, because we really can. We can make progress for individuals and for families and that is a huge privilege, and a huge delight.

But he has been able to form friendships across all of the other parties, and that has begun to, grow his hope and expand his imagination in terms of what might be possible for some subject matters of government to be able to work across the aisle. And so as long as the good people of Maungakiekie keep sending him back to parliament, he would love to do this for many, many years. He has also managed to build, and this has become a surprise to him, he has managed to build relationships across parliament.

And he has had one experience of that so far. He had a private member's bill pulled at the beginning of last year, from the biscuit tin, and it was to do with human trafficking. So, modern slavery, human trafficking, it's actually a thing it's a big thing that actually, tens of millions of people around the world are caught up in. And we've had, one successful prosecution of those kinds of cases in New Zealand in the last twelve years and it's primarily not because those cases aren't happening in New Zealand it's because that part of the crimes act isn't fit for purpose. So, section 98 of the crimes act needed a real overhaul.

His bill does that, and he has been able to get 100% support across the house. Just the last sitting week, so a week and a half ago, He went to the Justice Select Committee. We also heard several wonderful submissions and in fact several the submitters and the charities that have done work on this are from around here including the likes of World Vision and Tear Fund and, and then he did some work earlier late last week with the with the Justice Minister and, we're getting very close now to that bill getting through and becoming law. So being able to work right across the house on that has ignited his imagination as to what might be possible in some other areas as well.

His family have got used to this crazy new life that he's in. The number of absences that he's got. Kirsten finds the job really fascinating. She's actually taken to at times watching parliamentary TV.

He sits on the Māori Affairs Committee as a permanent member there. He is Deputy Chair of the Petition Select Committee. He enjoys both of those pieces of work, particularly the former where they get to work across the treaty settlement space. And he is a big fan of that and can see that process playing out well over the next He reckons within five years they can complete that particular part of our history.

So again, He thanked everyone very much and opened the floor for some questions.
(Questions and answers abbreviated)

Question Maungakiekie Member

The question I have for you is, do you think, this opening up of the discussion around issues of the treaty, is a positive thing or a negative one?

And why?

It's a great question. I care deeply about this space. There were two reasons really why in the end I went to politics from a subject matter point of view where I thought I could contribute. One is probably obvious, which is that, to advocate for that community and charitable sector, which I had spent so many years, working in.

I really believe that they do a fantastic job of delivering services, be it and I'm including in that all our schools, in terms of from everything from education to welfare, to youth development, to prisoner rehabilitation, to even large aspects of welfare. I think they are in the communities, they know best, and so I'm a big fan of that devolution approach. The second area is actually related to it as well, is, I could see that we were heading as a country towards an increasingly divisive space, between, the crown and Māori advocates. And the latter could potentially become so noisy as to dominate the space. Now I again having worked in the charitable sector, as I have worked in a wide range of community spaces that that are either very Māori in their identity or are working with those spaces.

I've seen what's possible when you empower local Māori communities, raise their mana, increase their health, and allow them to be able to really care for their own whanau. There's just nothing that is as effective as that.

That's what article two of the treaty is about. It's about recognizing the mana of each Māori community to be able to do best for themselves because that's what they know. It's the same in all our lives.

One rule for all people, everybody equals under the law, and so on and so forth. But it's not being heard that way at all, and it won't be heard.

So, I fear that what we want to have isn't going to happen for some time. I think we're now going to have to work through this incredibly inflamed place we've gotten to. I lament for it.

Our challenge is going to actually be announcing the course and then hopefully be able to end up dominating the public space with it. The problem is, and this is the big big problem, it's very difficult for a moderate position to be heard in the public space. It's the extreme positions that take up all of the air.

A problem is that people are just completely talking past each other. So, it's not two people or two parties, they're in relationship, actually working through a complex matter.

It is two people who have irreconcilably different positions and are just getting louder and louder as they shout at each other and what I've learned in these first 17 months is that politics, amongst other things, is the art of compromise and compromise begins with genuinely listening to the other, really hearing what it is that they say. We're all just aghast at where the conversation has gone. This is not the conversation we're wanting to have. We're wanting to have it here and pursuing what it looks like for communities to be made strong.

