



MAYORAL COLUMN

Waikare Gorge
blessing



I would also like to acknowledge the importance of having QRS, a Council Controlled Trading Organisation (CCTO) based and operating in Wairoa at the time of Cyclone Gabrielle. Imagine what would have happened to Wairoa, because of our isolation, if we did not have the depth of experience and resources that we have through QRS. We had machinery and trained staff who were able to respond immediately. QRS has then gone on to collate tradies and contractors who were vital during the response time and have continued to play a big part in the clean-up. Thank you to everyone who has helped in this space.

FUTURE COSTS

Wairoa District Council has, and will continue to, amass significant costs associated with cleaning up and rebuilding in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle. It is important to understand that if these additional costs are not recoverable, ie, through Central Government, then they will fall on the ratepayers of Wairoa.

It is great to have central government support to date, but we know there is a long road of recovery ahead of us and I am constantly lobbying Central Government and other external parties to assist with recovering as many of these costs as possible. These recent announcements are encouraging.

Since COVID-19 and the escalating costs we have seen across our country, it has been challenging, and the weather events we have experienced, particularly Cyclone Gabrielle, have compounded that. We are working through our budgets and we will be engaging with the community through our Annual Plan process.

FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Strategy, Wellbeing and
Economic Development
Committee
Tuesday, May 23, 1.30pm

Infrastructure and
Regulatory Committee
Tuesday, May 30 1.30pm

CONTACT US

Wairoa District Council
Queen St, Wairoa

info@wairoadc.govt.nz (06) 838 7309



WAIROA RECOVERY
TE WAIROA KA ORA TE WERO TE TAKI
STRENGTH X UNITY X RESILIENCE

Wairoa Recovery information

For information and help relating to
Cyclone Gabrielle please contact us:

- Online form www.wairoadc.govt.nz/contact-us/customer-service-request/
- Phone 06 838 7309
- In-person at the Council
- In-person at the Recovery Team Office at the Wairoa Young Achievers Trust building (the old Westpac building on the corner of Marine Parade and Paul Street)

For more information please email recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz or go to the Wairoa Recovery page on Facebook

SH 2 TO NAPIER REOPENED

It is great to have SH2 between Wairoa and Napier reopened. Thank you to NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, contractors and all those people who have worked so hard over the past three months to repair the extensive damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

This national highway connects Wairoa to the rest of Hawke's Bay, to our whānau and to vital services, including health care. This road is our lifeline, and while we are appreciative of the work that has gone into restoring connectivity, having to wait three months is too long and the costs to individuals and our local businesses are too high.

We hope there will be learnings from this situation and that more resilient roading options and alternative routes for our district and region will be prioritised in the very near future. There is a design plan to go over the top of the Waikare Gorge and I hope this is pursued as an urgent alternative. Because of financial restraints, we seem to be a country that patches things up when instead we need to be working towards resilience for our future.

It is great that we can now reconnect to the South with family, agencies, services and people who we usually deal with but have not seen for three very long months.

Please everyone travel safely and with care, the journey will take longer and there are restrictions and cautions in place.

MAYORAL RELIEF FUND

So far \$531,066.48 has been distributed to local people who have applied for funding through the Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund.



Everyone who has a stickered property is entitled to receive money through this fund and I encourage all affected people to please apply. The purpose of this fund is to assist our people who have been impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle. Its aim is to help the people of Wairoa and we look forward to it being distributed for the benefit of our communities.

Applications can now be made by scanning the QR Code or via the following link:

<https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-council/>

HAWKE'S BAY DISASTER RELIEF FUND

The Hawke's Bay Disaster Relief Trust has approved new funding eligibility to \$10,000. Phase 2 will allow previous applicants to reapply for additional support where they have been severely impacted.

The new criteria specifically targets those who have experienced significant additional pressure and costs associated with the cyclone and have not had financial support to cover these costs. Phase Two is open to individuals and community groups to cover larger costs incurred because of the flood such as cleaning, clearing, and potential rebuilding of properties impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle. The changes have been made possible due to generous donations made by the public and larger organisations such as Red Cross, Fulton Hogan and stuff.co.nz to name a few.

Application forms are available on the HBRC website or call into the Council offices or the Wairoa Young Achievers Trust office for help with your application.

RECOVERY

I know our recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle will be slow and challenging, but it is great to see some progress being made. I welcome the government's announcement of \$1 billion cyclone recovery funding which is aimed at supporting regional recovery by rebuilding roads, rail, schools, and flood defences.

There is a massive need for additional funding, and I am pleased the government has recognised this. It is also important that Wairoa's specific and unique needs are addressed and that we don't get swept up in regional initiatives. We may have a small population, but our district is large, and our need is great. We are already seeing our vital resources and services being eroded and I hope this funding addresses some of our needs around aged care and provision for our more vulnerable.

It is also encouraging that the government has provided funding to support the management and removal of silt and debris across Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti. From the get-go, our Council chose to cover the cost of removing silt and flood-damaged items because it was too overwhelming for our community to have to deal with. Costs for silt collected from Wairoa residential sections were estimated at around \$1.1 million, as at the end of April. This does not include the removal of silt from public areas such as the playground, river reserves etc. We took a risk, but it was one that was focused on the wellbeing of our community. We are hopeful this new funding will cover all, or at least most of the costs of silt removal, to date and moving forward.