

FACE-TO-FACE



It was great to have Harry Waiwai as my first 'kanohi-ki-te-kanohi' ('Face-to-Face') since I was re-elected as Mayor. I enjoy the Face-to-Face sessions which are held every Wednesday and provide a chance to catch up with locals and hear their opinions and thoughts. My door is always open, and I encourage anyone who would like to catch up on a Wednesday to please phone the Council offices on 06 838 7309 to make an appointment.

I am passionate about wanting the best for our district and will follow up inquiries members of the public may have. However, I do please urge you to follow the correct Council process in the first instance. I am happy to help, but the first point of call is to go directly through Council, as our staff on the ground will be far more likely to be able to help than I will. It takes just a couple of clicks to lodge a Customer Service Request (CSR) and is the best way to get Council's attention. You can also call into the Council to lodge a CSR or phone in.

The Council Customer Service Request pink forms are the method we have identified as giving us the best ability to remedy a situation. It provides location, a paper trail, messaging is clear and from within Council's system it can be sent to the relevant department/contractor to sort.

Our system is set up so that within hours of a CSR being lodged the situation will be investigated and if possible remedied as soon as practicable. It is important people are aware Council has a programme in place. We can't attend to a situation unless we know about it and the best way to do that is through the established Council CSR programme.

To lodge a CSR, go to Council's webpage, www.wairoadc.govt.nz, click on do it online, click on Say it and then click on Customer Service Request and enter the details.

Alternatively ring the Council office on 838 7309 or call into the front desk. For non-emergency work it is best to call during usual working hours but if it is an emergency that same number operates 24/7.

EMISSIONS



It was quite overwhelming to have so many farmers and community members join together to share their thoughts with our local members of parliament at the Wairoa District Council arranged He Waka Eke Noa farm-level emissions pricing proposal meeting.

It was very obvious our local people are not happy with the

Government's proposal and it was a heated and emotive meeting. I did admire that our local MPs, the Hon. Stuart Nash and the Hon. Meka Whaitiri did front up, knowing it would not likely be an easy meeting. We need to remember that while many of us do not agree with this proposal, Wairoa has been well supported by these two representatives, and our district has benefited from significant Provincial Growth Fund funding and we are grateful. We just need to ensure the Government is not giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

There has been a lot of discussion since the local meeting and a couple of thoughts that particularly stand out for me are: Perhaps districts like the Wairoa district could be looked at in isolation when it comes to carbon efficiency. If you factor in Te Urewera and its massive plantings of native bush and all the forestry/native plantings we already have, along with riparian planting we are probably one of the most carbon neutral spaces in the country. The government should be encouraging planting across the whole country, not just targeting specific areas.

I also wonder why for years the Government has told us it is looking into the large number of farms selling to forestry, and overseas investment, and wants to give Councils more control on what land can be planted in forestry, yet still no legislation has been passed. The government had no trouble making quick decisions without consultation following the arrival of, and during, COVID-19 and also pushing the Three Waters proposal through at pace with very little consultation. Why can't changes around farm forestry sales be implemented just as quickly?

The huge attendance at the local meeting demonstrated the local concern about the detrimental impact this tax will create in our district and the unrest in our community. I support making a difference to New Zealand's, and even the world's climate challenges, but not at the cost of our town, district and primary industry.

A recent report commissioned by Beef and Lamb NZ shows pine trees are being planted at an alarming rate and far in excess of what is needed. The report states the climate commission said New Zealand could get to net-zero emissions by planting 25,000 hectares of farmland in pine a year. Last year, foresters bought twice that amount, particularly in the Wairarapa district, Otago and Hawke's Bay, with rising sales making it more expensive for everyone to buy farmland.

The report also found, forestry conversions could shrink rural communities and give carbon-emitters a cheaper alternative to cutting pollution – buying forestry offsets. The flood of carbon units from recently planted forests could dampen prices in the coming years, meaning polluting companies have less incentive to cut their emissions.

Produced by consultancy Orme and Associates, the report showed, in 2021, more than 30,000ha of farmland was sold to be converted into harvested exotic forest – with more than 19,000ha sold to overseas owners and the other 11,000ha to New Zealand-established plantation businesses. An additional 20,000ha was sold to carbon foresters – organisations looking to plant permanent forests.

New Zealand's grass-fed farms are already the most carbon efficient in the world, and I do not believe our small country can afford to be leaders on any form of climate policy, or that we are big enough to make any significant difference.

SH2 BETWEEN WAIROA AND NAPIER

We all know that SH2 between Wairoa and Napier is a windy road and drivers need to remain vigilant at all times, especially with all the road works at the moment and the time restrictions. We also know there is a huge amount of trucks carting forestry, stock, bulk and produce etc using the road.

Recently I've experienced a few slow drivers who are inconsiderate of other motorists and don't feel they need to pull over to allow vehicles past. Most drivers are courteous, but this week I followed a truck that had a queue of 12 vehicles behind it, and as it swung to go up the Devil's Elbow the driver did not pull over. So, the growing line of vehicles behind this truck were forced to travel at about 20km/hour. This is really disappointing.

There are a lot of improvements being made to the road at the moment, which is great, but can limit passing opportunities. Trucks are usually slower and heavier, and along with other slower vehicles, their drivers need to pull over and let other vehicles pass them. Otherwise, motorists become frustrated and grumpy which can lead to bad driving decisions which none of us want.

It is great to see Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency working on improvements and upgrades to SH2.



FARMERS ON SKIS

Ki te Whenua Ki te Awa

Wairoa farmers of all ages and abilities are invited to get off farm and come along to give water skiing or wake boarding a go! If skiing isn't your thing - come along and manage the barbeque!

Registrations essential
Scan the QR code or Text 027 446 7261 for the online registration form
No experience or equipment necessary

Any queries contact Sue Wilson 027 446 7261 or Di Roadley 027 497 7303



5pm - 7pm

Friday 18 November

Friday 2 December

Friday 16 December

Friday 13 January

Friday 27 January

Friday 3 February

Friday 17 February

Friday 4 March

Friday 17 March




Submissions to the Government's He Waka Eke Noa farm-level emissions pricing proposal close on Friday, November 18.

Please make Wairoa's voice heard by making a submission

Online at <https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/agriculture-emissions-and-pricing/consultation/>

For further information or support with your submission please email feedback@wairoadc.govt.nz or phone Council on 06 838 7309.



CONTACT US
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