



eastern **BAY** life



Message from the Mayor of Whakatāne District

As difficult as this time has been for everyone, it gives me great comfort when I reflect on the strength, compassion and aroha of the people of this District.

Immediately following the eruption on 9 December 2019, the heroic efforts of staff from the tourism boat and helicopter companies saved many lives while putting their own at risk.

First-responders and hospital staff who cared for the injured find it hard to talk about what they saw and had to deal with. Through adversity they showed compassion and dignity for all those who were affected, and they continue with their professionalism and courage.

People from all over our community brought food, offered hospitality and opened their arms – anything that would provide comfort to those in need. Thank you everyone for all that you did – no gesture was too small, and all of you have contributed to making unbearable grief that much more bearable.

To our own Council staff, along with those from the Regional Council, who provided skilled technical and local advice and coordinated support behind the scenes to make the management of the response to the events run as smoothly as possible - ngā mihi ki a koutou.

I must also recognise the tireless efforts of all those agencies, such as the Police and Defence Force, that carried out their everyday work, in extraordinary circumstances, and did so with great empathy and understanding.

As our community was in shock, Ngāti Awa showed us how to draw strength from one another. Ngāti Awa helped us process how we felt with wise counsel and provided us with a safe place to come together, breathe out, and reflect on the mystery that both life and death present us with.

Families from overseas that came in response to the death of loved ones, shared that the iwi-led karakia each day at Te Mānuka Tūtahi Marae was of great comfort to them. It was irrelevant that they didn't understand te reo Māori - they felt spiritually supported and understood in a way that both surprised and comforted them.

A tragedy of this magnitude is something that few of us feel equipped to deal with. We will continue to pull together and support one another as we navigate the days ahead. For this I am sending you our gratitude and acknowledgement on behalf of all elected members. Thank you one and all.

As we move forward, those most affected remain our priority, as we also turn to the social, economic, cultural and environmental implications of this event and what steps need to be taken, one-at-a-time.

I wish everyone a safe and restful summer break.

**Noho ora mai
Mayor Judy Turner**



Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group

The BOPCDEM Group coordinated the multi-agency response to the Whakaari/White Island eruption event with NZ Police leading search and recovery operations.

We're grateful to everyone who's been involved in this effort both on the front line and behind the scenes and wish to acknowledge Ngāti Awa and many members of the local Whakatāne community who have provided incredible support to all.

We are remaining on standby in case this changes and the BOPCDEM Group office will continue to maintain a presence in Whakatāne.

For further information about the White Island Eruption – Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Facebook page. www.facebook.com/BOPCivilDefence



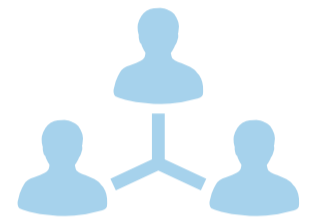
Coastal water quality

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Science Manager Rob Donald has advised that coastal water quality has **not been affected** by the Whakaari/White Island eruption, so Eastern Bay of Plenty beaches remain as safe to swim as they were before the eruption.

You can see the latest swim water quality monitoring results and advice for Bay of Plenty and all of NZ at www.lawa.org.nz/swim

FREE social services support for anyone that has been affected by the Whakaari/White Island event...

- Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services: 07 306 0096
- Free counsellor service call/txt: 1737
- Victim Support: 0800 542 846
- Pou Whakaaro: 0800 774 545
- Salvation Army Chaplaincy Services: 07 308 6923
- Healthline: 0800 611 116
- Whakatāne District Council: 07 306 0500



MBIE confirms business support for Whakatāne

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have now confirmed that support for Whakatāne will consist of a Business Support Grants Programme, and business recovery coordination services.

MBIE Economic Development and Transitions General Manager Dean Ford announced just prior to Christmas that the programme aimed to support viable businesses in Whakatāne significantly affected as a direct result of the tragedy. "Support will be available to meet specific business needs – such as professional services or for ongoing employment of staff."

"In addition, MBIE and Tourism New Zealand will conduct an analysis to understand the ramifications of the Whakaari/White island eruption for the wider tourism industry.

