



Kia ora Koutou

Welcome to the second Matatā Matters Newsletter - and the last for 2019.

I would first like to acknowledge the depth of feeling present in the Whakatāne District, following the tragic events at Whakaari / White Island. We offer our aroha, our embrace, and strength to you all, as we navigate this challenging period and hold fast to that which gives us hope.

The holiday season is rapidly approaching, and with the weather getting better and people flocking to our beaches and rivers, there's a timely reminder to take care in the water this summer. I'd encourage you all to please drive safely too.

We'd love to know what you'd like included in future editions. See the back page for other ways to stay in touch and provide feedback.

I wish you a wonderful summer season and a very happy New Year in our beautiful region.

Noho ora mai

**Judy Turner - Mayor of
Whakatāne District**

AWATARARIKI MANAGED RETREAT UPDATE

PROPERTIES BEING PURCHASED

Following confirmation of funding, 11 property owners have to-date taken up the opportunity offered through the Managed Retreat Programme to sell their properties to the Council. Three of the 16 houses in the high-risk area have already been removed and site works are being carried out in preparation for hydroseeding. The vacant land will ultimately form part of a reserve that the Matatā community and iwi will help design. This area is significant not only for the 2005 debris flow event, but also for its earlier cultural history and as the western gateway to Matatā township and the Rangitāiki Plains.

BACKGROUND

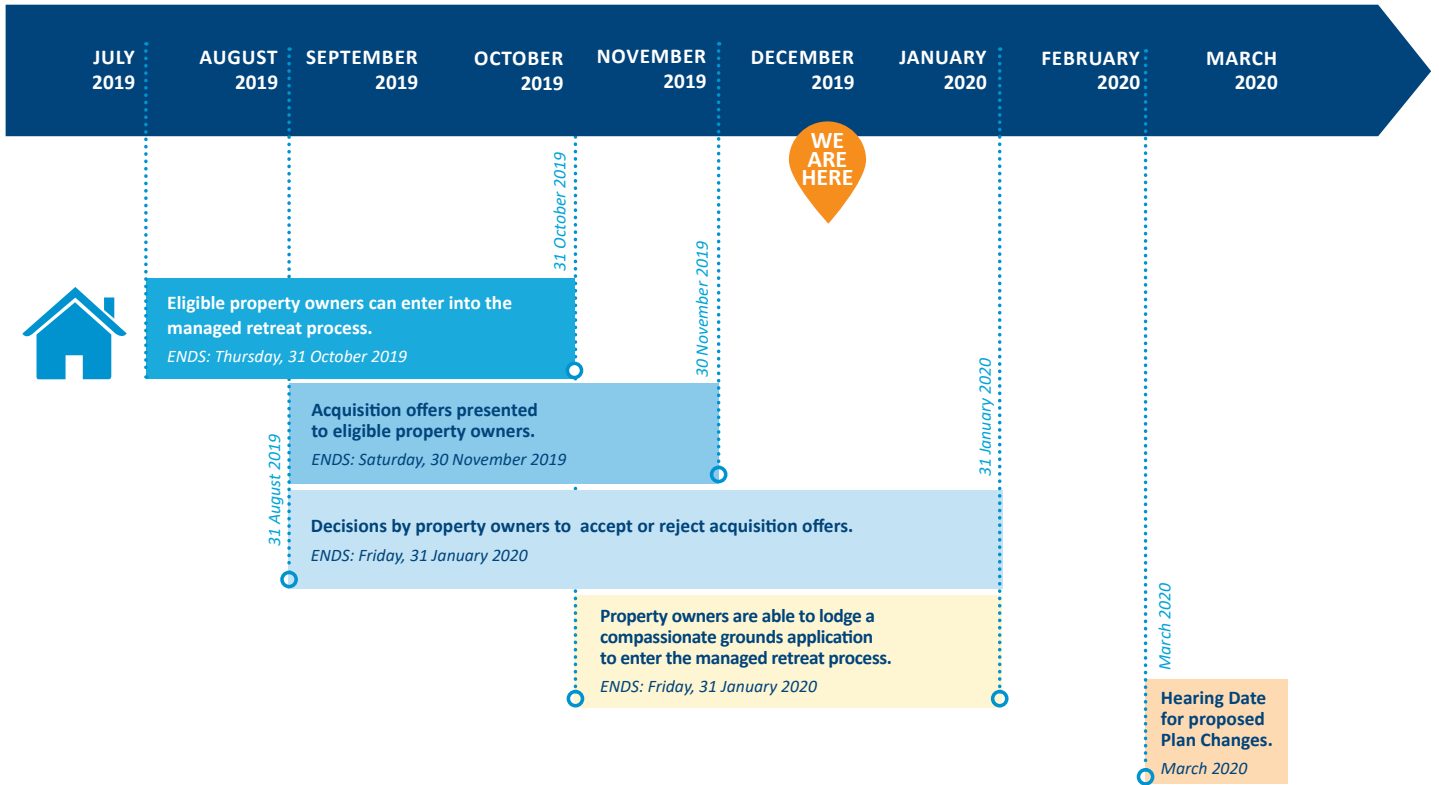
In July 2019, joint funding was confirmed for a property acquisition package, which aims to end the long and difficult process of addressing the debris flow risk to residents and property owners on the Awatarariki fanhead in Matatā. The Awatarariki Managed Retreat Programme is being undertaken through partnerships between the Whakatāne District Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and the Crown.

