



OUR PLACE

# Ko Konei

Your Whakatāne District Council  
Community Update - May 2017

## Aquatic Centre gets Poolsafe accreditation

The Whakatāne Aquatic and Fitness Centre has been granted Poolsafe accreditation by the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) for 2017-2018. The Poolsafe scheme is an independent assessment of public pools, and is an initiative jointly developed by the NZRA and Water Safety New Zealand.

To receive accreditation, the Whakatāne Aquatic and Fitness Centre completed an extensive three-month audit process, and Whakatāne Mayor Tony Bonne says the accreditation is well-deserved.

“The Poolsafe audit process included a documentation and procedures review, onsite inspection, a health and safety review and an improvement process, as well as staff assessments, so it is pretty comprehensive,” he says. “All Centre staff were involved in the process, and it means we can be sure we are offering the best possible service and that the facility is safe for users and for the staff who work there. This is great for our community and a real credit to all our Aquatic and Fitness Centre staff.”



## HIKOI MARKS RECOVERY PHASE

Mayor Tony Bonne joined members of the Edgecumbe community and Council elected members and staff in a hiko earlier this month to mark the commencement of the recovery phase following the April flooding and storm disaster. The recovery effort aims to both restore and create opportunities in our District.

The initial focus is on cleaning up flood and storm-related damage, restoring services and infrastructure, and supporting property owners to reinstate their properties. Alongside this, the Recovery Project team is coordinating support to businesses and farms, and assisting communities to restore and strengthen their social links.

Flood Recovery Manager Julie Gardyne says recovery will be a long process. “This is a marathon, not a sprint. We’re dealing with many complex issues and needs, and it’s important that we get this right so that we build stronger and more resilient communities for the future.”

## Rates postponement and remission approved

The Whakatāne District Council has approved a rates postponement and remission process which goes beyond the provisions of its existing rates remission policy.

At an extraordinary meeting last week, the Council agreed that rates postponements and remissions should be extended to all properties which are uninhabitable, or unusable, as a result of flood damage sustained in last month’s storm events. Under the existing policy, remissions would not have been available to non-resident ratepayers or commercial ratepayers. Flood-damaged homes on large rural properties will also be included, subject to a valuation by the Council’s valuation service provider on the residential portion of the land.

The Council noted that the decision to exceed its remissions criteria was ‘inconsistent’ with its policy, but confirmed that such a departure was permitted under the Local Government Act, given the widespread devastation caused by the April storms.

As a result of the decision, rates invoices marked as ‘postponed’ will be issued for the 269 properties (185 owner-occupied, 69 owned by non-resident ratepayers, 11 large rural properties, and four commercial

properties) which have so far been identified as eligible for rates remission. Payments will not be required until homes are repaired to a standard where they can be safely reoccupied. A rates remission application will need to be lodged within 12 months of the flooding event, so that all rates for the period concerned can be remitted. Initial estimates indicate that up to \$168,000 of rates may be remitted for the fourth quarter of the 2016/17 financial year. Further remissions will be required in the 2017/18 financial year.

Mayor Tony Bonne says Council elected members acknowledged that there would be a significant cost involved, but under the circumstances, felt there was no option but to address the flood-related impacts on properties as comprehensively as possible.

“People in a number of areas, and particularly in Edgecumbe, have had to vacate their properties until they can be restored to a habitable standard,” he says. “Councillors unanimously supported this approach, so that we can take away at least some of the financial pressures the affected communities are dealing with as a result of this natural disaster.”

## Project: Liveable Homes

### ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE THE MEANS TO REPAIR FLOOD-DAMAGED PROPERTIES

**The Whakatāne District Recovery Team is working with community funding agencies, the construction industry, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, volunteer organisations and other project partners to bring together a work programme to help people who don't have the means to repair their flood-damaged houses to get back into their homes.**

Preliminary information indicates that there could be up to 100 flood-damaged houses in the District where the owners will not be able to fund the repair work needed to make their homes liveable again. In most instances, that is because the homes involved are either uninsured, or under-insured, and most of the properties are in Edgecumbe.

Mayor Tony Bonne and Liveable Homes team leader John Pullar announced what is believed to be a unique project, which aims to ensure that all yellow-stickered, flood damaged homes in the Whakatāne District can be re-inhabited, regardless of their insurance status.

“Our information indicates that there may be a significant number of properties where the owners will need help,” Mayor Bonne says. “There’s no way we want those homes to sit and rot because their owners do not have the means required to get them back to a liveable standard, so our Recovery Team is leading an initiative which will bring together funding contributions, people with the right skills to lead teams of volunteer workers, building supply companies and anyone else who can contribute to this process, to get a great outcome for our community.”

John Pullar says the first priority is to ensure that all properties where help will be required are

identified, so that they can be included in the project. “We’ll have people at the Edgecumbe Library for the next two weeks at least to gather information and contact the owners of the homes we already know about,” he explains. “While that process is underway, we’ll assemble our work teams, confirm funding contributions and donations of building materials and organise the work programme needed to strip-out damaged homes and get them drying, so that refits can be organised.”

Mr Pullar says the Recovery Team hopes to get all of the homes involved back into a state where they can be reoccupied before Christmas. “This will be a mammoth task, but we think it’s doable and we’ll be giving it our absolute best shot. It’s also important to recognise that this is a ‘hand-up’, not a hand out. We’ll be expecting property owners to contribute their efforts to the project, as far as they are able to do so.

“We’ll be making further announcements as arrangements fall into place, so that we properly acknowledge the generosity of the organisations which will be helping make this major community initiative happen. Anyone who wants to help out is asked to call the Whakatāne District Council

## YOUR VOTE YOUR COMMUNITY

### Murupara Community Board By-election

As a result of a resignation, an extraordinary vacancy has occurred in the Murupara Community Board — Galatea-Waiohau Subdivision — of the Whakatāne District Council and a by-election is required to be held to fill the vacancy; this by-election will be held by postal vote on Thursday, 20 July 2017.

Nominations for the vacancy opened on Wednesday, 26 April 2017 and close at noon on Wednesday, 24 May 2017.

Nomination forms are available from Whakatāne District Council’s Administration Offices, Civic Centre, Commerce Street, Whakatāne, the Murupara Service Centre and Library, Civic Square, Pine Drive, Murupara, or can be obtained by telephoning 0800 922 822 to have one posted out.

on 07 306 0500 to register their interest and indicate how they can contribute. Ours is a strong and resilient community and we’re confident we can achieve the support we need to make every home in the District liveable again.”

#### TE TARI AWHINA COMMUNITY HUB

In another development of the recovery operation, the Te Tari Awhina community hub was officially opened in the Edgecumbe Library by Deputy Mayor Judy Turner on Monday 8 May. The Hub will be open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays, and is available to anyone from across the Whakatāne District who needs information, support, advice, referrals or meeting rooms for recovery-related business. Staff at the Hub are happy to assist with any queries, so please don’t hesitate to call in and say hello.

