

MAYORAL COLUMN

NEW BUILDS INSPIRATIONAL

Local builder Poll MacDonald is part way through building the first of eight new houses in town.

Poll is a true inspiration and a great example of someone who has just got stuck in and got on with the job.

Her aim is to improve the quality and availability of houses in Wairoa with the new builds in Apatu and McLean Streets the perfect way to achieve this.



Mayor Craig Little

The design plans are spectacular and go above and beyond standard requirements and will be a housing game changer for our town.

Poll is an incredible lady and has proven what can be achieved if you work hard. She travels from Tutira every day and has used local contractors for the work.

She is motivated by offering the people of Wairoa the chance to live in new warm homes.

Poll said she was never really into school and instead went building. She is an inspiration to our younger generation, particularly those who have been taking up trades as part of training and employment programmes, including the Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs, that are operating in town.

This builder is amazing. She told me she came to Wairoa, had lunch at Whakamahia and fell in love with our town, like so many people do. It is great to see people working hard and achieving and acknowledging what a great area we live in.

We know there is a shortage of homes in Wairoa and a local Housing Working Group of iwi, community and local government representatives has been working to develop solutions.

Housing demand is outpacing supply. Wairoa is 150 homes short now but with the expected population growth, we will have an estimated shortage of around 500 homes over the next 10 years.

There are also a series of plans for other subdivisions and new builds which makes it a very exciting time for our town.

Our population is growing and is currently around 9000 people. More homes mean more opportunities for our local whānau and also for whānau who want to come home or move to the district.

HOUSING MARKET

We have seen a significant increase in Wairoa house prices over the last few years. House prices in Wairoa grew at the fastest rate in New Zealand during 2020 with a whopping 63.5 percent increase in median prices.

Analysis by Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) showed median house prices in Wairoa leapt from \$165,000 in 2019 to \$269,750 in 2020.

Last year, Wairoa was the only district in the country that saw median prices increase more than 40 percent.

It will be very interesting to see the updated valuation of our district's properties with the revaluation scheduled for completion later this month and the new values posted to ratepayers in early November.

THE STRONG PROPERTY MARKET INDICATES SIGNIFICANT VALUE INCREASES ARE PREDICTED FOR THE NEW VALUATIONS.

Increasing sale prices and valuations do make it hard for people, particularly our younger generation, to get on the property ladder. However, the flip side is the value of houses going up giving people more equity in their investment which creates additional opportunities.

From a Council perspective, there has been a 37% increase of building consent applications over the past six months. From April 1-Sept 30, 2021, 85 consents have been lodged compared with 62

for the previous six-month period. A total of 103 consents have been processed over the 2021 year to date.

The total dollar value of our building work has increased from \$16.8m in 2020 to \$23.53 million in 2021. This increase is partly attributable to two high-value consents – the Affco boning room upgrade and New World Supermarket.

There is also a noticeable increase of relocatable building consents, with new prefabricated buildings being transported into the district and an increase of septic work designs on empty sections in anticipation of further development of new dwellings.

OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STATUTORY DAYS TO PROCESS A CONSENT HAS BEEN NINE DAYS WHICH IS A FANTASTIC EFFORT FROM OUR REGULATORY TEAM. THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STATUTORY DAYS TO PROCESS A CONSENT TO DATE FOR 2021 IS 10.2 WORKING DAYS.

Once a consent is lodged with Council, the processing clock is activated, and staff have 20 statutory days to issue the consent. This doesn't mean every consent will be granted in 20 days. If the building team has questions about the application, the processing clock stops until the query is answered, and restarts when the acceptable information is provided.

Our team works really hard to deal with every consent in the most efficient manner. Contributing factors to a quick turnaround include open dialogue and good communication with pre-lodgement meetings ensuring lodged consents have all the necessary information requiring less follow up for additional information which contributes to avoiding delays.

It is important to remember our Council team do not make the rules. These are government requirements, and the onus is on Council to ensure compliance. It's really encouraging to hear people in our community speaking highly about the service our regulatory team provide.

Congratulations to Planning and Regulatory Services Group Manager Simon Mutohori and his team for their hard work to ensure the procedures are in place to make the consent process as efficient as possible.

HAWKE'S BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL CHANGED BOUNDARY PROPOSALS

Council has now lodged its submission against the Hawke's Bay Regional Council proposal to change the constitutional representation of Māori in the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and a change to the Wairoa general ward boundary.

Under the proposal, 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 a boundary change to the existing Wairoa general constituency. The proposal is to extend south to include Tutira/Esk Valley in order to increase the general Wairoa electorate population.

While we are in favour of Māori wards from a representation perspective, we are against the proposed boundary extension which will lessen Wairoa's voice - ironic considering Māori wards were designed to enhance community voice.

Making the Wairoa electorate even larger, and taking in the Tutira/Esk Valley areas, which does not align at all with Wairoa, will simply dilute our voice and diminish our representation.

Wairoa in itself is a community of interest. Our needs and demographics are unique and very different to the rest of Hawke's Bay and as such we need bespoke representation.

Our community and its uniqueness must not just be thrown into another area to make the numbers work. We know legislatively that population is the driver, but the Wairoa district makes up 29% of Hawkes Bay's total land mass with Wairoa comprising 4,118 km² and the total Hawke's Bay land mass 14,111 km². Surely this must be taken into account.

Representation should not be driven by populations, ratios and percentage differences from the average. The notion that it gets

closer to the +/- 10% is laughable. Even before the proposed change the differential was well below this threshold in recognition of Wairoa's community of interest.

The Wairoa district has the biggest water catchment in the region. Based on land mass and waterways Wairoa should have more representation than we even have now, rather than proposing to reduce our voice even more.

Watering down Wairoa's voice may be an unintended consequence of the proposed boundary changes, but it will most certainly reduce and compromise the opportunity for Wairoa people to be able to make their vote count with a council that is meant to be representative of the entire region.

Wairoa must not be punished for comprising of a large area and small population. It is up to the regional council to manage the boundaries to ensure our isolated, but very much part of Hawke's Bay, community of interest is protected.

Submissions to this proposal have closed but if you have any concerns, or would like more information about this important proposal, I suggest you contact our Wairoa Hawke's Bay Regional Council representative Charlie Lambert.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tues, 19 October: 1.30pm

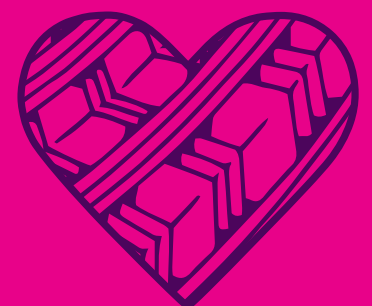
Under Level 2 all meetings will be held by video conference, the link will be available on Council's website.



CONTACT US

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TAUTOKO WAIROA



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