



MAYORAL COLUMN

VISIT FROM MINISTERS

Last week, Cyclone Recovery Minister, the Hon. Grant Robertson and Minister for Emergency Management and Hawke's Bay Cyclone Recovery ministerial lead, the Hon. Kieran McNulty, visited Wairoa.

This was the first time Mr Robertson had visited us since Cyclone Gabrielle, and he acknowledged the enormous damage our people and our whenua have suffered.

He talked about a locally and regionally-led rebuilding approach supported by the central government.

He acknowledged that Wairoa's geographical location makes it difficult to get things done and that we have specific and unique issues that need to be taken into account.

He also said negotiations are taking place around flood mitigation options and Land Categorisations. While the Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working with the central government on this, Mr Robertson wants to ensure any developments align with what Wairoa wants. This was reassuring to hear, we need our local entities working together to find a solution for Wairoa.

Currently, Wairoa is 'in limbo' hanging in the 2A category, which is basically the category of uncertainty with significant further assessment required. To move to 2C, or even 1, we need flood mitigation, which will come at a cost.

Mr Robertson assured us that the central government will contribute significantly towards future-proofing Wairoa. None of us want a repeat of Cyclone Bola 35 years ago, where nothing happened.

The four key issues to be able to move forward are confirmation of funding and how that looks, design, securing any necessary land and the regulatory process.

The Ministers also acknowledged the damage our infrastructure has sustained and the untapped potential we have as we rebuild.

Wairoa is a vast area with a low rating base, and there was also discussion around factors like Growth Domestic Product (GDP) that could be taken into account as our district produces more

per capita than most.

We will continue to work with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and Central Government to ensure we find the best future focussed solution for Wairoa. We are not in a position to pay for recovery costs, including flood mitigation.

ANNUAL PLAN ADOPTED

This week Council adopted its 2023/24 Annual Plan. The key for elected members has been balancing affordability with cyclone recovery and future growth.

Council had initially gone into the Annual Plan engagement process with a proposed 15.4 per cent increase. However, a projected contribution from Council Controlled Trading Organisation (CCTO) QRS has seen the final average increase drop to 10.6 per cent.

We appreciate the success and hard work of QRS in returning a projected higher contribution. It is a real credit to QRS that they have done so well. We have also received tremendous business support in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle from other local businesses like Affco. Any business that would like to contribute to help Wairoa rebuild and recover, please get in touch with me.

We need to be thinking about and planning for our future. While we have offset some of the increased costs, it does not take away from the fact that rising costs due to supply and demand issues and increasing inflation have put real pressure on the budgets Council forecasted for this year.

We have many challenges ahead of us and, moving forward, will need to focus on recovery and resilience while continuing with Wairoa's economic development, particularly by attracting external funding.

NORTH CLYDE REBUILDING

It was a privilege to be part of the re-opening of the Mahia Ave Store on Saturday. I was invited to the re-opening along with elected member Melissa Kaimoana. It was truly heartwarming to see this popular shop reopen its doors after five long months. Given the damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle, it would have been easy for Sima and Gul and their beautiful family to walk away and turn their backs on Wairoa. Instead, they dug deep, persevered, overcame an enormous hurdle and reopened! This is another step forward for the whānau of North Clyde.

I would also like to thank the owner of The Wairoa Dairy, Kurawari Panere, for the support she and her team have given the North Clyde community. Her business, on Carroll Street, had only been open for two weeks when it was flooded by Cyclone Gabrielle. Whānau and friends rallied around, and the dairy was back open within two weeks, a tremendous effort and a vital hub for North Clyde whānau.

I have also been working with Mobil Wairoa, and I hope we will soon see some work towards reopening the business and offering petrol sales, a convenience store and takeaways on the North Clyde side of town.

MOBILE ICE SKATE RINK

I know the excitement is building for next week's mobile ice-skating rink arrival.

It is great that we will have a different fun activity in the community. I understand the daytime group sessions are fully booked, but some out-of-school times may still be available.

Skating sessions are at least half an hour and are subsidised by the Council, costing \$8 for a child, \$12 for adults 16 and over, and \$35 for a family pass. The rink will be in town at the War Memorial Hall on Queen Street from Monday, July 24, to Sunday, July 30. To make a booking during public times, please head to

<https://www.trybooking.com/nz/events/landing/9798>. Tickets are also available from the i-Site.

MAYORAL RELIEF FUND

So far, more than \$700,000 has been distributed to local people who have applied for funding through the Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund.

Our focus has been on those people whose houses have been stickered. We look forward to continuing with the distributions to help people impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Applications can be made by scanning the QR Code or via the following link: <https://www.wairoadc.govt.nz/our-council/>



REGISTER YOUR DOG



Register your dog before 31st August!

GET IN TOUCH

(06) 838 7309

compliance@wairoadc.govt.nz

FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Māori Standing Committee

Tuesday, July 25, 1.30pm

Wairoa Youth Council

Tuesday, August 1, 3.30pm

Council Forum

Tuesday, August 8, 1.30pm

CONTACT US

Wairoa District Council

Queen St, Wairoa

info@wairoadc.govt.nz (06) 838 7309



Mobile ice skate rink coming to Wairoa

Get ready for a cool but not cold ice-skating experience.

Based at the War Memorial Hall, Queen Street, from Monday July 24 - Sunday July 30.

The rink will be open to the public out of school hours and available to groups and school classes during the day, with training also offered and disco skate nights.

Skating sessions are at least half an hour and are subsidised by the Council, costing \$8 for a child, \$12 for adults aged 16 and over, and \$35 for a family pass.

To make a booking during public times, please head to www.trybooking.com/nz/events/landing/9798. Tickets can also be purchased from the Wairoa i-Site. For group bookings, please email ed@wairoadc.govt.nz

