



WAIROA RECOVERY

TE WAIROA KA ORA TE WERO TE TAKI
STRENGTH x UNITY x RESILIENCE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH 2023 | NEWSLETTER 8



E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i
ruia mai i Rangiatea.

*I will forever find my way; I am
a seed planted from Rangiatea.*

E te whānau whānau

As we gather around the warmth of this festive season, let's take a moment to reflect on the journey we've travelled together this year. The floods that disrupted our lives also brought to light the incredible strength and resilience within each one of us. Your endurance through these challenging times is not just a testament to personal fortitude, but a beacon of hope for all. This Christmas, as we cherish the company of our loved ones, let us remember that every storm is followed by a rainbow. The waters may have risen, but so did our spirits, proving that we are a community unbroken, bound by unity and compassion.

As we turn the page to a new year, let's carry forward this enduring spirit. The road to recovery may be long, but it is paved with the collective resolve of each one of us. Hold on to the hope that brighter days are ahead, where laughter will replace loss and peace will fill the spaces left by the floodwaters. Let this Christmas be a reminder that even in the darkest of times, our shared light shines the brightest. Together, we will rebuild, restore, and rejuvenate, for we are more than just neighbours; he whānau tātau, we are a family, united in hope and love.

I runga i te taonga tuku iho o rātau mā te aroha

Tū mai e te whānau kia kaha kia māia kia manawanui

Benita Tahuri - Wairoa Recovery Manager

TWO STEPS FORWARD AND ONE STEP BACKWARDS

The impact of Cyclone Gabrielle can be clearly seen across our district, in our township, particularly North Clyde, and across our farmland.

Wairoa recovery Manager Benita Tahuri says that sometimes there is so much still to do that we don't see what has been achieved.

"Some days, it may be two steps forward and one step backwards, but at least we are still moving forward."

"From where we have come from to where we are now is a giant leap. We now have 44 dwellings that have moved from yellow stickered to white stickered and six homes with yellow stickers removed.

"Our kaimanaaki are on the streets 'ground truthing' to make sure our data is accurate, and we are seeing that there are many more homes that are very close to shifting from yellow to white and then to no sticker, which is encouraging.

"Extra Recovery staff has meant we are more present in the community and can respond more quickly and efficiently to people's needs. We are also working collaboratively with a range of services and organisations, helping us connect to where we need to.

"Following requests, silt has been cleared from underneath 133 homes, plus homeowners have removed silt themselves, and around 45,000 tonnes of silt has been moved, mainly from the Wairoa township.

"In the Wairoa district, more than 25,000m³ of woody debris has been stockpiled to get it away from bridges, culverts, and off-beaches to provide safe recreational areas along the coastline, river mouths, beaches and bridges.

"We have had many impacted businesses reopen, and new businesses have also sprouted up due to the cyclone. North Clyde's iconic and popular

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receive the Wairoa
Recovery Newsletter,
please send your email
address to:
recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz



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Ponderosa Fish and Chip shop has reopened under new ownership, and the Vista restaurant is back. On the weekend, Wairoa's new main street development, Ahi Kōmau – Gemmells on Parade, which features a courtyard space and houses three businesses focusing on hospitality, retail and training, was opened. Three tenants have been secured for the space: Gemmells – Café, Bar and Restaurant owned by Layton and Ange Gemmell, Beauty Antix beauty treatment business owned by Amber

Forrest and Jays Nutribox owned by Jay Byun.

"We are also seeing a focus on resilience and not just doing things the same old way.

"There is a drive to build back better, strengthen our foundations and enable Wairoa to be the best it can be.

"Getting whānau back in their homes remains a priority, along with looking after our rural population

and pushing to get the services that Wairoa needs.

"Recovery is a long journey; you are not alone, and it is not too late to reach out for support or help; we are here for everyone."

"If you or anyone you know needs assistance or advice to get back into your home, from under-house silt removal to help with moisture testing and plumbing, please email recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz or phone 0508 976248."



