



## THREE WATERS

The government is still pushing on with its three waters restructure. Throughout this review process, we have seen pre-determined decision-making and broken promises. Yet, I have still not seen evidence of how Wairoa will benefit by being part of a new entity. There may be overall cost savings, but they will be to our detriment. Wairoa will be competing against Tairāwhiti and the rest of Hawke's Bay, and I wonder if we will ever get treated wastewater out of the river under this new regime. Wairoa will become like a suburb with a low priority, and our isolation will make us an expensive add-on, which is just a fact of life with bigger entities.

This review is a missed opportunity. I am not against change and believe improvements could be made, but not through losing asset ownership and local voice.

In Cyclone Gabrielle, Wairoa demonstrated the importance of local staff who were on the ground with local knowledge. Through their skill and expertise, we got our water system up and running, despite our isolation and inability to access external assistance. Creating new entities will mean existing Council staff who work in the three waters space will no longer be employed by the Council and may not even be based in Wairoa. There is also a broader impact of 'stranded overheads' where existing Council staff who work across the Council's operations could have their positions compromised. None of this benefits the Wairoa community, our small voice will be lost, and our unique needs will not be recognised.

These new entities are not being established to give us, as water users, extra money; they are just providing the capacity to borrow extra money. These entities will borrow money at a cost that will be charged back to water ratepayers, with Wairoa water ratepayers also footing the bill for the rest of Hawke's Bay and Tairāwhiti three water services. At least under the current regime, people can come to the Wairoa District Council and talk with us. A centralised entity will mean we will lose our local ownership, our local voice and our ability to have a say over what happens with three waters delivery.

Originally, we were given the option to opt in or out, and it was then made mandatory to opt in; we were offered tranche two funding and then had that option taken away; and now dates have been moved forward, and Councils are being told to sign up to the entity.

With the election less than two months away, this will be an interesting space to watch, as other political parties have said they will repeal the Act.

## FLOOD PROTECTION

Protecting Wairoa from future flooding remains a massive priority. Our tripartite group of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa and Wairoa District Council are working together on river protection.

Some community engagement has already taken place, with around 45 submissions lodged, and more feedback will be sought as options are developed and shared with the community. We expect the engineering team to refine flood mitigation options and designs this month.

A crucial part of our future flood protection needs to be understanding why Wairoa flooded so severely in the first place. We urgently need more information on the causes of the flooding and the source of the slash and woody debris. Understanding this will help identify what went wrong so we can try to ensure it never happens again.

## TESTING TIME

The Court of Appeal's decision to uphold the approach taken by the Wairoa District Council regarding rating decisions made in 2021 is a good result.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal lodged by the New Zealand Forest Owners Association (NZFOA) against the decision of the High Court, which had dismissed an application for judicial review made by the NZFOA.

The NZFOA challenged the rating decisions made by the Wairoa District Council in 2021, which reallocated the distribution of rates amongst Wairoa ratepayers. In particular, the redistribution of rating onto forestry land and rural farming land provided relief to the residential ratepayers of Wairoa for whom the rating obligation exceeded affordability thresholds identified by the Local Government nationally.

Council takes its responsibilities seriously, and when we go through a process, such as a rating review, we have to ensure everything we do is legislatively correct. To have our decisions challenged, particularly with the proceedings during the immediate recovery of Cyclone Gabrielle, consumed a lot of resources that could have been used to help our district recover more quickly.

The Court of Appeal has recognised the difficult decisions we as a council had to make and the judgments we had to reach in setting rates for the district. Council's decisions were never about targeting any industry; it was always based on fairness and equity across the rating system.

## CLEAN-UP WAIROA

The Wairoa District Council is getting behind Clean-Up New Zealand Week and the community with a series of district-wide 'Whakapaipai tō tātau Hapori' events.

Wairoa's 'Whakapaipai tō tātau Hapori' events will begin with a community clean-up of North Clyde neighbourhoods on World Clean Up Day, Saturday, September 16, from 9am-11am, meeting at Memorial Park.

The local events are part of the annual Keep NZ Beautiful Clean-Up Week campaign and are an excellent opportunity to get your friends, family, school, business or local community group together to participate in New Zealand's largest clean-up event and to make a positive and tangible impact in your local community.

As many people as possible are encouraged to join in the clean-up Wairoa events at the following dates and locations:

North Clyde: Saturday, September 16, 9am-11am meet at Memorial Park.

Māhia Beach: Sunday, September 17, 9am-11am meet at the Pohutukawa Reserve (playground near the fishing club).

Pilot's Hill Reserve: Sunday, September 17, 2-3pm, meet at Pilot's Hill Reserve.

Marine Parade East: Monday, 18 September 12-1pm, meet at the Library Green.



Mayor Craig Little

## MEET THE MAYOR KANOHI KI TE KANOHI

If you would like to have a meeting with the Mayor, please call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to make an appointment.

## FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### WAIROA YOUTH COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 19, 3.30-5.00pm

Marine Parade West: Monday, 18 September 10-11am, meet at the Playground Reserve.

Tūwai: Friday, September 15, 11am-12noon, meet at Central Tūwai Village.

## FOLLOW THE Rs FOR A WASTE FREE WAIROA

### RETHINK

what is the end of life, what waste will be left, how long will it last, do you need it?

### REFUSE

what you don't need, what will cost you and the planet due to unnecessary waste?

### REDUCE

avoid buying/accepting what you don't need.

### REUSE

whatever you can. The longer we can keep things out of landfill the better.

### REPAIR

like they once did - fixing is fun.

### REPURPOSE/REGIFT

what else could I use this for? who else could use this?

### ROT

is it compostable? Will it break down safely?

### RECYCLING

kerbside crate collection, via rural collection days and at the Fraser Street Recycling Centre - clean tin, aluminium, glass, paper, cardboard and plastics (types 1, 2 and 5).

For more information visit [www.wairoadc.govt.nz](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz)