

MAYORAL COLUMN

STAY SAFE WHĀNAU

The COVID pandemic has certainly made it a year of challenges, and unfortunately, I imagine we still have some difficult times ahead. To all those people who have helped keep our district safe and functioning - I extend a very sincere thank you. A particular thank you to the Taiwhenua, Kahungunu Executive and the Queen Street Practice for their COVID related roles.

Also, a big thank you to all our Council staff, led by chief executive Kitea Tipuna. You have all played a part in keeping our district ticking during lockdowns and Alert Level and Traffic Light restrictions, your extra efforts are appreciated.

My key message to everyone is please stay safe, follow the government's COVID guidelines and look after yourselves and each other.



Mayor Craig Little

Vaccination is the best defence we have against COVID and in keeping our district safe.

It is also important people have, and are, preparing their homes for when COVID arrives and have a plan on how they will take care of whānau who become sick.

Be prepared now with stores of fruit and veges, fluids, and baby, pet or other specialised needs, hygiene products and medical and cleaning supplies.

Regularly wash your hands, sanitise, wear your mask, use the tracer app and follow the social distancing guidelines.

It is also important people source their information from reliable and genuine sources. There is a lot of misinformation being spread and I urge everyone to do their research and ensure their information is accurate.

We know we will have a lot of visitors to our beautiful district over the summer and it is important we protect them and of course protect our local communities.

Wairoa is remote, and we have many vulnerable people and limited health resources to support them. Our nearest ICU is two hours away and we have no ventilators, so it is important to keep our whānau safe.

I wish you all a very Meri Kirihimete and all the best for a prosperous 2022 - but above all please stay safe and be kind.

THREE WATERS

Last week I went to Wellington as part of a group of Mayors who represent more than a million New Zealanders. We took our Three Waters concerns to Parliament marking the first step of a powerful new local democracy campaign.

Communities 4 Local Democracy - He hapori mō te Manapori is a newly formed and growing group of Councils, that was created in response to serious concerns about the Government's Three Waters reforms, in particular losing control of approximately \$60 billion of community owned assets across the whole country.

Like the Government, we want to ensure all New Zealanders have access to safe drinking water and we are committed to working with the Government to achieve that. Noone disputes the need for investment, but there's a better way to achieve the Government's objectives and we want to work in partnership with them on that.

Our action group will introduce fresh ideas for better water that will ensure our local communities continue to have a say on how the assets that they have bought and paid for are used to achieve our health and environmental goals.

We don't believe the best solution is losing our assets and transferring them into what will be four of the largest companies in New Zealand - and then denying our communities their say in how those companies are run.

Communities 4 Local Democracy is taking a constructive approach to the situation by commissioning expert advice on alternative models that might achieve the objectives of Government and local communities. It will be sharing its findings when they are complete.

This group of Councils is not anti-Government or anti-change. It is about sensibility and finding the best solutions for our legacy of issues.

The government's decision does not reflect the concerns of communities and councils and the Three Waters Reform takes away local voice and local ownership.

Wairoa's elected members have heard feedback from our communities and are united in their opposition to the government's decision to legislate to mandate local councils to hand over their drinking water, wastewater and storm water assets to four new multi-regional entities.



MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

From His Worship the Mayor, elected members and staff

THOUGHTS FROM MORE OF OUR ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S THREE WATERS REFORM:

Hine Flood: The government's decision to go ahead with its proposal to reform three waters comes as a huge blow to our community and we need to continue to act cautiously. There needs to be change, but the promises by this current Labour dominated government leaves much to chance over the next 30 years, including the ownership of our assets. What assurance will Wairoa have to timely access and service provision? What are the guarantees around local employment relative to current, emergent and appropriately resourced delivery? Asset ownership, local democracy and voice are huge worries for Wairoa, and let's not forget the debt we will inherit by being forced to become part of Entity C. Our elected members, Chief Executive and staff, will go over and above the call of duty to protect and preserve the services our community expects. There is still much work to be done and a newly appointed committee has been established to now work with Councils and Iwi/Māori for the next phase of this government's 'desired' three waters reform portfolio. This next stage needs you, our community to engage to help provide proactive solutions to the inevitable change we are facing.

Melissa Kaimoana: I worry Wairoa will in large lose its voice. To date central government has moved without meaningful consultation with our communities and our Councils which own and manage these three water assets. I am concerned the priorities identified by Wairoa will not be prioritised in future planning. I find it very distasteful that Wairoa's assets will be used as leverage for other communities.

HOLIDAY HOURS

Council Office and Library hours: Council offices closed from midday Friday, December 24 and reopening Monday, January 10 2021. Library closed from Saturday, December 25, reopening from 10am Monday, January 10.

Community Centre: Closed from Saturday, December 25 and re-opening Wednesday, January 5 from 8am-5pm to the public and 6am to 9pm for members.

Information Centre: Closed December 25.

Open 10am-4pm: Sunday, December 26; Monday, December 27; Tuesday, December 28.

Open 8.30am-4.30pm: Wednesday, December 29; Thursday, December 30; Friday, December 31.

Open 10am-4pm: Saturday, January 1, 2022; Sunday, January 2; Monday, January 3; Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

Gaiety Theatre

Movies will be screened at the Gaiety Theatre over the Christmas and New Year period. Please head to www.facebook.com/Thegaietytheatre/ for the movie schedule.

Wairoa Refuse and Recycling Centre

Open 8am-5pm: Thursday, December 23; Tuesday, December 28; Thursday, December 30; Tuesday, January 4, 2022; Thursday, January 6; Saturday, January 8; Sunday, January 9; Tuesday, January 11.

Closed: Friday, December 24; Saturday, December 25; Sunday, December 26; Monday, December 27; Wednesday, 29 December; Friday, December 31; Saturday, January 1, 2022; Sunday, January 2; Monday, January 3; Wednesday, 5 January; Friday, January 7; Monday, January 10; Wednesday, January 12 2022.

Kerbside collection

• Extra Mahia and Mahanga refuse collections on Friday from December 17 through to January. 21

• Wairoa, Frasertown, Mohaka and Raupunga refuse, and recycling collections will continue as usual

• The Tuai refuse collection will have the Thursday, December 30 collection moved to Tuesday, December 28.

• The Tuai recycling collection will have the Friday, December 31 collection moved to Wednesday, December 29.

Mahia recycling

Staffed recycling point at Kaiwaitau Road, Mahia site from 9am to 12pm from December 23-January 12, excluding December 25, 26 and January 1.

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