MAYORAL MESSAGE

As the year draws to a close, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and best wishes for 2024. I know many of us will be looking forward to a new year and a reset.

Sadly, though, we still have many whānau not able to live in their homes, and my heart truly goes out to you all.

We are doing everything we can to make progress so we can rebuild our community. Wairoa District Council has launched an investigation into why Wairoa flooded so badly in Cyclone Gabrielle. Finding this out is not actually a Council responsibility, but for the wellbeing of our community, I believe it is very necessary. It is imperative we know the cause of flooding in order to give us confidence in progressing Wairoa's flood protection.

We met with the Prime Minister Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Hon Simeon Brown, Minister for Local Government and Transport and Hon Mark Mitchell, Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery earlier this month and stressed Wairoa's needs. Our focus remains on progressing flood protection, returning families to their homes and advocating for reliable and resilient roading.

We were heartened by the genuine interest and care these members of the new Government showed for the Wairoa community and appreciated the time they took to visit and see our issues firsthand.

I cannot promise that everything will be better. But I can promise that we are all working as hard as we can to get the best results for everyone in our district.

I do hope you can all have a Merry Christmas, enjoy a holiday break and that 2024 is kind to us all.

HOLIDAY SHUT DOWN

The Wairoa Recovery Office will be closed from midday on Friday December 22 and will reopen from Monday January 8.

We will be monitoring the phone line, so if you need an urgent recovery-related response or help, please call free 0508 YROA4U or 0508 976248.

CYCLONE GABRIELLE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Regional and local plans are underway to recognise the one-year anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle on February 14, 2024.

The commemoration will respectfully reflect on the journey over the past year and also lay the first foundations for a platform to help establish the aspirational build-back better vision for all of Hawke's Bay.

The anniversary is also a time to remind communities of the psychosocial support and wellbeing services available to them during what may be a particularly difficult time.

Early plans include a hikoi at North Clyde, whānau events and activities and a concert. We will stay in touch and share more information on how the commemorations will take place in Wairoa as plans unfold.

INDEPENDENT FLOOD INVESTIGATION LAUNCHED BY THE WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL

An independent investigation has been launched by the Wairoa District Council into why Wairoa flooded so severely during Cyclone Gabrielle.

Wairoa Mayor Craig Little said the community cannot move forward until a definitive answer to the catastrophic flooding is known.

"We still have around 140 yellow stickered homes and 627 properties in Land Category 2A. Our focus is on getting whānau back into their homes, but to achieve that, we need to know what caused such extreme flooding on February 14.

"Wairoa has secured \$70m, ring-fenced by the Central Government for flood mitigation. WSP engineers contracted by HBRC are looking at flood protection options to take our

impacted residents from 2A to Land Category 2C and 1. But we cannot plan and build solutions when we do not know with certainty what caused the flooding."

Mr Little wrote to the Hawke's Bay Regional Council directly after the cyclone, asking for answers to a series of questions. "While some questions were addressed, we are not confident we know all the answers. The Hawke's Bay Regional Council told us they would be carrying out an independent investigation into why Wairoa flooded so severely in Cyclone Gabrielle. This has not happened, which has prompted our Council to start this vital work ourselves. This review is not a Wairoa District Council responsibility, but we are

concerned about the wellbeing of our people and we need to know why we flooded before we start river protection and for the future prosperity of our community.

"We know there was a series of contributing factors including debris and slash backed up like beaver dams on bridges, a huge volume of water that came into the Wairoa catchment, the location and openness of the Wairoa bar and the tide, shallow waterways, management of Genesis and Waihi power schemes and overflows. It may be a combination of these things that was the cause or something that has not even been considered. The key, though, is knowing why we flooded so significantly so we can work on a solution."

MOISTURE CHECK SUPPORT

Reducing moisture levels in flood-damaged homes is vital to tackling the final stages of building repairs with Wairoa Recovery kaimanaaki Jase Hayes-Moeau, pictured, on the job to help out.

