



## CYCLONE GABRIELLE

We are now six months post-Cyclone Gabrielle, and as we head towards spring, I hope things will start to pick up for the many flood-impacted people in our district.

It is hard out there, and often things don't seem to be happening as fast as we would like, but I know everyone is doing their best and I thank you for your patience.

It is easy to focus on the things that haven't been done. But it is also important to look at what has been achieved. At the peak of the Cyclone Gabrielle event, we had 37 road closures due to cyclone-related damage and we are now down to two. We had 14 bridges/large culverts damaged or destroyed. We are now down to three compromised bridges with two of the areas having natural crossings with temporary ford structures being constructed for improved access until bridge repairs/replacements can be completed, and the Te Reinga Bridge which has been removed and a temporary design being worked on. Six other bridges require approach scour repairs and designs have been completed and repairs are underway.

Our Recovery Team continues to be a connector at a grassroots level. There have been some great initiatives, like the free tickets to the Hawke's Bay Magpies rugby game for flood-impacted whānau and a range of assistance packages to suit people's needs. For more information, email [recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz).

Wairoa District Council, Hawke's Bay Regional Council, and Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa have partnered to advocate that Wairoa must have flood protection and that the status quo must change.

Under the Government's Land Categorisation, Wairoa had been sitting in 2A, which meant more assessment was needed. The Government ring-fenced funding of \$70 million means flood protection can be implemented, which will help us manage future severe weather events.

We have been gathering community feedback around the flood protection options that people would like to see for Wairoa. The next stage of engagement is to use this feedback to create options and bring these concepts back to the community as part of a multi-phased engagement approach. We know that flood protection and mitigation will impact landowners and will likely require land acquisition and that keeping our community informed is paramount.

## UPCOMING ELECTION

The election is only a couple of months away, and I urge all Wairoa voters to be involved and make your vote count.

Cyclone Gabrielle has been life-changing, and it is essential that we think about what we need as a district to move forward. There will be opportunities, such as funding towards flood protection. But we have also lost services such as no aged care facility, no residential care for intellectually disabled people, no permanent dentist, and access to health care is significantly lacking.

I encourage people to get involved, listen to the options, do some research and make your vote count.

## MAYORAL RELIEF FUND



Around \$800,000 has been paid out from the Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund to flood-affected people. Thank you to all those people, businesses and organisations that have contributed to this fund.

The initial distribution was to assist in ensuring residents felt supported, and donors saw the impact of their generosity. The fund is still open to first-time applicants.

Every dollar that goes into the fund goes back into our community. I know that in some cases, it has been a slow process, but that is because we are doing all the work ourselves to ensure we are not wasting money paying for administration and overheads.

The updated funding criteria are as follows:

- Individuals/ families/whānau
- Local businesses – whose businesses were deemed non-habitable, causing displacement.
- Local marae
- Local community organisations and groups
- Welfare Requests – i.e., accommodation costs, travel expenses

Applications for funds are considered where the applicant:

- Is a permanent resident of the Wairoa District or was a permanent resident/ratepayer of the Wairoa District on 14th February 2023; and
- Has suffered a financial loss or is experiencing financial hardship due to the flooding in February 2023, and subsequent weather events.
- Is not eligible for funding assistance from any other source.

All funding prioritises white, yellow and red stickered properties, impacted marae, churches, community organisations and groups, affected businesses, and community groups supporting the clean-up at their expense. All grants are subject to funding availability. Unspent funds (if any) will be applied at the discretion of the Fund Allocation Panel and held for the purposes of other hardship grants under the criteria that exist for that fund for extreme hardship.

First-time applicants:

- Up to \$2,000 for households that have been white, yellow or red stickered.
- Up to \$1,000 for individuals from homes that have already received a grant, up to a maximum of 3 individuals from that home.
- Up to \$5,000 for marae, churches, community organisations and affected businesses.
- Up to \$500 for local Wairoa community groups supporting the cleanup at their own expense.

Additional Funding of \$350,000 has been received and ring-fenced for further distribution to those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle. The criteria for this additional funding are:

- Applications for Yellow stickered homes will be considered on a case-by-case basis up to \$1,000.
- Applications for White stickered homes will be considered on a case-by-case basis up to \$500.00.
- Applications for Commercial Properties will be considered on a case-by-case basis up to \$500.00.



*Mayor Craig Little*

## MEET THE MAYOR KANOHI KI TE KANOHI

If you would like to have a meeting with the Mayor, please call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to make an appointment.

## FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### STRATEGY, WELLBEING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 29, 1.30pm

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE:

Tuesday, September 5, 1.30pm

### MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 12, 1.30pm

All additional fundings applications are to be directed to [recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz](mailto:recovery@wairoadc.govt.nz)

## JOHN KIRWAN VISIT

I attended Sir John Kirwan's evening in town - what a fantastic guy. The All-Black legend and mental health campaigner has helped thousands of New Zealanders stay strong through tough times. His visit was part of his role as Westpac NZ Ambassador and involved visiting communities hit hard by the severe weather.

Everyone is under a lot of pressure at the moment, and it was reassuring to have Sir John openly discuss stress and mental health. My biggest takeaway was that people often don't ask for help if they feel down, when reaching out is the best thing to do. Look after yourselves and look after each other.