"This initial package is intended to provide a short-term response to immediate community needs over the summer period. Further decisions will be needed to respond to the long term implications for the local economy," Mr Ford says.

A three-member panel with independent appointees from the Whakatāne District Council, Ministry of Social Development, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa will approve grants for the programme.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa and Whakatāne District Council have welcomed the start of the programme with gratitude.

Chief Executive of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, Leonie Simpson says she is grateful for the business support programme which will offer some relief at a very challenging time. "There was a lot of work carried out in a short space of time to put this case forward to the Government, so we applaud the equally quick action that has been taken to enable local businesses to be supported in the immediate term."

Whakatāne District Council Chief Executive, Steph O'Sullivan echoes Ms Simpson's comments, adding that the road to economic recovery is not one that should be travelled alone. "There are a number of organisations that are working together to provide and facilitate the assistance that is needed at this time including the Eastern Bay of Plenty Chamber of Commerce."

A panel of business and community leaders will be established to assess the applications to ensure that the process is robust and transparent against the given criteria.

CRITERIA FOR THE MBIE BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS PROGRAMME

Eligibility criteria include that the business:

- was viable and suffered a significant income drop caused by the Whakaari/White Island eruption on 9 December 2019
- primarily based in the Whakatāne district
- paid employees at least the minimum wage
- provided a significant source of income to the business owner
- had no other efficient options available, including insurance

Businesses will need to:

- show how much they need and what they will spend it on. For example, businesses, may apply for a grant for a fixed cost, marketing, and operation costs (including wages and associated staff costs).
- provide accounts from the last full financial year, year-to-date financials and details of any tax issues.





Tourism Bay of Plenty

The thoughts of all at Tourism Bay of Plenty (TBOP) remain with those affected by the eruption on Whakaari/White Island.

Over the past two weeks, it has been incredibly heart-warming to see the outpouring of support from the community, which reflects the strength and spirit of our people.

Our industry and community have been significantly impacted and it will take time for us to recover however collectively we will work together to get through this.

Tourism is a key economic driver for our region and attracts a lot of people to our shores each year.

Whakaari/White Island is currently closed for business and we do not know when, or if, it will reopen. While Whakaari/White Island has been a unique attractor for the region, it is not the sole reason for travel. It is important to remember that Whakaari/White Island is located 50km off-shore. The eruption impact is isolated to the island so Whakatāne coastline beaches are not impacted.

There are a multitude of experiences on offer throughout the region that appeal to a range of people and groups from across New Zealand as well our manuhiri visiting from overseas.

We encourage people who have booked travel or tours, or who are considering booking travel or tours, to still visit the region.

Showing support for the local area and operators at this time will mean a lot to all of those whose livelihoods have been affected.

TBOP is working closely with the Council, TNZ and tour operators on a plan for 2020 to ensure it is clearly understood within the tourism sector that Whakatāne and the Eastern Bay of Plenty is open for business.

If you need help with accommodation, travel, or information about the Bay of Plenty, visit either the Whakatāne or Tauranga i-SITE, or our website bayofplentynz.com



Whakatāne is expecting a busy domestic summer season, and the Whakatāne District Council Tourism and Events team is working on a plan to assist the local tourism market to recover. Local tourism information is available at whakatane.com



Business recovery support information

We recognise that the Whakaari/White Island eruption has caused significant disruption to many businesses in the Eastern Bay region. If you are a business that has been directly or indirectly affected by the eruption and require assistance, please contact us and we will point you in the right direction.

The NZ Government and MBIE have confirmed a business recovery programme including a package of Business Support Grants (see left).

The Chamber of Commerce will also be coordinating NZ Business Mentors with businesses directly affected by the Whakaari/White Island eruption. This will include, but not limited to, confidential financial/legal/employment advice enquiries.