Houses need time to dry, and generally, moisture levels need to drop to 18% or less before interior walls can be lined. In the case of native timber buildings, the moisture level reading can be slightly higher at 24-25%.

Jase is already out and about in the community working with flood-impacted whānau, and now, with a trusty moisture checker, can read the moisture levels in homes before final sign-off.

"My job is pre-checks and taking photos of the readings, which are then sent to Council, and once the requirements are met and checklist verified, rebuilding can then begin."

Jase says because he is out and about already, he hopes that he will be able to speed up the process for whānau to have the necessary work completed and verified to allow insulation and wall coverings to be reinstated.

If you would like Jase to carry out a moisture check, lodge a CSR by heading to the WDC website: www.wairoadc.govt.nz/contact-us/customer-service-request.



MAKING PLANS TO SUPPORT WHĀNAU IN NEED

A Somerville Street couple have had a mammoth uphill battle since being forced to abandon their Cyclone Gabrielle-affected home due to health reasons.

Tracey and James Hati returned to their hometown of Wairoa around 10 years ago when James became unwell, requiring dialysis three times a week.

On the morning of the cyclone, their entire section was flooded with water surrounding the house, covering the road and "looking like rapids as it lapped against their home".

Because of James's health needs, the couple were collected and flown to Hastings Hospital, where they spent the next couple of months living in the whānau whare.

Tracey said they wanted to come home, but with SH2 between Wairoa and Hastings closed, they had to stay at the base hospital in Hastings to access services. Eventually, they were able to arrange for James's treatment to be carried out in Gisborne and returned to their family home.

"After more than two months away, when we returned, the house stunk of mud, there was silt everywhere, and we had no hot water or laundry facilities because of the damage to the under-house plumbing caused by the flooding and silt.

"We made an insurance claim, but we got rejected and told there was not enough evidence to support our claim." Meanwhile, the couple, who are supported by their daughter, have had no hot water since they moved back in and have been boiling water for their baths. "We have paid insurance for all those years, and then along comes a natural disaster, and we were rejected. With so much time taken up travelling to Gisborne for James's dialysis, we just didn't know what to do next."

It was the power of collaboration that alerted the Wairoa Recovery

team to the couple's plight, with reach outs from Tatau Tatau o Te Wairoa, a concerned neighbour and meeting up at the Tails and Tales neighbourhood drop-in sessions.

Wairoa Recovery kaimanaaki Michelle Tahuri-Olsen said the Recovery team is so grateful to those who reached out and made it known what the Hatis were going through.

Initially, the Hati's low-lying home had been white-stickered, meaning it remained liveable despite the surrounding homes being yellow-stickered. A recent reassessment of the home, which included noting cracked and slumping walls, saw the placard move to a Yellow sticker – restricted access.

Michelle said the house is close to the ground, and underneath is full of silt, but the silt can't be removed by accessing the house from the sides as it is too close to the ground. Because the house has now been reassessed as a Yellow stickered home, that will support the insurance claim and access to other services

such as Red Cross funding for plumbing works."

Michelle said now that there is a clearer picture of the damage sustained, the Recovery team will advocate on behalf of the Hatis and take their claim to the New Zealand Insurance Claim Resolution Service.

An accommodation pod has also been arranged for the Hatis so they can stay in the temporary home on their property while their house is given the attention it needs.

Tracey says she is so grateful to Michelle and the Wairoa Recovery team. "Just knowing we have a plan and support is amazing. We didn't think this would happen, it's been nearly nine months."

Michelle says every person's journey is different. "We know there are people out there who need help, and our job is to support you. For any flood-related assistance, please contact the Recovery Office by email at recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz or call 0508 YROA4U or 0508 976248.



Tracey Hati and Wairoa Recovery kaimanaaki Michelle Tahuri-Olsen outside the Hati's whānau home, which sustained cracked and slumping walls following Cyclone Gabrielle.

