

## MAYORAL COLUMN

### WHAKARAUORA - THE REGENERATION OF LONG WATER

On Tuesday Council adopted its Economic Development report 'Whakarauora- The regeneration of Long Water'.

This Provincial Growth Fund funded report was produced by the Giblin Group which specialises in attracting funding to help social infrastructure projects for local government.

It is a direct response to Central Government's recognition that some areas of New Zealand are challenged and that through the Provincial Growth Fund people living all over New Zealand can reach their full potential by helping build a regional economy that is sustainable, inclusive and productive.

The comprehensive document aims to provide a prioritised economic development framework to help guide sustainable growth throughout the Wairoa district over the next 10-years and beyond.

The report is about how our district can grow and become more advanced so that social and economic conditions are improved.

While it identifies some amazing potential for our district, it also contains some confronting statistics, particularly around the health of our people.

The report states that the secret to Wairoa's economy becoming healthier and sustainable, and fully harnessing its potential, is understanding the district is comprised of 10 distinct communities, each with its own identity, needs and opportunities.

It requires all of society - central and local government, business and residents - to recognise that.

I know I have always recognised we are a diverse community and one size does not fit all.

**THE REPORT STATES WAIROA'S FUTURE SUCCESS IS DEPENDENT UPON GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS, IN THEIR PLACE OF NEED. THIS REQUIRES A DEVOLVED, COMMUNITY-FOCUSED APPROACH.**

A healthier Wairoa economy is completely dependent upon our community also being healthy.

The report identified many potential game-changing means to improve Wairoa's economy over the mid to long-term, providing a fully integrated approach is consistently taken to implementing the strategy.

It also recognised Wairoa as a region of environmental excellence, biodiversity and community guardianship.

The information in the report and the Government's commitment certainly presents an opportunity for a proactive, community-led social investment to raise the standards for our people and our district.

## TE MATATINI



It was a privilege to watch Wairoa's two kapa haka groups, Te Rerenga Kōtuku and Mātangirau, compete at the national Te Matatini festival in Wellington.

**THEIR PERFORMANCES WERE FANTASTIC, AND THEY CERTAINLY REPRESENTED OUR DISTRICT, AND IN FACT THE HAWKE'S BAY REGION, WITH PRIDE.**

My wife Jan and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and it was wonderful to be made to feel so welcome and included by the performers and supporters.

You all put Wairoa on the map for the right reasons.

## TOP DAY AT THE RACES

Once again, the Wairoa race meeting at Te Kupenga track was a huge success and a great day out.

I attended on Sunday, and you could not ignore the positive vibe of enthusiasm that hummed throughout the day.

The huge support from locals and visitors was an obvious pushback to an independent review of the racing industry report which recommends shutting down 28 racecourses in New Zealand including Wairoa.

It's proposed the racecourses be closed, and the land sold, with the revenue generated by the sale going towards the renovation of other race tracks and facilities around the country.

For Wairoa, the races is a community event, and the club is self sustaining through the hard work of the committee, led by Paul Toothill, and volunteers and its farming enterprise.

**OUR COURSE IS SUSTAINABLE, IT MAKES MONEY AND THE RACES BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER WHICH OFTEN DOES NOT OCCUR TO THE SAME EXTENT AT BIGGER RACE COURSES.**

I understand a final decision on the future of the course will be made next month and I hope good sense will prevail.

## MAYORAL VISIT



Whakatane District Council Mayor Tony Bonne, pictured second left, and chief executive Steph O'Sullivan, pictured third left. They are pictured with Wairoa Mayor Craig Little (left) and Wairoa chief executive Steven May (right).

The Mayor of Whakatane, Tony Bonne, and his chief executive Steph O'Sullivan, stayed with me during a visit to Wairoa recently.

They met with councillors and staff, and it is great we can have such a strong bond with a neighbouring council.

It is interesting how many parallels Wairoa has with Whakatane despite the obvious differences.

A lot of the issues we are working through are similar to those of Whakatane, and it is always helpful to work together to try and solve these problems.

## FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 5 March: 1.30pm

### MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 March: 12.30pm

### COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 19 March: 1.30pm

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26 March: 1.30pm



### CONTACT US

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For more information or to make a submission visit [www.wairoadc.govt.nz](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz) or visit us at the Council offices.

