

Unite against COVID 19



Mayor Craig Little

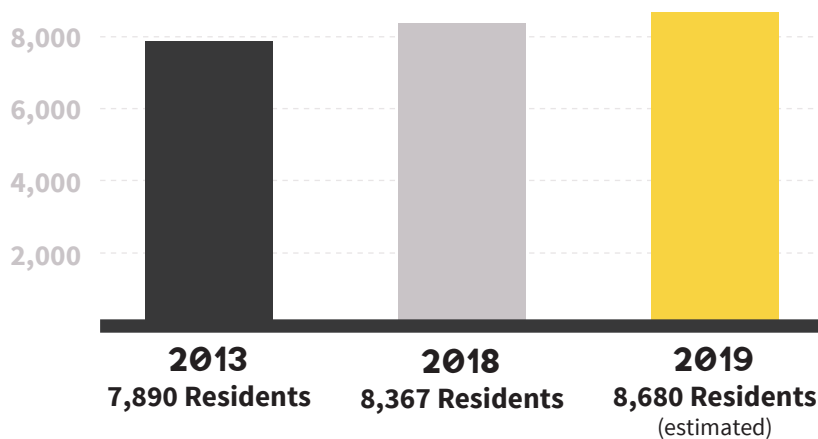
Wairoa's population is increasing

I am absolutely thrilled to finally have solid evidence to support the fact that Wairoa's population is increasing.

When I first stood for Council, more than 10-years ago, my focus was firstly to stop Wairoa's population decline and secondly to attract more people to Wairoa to increase our population.

The latest 2018 population Census data shows Wairoa's population increased by 477 (8,367) when compared to the 2013 census (7,890).

And what is even better news is the Wairoa District 'Estimated Resident Population' for 2019 is 8,680. This is an estimated increase of 790 compared to 2013, and 313 compared to 2018.



For years people told us we couldn't turn our population decline around. The predictions were that Wairoa would continue to decline but instead we have halted the decline and are now growing.

This is such positive news and I commend all those people who have helped to achieve this, particularly previous and current councillors.

More people living here is great for our economy and as we move towards post-pandemic recovery it is now more important than ever to push forward to see our population continue to grow.

I am thrilled that we are all moving in the right direction, but we all need to continue to work hard to encourage our whānau to come home and to welcome new residents into our district in order to see Wairoa's population continue to increase.

It would be great if more of our whānau returned home, to establish sustainable businesses and to help us build our local economy and support good social enterprise in Wairoa.

The 2018 Census also shows that two thirds (66.9%) of our people in Wairoa identify as Māori compared to just over half (58%) in 2013. This is not surprising given the great work being carried out by iwi and whānau.

We know we are a culturally rich community. Many of our whānau left to go to the big cities, but now more than ever, they are returning home for work life balance, to raise a family and to connect back to their papa kāinga.

This has been a whole of community effort and we need to continue the hard work to grow our population even more.

If we can carry on increasing our population, attracting additional Central Government funding, to complement the millions we have already received, and supporting our local communities and businesses then Wairoa has a strong future ahead.

COVID-19 has delivered some incredibly challenging times but it has also shown Wairoa to be a strong resilient and united community.

I knew we could do this, and I'm so proud of our whole community for coming together to work towards a common goal of growing our population and making Wairoa a great place to live.

Civil Defence

Wairoa has certainly been in safe hands during this pandemic period. I would like to acknowledge the work of our chief executive Steven May and the Council staff who have kept the council and our essential services running during this challenging time.

Also, a big thank you to Council's Community and Engagement Group Manager Kitea Tipuna who has been the main Civil Defence controller for our district over this time. Kitea has been assisted by Libby Young and Nathan Heath and other Council staff and volunteers. This group has mostly worked behind the scenes and their job has been huge. Thank you to all of you for your input.

AFFCO Lamb drive

Thank you to all the generous farmers of Wairoa who have donated lambs to our community.

Logistically it turned out to be quite a large exercise, particularly trying to arrange pickups and drop offs during Level 4 and 3 restrictions.

I am so appreciative of the meat donations and the time and organisation local people put in to make this happen.

The lambs are being processed free of charge by AFFCO Wairoa and will then be given to the Wairoa Community Welfare Food Hub for distribution.

It is fantastic to know these donations will be going to people who need it the most. It will help feed elderly people and keep them safe in their bubbles and help whānau, particularly those with large families.

I know a lot of farmers already support their communities in different ways and I thank all those who have helped others during this time of need.

Alert Level 3 remains in place

New Zealand is currently at Alert Level 3 and with the Government set to review how we are tracking and announce any further decisions on May 11.

It has been fantastic to have a couple of days of no cases, but we must remain vigilant under Alert Level 3 and keep working together and sticking to the rules.

Limiting our interactions with others is our best defence against COVID-19. Stay in your household bubbles whenever you are not at work, school, buying the groceries or exercising.

If you need advice and information, go online at www.covid19.govt.nz, and you can also call the free government helpline on **0800 779 997** (8am to 1am, seven days a week).

ANZAC Day

This year's ANZAC Day commemorations were vastly different to the past. I know hundreds of people made their tributes at 6am on April 25 and I understand it was a very moving experience to see people standing in their gateways, homes, gardens etc. This just shows the heart of our community. It was also fantastic to see the effort people went to creating tributes to those who went before us.

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