The managed retreat programme provides offers to eligible property owners for the purchase of their properties (at a current market value, with no discount for the hazard). The offers also provide for contributions to legal costs for the sale of a property and purchase of a new property, relocation costs (for residents in their primary place of residence), and mortgage-break fees (if applicable).

Eligible property owners are being offered one-on-one discussions to tailor the acquisition offer to suit their individual needs (as achievable within the timeframes for the initiative – see page 2).



PROPOSED TIMELINES FOR THE AWATARARIKI FANHEAD MANAGED RETREAT - MATATĀ COMMUNITY



BUS SERVICE

Matatā students will be able to make the most of the free Whakatāne to Tauranga Tertiary/Commuter Services which will run each weekday from 1 February to 20 December 2020.

The service is also available to the public (at a cost), and will be a one-year trial initially, to be reviewed at the end of 2020.

The service is a joint venture between the University of Waikato, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology and Bay of Plenty Regional Council, with each organisation contributing funds to make the service available, along with a grant from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA).

Professor Alister Jones, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Waikato says the new regional bus services will greatly improve access to tertiary education for Eastern BOP communities, “especially for our current and future students who face the challenges and costs of transport to our campuses,” he says.

Head of Student Support Services at Toi Ohomai, Dr Logan Bannister, says she’s confident the service will have a positive impact by removing barriers for students around transport accessibility and transport costs across the rohe.

For timetable details visit www.baybus.co.nz



NEW KAI KOHA SHELF

The new Kai Koha shelf set up at Bluelight Hub on Wilson Street is proving popular. The pātaka kai (pantry / food storage structure) is for anyone to donate food or take what is there if needed. Contributions are always welcomed – and the food is there to be eaten, so don’t be whakamā about taking some to eat!

YOUR RANGITĀIKI WARD COUNCILLORS

COUNCILLOR WILSON JAMES



Being part of our diverse community is a privilege, and it's an honour to serve. The events at Whakaari / White Island in the last fortnight have created overwhelming sadness and hurt. But they have also shone a light on what a strong and caring community we live in. It's this spirit that will get us through this tough time and ensure we prosper as we move forward.

I am a firm believer that every generation must leave something better for the next generation. This might be towns, services, amenities and/or lifestyles. All these are things that Councils work on for the betterment of those we pass them on to. Having been involved in many community initiatives over the years has given me practical experience in running effective functional organisations. The Whakatāne District needs efficiency, realistic optimism and great leadership to capture the huge potential gains our local industries are delivering to enable our District to prosper. I look forward to working with the Matatā community to take advantage of these opportunities.

COUNCILLOR GERARD VAN BEEK



Firstly, my thoughts are with all those who have been affected by the eruption of White Island. I have attended several events related to the memory of those who have died and I have been with family who have travelled from far and wide to be near their loved ones and understand how events unfolded that day.

