

15 June 2020

### **Reference for Blah Blah Marketing and Events Ltd**

When the Far North District Council needed to develop a shared vision for the District in 2015, we knew we needed to cut through the noise and grab people's attention if we were to reach people who don't normally take part in Council planning processes. Blah Blah Marketing delivered a billboard and social media campaign that was provocative and highly-effective without costing the Council and ratepayers megabucks.

People in the Far North care about the places they live in and they usually resist inappropriate development vociferously. Blah Blah Marketing leveraged that emotional investment by depicting the Far North's iconic places as they might look in the future. Cue large billboards showing construction cranes and high-rise buildings looming over Kerikeri's Stone Store. Other billboards depicted urbanised scenarios in coastal beauty spots or posed scenarios that might be welcome by locals: A Ngapuhi University in Kaikohe? A hospital in Kerikeri? The message was simple: Tell us what you want. People did exactly that. We heard from more than 1,200 people; an unprecedented number for a Council consultation exercise, thanks to Blah Blah Marketing's campaign that got people talking and an extensive community engagement exercise led by then Deputy Mayor Tania McInnes.

As the manager who worked with Blah Blah Marketing on the delivery of this campaign, I was impressed by their edgy creativity, professionalism and intuition about what messages and tactics would resonate with our communities. Anika and Steph were also receptive to our ideas, understanding of our processes and willing to challenge us when we got cold feet and considered diluting our campaign. They were a great team to collaborate with and I would have no hesitation in contracting them to undertake a similar campaign.

Blah Blah Marketing was also a natural choice for the Council when we sought a marketing company to promote the Twin Coast Cycle Trail in 2016. Again, we were impressed by their practical approach which was well-thought-out and realistically costed, compared to other more conceptual proposals we considered. Their knowledge of the local community and networks, particularly in the Far North business sector, and experience in destination marketing were also considerations in our decision to award the contract to Blah Blah Marketing.



**Richard Edmondson**  
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