

## MAYORAL COLUMN

### COVID-19

Covid-19 case numbers are growing in Wairoa, and I understand they will continue to increase until at least the end of the month. Personally, myself and some of my family have tested positive, so we can relate to what members of our community are going through. Everybody's symptoms are different, for me personally I found the headache, body aches and pains the worst. My wife's symptoms were similar but were more flu-like.

Locally we have a tremendous team of people providing our community with what they need. From vaccinations, testing, welfare and support. It is a true demonstration of the 'Wairoa way' of coming together and helping each other.



Mayor Craig Little

If you feel unwell, please isolate and arrange for a test. You will need to self-isolate for seven days and all the people who live in your home will need to self-isolate and carry out RAT tests if they get symptoms and on day 3 and day 7. Your contacts do not need to self-isolate and only need to test if they get symptoms.

Vaccinating, testing, isolating, mask wearing, hand washing and staying home as much as possible will all go towards limiting the spread of COVID-19 and the Omicron variant. Thank you to those people who are being careful and remaining in isolation. It is your vigilance that is helping keep our community safe.

For more information visit the Wairoa District Council Fb page or website on <https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-council/covid-19/#COVID-19>

### THREE WATERS

It is great to see Minister of Local Government and driver of the Three Waters Reform Nanaia Mahuta acknowledge that she underestimated two key areas of the infrastructure plan around the Three Waters Reform. Appearing on Q and A with Jack Tame, Minister Mahuta said she had "underestimated" how much the public really knew about what was happening with the pipes under the ground. She said the public had a lot more knowledge about the tradeoffs that Councils were making in relation to what gets spent above the ground and what gets spent under the ground.

Minister Mahuta also acknowledged an issue with the reform's \$3.5million advertising campaign, which depicted animated people using poor quality water and was labelled by critics as misleading and irresponsible.

She said there was a high level of sensitivity from local government around that campaign because they felt they were getting blamed for something. She acknowledged that decades of underinvestment in water infrastructure is within the council purview, but said perhaps the advertising campaign wasn't the best way to tell the message.

She acknowledged these are two areas that she underestimated, and she got wrong, and she accepts responsibility for that. However, she also feels she is the right person to lead the change and going forward, says the need for reform is absolutely clear.

I hope this is just the beginning of the acknowledgements of how flawed the Three Waters Reform and process is and that Minister Mahuta starts listening to the communities and the reform is put on hold. Last year our national water regulator, Taumata Arowai was established. This was long overdue, and I believe this will be a game changer. The best outcome would now be for the government to give Councils a five-year reprieve to allow them to bring their standards up to the level required by the national regulator. To date this reform process has wasted tens of millions of dollars which would have been better invested into local communities. We need to slow this reform process and the government needs to start applying a practical and sensible approach.

It has been reassuring to see the Communities 4 Local Democracy Group gaining strength. Wairoa is one of the original members of this group which now comprises of 32 councils and is growing. It represents more than 1.6 million people from the depth and breadth of New Zealand. It is about bringing fresh ideas for better water and wants better services, local responsiveness and accountability, public ownership and meaningful mana whenua partnership arrangements that are appropriately tailored.

The group believes it can do better than the 'one size fits none' proposals from the Government and can deliver better services while still remaining affordable and locally responsive.

Wairoa District Council supports the vision of Communities 4 Local Democracy 100%.

### ROADING NETWORK AND CONNECTIVITY

I continue to be incredibly disappointed in the state of our national roading network. Under investment and lack of maintenance is now resulting in additional costs for road users. It can now take an extra 15 minutes to drive from Wairoa to Gisborne or Napier and this ends up costing everyone, either in time or delays.

State Highway 2 between Gisborne and Napier is a prime example of a neglected state highway with under investment now coming home to haunt and impact our communities.

Drivers are frustrated at not being able to pass the many trucks on the road, and in reality we probably need another 20 passing lanes installed between Gisborne and Napier to improve the safety and efficiency of the road.

Our communities and our people are suffering as a result of this under investment by the government and NZTA.

### JUST A COUPLE OF CLICKS TO LODGE A REQUEST

The Wairoa District Council invites all local people to help keep our district in tip top shape.

Using the Council Customer Service Requests (CSR) is the best way to get Council's attention if you think something needs attending to.

We all want to see our district looking the best it can and while we have programmes in place to keep the district looking as tidy as possible, we also rely on locals to give a heads up if a job needs doing.

Advising us is not necessarily complaining, often it is just about sharing information and working in partnership with Council.

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.

I also have people who personally advise me of situations. I always try and follow these up, which usually involves visiting the location and if necessary taking photos to save staff time.

This is part of my open-door policy and I believe it is important that members of the public feel they can approach me and the Council and pass on any information.

To lodge a CSR, go to Council's webpage, [www.wairoadc.govt.nz](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz), keyword search CSR, and enter the required details. It really is a simple but effective way to communicate with the Council.

Alternatively, if you can't access the Council webpage, ring the Council office on 838 7309. 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.

If we know about an issue, we can get it sorted. It's just a couple of clicks to bring an issue to our attention <https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/contact-us/customer-service-request>

## FOR YOUR DIARY

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 29, 1.30pm

#### INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 5, 1.30pm

#### YOUTH COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 11, 3.30pm

#### FINANCE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday April 12, 1.30pm

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 Utonu  
Te Wairoa  
Remain Resilient Wairoa



## OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

LET'S GET YOU INTO YOUR OWN HOME, START YOUR JOURNEY NOW

THURSDAY  
24 MARCH 6PM

# HOME OWNERSHIP

WAIROA INFORMATION ZOOM

REAL ESTATE • MORTGAGE ADVISOR

WESTPAC • KAINGA ORA • SUPPORT

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

Wairoa Property Management Enabled Wairoa COLE MURRAY