

Mayoral Column | 22 February 2024



## ONE-YEAR CYCLONE ANNIVERSARY

The first anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle was a day of mixed emotions and a time to reflect and remember.

The commemorations put on by the Recovery Office showcased the best of Wairoa with true community spirit and whānau involvement across generations. It was a full day of activities, from the inflatable kids' zone to the evening concert of star performers.

The dawn hiko was a sad occasion as we walked past houses that were still empty.

It is frustrating that we still have more than 100 yellow stickered properties, our roading network to Wairoa from the north and the south remains fragile, we have no river protection and our lost services, such as Glengarry aged care and Idea Services, have not been replaced.

We must not allow the focus to shift away from Wairoa while our people still suffer. We must not forget that, per capita, Wairoa was the most impacted local authority of Cyclone Gabrielle affected areas and the most isolated.

We still have a mountain of work to do, and we need to continue to work together to get the best outcomes possible.

Thank you to the Wairoa Recovery Office, led by Manager Benita Tahuri, for the work in planning the anniversary commemorations. The day ran like clockwork, was well organised and a tribute to everyone involved.



The Cyclone Gabrielle one-year hiko with Deputy Mayor Denise Eaglesome-Karekare, Napier/Wairoa MP Katie Nimon, MP for Ikaroa-Rāwhiti Cushla Tangaere-Manuel and myself.

## LONG-TERM PLAN

The Council is once again working through its legislative long-term planning process. The three-year Long-Term Plan (LTP) will set our future direction and work and describe the outcomes we aim to achieve.

Recognising the devastating impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle, the Government changed the requirement to produce a 10-year LTP for severely impacted councils. Instead, the government directed those

councils, including the Wairoa District Council, to produce a three-year plan for 2024-2027 focused on cyclone recovery.

The Wairoa District Council is responsible for delivering a range of essential services and facilities, including water supply, wastewater (sewage treatment and disposal), waste management (rubbish and recycling), transport (roads and footpaths), parks and reserves, libraries, economic development, and animal control to name a few.

We are mindful that the extensive time and resource pressures resulting from Cyclone Gabrielle and the rising inflationary costs of providing our core services and facilities present real challenges for the Council and the community.

As we plan for our future, we need to think about our service levels and how they will be funded as we rebuild and recover from Cyclone Gabrielle while minimising the impacts on our community and our ratepayers.

We want to hear from you and understand your concerns and your needs as we travel this road of recovery together.

To have your say, please scan the QR code or go to [www.wairoadc.govt.nz](http://www.wairoadc.govt.nz)



## WAIROA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

I encourage all local businesses to become part of the Wairoa Business Association.

In our small and remote town, the only way to success is to support each other and come together as a united group.

The Wairoa Business Association, formed last year, does exactly that, with its focus on supporting, promoting and growing all Wairoa businesses – from main street shops to smaller niche businesses. It's been a challenging few years, from the impacts of COVID-19 to Cyclone Gabrielle - making now a perfect time for a reset.

The Wairoa Business Association wants to attract additional business and investment to our town. We all want Wairoa to be a place where people stop and shop.

The association will be asking business owners where they would like the group to focus its attention. A survey is being circulated, and the results will form the basis for the future direction. By asking businesses what they want, the group will be truly reflective of local businesses, and more people will want to be members.



Mayor Craig Little

## MEET THE MAYOR KANOHI KI TE KANOHI

If you would like to have a meeting with the Mayor, call the council offices on 06 838 7309 to arrange a meeting time. He is available to meet with people on Wednesdays.

## FOR YOUR DIARY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

### STRATEGY, WELLBEING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 27, 10am

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 27, 1.30pm

### MĀORI STANDING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 5, 10am

### COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, March 12, 10am

### COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, March 12, 1.30pm

### WAIROA YOUTH COUNCIL

Tuesday, March 12, 3.30pm

The Council wants to play a role in this reinvigoration. We want to see all our businesses grow and prosper, and we want to be part of helping that to happen.

By joining the Wairoa Business Association, the group will be strongly represented, liaise with the Council and work in partnership to support our local businesses to thrive.