

Mayoral Column | 21 September, 2023



## REBUILDING CONTINUES

Rebuilding our town and district is a big job, but it is also full of opportunities. Doing the same things gets the same results, so we must now look at different options to ensure the best future outcomes for Wairoa.

Although we know many people are still suffering, progress is being made. We are seeing some flood-damaged homes closer to being able to be lived in again, under-house silt removed, and even a few spring flowers popping up on what were silt-covered sections.

It is great to see the Glenbrook ford crossing at Waikare now complete. The rural community had a particularly tough winter and was isolated for many months. Having connectivity restored will be a game changer. The new crossing is a temporary design but will hopefully fill the gap until a more permanent solution can be built. Despite ongoing challenges, we are still working hard on the Te Reinga Bridge temporary design. Disappointingly, this has been set back by the wet winter, which caused further issues out of everyone's control. I have my fingers crossed for more progress now that the weather is hopefully more settled.

## TOURISM FUNDING

External funding through the Tourism Infrastructure Fund will see the North Clyde reserve area receive a facelift with new toilets and seating.

The aim is to turn the North Clyde River Parade reserve into a hub with picnic tables, landscaping, sun shelter and improved parking. The existing two toilets will be replaced, and improved signage will make the rest area more visible.

The Council's successful funding application saw \$680,910 received for ablution upgrades.

The majority of the funding, just over \$500,000, will be used for the North Clyde project, with the remaining budget, two lots of \$87,000, to be spent at the Opoutama and Mahia toilets and surrounds.

The funding is part of a \$14.3 million fund for 56 tourism projects across the country, of which just over \$6 million will go towards upgrading, repairing and constructing public toilets.

We know Wairoa is a popular tourism destination with our town, river and beaches real drawcards. More people put more pressure on our infrastructure, and it is essential we are improving and upgrading where possible. This is also a boost for the North Clyde side of town, providing enhanced facilities for locals and visitors and creating an area that takes some of the pressure off other public toilets.

## MORERE HOT SPRINGS

I understand the Morere Hot Springs could be reopened to the public early next year. We are looking forward to the reopening as soon as possible. It is really disappointing that this wonderful asset was closed in the first place.

The Department of Conservation has committed to undertaking essential repairs, and it will be great to see this local tourist facility open and available again.

We need good things like this in Wairoa. Morere is a great visitor attraction with the therapeutic natural mineral springs set amongst one of the largest tracts of lowland rainforest remaining on the East Coast.

## WAIROA BUSINESS HUB

I am thrilled to see a Wairoa Business Hub, created to support local businesses, established on our main street.

The Hub, opposite the Wairoa Community Centre, is run by local entrepreneur Seenie Kahukura. It provides a shared space for small to medium-sized business enterprises and is an ideal way to support our local economy.

Business opportunities are being created through post-cyclone rebuilding, and the establishment of The Hub is very timely.

The Hub is designed to provide a comfortable, personable, approachable and professional service space at a competitive price. I encourage anyone in business or looking at starting their own business to call in and have a chat with Seenie and his team.

## 2024 EAST COAST FARMING EXPO

It is excellent news to hear that the 2024 East Coast Farming Expo is being planned for next February 21 and 22.

This year's expo was wiped out by Cyclone Gabrielle just days before the event was meant to go ahead. The A and P Showgrounds, where it was scheduled



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.

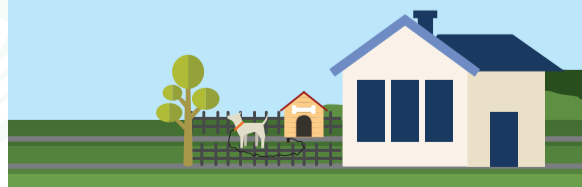
## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A RATES REBATE?

If you are a low-income homeowner/ratepayer you could qualify for financial assistance to help pay your rates.

For more information, or to apply, go online to [www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz) (enter rates rebate), or drop in or phone the Wairoa District Council office (06 838 7309), where our staff can help you with the eligibility criteria and to complete the application form if needed.

You will need to provide proof of income and have a copy of your rates invoice.

For more information head to [www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/properties-and-rates/rates/rates-rebate/](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/properties-and-rates/rates/rates-rebate/)



## FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, September 26, 1.30pm

### FINANCE, ASSURANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 3, 1.30pm

to be held, was extensively damaged due to the cyclone.

It is hard to see a community asset like the showgrounds, run by community-minded volunteers, to have suffered so much. I admire the dedication involved in continuing to plan to run the 2024 expo, which connects East Coast farmers with agricultural innovators.

## LOTTO WIN

I was thrilled to hear that a lotto ticket purchased from Wairoa New World was the \$10.3 million winning ticket.

We needed some good to happen, and this transformational win is great for the winner and the district. It is really important to respect this person's privacy, and if it is a local person, as has been suggested, then I congratulate them and wish them all the best.