

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

RATES REVIEW

The review of the distribution of Wairoa's rates is ongoing with elected members and Council staff holding workshops to understand the complexities of rating in general, and specifically Wairoa's current rating system. This enables us to share this knowledge so we can all make informed decisions.

There is no predetermination, no decisions have been made, we have simply been collecting and analysing information.

I would like to acknowledge the courage of the elected members to go through this process. Rating is a very complex issue, and it would be easy to walk away and do nothing, but as elected members we know we need to address the complexities and legacies of our rating system.

The real information we need is from the public. It is so important you tell us what you are thinking – whether you are satisfied or not. So often we only hear from the people who are not happy, but we need feedback from those who are satisfied as well. We will be seeking feedback throughout the next month.

We will soon be putting out some structured rating proposals and that is the time that we really need to hear what you think about the implications of any changes.

The key objectives are that our rating system is simple, affordable and appropriate.

THE RATING REVIEW INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Should those with more pay more?
- Should an industry that damages Council roads or assets pay more than those who don't?
- Should everyone contribute for those struggling the most?
- Should we all pay for the benefits of water and wastewater in the general rate?
- Should we reduce the fixed rate portion of the rates?
- Should we assume that because the capital value of your property is high you have more ability to pay for your rates?

As we know our taxation system progressively targets those who have the ability to pay. The tools Local Government has do not allow us to do that. The tools in our toolbox are really blunt and we need your feedback on the options that we are going to present. Currently the only methodology we have is to rate off the capital value of the property. That assumes owners of high value properties can be expected to pay more, ie, a higher capital value will pay more in rates compared to those with a lower capital value.

This review is significant. Our rating system needs to reflect where our district is now and be future-proofed. It is also important everybody understands this is not about increasing the total amount of money collected for rates by the Council.

We are still dealing with the legacy of the amalgamation between the Wairoa Borough and County Councils. This is not a criticism of previous Councils, but we do need to keep up to date in this fast-changing world.

I note Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay and others are also conducting rates reviews which is indicative of the changing environment and the need to future proof our districts.

LABOUR LANDSLIDE

Congratulations to the Labour Party on an election landslide. We are very blessed to have the support of Labour MPs Stuart Nash and Meka Whaitiri. They have never let Wairoa down and I know their assistance for our district will continue.

Prior to the election, the Government, with its coalition partner NZ First, was doing a fantastic job of helping the regions and small rural areas like ours.

While NZ First has lost its position in Parliament the party has certainly left a huge legacy in Wairoa with millions of dollars invested in our district as a result of the Provincial Growth Fund.

We are very appreciative of this investment, and the support we have received from NZ First, and I hope the Labour Government is able to continue what has been started.

I also hope Labour can realise the damage forestry is causing to our environment and communities.

PLANTING TREES MIGHT OFFSET CARBON EMISSIONS, BUT THE AFTERMATH OF A HARVESTED FOREST DOES NOT SUPPORT A CLEAN GREEN ENVIRONMENT.

I acknowledge too that farmers need to continue to work on being environmentally sustainable, but we need to stop our farms being planted in forestry if we want Wairoa to continue to grow as a better place to live.

ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHT GIVEAWAY

A local partnership initiative is shining the light on energy efficiency with a free LED bulb giveaway.

The Wairoa District Council, The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and Wairoa New World are part of a community-based lighting project that will see Wairoa households given five free new energy efficient LED light bulbs.

The initiative means local people will save on their power bills, brighten their homes and all while looking after the environment and at no cost to each householder.

Letters with a voucher for your free LED bulbs have been sent to household occupiers and can be redeemed at New World Wairoa supermarket between tomorrow, October 23 and November 1.

All you need to do is check whether you have bayonet or screw fitting bulbs and then head to Wairoa's New World Supermarket to redeem your voucher. As soon as you install your new bulbs you will start saving money.

This giveaway is a great initiative. Thousands of households and families will benefit from this project which will mean cost savings for consumers while helping to save the environment.

LED lighting lasts for at least 10-years and each LED that replaces the older style incandescent bulb can save you between \$100-\$300 over its life.

SWITCHING TO LED LIGHTING SUPPORTS NEW ZEALAND'S CLIMATE CHANGE EFFORTS BY REDUCING ELECTRICITY USE.

An extra thank you to EECA for donating 300 LED lightbulbs to upgrade the Council flats with new energy efficient lighting. This is in addition to the main promotion and will mean a significant electricity saving for the occupiers.

This project is funded by EECA and supported by New World in Wairoa.

Wairoa - look out for this in your mailbox!
Your voucher for 5 FREE LEDs inside!

Bring in the voucher you received in the mail to redeem your 5 FREE LED bulbs from New World Wairoa, 41 Queen Street
Get in quick - only available until 1 November 2020 and while stocks last.

EECA TE TARI TIAKI PŪNGAO ENERGY EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
NEW WORLD Wairoa

FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tue, 27 October: 1.30pm

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Tue, 3 November: 1.30pm

FINANCE, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tue, 10 November: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

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RATES REVIEW STAY UP TO DATE

Would you like to be kept in the loop about the rates review?

Visit the Wairoa District Council consultations website and enter your contact details so we can add you to our database for individuals that would like to be kept up to date about the rates review process.

Alternatively you can email us to be added to the database.

www.consultations.nz
feedback@wairoadc.govt.nz

