

Wairoa In Focus

Your Community, Your Future

Shipping container accommodation alert

A cheap place to live has the potential to turn into a costly option for those choosing to place a shipping container or detached building onto a property without first seeking Council advice.

Wairoa District Council's building team are keen to put the word out that these buildings come with their own risks and are not exempt from consent requirements.

Building Control Team Leader Corinne Hamlin said in recent times these buildings have been popping up all over the district without building consent, which has the potential to turn into a costly exercise for the owners.

Containers/detached buildings are becoming increasingly easy to purchase, with several companies offering structures that have already been converted, with additions such as windows and doors.

"People need to be aware that these conversions are often done without consent and do not comply with the Building Code. If they are relocated onto a property without consent they also do not comply with the Building Act. It may seem like a cheap deal, but it can turn out to be very costly indeed once enforcement actions

start," Mrs Hamlin said. "People often believe that if the container or building is on temporary foundations, it doesn't require consent. This is not the case. Any building over 10m2 requires building consent. We have seen cases where buildings are sitting on piles of unsecured blocks, or have been built onto in such a way as to pose a significant risk to safety," she said.

"Turning a blind eye is not an option for us, as council ensures buildings are safe, sanitary and meet the minimum requirements of the building code." In some cases, containers had been put on multiple-owned land which may have reduced rates because it is meant to be used only for grazing. Once a building is placed on the property, this would mean the special values are revoked and it is likely rates will increase significantly.

People need to be aware there is a process to placing a building on land, and any buildings are subject to the Building Act, Health Act, Resource Management Act and the District Plan.

The other matter for consideration is the life-span of the container, which is much less than that of a regular building due to the fact it has been

exposed to weather elements for undetermined periods of time.

"As we have no way of knowing how long the container has been in operation, we work on limited lifespan, which could be around five years, as opposed to a 50-year lifespan for a regular building."

Containers/detached buildings can still be a solution for many people, so the best way to find out what you can and can't do is to get in touch with council's building team to find out more. Call into council or phone on (06) 838 7309.



These are an example of the containers that are being converted into dwellings.

Maori representation opinion sought

Councils are required to decide every six years whether or not to institute Maori Seats. This means that in the next election, you could have the choice of voting for a Maori Seat candidate, or a general candidate.

WDC Councillors are currently seeking public opinion to find out whether the community would like to see dedicated Maori Seats. They must make a decision by November this year if it is to apply to the 2013 Local Government election.

The number of Maori Seats depends on the number of voters registered on the Maori Electoral Roll (MER). This would equate to two or three seats, depending on official figures, leaving three or four general seats, plus the Mayor.

Only voters on the MER can vote for Maori Seat candidates. Anyone of Maori descent can enroll on the MER, but those registered can only vote for Maori Seat candidates, not those standing for general seats. People on

both the MER and General Roll can vote for Mayoral candidates.

Anyone can stand for a Maori Seat, but a candidate cannot stand for both general and Maori seats at the same time.

Once elected, Maori Seat holders have the same responsibilities as other councillors to represent the entire community.

To find out more, visit www.wairoadc.govt.nz, or contact WDC Chief Executive Peter Freeman or Maori Liaison Officer Ropata Ainsley on (06) 838 7309.

If you'd like to add your opinion, fill out the form below. Councillors will make their decision at a meeting on Tuesday, November 8. Public meetings are being around the district. All meetings start at 6pm, taking place at the Wairoa Community Centre (tonight), Takitimu Marae (Oct 5), Mokotahi Hall (Oct 12), Mohaka Marae (Oct 17) and Ardkeen Hall (Oct 19).

EXPRESSION OF OPINION

Name: _____

Comments: _____

Do you wish Wairoa District Council to include dedicated Maori Seats?

YES NO

(Please tick one)

Return to: Wairoa District Council, PO Box 54, Wairoa 4160

BEFORE 12 NOON, TUESDAY, OCT 25

This form is not an official poll. It is simply to gauge public opinion.

Protect community trees

Do-it-yourself tree surgeons are being asked to put their saws away and leave council reserves alone following a number of incidents involving people cutting down trees along the riverbank.

Reasons provided for the illegal pruning include firewood gathering, making room for whitebait stands and to improve the view.

WDC Engineering Administration Officer Nicky Bradley said most people she had dealt with over the matter had been co-operative, which was appreciated.

"If people do have a problem with a particular tree, please come and see us about it so that the matter can be dealt with safely," she said.

WDC has an extensive policy dedicated to "street trees", which includes trees on council reserves. Provision is made within the policy to consider any request to

remove or modify trees, taking into account factors such as whether the tree poses any danger to people or property, or causes undue interference to the reasonable enjoyment of a person's private property.

Such issues are weighed up with how the removal of the tree will affect the surrounding environment and the value of the tree itself as a public asset.

"We have this policy in place so that we have clear guidance on how to proceed with a complaint about a tree in a fair, consistent way, that takes all factors into consideration," Ms Bradley said.

To find out more about the 'Amenity Street Tree Policy' or to discuss how to go about getting a tree removed, please contact Nicky Bradley on (06) 838 7309.

Get connected in CBD

Wairoa residents and visitors will be able to browse, tweet and Facebook to their hearts' content with the launch of free wifi in the central business district.

WAIROA WIFI (pronounced 'why-fy') is available in outdoor areas from Riverview Dairy to the Lighthouse, including parts of the riverbank reserve.

Wairoa is one of the first small towns in Australasia to provide a comprehensive free wifi network in the CBD. With a set-up cost of \$9000, it is expected to cost \$1500 a year to run.

Implementation of the service was a joint effort involving Wairoa District Council, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Harcourts - Wairoa Property Ltd, local property owner Jill Cameron and network service providers WASP NZ Ltd.

Free wifi is also available at the Wairoa Public Library.

Top tips for using free wifi:

- Make sure your wifi function is turned on.
- If you only have dial-up at home,

it could be worth making use of WAIROA WIFI instead.

- Keep your computer or device up-to-date with the latest security measures.
- You must be within range of the network. Your wifi card will detect the hotspot and you will have a live internet connection.

For the diary:

Council meetings:

October 11
November 8
December 13

Forum:

October 25
November 22

Maori Standing Committee:

September 30*
October 28
November 25*

*Meeting will be held on a marae

Meetings are held in the Council Chambers in the Queen Street offices and are open to the public, unless otherwise specified.

For more information phone 838 7309 or visit www.wairoadc.govt.nz