

Wairoa In Focus

Your Community, Your Future



Bringing Council news to the community

Welcome to the first Wairoa In Focus page – a monthly bulletin delivering news from the Wairoa District Council to the community.

The aim of the bulletin is to provide a link to those residing in the district, and beyond, with up-to-date information on what is going on at council.

Such a diverse range of work is covered by the council, from roading, water and rates to major economic, environmental and social decision-making.

Your views are important to the council team, so you are encouraged to make use of the varied points of contact available for enquiries or submissions, including phone (838 7309), email via the website (www.wairoadc.govt.nz), or by calling in to the Council administration offices on Queen Street.



Heart of the community ... committed to making the district a place for all to enjoy.

Photo by Kerry Fox

Protecting people and the land - Mahia Community Wastewater Scheme explained

Sorting out the sewerage situation on the Mahia Peninsula has been a longstanding issue for the district for years and while it still has a long way to go, much progress has been made in finding a sensible solution that benefits both people and the environment.

Sewage is currently handled through septic and holding tanks, but many of them are in a bad state of repair. This is causing dirty water to leach straight into open drains and out to sea, creating a significant risk to health as well as polluting our environment.

Decades of research, planning and public consultation has resulted in the proposed Mahia Community Wastewater Scheme, which will place most Mahia households on a shared system, eliminating the need for individual septic tanks.

Sewage will be dealt with at a treatment plant, the site of which is yet to be confirmed.

Cost to Mahia ratepayers is expected to be around \$12,000 each, which may be spread over a period of 30 years.

While this may seem like a lot of money, the cost of not going ahead with the scheme could be much greater, both financially and environmentally.

The government has proposed a 'warrant of fitness' test for septic tanks, where tanks will be subject to inspection on a regular basis. Wairoa District Council research has found that many tanks at Mahia would need to be replaced, resulting in great expense for individuals.

The Mahia Community Wastewater Scheme will allow residents to bypass the proposed 'warrant of fitness' altogether, saving thousands of dollars.

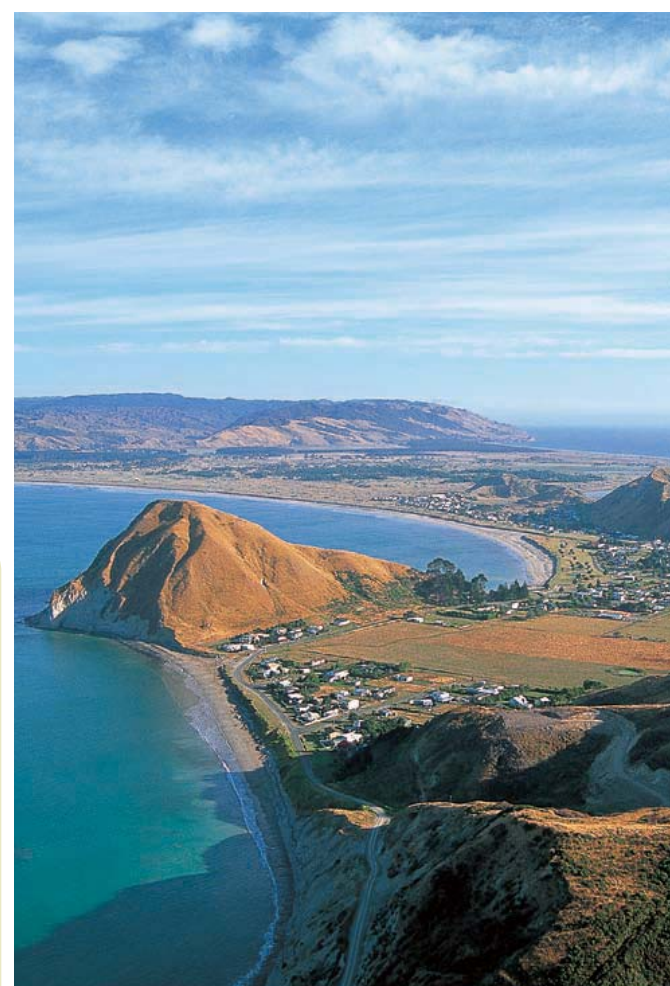
Government commitment to protecting our environment has resulted in the scheme being subsidised by 50 percent at the Mahia settlement and 90 percent to link in Opoutama.

Environmentally, the scheme will protect the land and surrounding sea for future generations.

Anyone who wishes to learn more about the scheme can do so on the Wairoa District Council website, www.wairoadc.govt.nz, or call into the Queen Street offices and see engineering manager Neil Cook, who is more than happy to answer questions.

Facts:

- The Mahia Wastewater Management Scheme was officially approved to go ahead through the LTCCP back in 2004.
- It is proposed that the network will collect sewage from each connected household at Mahia Beach, Oraka and Opoutama.
- Testing has shown that sewage is polluting groundwater around the target communities. The problem is real.
- A public survey of Mahia ratepayers, as well as field days and public meetings, has shown extensive support for the scheme, including recognition of the need for it and the value it will add to the community.



The Mahia coastline is under threat from pollution.



Shining the light on Civil Defence matters ... Emergency Management Officer Kevin Duley moves on.

Civil Defence champion farewells emergency management role

Be prepared in case disaster strikes – this is the message Emergency Management Officer Kevin Duley hopes to leave as his legacy as he moves on after three years in the job.

Taking care of the Civil Defence needs of the district has been the main focus for Kevin, who has become a familiar face by working with community groups, schools and service groups to pass on knowledge of how to be ready for a disaster.

A highlight has been working with different marae to ensure safety plans are in place.

"There are now around ten marae with up-to-date plans, which is very satisfying," he said.

The lasting impression he hopes to leave on all he has come into contact with is to be aware of Wairoa's isolation and put some time into being prepared for the worst case scenario.

"Should a disaster occur, there won't be an army of volunteers at the ready – people really need to take responsibility for themselves and prepare to be self-sufficient for at least three days," he said.

Kevin and his wife, Joy, are off to explore opportunities in Karratha, which is a town about 1500 north of Perth, Australia. A new Emergency Management Officer is yet to be appointed.

Dog registration deadline looms

The countdown is on to get annual dog registrations into the Wairoa District Council before the final deadline on Tuesday, September 2.

Dog control officer Doug Waugh said this year had been relatively positive in terms of compliance, with a great number of residents taking their dog ownership responsibilities seriously.

The full registration price now applies, which is \$52 for dogs classed as 'standard' or 'working', and \$90 for those falling into the 'menacing' dog category.

Failure to register dogs by the cut-off date could result in a minimum fine of \$300, plus the registration fee, as well as the dog being seized.

An important point to remember is that all dogs being registered for the first time are now required by national law to be microchipped, no matter what the age of the dog.

This task can be carried out at a vet clinic and enables proof of ownership to be established should the need arise. The only dogs exempt from microchipping are farm dogs that are used mainly for stock work.

Registration forms should have arrived in the mail some time ago for dogs already on the database, and new registrations can be lodged at the Wairoa District Council offices on Queen Street.