New Question, Plans for tenure?

I appreciate the question. First and foremost, I would love to have the opportunity to serve in parliament over the long term. I think I've seen there enough to realize that the real, the really big stuff actually requires you to serve there for quite a while. And secondly, I think it does require us to build a cross, house consensus on matters of everything from infrastructure to education, to health.

New question: The importance of Te Reo Māori

Can you share with us why you believe that Te Reo is an important language, to revive it, and where it sits in education as well?

I am a huge advocate for Te Reo Māori for a couple of reasons. One I just love it. I find it a language that speaks to and from the land of this place. I guess that could be for many reasons. It's that maybe it's just that it's a language that that's been here for hundreds of years. Greg has seen first hand the positive effect of learning Te Reo Māori has on the identity of those whose Whakapapa is Māori.

It's the insecurity and the self the self-doubt that comes when you aren't sure who you are. For someone whose Whakapapa is Māori and cares about the fact that they're Whakapapa Māori, being able to speak makes a massive difference. When they have strong identity, they are far less likely to, be calling for things that would be unhelpful.

New question: We have talked about the National / ACT agreement. Change the subject to New Zealand First / National agreement.

Obviously, there's coalition arrangements that National has with both ACT and New Zealand First, and within this space our agreement with Act was that we would allow them to draft and bring to parliament a treaty principles bill and we'd support it through to the second reading. And with New Zealand First it's to engage on the work on treaty principles. Is that what you're meaning? That treaty principles and remove the principles from it.

So that piece of legislation is being drafted at the moment. I haven't seen it. So, I'm not sure what position it's going to take. I'm hopeful that it could be helpful.

The key is to once again per my long answer to Bill about the treaty principles bill is to how it's going to be done which is why I think if anybody can do it well, I think Shane can. I hope. Well, we've got a coalition agreement that it must happen in this term of parliament so it will.

New question. Polls?

They don't really bother me. And they don't bother me for the fact that the polls become relevant when you're within a few weeks of the election.

So, what the polls are showing at the moment, nineteen months out, it's interesting but that's all it is for me.

Okay. Great. Well Excellent. We're going to draw the line there. Thank you.

I'm going to call on Iain McCrae to move a vote of thanks.

Greg, it's my pleasure to give a vote of thanks for your presentation tonight, which was inspiring, I think particularly giving us an insight to your first eighteen months in Parliament and what that means. I think that was very helpful for to us to understand what it is to be a new MP going in and learning the ropes and being a junior. I think I congratulate your wife, Kirstin, in putting up with that lifestyle, but also her ability to watch Parliament TV in the afternoon I think was something I wouldn't have expected. However, knowing that you've got a time scale, I won't talk any longer, but just to say thank you very much for coming along and expressing and answering questions directly and with sincerity, and that is appreciated. We wish you well in the future and the boundary changes tonight.

Thank you very much.



Thought for the week. Peter Mayow.

Be who you are, say what you think. Those who matter don't mind, and those who mind don't matter.

Duties 31st March

Guest speaker: Richard Griessman "Barstool Politics"

President - Craig

Scribe - Bill A

Attendance - Rob

Hospitality - Iain

Meals - Bruce M, Derek

Host - Ant

Thanks - Ernie

Thought For the Week - Trevor

Apologies to Noel before 5pm Friday

Duties 7th April

Guest Speaker: James Parkinson : Waikaraka Park Changes

President - Craig Jones

Scribe - Bill A

Attendance - Iain

Hospitality - Ant

Meals - Derek, Barry

Host - Ernie

Thanks - Trevor

Thought for the week - Bruce

Apologies to Noel before 5pm Friday

Rotary

Club of Maungakiekie



PRESENTS

“State of The Nation”

