

MAYORAL COLUMN

POPULATION GROWTH

Wairoa's estimated population (Statistics NZ subnational population estimates) as at June 30 2020 was 8960, up 1.7 % and the biggest increase in the last 20-years.

In fact, from 1996 to 2009 Wairoa's population decreased every year.

I became Mayor in 2013 and with support from elected members we focussed on not only halting Wairoa's population decline but also on growing our population.



Mayor Craig Little

We had plenty of people telling us we would never turn Wairoa's population decline around or halt the downward spiral. We were told we were dreamers for even trying.

But we have now achieved population growth and since 2014 our population has grown each year.

POPULATION GROWTH IS NOT A MAGIC BULLET, BUT IT DOES MEAN MORE PEOPLE WHICH MEANS MORE BUSINESSES, HOUSES AND EMPLOYMENT WHICH WILL ALL HELP SOFTEN FUTURE RATES INCREASES.

Measuring population is difficult. The last Census wasn't that accurate and COVID has further impacted. However, it is great to see Wairoa is growing, and not continually going backwards as many people predicted it would.

A TASTE OF WAIROA

It's great to see our local team working with Hawke's Bay Tourism to bring a five-course dining experience to Wairoa as part of the Hawke's Bay Food and Wine Classic (FAWC) event.

The inaugural Taste of Wairoa food and wine event will take place on June 26 at the Gaiety Theatre.

Local cooks and budding chefs are being called on to present their best dishes to a panel of judges.

The winners will then reproduce their successful dishes at the local event.

A Taste of Wairoa will be a great night out while also giving the local community a chance to showcase their own unique kai, dishes and secret whānau recipes.

The evening will feature a degustation menu celebrating three savoury dishes, a dessert and a petit four (a small bite-sized confectionery or savoury appetizer) with 90% of each dish needing to be made with local produce. Each meal will be paired with wine.

The dishes should ideally tell a story as to why it is the Taste of Wairoa.

Entrants vying to have their dish picked for the Taste of Wairoa event need to ensure they can replicate 100 of their dishes if they are successful.

Kitchen kings and queens have until the end of the month (March 30, 4pm) to enter with judging by a local panel taking place on April 9.

Those who are successful, will be further briefed about the June event by the organising team.

Tickets will be \$100 and limited to 100 people. Details on how to purchase your ticket will be provided at a later date.

For more information about the competition contact Rubyanne Edwards on 06 838 4648 or 027 782 3963.

LONG-TERM PLAN CONSULTATION

Council is currently preparing its Long-Term Plan Consultation document which will be presented to the community in May.

Every three-years Council develops a Long-Term Plan which describes its activities and the community outcomes it hopes to achieve over the next decade. The 2021-2031 Long-Term Plan consultation will focus on Levels of Service and what the community expects from Council. This will be your chance to tell us where you think Council should spend its money.

We want our community to have meaningful input into the 10-year vision and to help people understand what it costs to run the district, and how, by changing where the dollars are spent, that can affect the services we deliver.

There is a careful balance between Council providing the services that people want, while still being able to afford to provide them. Many of the costs we have to budget for are mandated national legislation compliance costs and reporting requirements that Council, as a responsible entity, has to adhere to.

Our consultation will take a Levels of Service scenario-based approach by showing different models where members of the community can choose whether to spend more, the same or less on a service, and how that decision impacts on cost, rates and the level of risk.

We encourage people to take part in this process so that together we can all help our district to be the best it can be.

CONSULTATION WILL INCLUDE COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SUBMISSIONS.

EROSION OF SERVICES

It is disappointing to now have confirmation that Wairoa will have no local bank branches.

I acknowledge the changes to the banking environment but having no local bank in Wairoa is a disaster for a large chunk of our already vulnerable population.

Council, iwi and other community leaders have worked with Westpac and BNZ to try and keep at least one branch open but disappointingly they had a pre-determined mindset. Even having one of the banks staffing a Wairoa branch for a couple of days a week would be an option.

Surely if one bank chose to keep its Wairoa branch open it would thrive? I believe we would see what happened during the post-COVID Tautoko Shop Local Wairoa campaign, where our local people dug deep and supported the people and businesses who support them.

While a lot of banking can be completed electronically and over the phone, Wairoa is one of the least digitally connected communities in the country. Many of our community cannot afford devices to use for electronic banking, or as in many parts of our district, have unreliable and costly internet connection

Our district is vast, and we are at least one and half hours travel away from the nearest branch, further for those on the boundary of our district.

A trip to the closest Gisborne, Napier or Hastings branches is effectively a whole day. That means taking a day off work and having a reliable roadworthy vehicle that will make the 200km minimum return trip. Not to mention the cost of petrol for a simple trip to the bank.

Banking is not just about financial services. People pay bills at the bank and for many there is a social aspect of just getting out of their homes.

It is disappointing banks are only about the profit lines and that we are being manipulated into a cashless society.

It is very sad when figures and profits are prioritised over community wellbeing.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

YOUTH COUNCIL

Mon, 29 March: 3.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tue, 30 March: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

Wairoa District Council
Queen St, Wairoa
info@wairoadc.govt.nz
(06) 838 7309



**A TASTE OF WAIROA,
COMING TO TOWN ON JUNE 26.**