Call the **Whakaari/White Island Business Support line** for advice or assistance: **0800 999 030**



Crete Wana - General Manager, Eastern Bay Chamber of Commerce

KEEP BUSINESS RECORDS

We understand that many businesses are entering peak season and have employed staff and stocked accordingly. The cash flow implications are likely to be significant for many of us. It is important that you keep an accurate record of the impact that you have incurred from the time of the Whakaari/White Island eruption including:

- actual revenue vs the previous year, and what you had been budgeting for
- staff numbers that you had and if you let any go
- the value of stock that you were unable to sell through, creating cash flow challenges
- direct loss of income
- keep track of all times of requests to any government agencies and banks
- any examples of long term cancellations or impacts

We realise that this is a stressful time and if you need support with organising your records please contact us to be connected with a Business Mentor/Support person.

INLAND REVENUE

Inland Revenue understands, that for those affected by the eruption, that tax will not be front of mind right now. This may relate to any personal or business tax matters, Working for Families Tax credits, Child Support, Student Loans or KiwiSaver.

Please contact IRD to discuss your situation.

0800 473 838

OTHER BUSINESS-RELATED SUPPORT

- talk to your bank manager – ensure they're aware of your situation. They may be able to assist with low/no interest
- creditors: maintain an open dialogue and ensure no surprises that may impact your future lines of credit
- understand your obligations around paying staff: call the Chamber Business HR advice line on 0800 CHAMBER (24 26 23)
- fully check and understand your insurance cover, including business interruption insurance.

WORK AND INCOME

Work and Income can help you with costs you don't have any other way of paying.

You do not need to be on a benefit to be eligible and even if you don't think you qualify, call **Work and Income** on **0800 559 009** to check your eligibility.

Work and Income may be able to help if you have lost wages because of the Whakaari / White Island eruption. For example, if:

- you can't work because your workplace is closed, or
- you have to stay home and look after family members

Contact Work and Income if you:

- would like assistance
- aren't sure if you can get assistance
- are struggling to support yourself, or your family
- would like more information

Visit the Work and Income website workandincome.govt.nz or phone **0800 559 009**.



Ngā Tikanga o Ngāti Awa provide blueprint for Iwi Disaster Response

ABOUT THE RĀHUI

The taking of any seafood, including fish, from anywhere within the Ngāti Awa rāhui boundary remains prohibited until further notice.

Activities not related to the harvesting of seafood – including swimming, kayaking and boating are now permissible

- Te Puia Whakaari (Whakaari/White Island), remains under strict rāhui and should be respectfully avoided
- The boundary of the Ngāti Awa kaimoana and fishing rāhui is from the Tarawera River in the west, to Ōhiwa in the east and includes Te Puia Whakaari, Rurima and Moutohorā Islands
- Neighbouring coastal hapū and iwi have also applied their own rāhui over their own customary marine areas. Those iwi will be responsible for administering their rāhui
- Ngāti Awa are grateful for the respect that has been afforded to the rāhui to date.

Tikanga Māori are prescriptions for the correct and proper way to act and/or behave in certain situations. Generally formed over centuries and transferred from generation to generation, tikanga presents a baseline of social, spiritual and cultural norms that articulate what that community considers acceptable, and not acceptable.

From the moment it was realised lives were lost, the tikanga of rāhui was enacted: a temporary ritual prohibition of activity within a tribe's customary marine area. Ngāti Awa tōhunga and kaumatūa (cultural and spiritual leaders) for Ngāti Awa decided the terms of the rāhui before Koro Tūtua, led the appropriate incantations to place the rāhui over the customary Ngāti Awa marine area and Whakaari.

Every tikanga has a practical purpose and in the case of rāhui, where there has been loss of life at sea and it is likely the deceased are in the water space, rāhui not only respect the deceased, it also protects the living from consuming fish and seafood that may have been in contact with a deceased person. This is why a rāhui prohibits the taking of all seafood – including fish.

Central to Ngā Tikanga o Ngāti Awa is the concept of manaakitanga – the responsibility each of us has to care for one another. Ngā Tikanga o Ngāti Awa make it clear that the priority for the iwi was to care and show aroha (love/compassion) for those who had been most affected by the tragedy - a rāhui is another way we can manaaki (care for) others.

