

# Vision, leadership, faith prevail

**T**HE vote is counted, the tender is signed, the Len Lye Centre is to be built.

That is what we know now, in the present, after a fascinating and possibly historic council meeting on Thursday night.

If we look back, over the past decade, it has been a story of controversy, a civil war of opposing philosophies and philanthropies, pitting citizen against citizen, arts supporter against purse tightener.

But the real and enduring story of the Len Lye Centre is likely to be told a number of years from this present point, with the advantage of distance, clarity and hindsight.

It will be a story told in three parts: Vision, leadership and faith.

Those three elements were steady com-

panions running through the narrative of Thursday night's meeting.

And it was the purveyors of those qualities who were triumphant on the night and victors for their community. Whose arguments succeeded over the poorly co-ordinated chorus of the flinty and churlish - with a few notable exceptions.

Len Lye was an artist of undoubted vision and part of that inspiration was a gift to the community he grew to love. That philanthropy required people to share his vision and bring his renowned collection and ideas to life.

Because as has been told, others of similar vision and possibly greater resources eyed that collection, shared the artist's ambition and stood ready to profit.

So honouring Lye's legacy would require leadership, which was roused by setback and adversity and to the fore on Thursday night. In public submission and in official exhortation. Mayor Harry Duynhoven has sometimes been accused of mistaking the trees for the wood, of focusing too heavily on the personal rather than the politic, but Thursday night provided perhaps his finest hour. An evocation of the glory and pride of the Samurái Summer and the intangible qualities that make up the parts of an intriguing and popular sum that is this city, this region. His presentation, and those of Len Lye Committee chairman Lance Girling-Butcher and supporters Kinsley Sampson and Alessandra Keighley, spoke to the more noble ambitions of this community.

And they talked of faith: faith that despite the disconcerting setback of a budget overrun and concern about how that happened, supporters and fundraisers would work even harder over the next two years to ensure that ratepayers would not have to honour the under-write.

They would ensure that the vision was not lost and the leadership not wasted.

Ultimately, like the councillors who supported the centre and voted accordingly, we must believe that faith will be rewarded with a stunning success story: a world-class facility largely funded by external sources. That faith, of course, has a flipside, as Chris Herlihy told the council: you have our support but please, no more surprises. Lest the story finish with an unhappy ending.