



Wairoa In Focus

Your Community, Your Future

Residents believe Wairoa great place to live

Around 97 percent of Wairoa residents feel the district is a safe place to live, with 84 percent taking a positive view on their quality of life here. This was one of many findings reported in the annual Wairoa District Council-commissioned Communitrak survey to garner important viewpoints from a cross-section of the community.

203 residents were recently interviewed over the phone by National Research Bureau Ltd, an independent firm specialising in local government surveys.

Quota sampling ensured an even balance of male and female, as well as proportional ethnic group quotas, in order to obtain an indication of typical resident perceptions.

The survey covered several different aspects of Council operations, with 91 percent of respondents saying they were satisfied with the overall service received when contacting Council offices.

Residents were read out a number of Council functions and asked whether they are very satisfied, fairly satisfied or not very satisfied with the provision of that service or facility.

Parking in Wairoa was viewed favourably, with 85 percent satisfaction, while the library service earned 83 percent satisfaction. Livestock control was covered in this line of questioning, receiving an 84 percent satisfaction rate, while reserves and sportsgrounds also received 84 percent.

Perceptions of the Mayor and Councillors also came under the survey's spotlight, with 69 percent of residents rating their performance as very or fairly good. This places Wairoa above the Peer Group and National Averages.

Consultation was covered in the survey, with 56 percent wanting consultation on major issues and further 24 percent wanting to be consulted step-by-step on most issues. Conversely, 20 percent want to let the Mayor and Councillors get on with the job they were elected for, while still being informed.

Chief Executive Peter Freeman said the annual survey was a useful tool in determining how council services and functions could be improved.

"We take these results seriously. While we are happy with the positive aspects of the survey, we certainly won't be resting on our laurels. Moving forward, the focus will be on

A renewed focus on improving education around dog control laws will be put into effect as a result of the annual Communitrak survey, which revealed around 36 percent of respondents were unhappy with the number of stray dogs.

Some people even indicated they were too frightened to walk down certain streets within the Wairoa township.

Animal control team leader Des Jane said the results of the survey were significant and steps would be taken to make sure people felt safe.

"We have statistical data that shows us complaints have decreased over the past few years, but clearly there is room for improvement," he said.

Around 75 percent of respondents said they had not used dog control services over the past year.

"If people do have concerns, they need to contact us immediately so that we can get an officer on the scene to deal with any problem dogs."

"Certain dog owners do persist in allowing their dogs to wander. It doesn't matter if it's a Rottweiler or a fox terrier – no dogs should be wandering," Mr Jane said.

If a dog is caught straying, it is impounded. If the same dog is impounded a second time, an infringement of \$200 may be issued.

Three convictions for the same offence may result in the owner being prevented from owning a dog.

"It is not a right to own a dog. There are obligations that must be met. In general, the majority of owners do meet these requirements."

New full-time Animal Control Officer Harry Te Rangi will be a familiar face to many, having worked for WDC on a part-time basis for the past few years. Harry joins team leader Des Jane and fellow officer Michael Walker in carrying out compliance work.



Youth in spotlight this month

Arts and culture were a hit with those who chose to take part in Youth Week activities last week. The fun began with a theatre workshop on Wednesday, followed by auditions for a theatre production on Thursday and a concert performed by local bands on Friday.

WDC Youth Co-ordinator Ali Maru said the purpose of organising these events was to give Wairoa youth an opportunity to see what they are capable of as well as celebrating the skills and talents they already have. "Those who took part were taking a big leap out of their comfort zone, which is exactly what we aimed to do. Allowing them to push themselves in that kind of environment will hopefully encourage them to do so in other areas of their lives," she said. Kahungunu Executive and Te Ora Hou were also involved in organising Youth Week.

YROA YNOT has been making its mentoring programme a particular focus at present, and mentors from the community are still sought to make a difference in a

young person's life. Becoming a volunteer involves getting together with a Wairoa College student on a one-to-one basis throughout the year, providing support in a number of ways, such as meeting with the student for about an hour a week to help with

tutoring, goal-setting, career exploration or sport.

Mrs Maru said the programme had produced some great results. In particular, junior students have gained confidence, built strong relationships and now contribute to their community in a positive way.

Mentoring Year 7 students to support them as they make

the transition from primary to secondary school was a particular focus for this year.

"We would like to see some strong relationships develop early in their College years that will give them a sense of direction to see them through their schooling."

Mentors were also required for older students, although this could be in a group situation.

Providing a mentoring programme is one of the key focus areas of YROA

YNOT, with aims such as improving self-esteem, keeping young people in education and helping to improve academic skills. It is also designed to act as a bridge between generations within the community.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the programme and what it means to be a mentor, should contact Ali on 838 3821/027 666 4560 or allison@wairoadc.govt.nz.



Consider becoming a mentor

Forget flushing fabric

Please stop flushing fabrics or other non-soluble materials down the loo - this is the plea from council officers responsible for the maintenance of the town's sewerage system. Continuous callouts to unblock and repair pumps are having a detrimental effect on the environment and are costing ratepayers.

The machines are all heavy duty effluent pumps. However, they can become blocked easily by large quantities of foreign matter. The chief culprit by far is rag, including towelling and discarded underwear, which accumulates, then gets sucked into the pumps. The only way to fix the problem is to get someone out to clear the pump, by which time the effluent level in the reticulation system may have become unacceptably elevated.

The solution is to dispose of this material elsewhere.

REPORT ANIMAL CONTROL PROBLEMS 24 HOURS/7 DAYS BY CALLING 06 838 7309

For the diary:

Council Meetings:

June 12
July 10
August 14
September 11
October 9
November 13
December 11

Council Forum:

June 26
July 24
August 28
September 25
October 23
November 27

Maori Committee:

June 29
July 27
August 31
September 28
October 26
November 30

Meetings and forums 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