**Connecting people to spaces and places (limited to 10 words)**

In this day and age, it’s becoming more and more imporant to ensure that communities feel well connected. Espiecally in the small rural town of Gisborne.

When I moved away some 28 years ago, I vowed to never retuen. Fast forward to 2023, and I’m back with my family, living and working in Gisborne, and adventagously using my combined knowledge and skills across a variety of different industires to try and make this town a more people centric place.

iI 2021 I helped form an active recreation charitable trust, the Tairāwhiti Adventure Trust. Since then, we have delivered Aotearoa’s first world class skate park, a world class velo solutions pump track, lobbied the local council for better road safety initiatives, plus a while bunch of other kaupapa that is aimed at improving the overall hauora of our community by encouraging them to engage in active recreation.

Upon completion of the skate park and pump track facilities, we noticed an increased number of users in the area, with people feeding in from the surrounding arterial routes. As the area got busier, so did the road, and it was at that time that we applied for the Streets For People programme, in conjunction with our local council.

This programme has given us the ability to adapt the street to better suit our community who are walking, cycling, skating, and scootering, to the active recreation facilities. It’s also brought to the surace the ugly side of our society, who are so hellbent on car parks that they would rather write a letter to the editor to complain then park 30 seconds away from their destination and walk.

If we could masterplan our cities in Aotearoa this day and age, Imagine how much more condusive to walking and cycling they would be – how did countries in Europe get it so right, so long ago?

Alas, it’s our obligation as community memebrs to fight the good fight, and with some forward thinking from our elected politicians, community advocates, engineers, designers, policy makers, and fund holders, we may very well get there in this lifetime.