

## MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

### CEMETERIES BYLAW

Clearer guidelines and processes around how we remember our loved ones in public cemeteries in Wairoa is a driver of the Council's Cemeteries Bylaw review.

While media attention around this draft bylaw review seems to have taken on a gang insignia and headstones direction, that is not the purpose of the draft bylaw. Bylaws are rules or regulations that are created to control specific activities within Council districts. These bylaws help ensure that our community is safe, healthy and vibrant. Bylaws are made by the Council in accordance

with requirements set out in the Local Government Act 2002. We are reviewing the Cemeteries Bylaw and a six-week public consultation period will begin in late March. No decisions have been made and the period of public consultation is so that we can hear feedback from all of our community. A proposed change to the existing bylaw is that headstones that are deemed offensive would be banned. This proposed change has been included because of feedback we have had from members of our community who find some headstones offensive, in particular, three that feature Mongrel Mob insignia. People who are visiting their loved ones in a cemetery shouldn't have to be confronted by gang insignia and it may be that the families of the three people who have prominent Mongrel Mob insignia on their headstones, may volunteer to discuss and address this matter with Council. We are certainly happy to have this discussion.

When these headstones were installed, there was nothing within the bylaw to prevent that from happening. However now, in line with community requests, we are going out to our people to hear their opinions.

I believe a cemetery should be a place of respect where a loved one can rest in peace. We want our whānau to feel our public cemeteries are places of deep contemplation, reflection and sombre remembrance. Cemeteries should be a neutral location. We are asking for our community to guide us on how they think that should look.

We are also proposing alcohol be banned at the Wairoa Cemetery - again out of respect, and we will also be guided by our community on this.

Moving forward, once the bylaw is adopted, it will provide very clear guidelines and processes that we haven't had before.

We have engaged with the gang leadership in our community, and they are supportive of the Council having clearer guidelines and processes by way of this draft bylaw.

Wairoa is no different to any other town in New Zealand. Regardless of gang affiliations, these are whānau, they are sons, daughters, mothers and fathers, and it's important we involve all parts of our community in the consultation of this draft bylaw so that we can get it right.

### POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES IN WAIROA

With a growing number of COVID-19 and Omicron cases in New Zealand, no one is surprised that there are positive cases in Wairoa.

These cases are safely isolating but realistically it is expected the number of cases will continue to grow.

If you are feeling unwell, have symptoms, or are a close contact of a person who has tested positive, you will need to isolate. For COVID testing you must ring the Queen Street Practice on 06 838 8333 and make an appointment. Testing times are from 1.30pm Monday-Friday and weekends from 3-4pm. Testing is available for anyone who has any cold and flu-like symptoms, no matter how mild. Having COVID-19 cases in Wairoa is what we have been encouraging our whānau to plan for. While people are waiting for their results or if they are a close contact or have been at a location of interest they will need to self-isolate. These local cases are a very timely reminder to be prepared and have a plan for how you will manage if someone in your household needs to isolate.

Make sure you have access to food and essential supplies while you are in isolation, you may need to organise a buddy outside your household to help with supplies and other daily chores.

Because we have COVID-19 in Wairoa, people also need to be vigilant by wearing a mask in public, washing their hands regularly, practice social distancing and use the COVID tracer app and vaccine pass wherever you go.

Most of all, please be kind, and remain calm. Don't be concerned

with who has COVID, be concerned with keeping yourself and your whānau as safe as possible."

'Kia ū tonu Te Wairoa'

'Remain resilient Wairoa'

For more info visit the Wairoa District Council Fb page or website #COVID-19

<https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-council/covid-19/>

### STRONG FOUNDATIONS BEHIND MAIN STREET REBUILD

Strong foundations are the key to Wairoa's main street revitalisation project - Te Wairoa E Whanake - Rise Up and Grow Wairoa.

Last week, members of Council's Economic Development Committee met on site to view the rebuilding progress.

The partnership initiative involves transforming the former main street burnt-out building and the old Winter's building on the corner of Marine Parade and Locke Street.

The project is predominantly funded through a successful Provincial Growth Fund Application and focusses on a multi-functional connected town centre that champions the Wairoa River.

Earthquake strengthening is a focus of the current work. This experience will provide an opportunity for other Wairoa building owners in town to learn and leverage off the work we are needing to conduct to meet the earthquake strengthening requirements.

This landmark project was always going to be a major undertaking and COVID-19 restrictions and an unprecedented escalation in material costs and difficulties in securing contractors have impacted on the project. To offset these increases, work is ongoing to secure external funding. Despite the challenges, I believe this project will go towards resetting our town centre.

The development will include a street food café hospitality pod, an indoor/outdoor courtyard area, and three businesses offering a mix of hospitality and retail.

Our hope is this new area will create a retail and community hub and it will certainly transform this block of our main street.

Depending on the COVID-19 environment and resource availability, we are predicting the burnt-out building redevelopment will be completed and open for business by the end of the year.

While work at the burned-out building site is currently centred around the strengthening of the existing building structure, the next stage will see the installation of the steel structure for the new build area. Design plans are ongoing for the former Winter's building which will include the relocation of the Wairoa i-Site.

It is exciting to be working on a new development for our community and I look forward to the fresh options this project will bring to our town.



Council Chief Executive Kitea Tipuna and myself surveying the strengthening progress inside the former main street burnt-out building shell.

## FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 01, 2022 1.30pm

### COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, March 08, 1.30pm

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



### CONTACT US

Wairoa District Council

Queen St, Wairoa

[info@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:info@wairoadc.govt.nz) (06) 838 7309

**Kia Ū tonu  
Te Wairoa**  
Remain Resilient Wairoa



### OUR COMMUNITY PLAN



Cameron Osmond of the Provincial Development Unit and Wairoa District Council Chairman of the Economic Development Committee Denise Eaglesome-Karekare are looking forward to the burnt-out building site becoming a thriving main street hub.