

MAYORAL COLUMN

MAYORAL RELIEF FUND APPLICATIONS OPEN

The Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund is open for applications. The fund is aimed at providing assistance across the entire Wairoa district for issues related to the severe weather events in March/April.

Priority will be given to:

- Provision of essentials for daily life, transport needs and household contents.
- Rebuild/recovery costs of buildings damaged by water or storm damage.
- Essential items not covered by insurance or other funds.



Mayor Craig Little

Applications to the fund will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, by myself and Chairman of the Wairoa Taiwhenua Nigel How.

This funding was given to Wairoa by Civil Defence Emergency Management Minister Kiritapu Allan who visited our district and pledged \$100,000 to the Mayoral Relief Fund. The funding will support people and communities to bounce back following the extreme weather events. Applications can be sent to recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz

The Wairoa and Gisborne Councils' Recovery Managers have contracted the Federated Farmers to undertake a survey of local farmers. The information being gathered will inform ongoing recovery needs. The survey phone calls have started. If you have not been contacted over the next week or so, please email recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz

WAIROA CEO APPOINTED TO RMA STEERING GROUP

It is great that our Chief Executive, Kitea Tipuna, has been appointed to the new Local Government Steering Group to advise Government on its Resource Management Act (RMA) Reform.

The national steering group includes 12 local government elected members and senior council executives. Kitea's appointment is vital to ensure the voice of rural New Zealand is represented.

The establishment of the steering group reflects the Government's desire to build on its relationship with local government and form a partnership around the reform of the resource management system.

The journey from legislative design to establishment of the new system, and transition is expected to take several years and the working relationship with local government has been highlighted as crucial to success.

This steering group appears to have a good mix of government leaders from across New Zealand who will bring different experiences and perspectives to provide input on all aspects of the reform programme.

Kitea's involvement is important, the initial priority is ensuring the existing resource management system can transition to the new system smoothly. An initial focus of the group will be around testing policy and helping develop plans for implementation and transition to the new system. The steering group will play a critical role in helping to ensure the new system works well.

TE REINGA BRIDGE PROGRESS

We are working hard to hopefully have pedestrian access on the Te Reinga Bridge next week.

Work on a temporary solution has involved construction on two of the bridge piers and depending on weather, the stabilising work could be completed this coming weekend.

Once the temporary solution is completed and contractors have finished on site, the bridge will be load tested to ensure it has been adequately stabilised before it is opened to pedestrian access, and potentially light vehicle access.

It is hoped the load testing will take place next Monday May 16/ Tuesday May 17. Results of the load testing and restrictions will then be shared publicly.

Well done to all those people who have worked tirelessly to prioritise work on a temporary solution. I know we have a long way to go to achieve a final solution, but hopefully we will achieve temporary pedestrian, and hopefully light vehicle access, next week which will be five weeks after the damage was first reported.

Please remember to stay off the bridge until the final load testing results are complete as the bridge, the scaffolding under the bridge and the work site remains totally closed off to members of the public.

WEATHER EVENT RECOVERY CONTINUES

I drove around our district's roading network last week with our Transport Asset Manager Mike Hardie. I must admit it was a bittersweet journey as I saw some areas where roading clean-up was progressing well and others where there is still a huge amount of work needed. Areas like Russell Parade at Frasertown, where the riverbank is collapsing into the river right outside the school, is a mammoth repair job.

Just a reminder to people we are doing the best we can. Contractors are balancing priorities with needs across the entire roading network. The focus remains on clearing road access for all vehicles, including stock trucks and trailers, and there may be a reduced level of services during this difficult period.

We are working collaboratively with NZTA Waka Kotahi and within their funding processes to ensure the best results for our district.

We have had NZTA Waka Kotahi representatives visit the district and see first-hand the damage that we are dealing with. They really understand our roading network and the consequences and severity of this damage.

Early indications are that repair work from these weather events could cost anywhere between \$20-30 million, depending on the final outcome of the Te Reinga Bridge scenario. There are certain processes we need to follow and by planning our recovery and repair work sensibly and in alignment with NZTA Waka Kotahi, our district is more likely to receive better outcomes.

ANNUAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Consultation on Council's Annual Plan 2022/2023 is underway, and we really do encourage members of the public to share their views.

This year key issues are around requests for additional funding from the Wairoa Community Centre and Wairoa Museum. If Council continues to fund these two vital community assets at the current level, the rates increase would remain at an average increase of about 8.2%, as indicated in the 2021-31 Long-Term Plan.

If the community indicate they have an appetite to increase funding to cover increased costs for these important community facilities, that will result in an average rate increase of around 9.5% for the coming year.

These two assets are vital to our community's success and it is really important the community tell us what level they would like these community facilities funded at.

The community centre is well patronised and essential for our health and wellbeing and the museum preserves our rich culture and history.

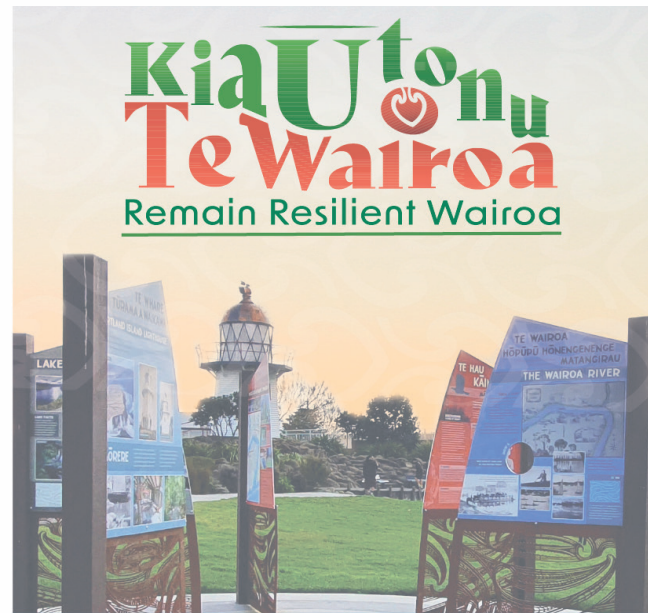
If you are not aware of what these two organisations do I encourage you to find out more so you can provide us with your thoughts.

A hybrid community meeting will take place in town next Tuesday, May 17, with elected members and any members of the public who would like to attend, as well as a Zoom capability for those people who choose not to attend in person. This meeting will take place from 5pm at the War Memorial Hall.

Online engagement will be via website Council's website, www.consultations.nz/wdc. Submissions can be completed via this

site or by using the submission form in the hardcopy Annual Plan Consultation Document which is available from the Council office on Queen Street. Submissions close on June 5, 2022.

We welcome your involvement in this process as we face the challenges and build our community's future together.



OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE:

Tuesday, May 17, 1.30pm

YOUTH COUNCIL:

Monday, May 23, 3.30pm

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE:

Tuesday, May 24, 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
Wairoa District Council
Queen St, Wairoa
info@wairoadc.govt.nz (06) 838 7309