FLOOD PROTECTION OPTIONS BEING EXAMINED

A group of local stakeholders is sifting through options to provide flood protection for Wairoa's Land Category 2A residents.

As a result of Cyclone Gabrielle, Wairoa has 627 homes categorised as 2A, which indicates more information is needed before any further decisions can be made about a pathway forward.

Central Government has provided \$70million for a flood protection scheme for Wairoa with Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa Trust and Wairoa District Council (The Tripartite partners) investigating options.

Engineers have developed a range of models based on thoughts and ideas from community engagement in August, plus river data with models based on science and hydrology and computer-generated modelling.

The stakeholder group provides local

knowledge and a grassroots Wairoa voice. While the stakeholder group is an initial sounding board, options will be taken back out to the wider community for further engagement and feedback before a final decision is made by the tripartite partners.

Wairoa District Council Chief Executive Kitea Tipuna, speaking on behalf of the tripartite group, said a range of options are being considered and shortlisted. "In this type of situation, there will be cause and effect. We need to identify an efficient, agreeable, consentable solution that makes sense and has the most benefits for our township and the least detrimental impact on our community.

"During the Prime Minister's visit to Wairoa earlier this month, we were told there is a sense of urgency in providing flood protection options for Wairoa, and the stakeholder

group is working towards selecting its preferred option by the end of March."

Mr Tipuna said early feedback from the stakeholder group was the need to actively manage the Wairoa River mouth and that the final model should be peer-reviewed to ensure the correct model is selected from a human life and monetary perspective.

Once confirmed, a flood protection scheme will assist in managing future severe weather events and provide certainty for homeowners and businesses. Approved flood protection is expected to take affected properties from 2A to 2C or 1, which will provide certainty and security moving forward and support keeping whānau in their communities and prevent properties in Wairoa from falling under the Land Category 3 property buyout.

RECOVERY OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

Wairoa first is Naomi Wilson's philosophy.

Born and bred locally, Naomi is the Office Co-ordinator for the Wairoa Recovery team.

Her background includes working in politics, most recently as support for former Member of Parliament Meka Whaitiri.

She was also involved in the welfare space and looking after isolated communities during the cyclone response and is the Wairoa Recovery Pou lead for resilience.

"I've seen what our whānau have been through and are still going through. It's important that we plan now so that we are not so vulnerable in the future. That includes working at a grassroots level to ensure our whānau are as prepared as possible for whatever the next event may be."



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

Head to www.wairoarecovery.co.nz for up-to-date recovery information, stories, newsletters and a whole lot more. Please feel free to send us any of your cyclone-related pics and videos and we will share on our webpage.

BESPOKE NUHAKA RESILIENCE PLAN

A Nuhaka Resilience Plan developed by the community is the goal of George Rarere, Community Resilience Project Manager for Nuhaka Ngāi Rakaipaaka.

The former Government policy writer aims to collect feedback from more than 75% of the Nuhaka community on how Nuhaka will look in 10 years and the obstacles and solutions for the village and surrounding areas.

The resilience plan will be based on critical points across social, cultural, economic, environmental, and organisational factors and align with the Rakaipaaka iwi strategy.

With decades of Government experience, George and his wife Rebecca retired to Nuhaka a year ago.

George was born in Mahanga, with his Rakaipaaka connection through his mum's side. The couple chose Nuhaka for its isolation, environment and whānau, adding that you know when the calling comes to return to your people.

Just months after moving home, the community was hit by Cyclone Gabrielle and flooding two weeks later and then again in November with a significant flooding event.

"It hurts when we see whānau struggling. My trigger was the early November weather event. I saw our people experience flooding and saw the frustrations, sadness and water around the whare.

"Developing a plan now is based on future-proofing and building

resilience. We have short-, medium- and long-term plans, from establishing Neighbourhood Watch to developing evacuation plans for different emergencies.

"We need to build a resilience plan that everyone feeds into, and we are doing that by gathering whānau voices and through a survey, with the final plan expected to be completed by the end of February."

