

MAYORAL COLUMN

ALERT LEVEL 2

After weeks of COVID-19 Alert Level 4 and 3 lockdowns it is great to be returning to new sense of normality.

Wairoa, along with the rest of the country, excluding Auckland, moved into Alert Level 2 from midnight on Tuesday.

At Alert Level 2 there are no restrictions on who can be included in your household bubble, all businesses and services can open, people can go to work, and schools reopened today.

using essential workers who live in Wairoa and care about our community because they are part of it.

The Government's proposal of taking Three Waters delivery away from local Councils and into the control of new entities is a significant change to the way drinking water, stormwater and wastewater services are delivered in New Zealand. Their proposal centralises water services into four entities. Wairoa would be part of Entity C, which includes a population of one million and 21 local councils and stretches from the East Coast to the top of the South Island.

The Three Waters Reform proposal has serious ramifications for small communities like Wairoa. We are told we will be better off, but the figures that are being used and supplied by Central Government simply do not stack up.

Wairoa's stance is that we would prefer status quo with additional external funding, but we don't believe the government will agree to this simple fix. Therefore, we are working with the rest of Hawke's Bay to see if we can develop a regional approach as we cannot see Wairoa benefitting from the government's proposal. We have joined the other four Hawke's Bay Councils to review the analysis and modelling behind the Government's proposal to transfer the delivery of Three Waters from Councils to four multi-regional entities.

THERE ARE A LOT OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL.

I accept we need to keep future Three Waters costs affordable for households, but I struggle to understand the logic behind the figures the Government is presenting, and I simply can't see how the proposal will make Wairoa people better off.

The Government has not given us a lot of time for feedback and recent COVID lockdowns has made this work even more challenging, but it is still so important our community and iwi voices are heard.

We are relying on people writing their thoughts and emailing them to feedback@wairoadc.govt.nz, post to Wairoa District Council, P O Box 54, Wairoa, attention Three Waters feedback or drop a letter off at the Council offices.

For more information head to Council's website www.wairoadc.govt.nz

HAWKE'S BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL CHANGED BOUNDARY PROPOSALS

The Hawke's Bay Regional Council has adopted an initial proposal to change the constitutional representation of Māori in the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and some general ward boundaries.

While further consultation will follow, it is really important tangata whenua and all Wairoa people are aware of these proposed changes and that you have your say.

Under the proposal, and if there are no amendments, the Hawke's Bay Regional Council will consist of 11 councillors – nine general and two new Māori constituency councillors with approximately 12,500 to 15,000 voters in each of the proposed Māori wards.

Importantly, this proposal also includes boundary changes to the existing Wairoa general constituency. The proposal is to extend south to include the Esk Valley in order to increase the general electorate population.

We are told this will allow for a better balance of constituent numbers, but my concern is it could dilute Wairoa's voice.

I recognise it is a balancing act trying to achieve equitable representation while still representing individual communities of interest, but I do not want to see Wairoa's voice lessened by these changes.

Māori wards were designed to enhance community voice, but in Wairoa's case, because of the boundary extension in the Wairoa general constituency, this proposal could actually lessen Wairoa's voice.

I would not want to see the voice of Wairoa people diminished.

Wairoa in itself is a community of interest and making the electorate even larger will make it unwieldy and less representative of Wairoa.

MAYOR'S TASKFORCE FOR JOBS

It is great to see 12 of our young people taking up employment with the Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa horticultural hub.

The Wairoa Young Achievers Trust, which holds the Mayor's Task force for Jobs contract, was able to secure fulltime positions for these 15-19-year-olds and through the fund offer financial assistance.

The horticultural hub is a collaborative venture supported by a Provincial Growth Fund grant and loan to develop a trial orchard, engage landowners to diversify into horticulture and develop an integrated skills and training programme.

Each cadet has the opportunity to gain level 2-6 horticulture qualifications. The cadets all whakapapa, in some way, to the to the land they will be working on, which provides a true connection to their mahi.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tue, 14 September: 1.30pm

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thurs, 16 September: 1.30pm

YOUTH COUNCIL

Mon, 20 September: 3.30pm

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Tue, 21 September: 1.30pm

Under Level 2 all meetings will be held in the War Memorial Hall to allow for social distancing requirements.



CONTACT US

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

MEET THE MAYOR

If you would like to have a meeting with the Mayor, call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to arrange a meeting time. He is available to meet with people on Wednesdays.



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Mayor Craig Little

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Wairoa District Council staff who were involved in Wairoa's Emergency Operations Centre. This group was stood up and monitored the developing COVID-19 situation with a local crew of Council staff on standby ready to step up if and when needed. It was reassuring to know our team was there monitoring the situation and advising and assisting where needed.

Last year, when New Zealand went into Level 4 lockdown, the government declared a Civil Defence Emergency. This time around was different with no State of Emergency declared. The response was managed under the provisions of COVID-19 Public Health Legislation with the Ministry of Health the lead agency.

Thank you too to our Council staff and contractors who continued to provide essential services during the lockdowns. Rubbish collection, three water service delivery and other Council related services kept on ticking thanks to a top team of essential workers.

Also, a big shout out to essential workers in the health sector, emergency services, supermarket staff and other essential staff. We really appreciate you going the extra mile.

Under Level 2, Wairoa District Council's offices and town facilities such as the Library, Gaiety Theatre, Museum and Community Centre will be open. However, masks must be worn in these types of indoor facilities and gatherings are limited to 50 people in an indoor space (25 at the library) and 100 people in an outdoor space. This includes cafes, bars and restaurants, events and entertainment, meeting friends and whānau, faith-based gatherings, funerals and tangihanga.

Everyone is encouraged to wear a face mask. This is a legal requirement if visiting an aged care or health facility, business and retail stores - particularly those providing close contact services, cafes, restaurants and bars, public areas and public transport.

I would also like to encourage you all to shop locally. Many of our town's businesspeople provided essential services during the lockdown levels. I am really impressed with those businesses and service providers who went the extra mile to ensure our Wairoa community was looked after.

AS WE HEAD INTO LEVEL 2, I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO TAUTOKO WAIROA, SUPPORT THOSE BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORTED US BY SHOPPING AND BUYING LOCALLY.

Please stay safe. Wear a mask, follow social distancing requirements, remember it is mandatory to keep records and scan places you visit for contact tracing purposes.

If you are unwell call the COVID Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

COMMUNITY VIEWS WANTED

Central Government's Three Waters Reform proposes radical change, and it is important we hear from our community.

This latest COVID-19 outbreak has put a lot of pressure on our country - but we must not lose sight of the Three Waters Reform proposal.

In fact, under Alert Levels 4 and 3 it showed us just how vital it is to have our drinking water, storm water and wastewater managed by the Council which maintained the services with no interruptions