

News and Views - June 2009

Well Being and the 'Super City'

Christian communities, since the days of Jesus, have been actively concerned about the well being of people. Our tradition has in various ways expressed concern for individual well-being and for social-well being. It is easy for the church of today to get these two dynamics of well-being out of balance and focus predominantly on the personal. Yet they are the two sides of the same coin. We do need as individuals to attend to our personal health and well being, (physical, emotional and spiritual), and also as communities to attend holistically to the environment in which we live: the physical environment of our neighborhoods, the quality of our social interactions, and the sources of pride with which we identify our particular neighborhood. Currently our potential for social-well being is under threat again as the 'Super City' plan rolls out. A core function of local government is to provide for the social-well being of the people who elect it - even if in Auckland City this slides readily to the bottom of the agenda! While we need to ensure that the roads and public transport of Greater Auckland is coordinated and clean water and power are supplied fairly along with all the other basic services, we need also to ensure that the character and social cohesion of our local communities is not lost in the much larger 'Super City'. We need to ensure that the gap between wealth and poverty is not exacerbated, and the resources to ensure everyone has access to amenities that enhance social well-being are fairly distributed. As I think about it, we must ensure that local democracy is strengthened; that the local boards have resources and authority to respond to the community within their responsibility of care. Consequently, all of us must be concerned enough for each other to make the effort to be informed and to vote. We need to ensure issues of social wellbeing do not drop off the agenda and that we have a voice and the means to respond locally.