

MAYORAL COLUMN



Mayor Craig Little

THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

I am not opposed to the Government's Billion Dollar Tree project as long as the right tree is planted in the right place.

This was the main topic of conversation when I visited Parliament last week.

Local farmer Dave Read accompanied me, and we represented all farmers in our district who are concerned about the impacts blanket forestry planting will have on our district.

In the last six to eight months about 10,000 ha, which equates to seven percent of the district's pastoral land, has been purchased by forestry.

If forestry were to continue at that rate Wairoa pastoral farms would be wiped out in 11 years' time.

Agricultural production census figures for 2017 show that in the Wairoa district each 1000ha of forestry directly employed 1.5 people, compared with 7.6 people for every 1000ha in sheep and beef farming.

LOCAL MP STUART NASH ORGANISED OUR PARLIAMENT MEETING, AND THE RECEPTION WE RECEIVED WAS VERY ENCOURAGING WITH AN AUDIENCE OF AROUND 25 PEOPLE.

We met with the Minister of Forestry Shane Jones, Minister of Conservation and Associate Minister of Environment Eugenie Sage, Minister of Agriculture Damien O'Connor and representatives of the overseas investment office, MPI and other Government officials.

Dave Read is like a walking talking encyclopaedia of land use facts, and I believe our audience listened to us. We weren't there knocking the project, we were simply saying we have had our quota.

Shane Jones agreed there is a problem when productive farming country is going into trees.

He told us he would look into the situation, particularly the criteria for overseas investors around buying into forestry as opposed to farm blocks, and the carbon credit incentives.

We also met with Lawrence Yule, National MP for Tukituki. Lawrence and I were colleagues when he was Mayor of Hastings, and he arranged for us to meet National Party representatives, to again discuss the concerns around forestry blanket planting.

I have confidence we were listened to, and I hope there is a change, so future planting is spread across the whole country.

RAIL OPENING

The Wairoa/Napier Rail line is scheduled to be officially reopened next Friday, June 14.

Many people, including myself, did not think our rail line would ever reopen.

The commitment from this Government to ensure we have alternative transport methods is really encouraging.

Having a train back on track will get more vehicles off the road and who knows, we may even end up with a passenger service in the future.

POLICE STAFF NUMBERS

It is great to see the Police active in our district.

We have been pushing to have our town fully resourced with enough staff for a 24/7 station. This is being achieved by working at a local, regional and national level.

Gangs and crime, particularly methamphetamine-related crime, will not be tolerated. The Hawke's Bay Mayors have joined together, and we will continue to work to keep our communities safe.

Anyone with information around gangs or crime should phone the new non-urgent Police number 105, or if you are uneasy calling that number, contact me in confidence.

MĀORI FILM FESTIVAL

The Māori Film Festival saw indigenous art and cinema rolled out over Queen's Birthday weekend.

This year was the 14th festival with director Leo Koziol at the helm. It ran over four days across three venues at Nuhaka, Mōrere and the Gaiety Theatre in town.

The Gala event at the Gaiety was a fantastic evening, and I would like to extend a big shout out to Leo and all those people who worked hard to make the evening, and the rest of the weekend, the success it was.

A highlight was the Te Wairoa Leadership in Media Award which was presented to Wairoa's precious taonga Whaea Liz Hunkin.



It was an honour to present the Te Wairoa Leadership in Media Award to Wairoa's precious taonga Whaea Liz Hunkin.

The award is sponsored by the Wairoa District Council and recognises someone who inspires the use of media in all its forms to promote and uplift the Wairoa district and her people and utilises media in all its forms to promote and uplift the Wairoa district and her people.

Liz Hunkin is an amazing woman, an educational expert and Te reo Māori exponent.

Her many contributions have been well recognised at a national level, and it was fantastic that her amazing accomplishments, leadership and outstanding contribution to the promotion of Te Reo have again been honoured.

She is a true leader in the revitalisation of te reo Māori within the district and has championed Te Ataarangi and the teaching of te reo Māori for over two decades here in Wairoa.

She has made an outstanding contribution to the survival of te reo through her own passionate teaching and her determination to help others succeed in learning. This award is in particular recognition to her regular column in the Wairoa Star "Rui, Ruia".

FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 11 June: 1.30pm

MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 June: 12.30pm

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 18 June: 1.30pm

FINANCE, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25 June: 1.30pm



CONTACT US

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ROAD CLOSURE

**Mahia East Coast Road
6-9 June 2019**

For more information visit
🌐 www.wairoadc.govt.nz