George's working history includes working in nine Pacific countries supporting the New Zealand horticultural industry with workers. That Pacifica connection is part of Nuhaka's future resilience with the Wairoa district's growing Pacifica community and their trade

qualifications an untapped resource.

"Our plan will encompass our total community, and by engaging with at least 75% of our community, it will hold credibility."

Te Iwi o Rakaipaaka Trust general manager Johnina Symes said George is a perfect example of whānau bringing their skills home to help their community. "Nuhaka's need for resilience was identified, and through Red Cross funding, we are able to develop a localised resilience plan. Our small community has been impacted twice with our homes, our marae and our school flooding. Our community is concerned, and this work has been highlighted as urgent."



George Rarere, Community Resilience Project Manager for Nuhaka Ngāi Rakaipaaka, is working with the community to develop a bespoke resilience plan.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FUNDING AVAILABLE

Are you a homeowner who is unable to get back into your home following Cyclone Gabrielle or more recent severe weather events?

Have insurance payments run out and you are now paying for accommodation on top of mortgage/living costs?

Did you know you can apply for Temporary Accommodation Assistance, which is not income or asset tested?

To find out more please call Work and Income NZ on 0800 559 009 between 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday, or between 8am and 1pm on Saturdays.

Please note: There are different types of supports and payments available depending on your situation, so even if you think you don't qualify, the team encourage you to call to discuss supports that you may be entitled to.

To find out more visit: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/temporary-accommodation-assistance.html>

NEW BUILD AIMS HIGH

Michele Murphy and Mikey Nissen are taking no chances with their new build, which will sit 1.5 metres higher than their original Airport Road house.

Their home of 16 years was written off due to flood damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle. The hardworking couple still have a long road to recovery but aim to be in their new house early in the new year.

February 14 started as a typical day for Michele, assistant branch manager of Farmlands, and Mikey, a beekeeper for Te Kapu Apiaries.

The couple left for work just after 7am, and at that stage, there was 75mm in the rain gauge and just a few puddles in their surrounding paddocks. Within half an hour the flood waters were rising significantly and ended up flowing through their house.

Michele said she got to work and couldn't get into the building because the power was off. "So, I headed home, and in the 20 minutes that I was gone, the water had risen so quickly it was waist-deep, and rescuing the Mahia Hunt Club hounds meant swimming them out."

Mikey's story was the same. He headed to Frasertown to start his workday and could see the river raging and coming in like waves. "By the time I got back, I could only drive to the QRS corner of Kaimoana Road, and the water was waist deep."

Michele said they lost everything from their property except what was on the walls. "Water came up

through the plumbing and just filled the house. Our house is 60cm off the ground, and the water went inside and about 20cm up the walls. We had gear from the sheds and outside the house floating through the neighbouring paddocks.

"At the beginning, we didn't take in how life-changing it would be. We thought we would just have a massive clean-up, not 10 months without a home."

Michele and Mikey initially stayed with family and then in a bed and breakfast where they are grateful to have had their own space.

"Our insurance worked quickly, and within three months, we knew the house was going to be written off as the cost to repair it was more than it was insured for."

Rather than pulling the house down, their home will be relocated to a local section.

Michele and Mikey have designed their new home, which will be considerably higher off the ground and sit on the same site as their existing house.

"Everything is in motion. There is still a lot of work to be done outside, but we can't wait to be in our own home again."

Michele and Mikey are grateful for the support they have received from their families and workplaces, as well as assistance from Taskforce Green, fencing materials from the Rapid Relief Team, support from the Wairoa Mayoral and Hawke's Bay Relief funds, plus local support with silt removal and cleaning their septic tank.

"There are a lot of learnings to come out of this event, and I think we will all be more prepared for if there is a next time. It has been a tough time, especially for those people on the North Clyde side of town."



Michele Murphy and Mikey Nissen on the steps of their flooded Airport Road home which will soon be replaced with their new home.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Danie Brown-McKenzie is putting her skills to use for the Wairoa Recovery office.

