



# WAIROA IN FOCUS

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## FROM MAYOR CRAIG LITTLE BAKING DONATIONS FOR TAIRAWHITI

My heart goes out to our Gisborne/Tairawhiti neighbours who are dealing with the extreme aftermath of the January 21 weather events.

In Wairoa, we know what the impact of severe weather is like, and we really did dodge a bullet in this latest event. While we were fortunate the impact wasn't as bad for us this time, we must remember that no matter how prepared we are, we cannot control Mother Nature. As we are constantly seeing around the country, these extreme flood-related events are occurring more frequently.

On behalf of our Wairoa community, I would like to launch an 'Aroha Tairawhiti' campaign and am hoping local organisations and individuals will be able to provide baking, which we could then donate to our flood-affected neighbours. The Gisborne/Tairawhiti region declared a local state of emergency on Wednesday, January 21, as the East Coast area was once again battered by extreme weather. The flood-damaged communities in Te Araroa and Wharekahika/Hicks Bay really bore the brunt, and the region is also suffering from isolation and restricted road access, particularly with the Waioweka Gorge on SH2 already closed.

After the Wairoa River mouth June 2024 flooding, Gisborne Mayor Rehette Stoltz and Chief Executive Nedine Thatcher-Swann made the trip to Wairoa laden with baked goods and other donations. That visit was so thoughtful, and it really lifted people's spirits. The way they reached out and connected gave us a real boost and made us feel less alone. I really want to reciprocate that feeling and let Gisborne/Tairawhiti know that we are thinking of them and we care. If you or your group are able to donate baking, please give me a call on 027 475 7278.

### Catch up with Mayor Craig Kanohi ki te Kanohi Face to Face

If you have anything you would like to discuss with the Mayor, please call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to arrange a meeting time. The Mayor is available to meet on Wednesdays or by appointment.



*The air ambulance transports more than 400 patients each year to and from the Wairoa community, with the airport upgrade improving access and enabling even more transfers to take place.*

### AIRPORT UPGRADE IS A LIFESAVER

The \$4.2 million government-funded upgrade to the Wairoa Airport is quite literally a lifesaving lifeline.

The upgrade, particularly the lighting and runway extension, will improve access, enabling faster treatment and helping save lives. Those people and their whānau and friends who have experienced the lifesaving service will know the benefits of this upgrade. Personally, I have been required to use the service twice, and it is a reassuring feeling to know you are getting the health care you need in the quickest time possible.

At the moment, the Wairoa runway, at 914m, is the shortest runway in the country used by the New Zealand Air Ambulance Service and cannot be accessed by all of the NZAAS fleet. Every year, in difficult weather conditions, there are dozens of occasions when the air ambulance cannot land in Wairoa due to reduced weather-related visibility. The improved lighting and guidance systems will greatly improve this rate of accessibility.

The improvements also mean larger air ambulances, like the National Starship Children's Air Ambulance based in Auckland, can land directly in Wairoa, which it currently can't due to the runway length.

The upgrade is about ensuring safe, all-weather access for medical aircraft so the service can be there for our people.

I have seen feedback from people saying this money should be spent on stormwater drainage and that the upgrade is commercial and will benefit flight passengers and businesses. While this upgrade will benefit the entire district, for me, improved emergency flight access is the primary driver. When Wairoa is completely shut off by the road to the North and South, the Airport is the only way in and out.

This funding is specifically for the airport, it can't be exchanged for other works. Council is continuing to work on improving our stormwater collection and drainage. There are a number of contributing factors causing flooding. We know there is more work to do, and that it is important we focus on the basics and work towards the Council's infrastructure being fit for purpose and working in partnership with our community.

Our Council is focused on trying to attract as much external funding as possible so we can improve our resilience and be the best we can be.

I know there is still much more work to do, but I am thrilled to have secured this airport funding for our vital lifeline. Again, thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to have this project elevated to a national level. Our Council is particularly grateful to the coalition government and all stakeholders, including local iwi and airport users, who supported this project, which comes at no cost to our local ratepayers.



Wairoa Mayor Craig Little

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

### Environment & Economic Development Committee

Tuesday, February 10, 1pm

### Assurance, Risk & Infrastructure Committee

Tuesday, February 17, 1pm

### Māori Standing Committee

Tuesday, February 24, 1pm

## DOG REGISTRATION PAYMENT PLAN

Setting up a payment plan over the year can help reduce the pinch when it is annual registration time.

To find out more [www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/animal-education/dog-owners](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/services/animal-education/dog-owners)

## PUBLIC NOTICES

Wairoa District Council's public notices can be found by going to [www.wairoadc.govt.nz/public-notices](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/public-notices)

## AFTER HOURS SERVICE

If there is an outage to a Council service outside of regular business hours please call 06 838 7309 - 24/7.

### The GAIETY Now Showing February 5 - 12

#### Mercy

M | 1hr 40m

Thursday 5th February 5.30pm

Saturday 7th February 5.30pm

#### Song Sung Blue

M | 2hr 13m

Friday 6th February 5.30pm

Wednesday 11th February 5.30pm

#### Send Help

R16 | 1hr 53m

Friday 6th February 8pm

Wednesday 11th February 5.30pm

#### Avatar: Fire and Ash

M | 3hr 12m

Saturday 7th February 2pm

#### Grand Prix of Europe

G | 1hr 38m

Sunday 8th February 11.30am

#### Crime 101 PREMIERE

TBC | 2hr 15m

Thursday 12th February 5.30pm

#### The SpongeBob Movie: Search for Squarepants

G | 1hr 36m

Sunday 8th February 2pm

**Creative Communities SCHEME**

**Do you have an amazing creative idea?**

**We have funding to help you bring it to life!**

**Applications are now open**

For more information head to [www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-district/grants-funding/creative-communities-nz/](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-district/grants-funding/creative-communities-nz/)

2026  
**WAIROA**  
**WAITANGI**  
**DAY**

Friday 6 February 9am - 12pm  
Manukanui Pa | Wairoa Library Green

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