

MAYORAL COLUMN

WEATHER EVENT

As I write this, Cyclone Fili is bearing down on the Wairoa district. We are working closely with our neighbouring regions, particularly Tairāwhiti and Hawke's Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management and other agencies and gathering information and data to ensure we are prepared and can react with the most appropriate response and resources if needed.

We are hoping for the best but planning for the worst. We have responders on standby and if the weather event creates a situation where a State of Emergency needs to be declared then that is what we will do.

I know there has already been catastrophic damage to local farms and rural residences through slips and flooding and Council's roading network and other infrastructure has suffered. More rain is not what we needed.

I want to assure the hundreds of people who are affected by the Te Reinga Bridge closure that we are doing everything we can to fast track repair work while also looking at pedestrian options and keeping the alternative route at the best standard we can. I understand this closure is effectively cutting this community in half and I worry about children not being able to get to school and the effect on people's employment.

It was great to have Minister Meka Whaitiri visit Ruakituri and attend the community meeting on behalf of the government. It is reassuring we have the full support of the government in our recovery. I have also received calls from Minister for Civil Defence Emergency Management Kiritapu Allan who was just checking in that our community is ok.

Rebuilding our district is going to be a long journey. Tens of millions of dollars will need to be spent to restore connectivity and safe travel around our roading network. The closure of the Te Reinga Bridge due to significant structural damage is an additional blow to the community. While there is an alternative route via the Erepeti/Ohuka Roads, this is a lot longer and the road has not been designed for the high traffic levels that are expected while the bridge is closed.

I would like to thank all the engineering team, particularly Mike Hardie, our roading network manager, who along with his crew have a lot on their plates trying to rebuild our district's roading network and are doing a great job in challenging circumstances. Thank you also to the contractors who are carrying out the work.

We appreciate the patience from our community while we rebuild our district. Please be safe and if you notice any damage, please report it to Council on 06 838 7309.

RISE IN HOUSE PRICES

The Wairoa district has bucked the trend of stalling house prices and recorded the biggest percentage jump in house values across the country during the first quarter of 2022.

The OneRoof-Valocity report for the first quarter of this year revealed the average house price rose about 18%.

The overall district, including Mahia, has an average residential property value of \$489,000.

During the first quarter of 2022, the wider Wairoa township's average house price rose from \$314,000 to \$362,000 (about 15%) and in Mahia the average house price rose from \$733,000 to \$856,000 (about 17%).

I am aware this is a double-edged sword as homeowners want their assets to increase in value but it also makes it more difficult to get on the housing ladder. Locally we have a number of new housing development proposals so I hope that will also go some way towards supporting whānau who need homes.

HONOURING TĀ TIPENE O'REGAN

Tā Tipene O'Regan, who was recently named the 2022 New Zealander of the year, is an outstanding man.

Tā Tipene is known for his work in Ngāi Tahu's Treaty Settlement, as an educator and as a public figure whose life has been dedicated to building an inclusive, bicultural nation. He made history in 1997, signing a deal for Ngāi Tahu almost 150 years after the first formal statement of grievance was made against the Crown.

The settlement of the claim, provided \$170 million in compensation to the iwi, along with rights to sites of significance, a role in the conservation of their lands and an 'unreserved' apology from the Crown for breaching Te Tiriti, The Treaty of Waitangi.

For me, Tā Tipene's words are some of the most inspiring I have heard.

He hopes the landmark event of the Ngāi Tahu settlement and the healing it enabled, has contributed towards building an inclusive Aotearoa.

He uses the phrase, 'The two hulls of a double canoe' saying he has often thought of that as a pretty good metaphor for a bi-cultural society.

In his words, "You need to have both hulls working properly. That's the kaupapa, that's where you sail from. Extraordinary the distance we've travelled, in a relatively short time. I look for a society in which we can be truly a bi-cultural nation, which I dream we shall yet become."

The Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Ngā Tohu Pou Kōhure o Aotearoa, celebrate people who use their passion to make our country a better place. Tā Tipene's inclusiveness, contribution and influence certainly warrants celebration.

BYLAWS

Council is currently engaging with the community on its Waters Bylaws which includes the Water Supply Bylaw, Wastewater Bylaw, Trade Waste Bylaw and Stormwater Bylaw. Plus, we are engaging on the Cemeteries Bylaw and proposed Development Contributions Policy. Consultation around the Council's Annual Plan will begin in May.

Gathering thoughts and opinions from the community is an important part of how Council functions. We want to hear what people think.

We have made the feedback process as easy as possible and hope there will be a really high response to the items that we are currently engaging on. It is important to remember that social media comments or writing letters to newspapers is not a formal part of our information gathering. People who would like to make a submission need to follow the Council process so feedback can be correctly gathered.

You can make a submission to the Cemeteries and waters bylaws online: <https://www.consultations.nz/wdc/bylaws-consultation/> or the proposed Development Contributions bylaw <https://www.consultations.nz/wdc/development-contributions-policy/>.

You can also email your thoughts to feedback@wairoadc.govt.nz, by post to Bylaws Consultation c/o Wairoa District Council Governance Team, 97 Queen Street, Wairoa, or in person to the Wairoa District Council Office, Coronation Square, Wairoa.

ANNIE ARANUI SCHOLARSHIP NOW OPEN

Applications for the Annie Aranui Scholarship are now open.

The scholarship was set up in memory and recognition of Annie Aranui, the Ministry of Social Development Regional Commissioner for Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti, who sadly passed away in March of last year.

I held Annie in high regard. She was approachable and personable, had her finger on the pulse, and was continually monitoring and working for the betterment of the

communities she served.

I had tremendous respect for Annie and the work she led in the Wairoa community. Annie really is irreplaceable, and her sad passing was far too early and a huge loss for her whānau and her communities.

Applications for the Annie Aranui Scholarship close on June 30, 2022. The scholarship aims to enable and support young mana wahine into the public sector including central and local government, iwi owned organisations and community-focussed NGOs

The scholarship is up to \$5,000 to support mana wahine (17-24 years) in the workplace, including support for rangatahi already working to progress their development and career; individually tailored programmes to meet the rangatahi growth aspirations and support development e.g. te reo development, leadership training, specialised mentoring.

Annie served in the public sector for more than 36 years and her service was recognised with the New Zealand Public Service Medal in 2020.

For more information about the Annie Aranui Scholarship please contact info@hbyft.org.nz

NATIONAL SURF RESCUE CHAMPS AT MAHIA

The largest national surf lifesaving championships on the New Zealand calendar were held at Mahia on the weekend. This event was scheduled to be held in Gisborne but the condition of the beaches following the recent high rainfall event meant a shift to Mahia. These championships are filled with hard, fast action-packed racing. Mahia turned on the weather and surf and the photos I saw were incredible. I have had great feedback around how well the event went, and it is certainly a great way to showcase a beautiful part of our district.

FOR YOUR DIARY

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, April 19 1.30pm

MAORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 28, 1.30pm

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 3, 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 (06) 838 7309