Danie began an Office Administration Support role in November. Previously she had been working for Pursuit and contracting to MSD. Her role includes data entry, recording, documentation and filing.

Wairoa, born and bred, Danie had been living in Napier but moved home, along with her partner, after the cyclone.

"We wanted to be here to support whānau, and through my partner's role as a trainee builder and my position with the Recovery team, I feel that we are contributing to help our community rebuild."



BUSINESS BACK

THERE FOR THE PEOPLE - FARMLANDS WAIROA

Quick thinking and pallets of potting mix were the saviour for Farmlands Wairoa during Cyclone Gabrielle.

The store, on the corner of Mahia Ave and Bridge Street, sustained some flooding, but a prompt response by manager Jason McNabb, staff and helpers saw damage minimised.

Jason said the staff hadn't long been at work when they saw the water coming down Crarer Street and towards Farmlands. Soon after, it was in the farm supply yard.

"We closed all the doors and, using two pallets of potting mix that we had in stock, pushed the bags against every door to try to keep the water out.

"Water still slowly seeped in and reached about four inches inside the store, but we kept most of it out. From inside the store, we looked out through the windows, and the flooding was eye level, and people were outside on jetskis and boats. It was like looking into an aquarium."

With the forklift covered by water in the outside yard, the team lifted everything they could off the floor. "We had a lot of community support, the team from Pryde Contracting helped us lift stock up high, there was a real community effort.

"By the time the flood

waters started to subside, we opened our big doors, and the water just started flowing out, and we cleaned up the rest with squeegee mops that we had in store.

"All we lost was a pair of socks and a kids' shirt - because they fell off the shelf and into the water."

Jason said the immediate need was obvious and getting their business back open so they could help the community was the aim.

"People needed supplies, but we couldn't run transactions without power, so we started a ledger book and ran a trust system for four days." Jason says everyone who ticked up supplies returned and paid for their gear.

While reopening on a limited basis to support the community was a priority, it took around five days for the store to be completely cleaned up.

"Being able to open up the store so quickly was great. People needed supplies but they also needed to chat, and tell their stories, we became a bit of a hub. People were in shock and needed somewhere to go."

While Farmlands was there for the local community, it was also supportive from a national perspective. Farmlands ran a massive fundraiser where farmers and suppliers made donations, and Farmlands

also had input, with \$2.1 million raised, which was then donated through products back to affected people.

"I never expected to see a flood of this magnitude. Even when we saw the river coming down the

road, I didn't expect it would get into the building. Our staff were amazing, everyone just pulled together and worked hard to get us cleaned up and operational again. It was a massive undertaking."



Wairoa Farmlands manager Jason McNabb and staff Michele Murphy and Laura Story said after the flooding from Cyclone Gabrielle, the priority was to get the store re-opened to support the community.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please share your Cyclone Gabrielle photos and videos with us. We would also really like to hear your stories.

To get in touch please email recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz

THANKS TO THE TRADIES

Thank you to everyone who turned out for the Tradies Big Day Out earlier this month. It was great to be able to bring everyone together and celebrate those contractors, services and tradies who are working hard for our community.



Big hitters lined up on the diamond at the Tradies Big Day Out.



Feeding the big hitters were the Wairoa Recovery team, from left, Naomi Wilson, Benita Tahuri, Rupene, Amato, Michelle Tahuri-Olsen and Jase Hayes-Moeau.



SANTA AT NUHAKA

Christmas came early for the twice-relocated Nuhaka School students.

The Wairoa Recovery team reached out to the school turning up with bags of presents, a jolly ho ho ho and lunchtime feast.

The school of nearly 100 was relocated due to flooding after Cyclone Gabrielle and then moved again from their new home of the Latter-Day Saints Chapel at Nuhaka after flood waters created issues.