*WITH GUEST SPEAKER
DAVID SEYMOUR*

*The date, Wednesday 28th May 2025
at Sorrento In The Park*

*Tickets \$225.00 includes 3 course
meal Wine Provided*

*Net Proceeds to Maungakiekie Rotary
Club projects.*

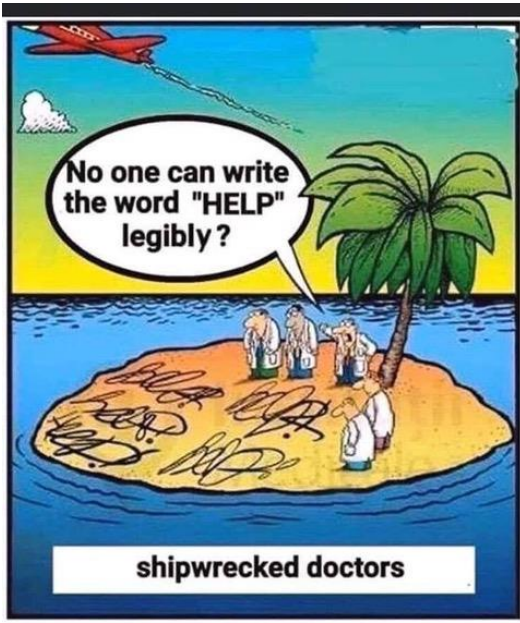
Tickets available from:

Ctl + click on link below.

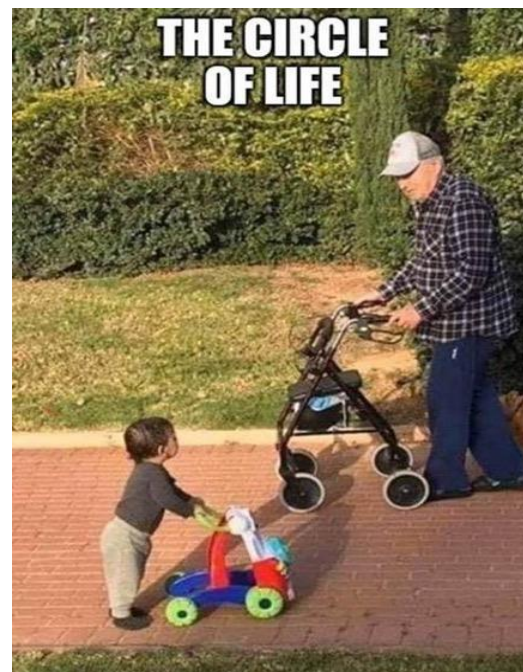
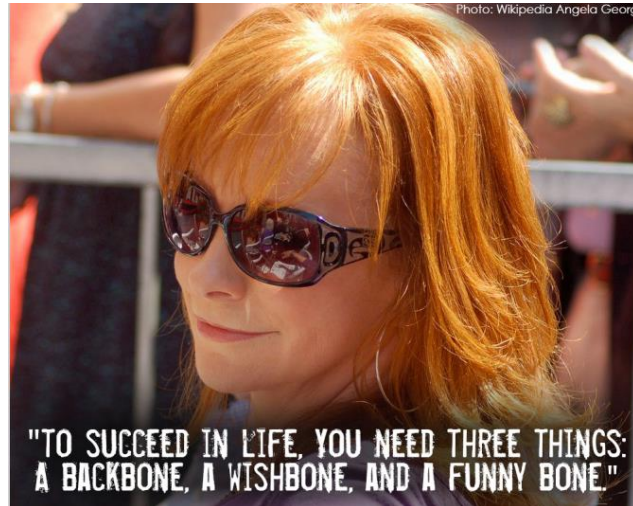
[Maungakiekie Rotary –](#)

[State of the Nation Fundraiser](#)

Smile, it makes people wonder what you have been up to!



I'M NOT OLD.
I'VE JUST BEEN YOUNG FOR
A VERY LONG TIME.



Theory of relativity



Do not keep roasted peanuts in transparent jar, they disappear fast.



But if you keep roasted cashews in transparent jar next to peanut jar, peanuts last longer..



However if you add third element..A liquor bottle nearby...All disappear in no time 😊 ...



Rotary Maungakiekie Bulletin Editor: Bill Appleton
bill.appleton.ri@gmail.com

End note:

Tino rangatiratanga can mean self-determination, sovereignty, independence, autonomy. The term itself is rooted in a Māori worldview, and there is no one English term which fully encapsulates its meaning.