

Mayoral Column | 29 May 2024



WAIROA MAYORAL RELIEF FUND

I am continually humbled by the funding donated to the Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund. We launched this fund directly after Cyclone Gabrielle, and the total contributions received have exceeded \$2 million.

That is \$2 million worth of love and support and demonstrates how people feel about our community and how they have wanted to help us recover from the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle.

We are so appreciative of everyone who has donated to this fund. We have seen contributions from all over the country, from private individuals to corporations, other Councils and businesses along with community service organisations and clubs.

The Give a Little Page that was established has been a great way for people to donate to the fund – thank you to you all, and we also received donations of essential products like gib, furniture and beds.

I would particularly like to acknowledge Te Uru Taumatua (Ngāi Tūhoe) for their considerable and transformational financial support of \$500,000. This iwi contribution demonstrated how we can all work together and personally gave me hope that Wairoa had the collective ability to recover from the cyclone. This generous Te Uru Taumatua donation was followed by Affco giving a \$100,000 donation, assisting with our water supply, and generous donations of meat and other support. Genesis Energy also generously donated \$100,000 to the fund. Other significant funders were the First Light Community Foundation, which has demonstrated ongoing support; QRS, which, as well as a financial contribution, has proven how important it is to have a Wairoa-based contracting company; and Rocket Lab.

I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of the Rapid Relief Team who were onsite helping with food immediately after the cyclone and then their donations of fencing gear to the farmers of our district along with other organisations like Big Save Furniture, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and New Zealand Red Cross.

Thank you to everyone who has helped make a difference, there are so many others who have, and are still, helping out with our recovery. Your support will always be remembered.

This fund only exists because of the generosity of the people and organisations that have made these donations. Donors wanted the funding to go directly to support the people of Wairoa who are most in need. We are tremendously grateful for the generosity of the hundreds of people whose donations will help towards our whānau rebuilding in the wake of such destruction.

While hundreds of thousands of dollars have been allocated to our community based on the applications we have received, the funding we have left, and that is still coming in, will help get our whānau back into their homes.

The panel reviewing applications, allocating the Mayoral Relief Fund and making the decisions comprises Nigel How, Chair of Wairoa Taiwhenua, well-respected North Clyde resident Hine Kohn, and myself. Every dollar received and applied for is accounted for.

We are still trying to attract funding, and my aim is to continue until every flood-affected home in Wairoa is rebuilt. Thank you again for caring for and helping our community.

LONG TERM PLAN

Council is in the process of finalising its Long-Term Plan. The cyclone and back-to-back weather events have caused enormous suffering for our people and had massive implications for the Council's infrastructure and finances.

Like other Councils and businesses, we are also facing an economic storm, with the highest inflation

and interest rates in three decades and increased costs in areas we cannot control.

Our job is to rebuild our community and become more resilient so the whānau of Wairoa can thrive.

We must balance that with an affordable and responsible financial pathway while still looking ahead.

Planning for our district's future has never been more challenging. Elected members and staff will be out and about in the community over the next few weeks, and we welcome the chance to catch-up and hear your thoughts.



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

COUNCIL FORUM

Tuesday, June 4, 10am

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, June 4, 1.30pm

YOUTH COUNCIL

Tuesday, June 4, 3.30pm

TE ROHE O TE WAIROA RESERVES BOARD MATANGIRAU

Tuesday, June 11, 10am

FINANCE ASSURANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 11, 1.30pm