My thoughts are with the families of those who are still missing. And that those that are in hospital, may they have a speedy recovery. On behalf of our community, I would like to thank all who have helped – the passengers who looked after the victims as they returned to Whakatāne and helicopter pilots who brought other victims home. Our Fire and Ambulance services, the doctors and nurses at Whakatāne Hospital and those throughout New Zealand and Australia who are now caring for patients. Our Emergency Operations Centre staff who have worked tirelessly to coordinate the efforts of the many agencies that are in town to help us.

Thank you to all those who voted me back onto Council as your ward member. In the previous trienniums I was appointed to the Rangitāiki Community Board and participated in the many Matatā community activities that have occurred over the last nine years. I hope to continue my participation, although the formal representation role has been passed to Gavin Dennis. He is already pushing the needs of Matatā, especially the need to have a reticulated sewerage system, an issue I fully support.

Finally, I hope that you are able to take time off and enjoy the festive season and the New Year.

COUNCILLOR GAVIN DENNIS



As a long-time resident of Matatā, and a very active community member, I have come to enjoy getting things done for our community. And I believe it's time more is done in Matatā and the surrounding area. We need improvements in our infrastructure to bring our community into line with Whakatāne and Ōhope. Things like sewerage and doing some raupo removal in the lagoon before it is completely choked. Too long we have been the poor cousins. It's time for change and I will be working hard to make this change.

Matatā has a great future, but we need to work hard to ensure we take advantage of any and all future opportunities.

The recent events following the eruption at Whakaari / White Island are a stark reminder that we live in a very dynamic natural environment. The Matatā community knows this all too well, as we continue to deal with the long-term effects of the 2005 debris flows. With Christmas coming, it's a time to reflect on all our blessings and also ensure our communities have the infrastructure, the information and the interconnections that enable us to respond positively to any situation we are faced with. I look forward to working with you over the next three years.

COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS

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*Have a safe and happy
Holiday Season.*

NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT

A well-connected community helps to improve the safety, resilience and well-being of all residents. We bring people together so they know how to look after themselves, and others, during any emergency event. It's as simple as getting your neighbours together.



At the gathering of each group we cover:

- Getting to know each other and creating awareness of what's happening in your neighbourhood
- Establishing a group contact list
- Awareness of crime in your area from Police
- Learning how to be first responders in any situation
- Where to get relevant emergency information from
- How to improve your household and neighbourhood safety
- Local hazards and how we need to respond to them
- Fire safety awareness
- Support from neighbours 24/7 when needed

Also, each group is given free signage and letterbox stickers as crime deterrents.

Neighbourhood Support partners with Civil Defence, NZ Police, Fire and Emergency and many other community groups, which enables us to share information they have that you need to be aware of.

To make a difference in your community get involved with Neighbourhood Support.

It's free and really easy.

If you are interested in establishing a group just contact Shelly on 027 255 1350 and she will organise and run your gathering.

SWIM SAFE

New Zealand has one of the highest fatal drowning rates in the developed world. In 2017 there were 92 preventable deaths, all entirely preventable. Each one leaves families and communities devastated. Let's not add to that total this year. Take some simple precautions when you go near water:

- **Be prepared.** Learn water safety skills. Set rules for safe play in the water. Always use safe and correct equipment and know the weather and water conditions before you get in.
- **Watch out for yourself and others.** Always pay close attention to children you are supervising when in or near the water. Swim with others and in areas where lifeguards are present.
- **Be aware of dangers.** Enter shallow and unknown water feet first and obey all safety signs and warning flags.
- **Know your limits.** Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.

For more water safety information go to www.watersafety.org.nz



Keep in touch

Find information, ask us questions or give the District and Regional Councils your feedback by contacting us as below:



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EMAIL info@whakatane.govt.nz
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You can also follow the council pages on Facebook to see our latest news and updates:

facebook.com/WhakataneDistrictCouncil

facebook.com/boprc

Please send newsletter feedback and contributions to info@whakatane.govt.nz, with Matatā newsletter in the subject line.