

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

STATE HIGHWAY 38

Council is still actively pushing to have State Highway 38 tarsealed, especially to Tuai. I believe SH38 is now the only unsealed State Highway in New Zealand with the sealing of the Forgotten Highway SH43 now nearly complete. I commend Te Uru Taumatua in securing \$7.99 million from NZTA Waka Kotahi. While I support any trial and innovative method,

I don't believe the trial should be at the expense of tarsealing this national state highway.

It is unbelievable that in this day and age the government roading authority Waka Kotahi NZTA is still doing everything in its power to stop this road being tarsealed.

Our immediate request is to have State Highway 38, which is outside of the Te Urewera mandated area tarsealed. This unsealed section comprises of just over seven kilometres in three separate unsealed sections. Tarsealing these sections would see State Highway 38, to the village of Tuai, tarsealed.

We know this unsealed road is hard on our community and impacts on people's wellbeing and this tarsealing is overwhelmingly supported by the Tuai community.

Waka Kotahi NZTA is meant to be about connectivity. State Highway 38 is not an example of connectivity.

We want State Highway 38 to be tarsealed with a proven product that is used all over the world to give us parity with the rest of New Zealand. Our district and people have suffered years of neglect by not having a sealed State Highway, we do not have time to now wait again while an unproven alternative seal trial is carried out

ROAD TO ZERO

Everybody wants to see the road toll reduced. I admire the Waka Kotahi NZTA national Road to Zero - Te Ara ki te Ora campaign. However, I believe we need to be realistic, and that starts with safe roads. State Highway 38 is not a safe road. An unsealed State Highway is not a safe road. SH2 from Gisborne to Napier also needs massive safety improvements and this is where the focus should be.

The Road to Zero campaign targets all New Zealanders and aims to disrupt complacent attitudes and acceptance about people dying and being seriously injured on our roads.

The road safety vision is where everyone, whether they're walking, cycling, driving, motorcycling or taking public transport, can get to where they're going safely.

I look forward to Waka Kotahi NZTA tarsealing State Highway 38 so we can keep our district connected and safe.

SUPPORT THE GAITY THEATRE

My wife and I went to the movies on Sunday night. It was a fantastic big screen experience, but disappointingly we were the only people there.

The Gaiety Theatre is like every asset in rural New Zealand. If it is not supported the cost will outweigh the benefit and we will lose it. I don't want that to happen and the only way to prevent it from happening is to support the Gaiety.

I know it is challenging in these COVID-19 times but going to the movies is one of the few experiences we can presently still enjoy and there is plenty of room to keep your distance from other people in the theatre. In this COVID cancellation time it is actually really nice to have an outing.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Housing demand in the district is outpacing supply and it is great to see residential developments being planned.

We are short of around 150 homes now, but with the expected population growth, could have a shortage of around 500 homes over the next 10 years.

A working group comprising the Wairoa District Council, iwi and local providers has been established in response to Wairoa's housing shortage and a local housing strategy is being developed to cater for all our community needs.

Housing is not just about physical builds. It's also around home ownership. A home ownership information zoom is scheduled for Thursday, March 24, 2022.

The zoom is for whānau who want to own their own home, and will feature presentations from real estate, mortgage advisors, banking and Kāinga Ora representatives.

To view the pānui and registration link head to <https://www.facebook.com/enabled.org.nz>

THREE WATERS

It is very difficult for our Council to have faith in the Three Waters Reform and process when government officials continually break the promises they make to us.

Last year, at the Government's request, our Council made a comprehensive submission around the Council and community views on the government's Three Waters proposal. It appears our submission was ignored and our questions have only just been answered this week. It took four months of lobbying Minister of Local Government Nanaia Mahuta to have these questions answered. It is unacceptable that the Government has bulldozed through with this proposal before it has addressed the local Council's concerns - this Three Waters decision was pre-determined from the start.

I also had a Zoom meeting with Minister Mahuta in August last year, and as a result of our discussions she committed to sending officials to Wairoa so they could gain information to enable a better understanding of our local Three Waters position.

Now seven months later we are still waiting for that visit. How can the government push for such massive change when it cannot even answer the questions the local authorities are asking on behalf of the owners of the Three Waters infrastructure?

New Zealand's Three Waters situation does not have a one size fits all solution. I believe the new water services regulator, Taumatua Arowai, will go some way to addressing national issues but I have grave reservations around the reform proposals.

I also believe our Hawke's Bay model, which the government has completely overlooked, is far more suited to our community needs than a centralised version where Wairoa will become one percent of a giant entity.

Yesterday, the Three Waters Governance working group released its report, and as expected this has been another tick box exercise where the public concerns have not been listened to and the government has no intention of changing its undemocratic process because, as I have always said, this has been a done deal from the start. This process goes against the principles of Local Government.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, March 22 1.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 29 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 (06) 838 7309

Kia Utonu Te Wairoa

Remain Resilient Wairoa



OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

LETS GET YOU INTO YOUR OWN HOME. START YOUR JOURNEY NOW

THURSDAY
24 MARCH 6PM

HOME OWNERSHIP

WAIROA INFORMATION ZOOM

REALESTATE • MORTGAGE ADVISOR

WESTPAC • KAINGA ORA • SUPPORT

EMAIL [MELISSA@ENABLED.ORG.NZ](mailto:melissa@enabled.org.nz) TO REGISTER

Wairoa Property Management

Enabled Wairoa
Empowering People, Transforming Lives

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COLE MURRAY