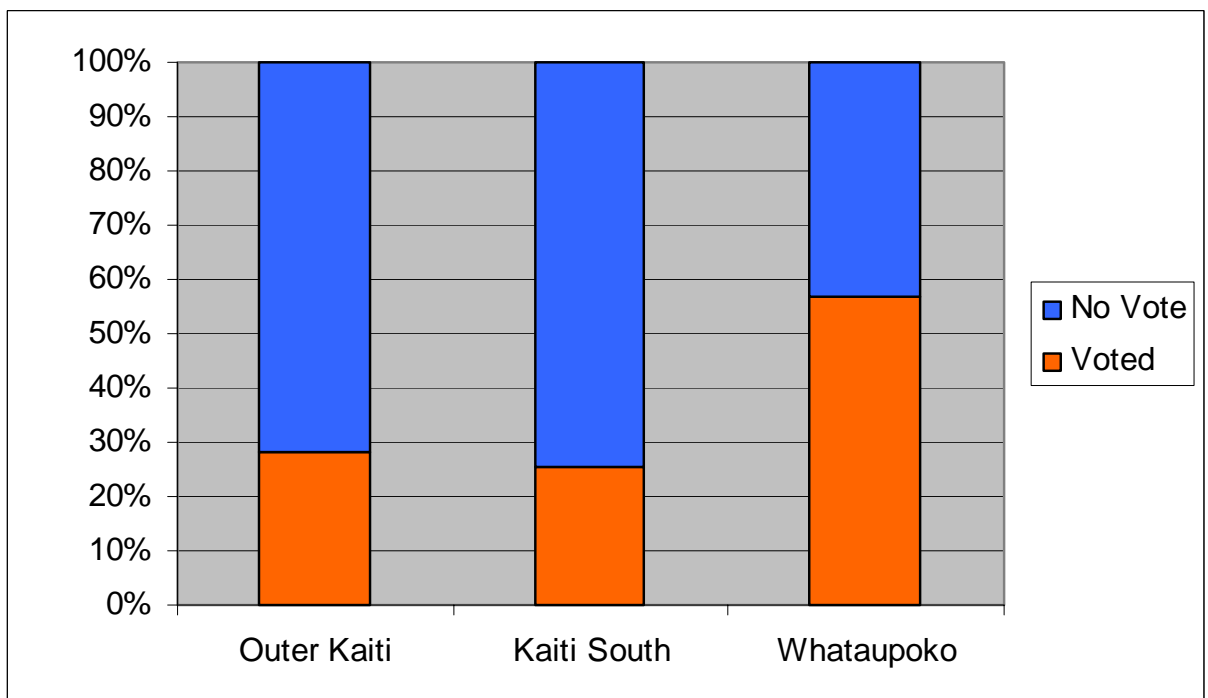
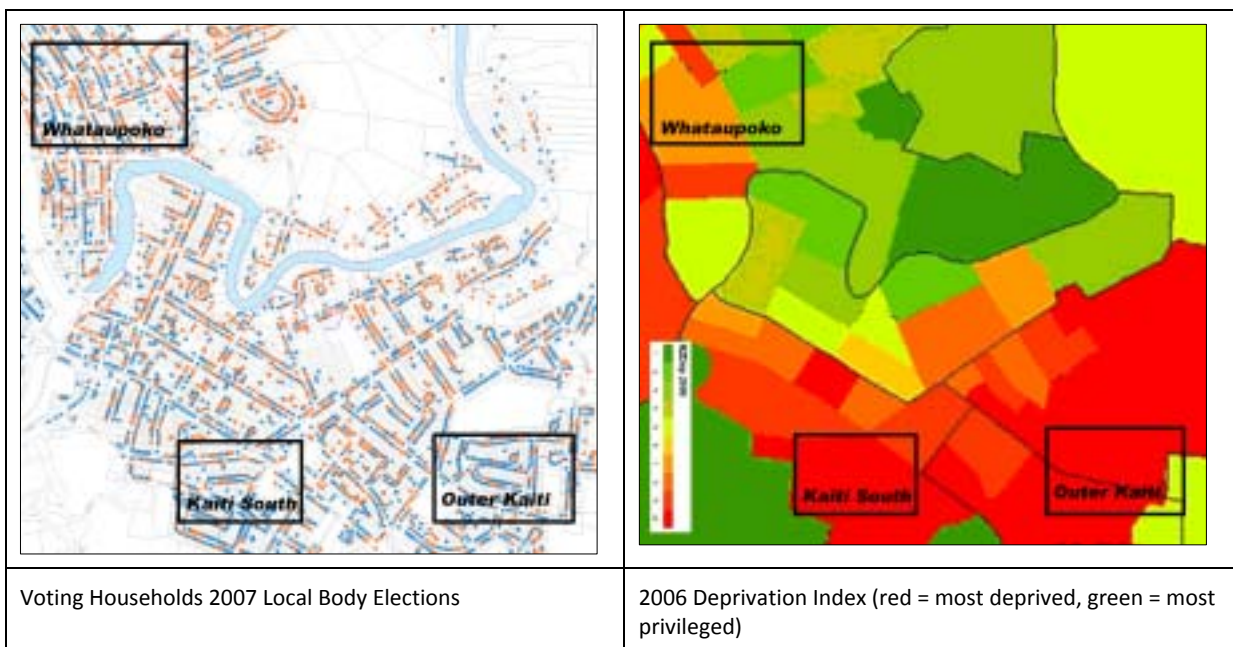


