

WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL ... IN FOCUS

30 January 2020

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

The year 2020 marks a new decade and a period of transformation for our district.

Through the Coalition Government's regional revitalisation plan, and the Provincial Growth Fund, millions of dollars are being invested to assist Wairoa to become the best it can be.

Never before has Wairoa been the focus of such a significant investment injection.

This is a gamechanger for Wairoa and the opportunities that will be generated as a result of the funding are immense.

Over the last year or so, we have seen a mixture of direct grants and loans distributed to a range of organisations, from Council and Iwi to corporate enterprises and small business owners, all of which have the same agenda - to grow our district.

Anyone can apply for Provincial Growth Fund assistance, it is not just limited to Councils, and I commend all those people who have, and are, working with the Provincial Growth Unit.

Through their vision and planning, they have presented business cases to Central Government which have been strong enough to pass muster and therefore attract investment.

The initiatives are the result of a lot of hard work from high calibre people who want to grow our district.

These initiatives are partnership solutions between the Wairoa District Council, Provincial Growth Fund, the Wairoa Community, Iwi, education providers and visionary people who want to make a difference.

Last week's \$6.1 million announcement included enhancing ratepayer owned assets, such as the revitalisation of Wairoa's main street, including the burnt-out buildings and the relocation of the i-Site and development of a tourism centre and developing the Regional Digital Hub in the library.

In announcing last week's funding, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development Fletcher Tabuteau said these projects, particularly the main street initiative, will encourage more businesses and visitors into the main town and create better employment opportunities for local people.



Transformation of the main street burned-out buildings are a significant component of a CBD revitalisation project included in last week's Central Government funding announcement. Pictured from left are Vision Projects directors Alex Powdrell and Roz Thomas, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development Fletcher Tabuteau, who announced Wairoa's \$6.1 million funding boost, Wairoa District Councillor and Economic Development Chair Denise Eaglesome-Karekare, Wairoa Mayor Craig Little and Council Chief Executive Steven May.

The main street initiative, Te Wairoa E Whanake, Rise Up and Grow Wairoa, and the library Regional Digital Hub have been developed in partnership with Council contractors Vision Projects.

This talented team had a clear direction from the Council and through their hard work have successfully sold the idea to Central Government on behalf of Council.

Last week the under-secretary acknowledged these efforts describing Wairoa as a unique community with the funding providing the ability to transform two centrally-located, under-utilised buildings by concentrating economic activity such as the

visitor centre, start-up tenants, Rocket Lab education centre and a potential showcase for local food and beverages in a prime location in the township.

Revitalising the main street has been a dream of many Wairoa councils and councillors over the years, but we have never been able to justify the spend. Now with external funding from the Coalition Government we are able to revamp our town centre with a minimal impact on our ratepayers.

For more information head to www.tewairoaewhanake.co.nz

Last week's announcement also included nearly \$1 million funding for the Wairoa Digital Employment Programme.

This programme will help whānau and the Wairoa community develop new businesses and opportunities for social and economic benefits beyond those directly involved.

The programme will be run through the Korou Digital Agency Ltd, a subsidiary of Korou Digital Trust, and comprises local residents, project manager, Andrew Hume and directors, Sheridan Beer, JJ Solomon, Zach Stark and Hinerangi Edwards.

This project is the result of the work of a group of passionate local people who are working to create employment opportunities for our rangatahi.



The Wairoa Digital Employment Programme which attracted nearly \$1 million in Government funding is discussed by, from left, member of the Korou Digital collective Kiwa Hammond, Wairoa District Councillor and Economic Development Chair Denise Eaglesome-Karekare, Wairoa Mayor Craig Little, Korou Digital Trust project manager Andrew Hume and Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development Fletcher Tabuteau.

While last week's announcement related to revitalising business, tourism and training it is on the back of the 2019 announcements when Wairoa received \$9.1 million from a Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment package of \$68.3 million for Hawke's Bay.

Last year's boost included \$5.5 million invested into the Ngati Pāhauwera Horticulture, Forestry, and Land Enhancement plan to go towards the Whenua Maori Fund to support Māori landowners.

It is great to see the Government supporting this proactive and capable iwi which is doing so much in their community which will benefit the whole district.

It also saw citrus growers Dianne Downey and Paul Hyslop, owners of The Limery, benefit from a \$355,000 loan to facilitate the expansion of their Kopu Road based orchard.

Improving Wairoa's roading network with a \$2.2 million bridge strengthening programme was also approved last year along with Quality Roding and Services (QRS) receiving \$60,000 to grow employment opportunities and enhance the organisation's capabilities.

Reinstatement of the rail line between Wairoa and Napier, with logging trains starting back last Sunday, has also been part of this regional investment and another example of this Government boosting Wairoa's economy.

We are incredibly appreciative of the confidence this coalition Government, through its Provincial Growth Fund, has shown to our district and rural communities in New Zealand.

I know there are other local projects on the go, and we look forward to more positive announcements for our district and our people.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tue, 11 February: 1.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tue, 18 February: 1.30pm

FINANCE, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tue, 3 March: 1.30pm

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Tue, 17 March: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

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KEEP SAFE AROUND THE RAILWAY TRACKS

Take special care around the railway tracks and level crossings.

Freight trains have returned to the Napier to Wairoa railway line.

Whether you're driving or on foot, please remember to look both ways for trains. Trains can come at any time, from either direction.

Always cross with care at an official crossing.