The school finished its end of the term based at Tāne-nui-a-Rangi Marae, with principal Raelene McFarlane saying everyone is keeping their fingers crossed for a smoother school year in 2024.



Father Christmas made a grand entrance at Nuhaka School's new base at Tāne-nui-a-Rangi Marae.



It was thumbs up from Santa, Nuhaka School Principal Ralene McFarlane and Wairoa Recovery Manager Benita Tahuri at the Nuhaka School Christmas celebration.



FLOODWATERS HIT TWICE

Flooding from Cyclone Gabrielle was bad enough, but getting hit a second time has left Nuhaka resident Rose Karangaroa frustrated.

Rose has lived at her Kaihue Street home for nearly 50 years and in that time had one minor flooding event 20 years ago.

Cyclone Gabrielle saw half a metre of water gush through her carport, deck and shed, but fortunately, not quite into her home. "In Cyclone Gabrielle, my concern was for Wairoa. Even though Nuhaka flooded, we weren't as bad as they were in town. But this second round of flooding in early November was different, it came to the point where we needed help too."

Rose had the same flooding all over again, including damaging items that had been replaced from the Cyclone Gabrielle event. A priority now is removing the underfloor insulation from her house so the floor can be checked to ensure it is not damaged or holding moisture and dampness.

In Cyclone Gabrielle, the water stayed under Rose's home for three days, and in the end, two local farmers came to the rescue using pumps to pump the water from under the house, across the road and out to the estuary. "They worked 24/7 to keep the pumps going, they were our

saviour, alongside the local digger driver who helped us out too."

The early November heavy rainfall event caused significant damage in the Whakaki, Nuhaka and Mahia areas, with 19 properties sustaining damage and receiving Rapid Building Assessment placards.

Drainage and flooding issues in the Nuhaka village prompted a community meeting arranged by the Wairoa District Council and Hawke's Bay Regional Council with both authorities committed to finding

solutions.

In Rose's case, she believes the flooding was a culmination of heavy rain and bad drainage. While some drainage repair work has since been carried out, Rose says she won't be happy until she sees that much rain fall again and there is no flooding.

Rose is appreciative that the authorities responsible for the drains are hopefully listening to the local knowledge and taking a collaborative approach to improve the drainage in the village.



Rose Karangaroa and daughter Roz outside their Nuhaka home which has flooded twice this year.

Q AND A WITH BENITA

WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE WAIROA'S RECOVERY MANAGER?

I wanted to be an integral part of the solution, help, and use my skills and experience to support recovery.

Generally, I am a positive, outgoing, and passionate person who believes in the power of collaboration and working together to reach a positive outcome. I am also a passionate advocate for equity and families accessing resourcing when available.

Growing up and being of this land, Wairoa, I understand the difficulties we face here in general – and that is not even after a huge cyclone. That meant I could add value to the recovery effort for our directly impacted families. So, my decision to accept the role of recovery manager was an easy one. However, the role has been challenging, far harder and more draining than I imagined. It has been the hardest work gig I have been involved with in my lifetime.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR WAIROA DUE TO CYCLONE GABRIELLE?

The most significant challenge in Wairoa is the substantial need for funding to aid the rebuilding process. This is particularly critical for uninsured or underinsured families, which, due to rising costs and our town's isolation from major cities, unfortunately, represent a large portion of our community. The cyclone and flooding impacted individual families and also the availability of services. Many services that were once pillars of our community are no longer operational and some have closed permanently. This loss has further strained an already struggling community, making our work even more essential. There is now no such thing as BAU - Business as Usual. That went out the door along with the receding flood waters. We have to understand that the only mindset we need is how to move towards a new Business as Usual - one where recovery is central to that planning and implementation.

WHAT ARE THE BEST THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN FROM CYCLONE GABRIELLE?

The smiles, the spark of hope and the absolute inner strength and resilience of our whānau here. Each one of you is my inspiration.

WHAT ARE YOUR THREE TOP TIPS FOR WHĀNAU TRYING TO RECOVER AND REBUILD?

