



OUR PLACE

Ko Konei

Your Whakatane District Council
Community update - August 2014



Refresh for Council fleet

Faded and dated Whakatane District Council vehicle graphics are now in the process of being refreshed to align with the Council's new branding. The graphics were designed internally with simplicity and longevity in mind and production is being progressively rolled out through the vehicle fleet by a local supplier.



New welcome to town

The Whakatane Airport has new entranceway signage. Aaron Milne, Whakatane District Council's Business Services Manager, says this is part of a wider initiative to welcome visitors and promote the District. "The Airport is the gateway to the Eastern Bay of Plenty and as such plays a key role in creating a strong first impression with both business and leisure visitors. Having recorded the highest number of sunshine hours nationwide for three of the past four years, Whakatane can rightfully claim the mantle of "NZ's Sunshine Capital" and going forward this will be a major theme in the District's branding and promotional activities."

Strand Plaza takes shape

The next stage of the Strand Plaza redevelopment is now underway, with local company BCS Roding being contracted to install paving, landscaping and lighting and power supply points. A new water main and stormwater piping will also be installed, with other work to include the relocation of the nearby pedestrian crossing and upgrading the service lane to the north of the Plaza. Work is expected to be completed by the end of September and the entire project opened to the public, in conjunction with the opening of the adjacent retail redevelopment, in early-October.



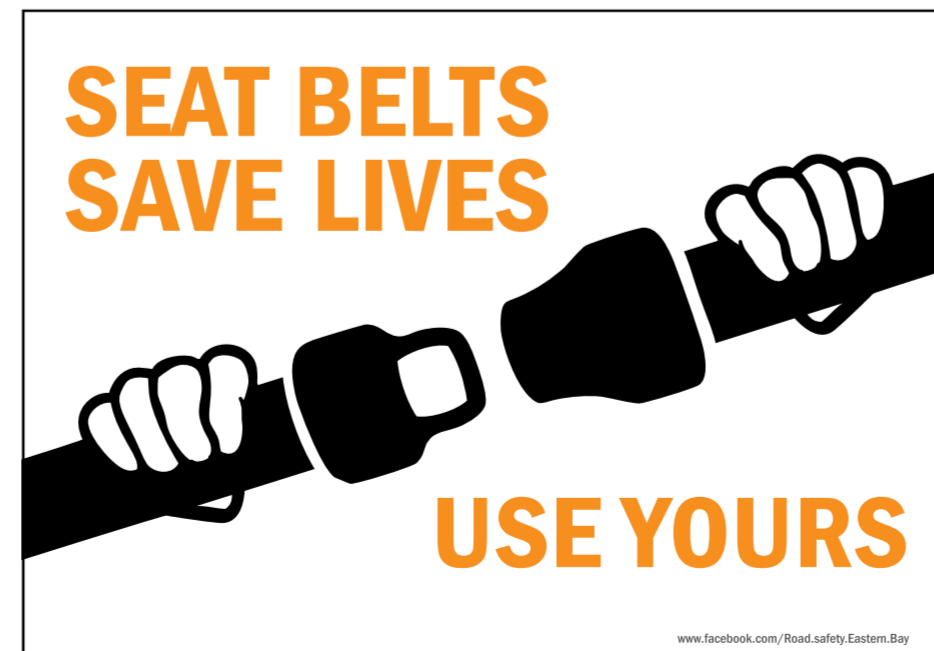
Looking out for one another

Road crashes don't just affect the people involved. Eastern Bay communities feel the impact. That's why the region's road safety representatives ask residents to look out for each other.

Drive to weather conditions, especially at this time of year when roads are wet and often slippery. Tell your whanau and friends to do the same. Help us keep you safe out there so you get to wherever you're going. Your family wants you home safely.

As one Eastern Bay woman says, losing someone close in a car accident is the most horrific thing to go through. "I lost my mum in a car accident. Nothing can prepare you for a cruel and sudden loss like that. My heart sinks every time I hear of a fatal accident. I just wish people would stop thinking it won't happen to them or their loved ones. It's so frustrating because these accidents don't need to happen if drivers make better choices. It is a long grieving process to go through that affects so many people, and it could all be avoided," she says.

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. Visit Eastern Bay Road Safety on Facebook for news, information and advice about driving around the region.



Community Board Meeting

The Whakatane Community Board's next meeting will be held at Wairaka Marae on Wednesday, 20 August 2014. The meeting will commence at 5.30pm and interested members of the public are welcome to attend. The Community Board supports a wide range of community groups, including recent funding for the Eastern Bay Brass Band, whose junior members competed at the NZ Championships in Invercargill. The players did the town proud and came back with a number of awards.

Funding was also provided to the Bay of Plenty Rugby Union to assist with the cost of hosting the recent Women's Rugby match at Rugby Park, where the Black Ferns beat Canada. A donation was made towards the cost of a new mural at the Whakatane District Aquatic and Fitness Centre.

For more information, contact Janie Storey on 306 0500 or janie.storey@whakatane.govt.nz

Mana Taiohi programme a success

A first-of-its-kind, Whakatane District Council-led youth development project has been hailed a success following a completion programme held in Galatea recently. The Mana Taiohi programme engaged potential young leaders from the district's rural communities and supported the small teams involved in planning and project-managing events in their communities.

Erena Brew of the Whakatane District Council says the programme provided real 'hands-on' opportunities for young people to turn their event ideas into reality. "And in the process, they have gained an appreciation of the skills and planning required to run an event," she says. "They have also learnt the importance of good communication, what it means to be a reliable team member and how to network to get support for their event."

On the final day of the Mana Taiohi youth development programme on 7 July, participants came together to share the lessons learnt, talk about their next life steps and listen to educator Marcus Akuhata-Brown share his story about taking up opportunities when they came to him.

The programme is funded through the Ministry of Youth Development and Mana Taiohi programme co-ordinator Renske Forsyth says it has been well-received and supported. "The energy and gifts these young people have to share with their communities is already obvious," she says, "and it is exciting to share their journeys of discovery."

The great New Zealand SUNSHINE RACE 2014

Whakatane has been the country's sunshine capital for three of the last four years and is well on the way to making it four-out-of-five...



Hours of sunshine as at 30 June

Greenways response positive

The community's response to the Whakatane River Greenways Concept Plan has been particularly positive. Whakatane District Council Community Services Manager Paula Chapman says the feedback on the draft plan has been extensive, with a number of proposals – including facility improvements, ecological enhancement and a community garden – being warmly welcomed by community groups and individual stakeholders alike. One of the main features of the Concept Plan is linked to the implementation of the Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy. This provides for increased opportunities for walking and cycling along the river reserves by widening paths, linking to and extending the Warren Cole Walkway.

"Some residents do have concerns over usage of public land bordering their properties, but it is important to remember that at this stage, this is still a concept plan," Ms Chapman says.

"Any projects that the Council decides to progress would require further and more specific consultation with property owners and stakeholders."



Marcus Akuhata-Brown (centre-front) and members of the Mana Taiohi programme.