## Kaiti Voter Participation Project

**THE SITUATION:** Kaiti South & Outer Kaiti residents are voting at less than half the rate of residents in other parts of Gisborne City such as Whataupoko (based on 2007 voting rates from a random sample of 200 properties in each neighbourhood).

**THE REASONS:** A range of historical factors and contemporary issues have contributed to a situation where communities with higher levels of young, Maori, less educated and poorer citizens have lower participation in local body elections. National campaigns and initiatives designed to increase voter turn-out are not being effective in neighbourhoods like Kaiti.

**THE PROPOSAL:** A locally-designed and implemented project to increase voter turn-out focusing on low-participation neighbourhoods.



## WHAT WE KNOW:

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- voting is lower in communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation
- Māori have lower rates of voter participation than non-Māori
- voting is lower amongst Māori in provincial areas than it is in metropolitan areas (but the opposite is true for non-Māori)
- younger people have lower rates of voting than older people
- voting habits are formed young and influenced by previous generation
- Kaiti has high levels of deprivation, young people and Māori citizens
- face-to-face non-partisan voter engagement can increase participation
- efforts led by locals are more effective in encouraging voter turn-out
- GDC has made a commitment to ensuring “*that all people participate in the democratic process*” and “*providing more effective ways for Māori to participate in decision-making and of increasing their capacity to do so*”
- a 500 page report written by historian Jane Luiten for the CFRT / Waitangi Tribunal and released last month provides overwhelming evidence on the active suppression of Maori interests in local government on the East Coast since 1876.

PLANNED ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAMES
Governance group agree on project plan and engage Project Coordinator.	Jan
Literature review with recommendations on effective strategies for registering, mobilising and educating citizens from communities experiencing high levels of deprivation	Feb
Campaign action planning with key organisations active in the community and stakeholders (including academics and high profile people) with an interest in these issues	Mar
Campaign implementation: Door-to-door workers; Print & Radio; Schools/Clubs/Churches/Marae; etc.	Mar-Oct
Monitoring & evaluation of voter registration, motivation & mobilisation project	Feb-Nov

## PROJECT PARTNERS: (as at 10 December 2009)

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The project has been initiated by Ka Pai Kaiti Trust ([www.kapaikaiti.com](http://www.kapaikaiti.com)) a residents association and community development organisation of volunteers established in 2000 and committed to making Kaiti an even better place to live.

Te Runanga o Ngati Porou ([www.ngatiporou.com](http://www.ngatiporou.com)), Te Runanga o Turanganui-a-Kiwa ([www.trotak.iwi.nz](http://www.trotak.iwi.nz)) and The Gisborne Herald ([www.gisborneherald.co.nz](http://www.gisborneherald.co.nz)) have agreed to support the project.

Gisborne District Council ([www.gdc.govt.nz](http://www.gdc.govt.nz)) have asked staff to write a report with recommendations on whether or not they should be involved and Tairāwhiti District Health Board ([www.tdh.org.nz](http://www.tdh.org.nz)) have said they will not support the initiative unless it includes the whole region.

A number of national organisations, including the Community Sector Taskforce, are interested in supporting the project.

Kaapua Smith is a political scientist with a particular interest in the issues the project is trying to address and is acting in a voluntary role as an expert advisor to the project.

## CONTACT:

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