

MAYORAL COLUMN

BUSINESS CASES TO BOOST OUR ECONOMY

Boosting Wairoa's economy through the Coalition Government's Provincial Growth Fund is an ongoing mission.

Our Council is focussed on working with the community and government representatives to make our district the best it can be.

We are off to an excellent start for 2019 with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development, Fletcher Tabuteau, visiting Wairoa this month so he



Mayor Craig Little

could see first-hand what our community looks like and what the potentials and challenges are.

I commend Mr Tabuteau for driving the provincial route from Gisborne to Napier. It would have been easier and quicker for him to fly, but his decision gives me confidence that this coalition government really is here to help.

Mr Tabuteau took time to listen to our ideas and give us advice.

Last year the Council received a \$250,000 capability funding boost to help develop business case applications as part of the Government's regionalisation drive.

A Project Control Group has been established comprising Council chief executive Steven May, who is the group chairperson, treaty settlement entity representatives Toro Waaka and Leon Symes, Council's economic development and engagement manager Kitea Tipuna, two Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment representatives and I am also a member of the group.

We are fortunate to have had so much support from Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones, and our local MPs Meka Whaitiri and Stuart Nash, who have helped enable us to achieve the progress we have so far.

The fact Mr Tabuteau took the time to touch base and see how we are getting on demonstrates the Government has a handle on places like Wairoa and other small rural towns.

As a Council, we appreciate the support we are receiving. Putting these business cases together is a massive task, and we have to get it right.

"Wairoa has huge potential, and that is obviously being recognised. Following the Wairoa visit, I later met with the honourable Mr Tabuteau in Hawke's Bay along with representatives from other councils and they were all surprised when Mr Tabuteau started his speech with "When I was in Wairoa..." And the fact he had already visited our town.

I also encourage feedback from the people of the Wairoa district to tell us what they think we should be focussing on.

This is not just a Council initiative. Any individual or organisation can put their own application together. I do recommend anyone with an idea get support from Council as applications will be more successful if they have regional support.

The Provincial Growth Fund is about enabling infrastructure which will allow the district to grow from employment to better land use.

We are seeing people come together to talk about opportunities and chances. These conversations are not all about the fund, they are also about how we can work together and get better outcomes.

People are realising there are opportunities by working together and we are stronger together than by working in isolation.

"We know there have been investigations and studies carried out in the past and we don't want to duplicate work that has already been done. We do however want to centralise as much information and knowledge as we can."

Business cases that have already 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.

I look forward to 2019 being the year we can start getting some of these projects off the ground.



Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development, Fletcher Tabuteau, pictured fourth from right, visited Wairoa earlier this month to help progress Wairoa's Provincial Growth Fund projects. He is pictured with members of the fund's Project Control Group.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 5 February: 1.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12 February: 1.30pm

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 February: 12.30pm

FINANCE, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26 February: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

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GREAT THINGS
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HAWKE'S BAY NEW ZEALAND

Waitangi Day Festival

WED, 6TH FEB

Alexandra Park

Free Event

10am - 2pm

Food Stalls, Arts and Crafts,
Family Friendly activities

2pm - 4pm

ReoRua Presentation

5pm - 7pm

Twilight Concert

Contact Esta Wainohu for more information, if
you would like a stall or to be a part of the
concert on 06 838 3086.

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