1. It's important to understand that everything takes longer than you expect or want it to. Recovery and rebuilding are complex processes that involve numerous factors and stakeholders. Patience and perseverance are key.
2. Remember that you are not alone. It can feel isolating during such hard times, but people and organisations are ready to support and work alongside you.
3. It's never too late to seek help. If you haven't reached out to us yet, please do so. We're here to support you, help you navigate the available services and resources, and advocate for your needs. Our goal is to ensure that every member of our community gets the support they require to rebuild and recover.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST RECOVERY SUCCESS SO FAR?

Success is one of the more difficult things to measure in a huge recovery such as this. There have been successes along the way, but it can be difficult when you are in it every day and deal mostly with issues and problems with the hope of people riding on your shoulders. Some of the positives have been:

- When we support someone getting hot water back into their homes
- Getting the water turned on.
- Connecting whānau to local support services
- Supporting the process of getting temporary accommodation
- Sharing a hug
- Sharing information that leads to whānau accessing further support
- Seeing a smile



The longer our community takes to rebuild, the more detrimental the impact on our entire community, economically, socially, and in all ways. Wairoa has never experienced this scale of devastation, and we are still being hammered with subsequent rain events, adding to the growing list of impacted whānau and homes. We are in this together. Whether you know it or not, our entire community is impacted or will be in different ways. The struggle is real at all levels.

HOW CAN WAIROA BE MORE RESILIENT FOR THE FUTURE?

Firstly, we need to plan and prepare as individuals and whānau to create a plan for future events. Store enough food and water for a week because we do not know what is around the corner. Education is key; be aware of what is happening in our community, show up and support events being hosted, and generally connect more in our town.

Finally, let's support each other, harder and longer. This is a marathon event - there is no escaping the ongoing and future impacts of events like this. Be kind and be gentle, be the best version of yourself always, relationships are the key to everything. People are the key, and the relationships we create during the recovery from this disastrous event will be lifelong. My final thought is to get over disappointments as fast as possible because they will come in thick and fast.

We will get there, but please remember

1. It always takes longer
2. You are not alone
3. It is not too late to reach out for help, please do.

TE REINGA BRIDGE GETTING CLOSER

Despite massive delays caused by heavy rainfall events, the temporary repair of the Te Reinga Bridge is drawing closer.

Currently, the completion date remains early 2024, after heavy rainfall at the end of November delayed site works and caused a five-day delay to the construction programme.

It is anticipated that the piles will be fully installed, and the working platform will be removed from the waterway by Christmas.

Progress on the Ruakituri side has been consistent, with crews constructing a gabion wall abutment similar to the Te Reinga side. This will facilitate the construction of approach works behind it, allowing access to the staging bridge from this side. The installation of the superstructure on the Ruakituri side is scheduled to take place after the completion of the gabion abutment in the New Year.

Contractors are currently developing the Bailey Bridge launching plan, incorporating local resources wherever appropriate.



WAIROA RECOVERY

TE WAIROA KA ORA TE WERO TE TAKI
STRENGTH x UNITY x RESILIENCE

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US

- Online form via WDC website: www.wairoadc.govt.nz/contact-us/customer-service-request
- Call free 0508 YROA4U or 0508 976248
- Email recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz
- In-person at the Recovery Team Office at the Wairoa Airport (end of Airport Road) our office hours are Monday to Friday 10am-2pm.
- Recovery Website www.wairoarecovery.co.nz

You can also pop into the WYAT office on Marine Parade for support and funding assistance with: Mayoral Relief Funding, HBRC Disaster Funding (residential), Pātaka forms, Red Cross Funding



WAIROA RECOVERY

Disclaimer: The Wairoa Recovery team has made every effort to ensure that this information is as up-to-date and accurate as possible. We acknowledge this is a rapidly changing environment and the information provided should be used for general purposes only. We encourage people to seek additional information before making any business, legal or other decisions. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us at recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz.