

## MAYORAL COLUMN

### CLEANING UP OUR DISTRICT

We are undergoing a massive clean-up in our district as we recover from the end of March extreme rainfall events and then additional rainfall during Ex-Tropical Cyclone Fili earlier this month.

Some areas of our district received triple their average monthly rainfall, other areas double. Early suggestions are a good portion of sites had March totals that were the highest in their records.

The weather bomb created widespread damage throughout our district with flooding caused by high river levels, bank erosion, overtopping of rural stopbanks, washouts, and damaged culverts. At the peak Council had 30 roads closed or with limited access, because of slips, washouts and rock falls.

Council is still gathering intel and data in order to put a monetary value on the damage caused to the roading network, but estimate it could be between \$20-30 million. This figure cannot be confirmed until all the necessary information is analysed.

Initial assessments indicate around 450 properties of varying sizes throughout our district were impacted by the weather events, mainly with severe slipping, fence, track damage and flooding.

Wairoa has been very fortunate to have received tremendous support in relation to these events.

We have had visits from local MPs Meka Whaitiri and Stuart Nash, Civil Defence Emergency Management Minister Kiritapu Allan who visited and pledged \$100,000 to the Mayoral Relief Fund. This funding is aimed at supporting people and communities to bounce back after an emergency and is intended to help fill gaps quickly where an immediate need exists. This is on top of a commitment of \$50,000 from MPI which is being used to undertake needs assessments of affected rural communities and using GIS mapping.

Louise Upston, National Party spokesperson for Social Development and Employment, Social Investment, Whānau Ora and Land Information also visited Wairoa and the Ruakituri area to see the damage. National Party spokesman for Emergency Management Gerry Brownlee has also been in touch.

I had a fantastic phone call from Affco CEO Nigel Stevens who has pledged \$30,000 towards a specific weather-related project. Nigel told me he had been following the weather events and subsequent damage sustained in our district and wanted to contribute to assist our community. He said the contribution was, "a reflection of the importance of the Wairoa community to AFFCO, and in appreciation for the support that Wairoa District Council provides to AFFCO on an ongoing basis."

I was incredibly impressed with this gesture which demonstrates true community partnership. Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc and Wairoa Taiwhenua have also taken the lead in arranging a hangi fundraiser for those families affected by the weather events.

It really has been great to have a high-level interest and understanding of our challenges and also regional and local acknowledgement with everybody working towards our recovery. Thank you to you all.

While the whole of our district has been impacted by the weather event, there are some areas where damage is worse than others. In the Ruakituri area residents have been particularly impacted by the closure of the Te Reinga Bridge due to structural damage. A design plan has been completed to enable pedestrian, and potentially light vehicles, access over the currently closed Te Reinga Bridge. Work is expected to be completed within the next four weeks.

It is anticipated light vehicles will be able to cross the bridge under this temporary solution, and that will be confirmed once the work is complete and load testing can be carried out. A permanent solution to repairing the bridge is also being worked on. The alternative Erepeti/Ohuka/SH38 route is being used while the bridge is closed. I know there are frustrations as this road is not designed for the increased traffic and it is a much longer route. It needs to be remembered this detour route is a Class 1 road, and as such all vehicles, from stock, fertiliser, and forestry trucks to private vehicles, are entitled to use it.

I know there will be maize coming out soon which will also need to be transported on this route. Please everyone be patient while we work as hard as possible to restore at least temporary pedestrian access across the Te Reinga Bridge. And a reminder. If you have any information, queries or requests regarding our recovery please email [recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz)

### ANZAC DAY

It was great to move around the district and be part of the ANZAC Day commemorations. My day started from Kaiuku Marae at Mahia, then to the Frasertown and Taihoa services and the Civic Service at the War Memorial in town. I was particularly impressed to see so many young people attending these events and commemorating those who have gone before us. The local turn outs demonstrated to me that our future is in good hands.