On Tuesday 10 December, Te Mānuka Tūtahi Marae was opened to grieving families and the public as a place to come, rest and reflect. The entire iwi rallied behind these families, joining our hope, grief, and tears with them.

A full media ban was then placed over the marae in an effort to provide a sanctuary where those who were suffering under the weight of tragedy could seek solace away from the added pressure of media.

Morning karakia (prayer) vigils were held daily at Te Manuka Tūtahi marae as a chance for the community to come together to express solidarity and unity of spirit. Each morning prayer session was followed by an update from relevant authorities and sharing kai together; another tikanga that allowed Ngāti Awa - and the wider community – a further opportunity to extend hospitality and comfort to those impacted.

Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī opened their doors providing catering and accommodation for out of town whānau, Police and other recovery staff. Vacant rooms throughout the town were quickly snapped up by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa to accommodate emergency services and families of the victims, as they waited in hope for news of survival that never arrived.

Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services were immediately on the ground at the Emergency Operations Centre to further extend manaakitanga, local knowledge and support to the response and recovery operations, and provided counselling, social services support and psychosocial support to anyone impacted by the tragedy.

Although a sense of normality is slowly returning to Whakatāne, the obligation of manaakitanga holds firm and the iwi continue to work closely with the relevant authorities to ensure those who require it are receiving adequate support.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa remains committed to assisting the impacted whānau now and into the future. Planning for a public remembrance

ceremony is underway with the wishes of the whānau of victims being central to this.

The event is being scheduled for early in the new year to allow time for the many who have been impacted by the tragedy – and especially those who are still mourning loved ones – further time to rest and recover.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa would like to express our sincere appreciation and acknowledgement to those from Whakatāne and beyond that supported the iwi to manaaki our manuhiri (visitors), their families and friends and the staff.

Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa.

Health warning for taking kaimoana

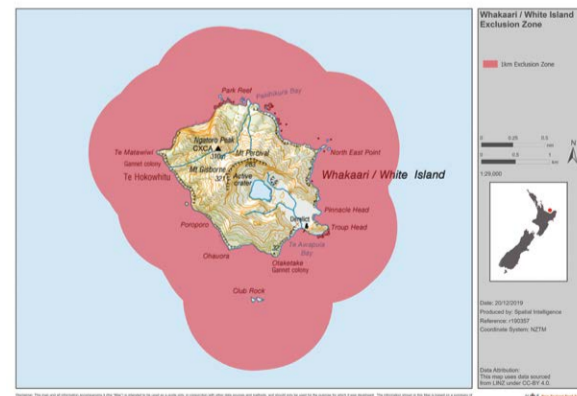
Please note that the Ministry of Primary Industries has issued a health warning advising the public not to collect or consume fish or shellfish harvested from the area surrounding Whakaari / White Island. While the rāhui already prohibits this, please note that there are risks to health due to the contamination from the recent volcanic eruption associated with this.

KAIMOANA (SEAFOOD AND SHELLFISH) AROUND THE WHAKAARI/WHITE ISLAND AREA

MPI is advising the public not to consume fish, shellfish or crayfish harvested from the shores of Whakaari/White Island and within a 1km buffer zone extending off the White Island coastline due to public health concerns. This includes finfish, crayfish, mussels, oysters, tuatua, pipi, toheroa, cockles, scallops, catseyes, kina (sea urchin), and all other shellfish (see map – Whakaari/White Island buffer zone) This is due to concerns about elevated levels of environmental contaminants including

heavy metals following the eruption and ongoing volcanic activity.

Cooking fish, shellfish, or crayfish will not remove the contaminants. If anyone becomes ill after eating seafood from an area where a public health warning has been issued, phone Healthline for advice on 0800 61 11 16, or seek medical attention immediately. You are also advised to contact your nearest public health unit and keep any leftover kaimoana in case it can be tested.



For more food safety information on gathering kaimoana read: www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1058-food-safety-for-seafood-gatherers



For further information, visit

whakatane.govt.nz

or phone 07 306 0500