

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

SUBMIT TO HAWKE'S BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL'S LONG-TERM PLAN

I encourage everyone, particularly farmers, to make a submission to the Hawke's Bay Regional Council Long-Term plan.

This is your chance to strengthen the Hawke's Bay Regional Council's focus on the Wairoa community by sending strong signals about what we expect and how we picture our community in the future.

It is concerning that our regional council does not seem to have the same community aspirations as the Wairoa District Council does for the future of our district.

Central Government isn't helping us to stop our Wairoa farms going into forestry and we are now seeing the Hawke's Bay Regional Council advocating tree planting in Wairoa through Chief Executive James Palmer's comments, "There are significant areas of land in Wairoa district that will in time need to go to permanent forest cover."

Based on Mr Palmer's comments it appears he wants Wairoa to become the carbon-sink for the rest of Hawke's Bay.

In Wairoa, significant areas of land are already planted in forestry, DoC/native reserves, or planted by the farm owners. We cannot afford to have more of our viable hill country farms planted in trees.

We support what the regional council is trying to achieve from an environmental perspective, but the Wairoa district cannot be the sacrificial lamb to support carbon credits for the rest of the region.

The regional council has to get out of the mindset that the majority of Wairoa farms are unproductive and slipping into waterways. There are generations of successful farmers in Wairoa, this is their livelihoods and their land.

Just because a farm is hilly or has steep faces does not mean it's unproductive.

Forestry does kill small towns and it does not invest in them. This is demonstrated by the hundreds of trucks and rail carriages full of logs that leave our district every week. There may be people clipping the ticket from forestry, but it is not Wairoa.

Of course, there are some erosion prone sites in Wairoa that need to be planted, but most land can be managed by careful plantings, such as riparian, to prevent soil loss while also being farmed to provide food and employment.

It's about the right tree in the right place, not blanket planting of significant areas.

WE NEED TO CHANGE THIS MINDSET AND STOP THE PROPAGANDA SPREADING.

Forestry causes massive environmental destruction involving erosion and slash or damage to the eco-systems and soil caused through forestry and harvesting.

Everyone talks up forestry as being clean and green, but they forget what happens after harvesting when the remains are brown and dead. We just need to look at the massive disasters caused by forestry slash and silt in our waterways.

I have urged the regional council to start focussing on what damage forestry does to the environment, from planting when entire native bush areas are sprayed out, to harvesting when eco systems are alienated and topsoils removed.

What happens to the soil after each rotation of forestry when the goodness has been sucked out of the ground and the trees are taken away? especially after the third or fourth rotation. Is there any research into what that impact on the environment is?

Carbon revenue is also a very short-sighted approach. What happens after these blanket planted carbon forests have absorbed all their carbon and the landowner no longer receives carbon credits? This land will then become a liability to the landowner, will this mean no rates will be derived from this unproductive land for the Hawke's Bay Regional Council or the Wairoa District Council?

It is also ironic that the regional council is quite happy to predict the demise of Wairoa yet cannot see the importance of developing a regional park for our people – this has been on the agenda for many years, the regional council even committed to drawing up a plan, yet the park has still not happened.

It has now been put off until Year 5 and beyond of the regional council's Long-Term Plan, and only tagged with a fraction of the investment that was first talked about.

Hawke's Bay has six regional parks, four within close proximity of each other and easy access for Napier/Hastings people, Central Hawke's Bay has the Peka Peka Reserve just 20 minutes away and is closer in distance to the centralised regional parks. Isn't it ironic another regional park is now being talked about for Ahuriri and yet Wairoa still waits?

Surely a regional park would have huge benefits for our awa, the environment and the world we live in today.

I have invited the regional council chairman Rex Graham and elected members to come to Wairoa and spend several days getting to know our community. It is time to stop treating Wairoa separately from the rest of Hawke's Bay and instead treat us equally.

I urge you all to make a submission to the Hawke's Bay Regional Council's Long-Term Plan to ensure Wairoa's voice is heard.

FAWC

DON'T FORGET TO MARK THE JUNE 26 INAUGURAL TASTE OF WAIROA EVENT ON YOUR CALENDARS

The Wairoa District Council and Hawke's Bay Tourism are pairing up to bring a five-course dining experience to Wairoa as part of the Hawke's Bay Food and Wine Classic (FAWC) event.

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

A Taste of Wairoa promises to 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 event will take place at the Gaiety Theatre. Tickets will be \$100 and limited to 100 people. Details on how to purchase your ticket will be provided at a later date.

ANZAC DAY

This Sunday our ANZAC Day commemorations and services will once again take place.

Last year, due to lockdown, people stood by their front gates and made their solitary tributes.

I hope this year as many people as possible will attend the local events to officially acknowledge our veterans and service personnel.

A Dawn Service will be held at Kaiuku Marae, Mahia on the Mahia East Coast Road at 5.30am.

In town 9.30am services will be held at Taihoa Marae on State Highway 2 and at Frasertown in Carroll Street.

The Wairoa Civic Service will be held at the Wairoa War Memorial and hall at 11am.



FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tue, 4 May: 1.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tue, 11 May: 1.30pm

YOUTH COUNCIL

Mon, 17 May: 3.30pm



CONTACT US

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