

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

Wairoa has certainly been filled with Christmas spirit with the town lit up and last weekend's Christmas parade and festival a huge hit.

Thank you to everyone who organised the events, took part, and also to those who attended and supported the activities.

2018 has been a busy year with some massive highlights.

For us, the big win has been the coalition government's focus on the regions, particularly places like Wairoa that had never appeared to be on the Government's priority list.

I have always believed Wairoa

needs to push itself forward as no one else will do that for us. It is great to now see our district being recognised.

Our team is working on developing Wairoa's Provincial Growth Fund business case applications thanks to the \$250,000 capability funding boost we received.

Business cases that have been identified include the sealing of SH 38 and improvements on SH 2, both in conjunction with NZTA, development of a railhead in conjunction with the Napier Port, economic potential of unproductive land, bridge strengthening, rural roads, and business support services within Wairoa.

Investments related to the fund have included \$5 million to reinstate the Wairoa-Napier rail line, Lake Whakaki restoration plans benefitting with a funding investment of \$200,000 for the Whakaki catchment to look at plantings around Lake Whakaki, cultural and economic assessments of Whakaki catchment land, and \$150,000 awarded to the Wairoa Community Partnerships Group to launch its Jobshop initiative which aims to energise young people into employment.

Re-opening the Wairoa to Napier rail line is already having positive spin-offs through the creation of a rail hub in Wairoa.

WE ARE A DISTRICT OF HUGE POTENTIAL, AND THE PROVINCIAL GROWTH FUND HAS BEEN A CATALYST FOR STARTING CONVERSATIONS.

It's great to hear the enthusiasm of our community as we look at what could be possible.

We welcome anybody who has a business case to put forward to the Provincial Growth Fund to come and talk to us. This needs to be a community-led journey. Council is working with a selection of Government agencies, and it is important we put forward as many opportunities as possible.

Other significant achievements over the year have included the progress of Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa, and also our other iwi groups, Ngāti Pāhauwera and Ngā Tūhoe which, having reached their settlements, are consolidating their futures.

Also, best of luck to the Ngāti Ruapani group which is trying to seek a mandate from the Government's Office of Treaty Settlements.

Last month Rocket Lab put our district further on the map by putting its first commercial rocket into orbit with all six payloads deployed.

The next launch window will be from 13th - 21st December 2018.

Improving Wairoa's connectivity has been a big part of 2018 with the fibre rollout nearly complete and the Rural Connectivity Group establishing 11 new sites to improve broadband and mobile infrastructure in some of Wairoa's most isolated areas. I have personally canvassed very hard to see our connectivity improved as I believe everyone in New Zealand is entitled to the same level of connectivity.

This month the wastewater discharge consent application was lodged with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council. The application seeks to replace the existing consent for the discharge to the river with a series of milestones over the next 30 years that transition to an irrigation system. The ultimate goal is to stop discharging to the river, but this will take a lot of time and investment. Our application includes future proofing our asset, so we can provide the best service possible for generations to come.

Our Vision for the next 10 years is around improving our environment, sustainability, pride and community. Looking towards 2019 we will continue to focus on growing our population, transforming our district, and delivering a world-class service.

Economic development remains a key priority while maintaining our levels of core services and infrastructure to provide a foundation for strong and resilient communities. I would also like to thank and acknowledge our councillors. This year has also

AS A COUNCIL, WE HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT SOMETIMES ARE HARD BUT WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THIS COUNCIL IS THEY ARE WILLING TO STAND BY THOSE DECISIONS.

seen a Council staff reorganisation with the new structure focused on being more responsive to the community and delivering our services as efficiently as possible. We are living in a very fast-paced world, and nothing seems to stand still for long. It is important we are prepared and ready to meet the challenges as we know any change in legislation is always just one step away, and change can bring about huge costs, just look at the impact of the Havelock North water inquiry.

Our Council staff are a great bunch who want the best for their district and, I would like to acknowledge their work over the past year and thank everyone for their efforts.

This is my final column for the year, so I will close by wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2019.

Take care, be safe and look after your whānau.



FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 December: 12.30pm



CONTACT US

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HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS

WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL

21st Dec 2018
closed (from 12pm)
24th Dec 2018 to 4th Jan 2019
closed

WAIROA I-SITE

25th Dec 2018
closed
26th Dec 2018, 1st & 2nd Jan 2019
10am-4pm
All other days
normal opening hours

WAIROA LIBRARY

24th Dec 2018 to 2nd Jan 2019
closed
3rd & 4th Jan 2019
normal opening hours