### LOCALISED FORESTRY

There has been a lot of local talk around Ngāti Pahauwera planting trees on their Pihanui Farm on the Cricklewood Road. I have never made a secret of the fact I am not a fan of blanket forestry, I am not against tree planting, but loss of rural employment through converting pastoral farming to forestry does concern me. My priority for Wairoa is around the four wellbeings of cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Ngāti Pahauwera is not the first local landowner/farmer to plant trees on their land and I support planting the right tree in the right place. In this particular case, the drivers behind the Ngāti Pahauwera tree planting decision are environment and employment, best use of the asset base, a planned 30-year cycle and, most importantly, carbon credit returns will help Ngāti Pahauwera Commercial Development Trust plans to extend its Rockit apple orchard into the Raupunga area to add to its current apple plantings with the intention of creating 40 high paying jobs.

Unfortunately, with most forestry plantings, whether that is Production or Carbon, there simply aren't many employment opportunities for our people, ie, the majority of jobs are out of the district, here lies the problem I have with forestry. But that is the big difference between what Ngāti Pahauwera is planning, which is for the betterment of their people, rather than for the betterment of international investors or people outside of Wairoa where we see very little benefit for our community. I admire Ngāti Pahauwera's belief that between theirs, and Tātau Tātau o te Wairoa's involvement in the horticultural sector, this will spearhead a serious economic initiative that will add to the economic wellbeing of the Wairoa district and community.

I have been impressed with the Ngāti Pahauwera vision and leadership and I urge the people who may not have been in favour with this decision to look at the bigger picture of what Ngāti Pahauwera is trying to accomplish.

Ngāti Pahauwera clearly has a plan in place, and by leveraging off one property and investing off-farm, they can create increased income and employment. I can see what they are trying to achieve, and I urge the community to be open minded. Ngāti Pahauwera is an integral part of the fabric of our community and if this iwi does well, then our district does well.

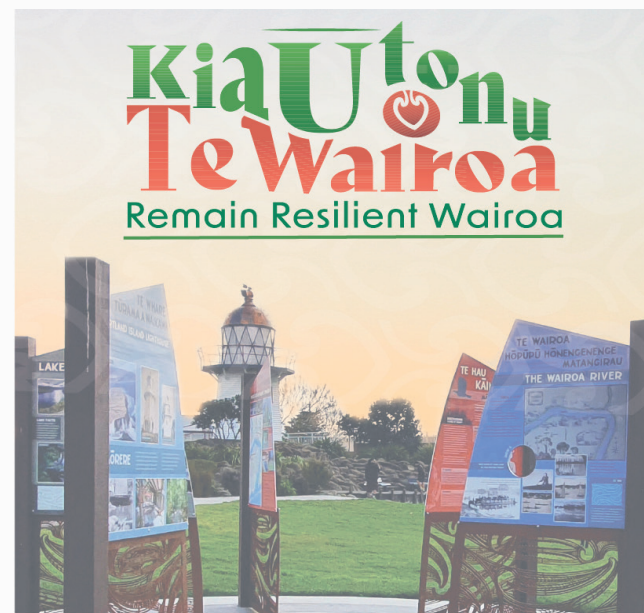
### BYLAWS SUBMISSIONS

Submissions on Council's Cemeteries Bylaw, Water Supply Bylaw, Wastewater Bylaw, Trade Waste Bylaw and Stormwater Bylaw have now closed.

We received just under 50 submissions. Thank you to those people who did make a submission. We appreciate your feedback and opinions and that you have taken the time to be

involved in helping to shape the future of our community.

An extraordinary meeting of Council to hear the submissions will be held from next Tuesday, 3 May 2022. These will be held in Wairoa District Council Chambers. Those not speaking are encouraged to attend via Zoom.



## OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

## FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### BYLAWS SUBMISSIONS HEARINGS

Tuesday, May 3, 9am

### COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 3, 1.30pm

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 10, 1.30pm

All meetings can be held by video conference, the link will be available on Council's website.

## MEET THE MAYOR

If you would like to have a meeting with the Mayor, call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to arrange a meeting time. He is available to meet with people on Wednesdays.



### CONTACT US

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