



Opotiki District Council  
STRONG COMMUNITY STRONG FUTURE

# Pānui

Issue 93 // April 2023



Keeping you up to date with Opotiki District Council

## From the Mayor

**The past month or so has certainly shown both the highs and lows of the mayoral office!**

One recent example was that last month, I was delighted to sit down with Pohutu, a young man who attended Outward Bound in February. Opotiki Mayors Taskforce for Jobs has been gifted a Fidelity Life Scholarship to Outward Bound and Te Pou Oranga o Whakatōhea identified Pohutu as a great recipient who was about to begin a pre-apprenticeship training programme. It was a privilege to talk to Pohutu about his experience and what he took away from his time on Outward Bound.

On the other side, the councillors and I are deep in discussions about the coming Annual Plan. Councils around the country are facing the same challenges as Opotiki and so most people will have read in the news about some of the likely rates rises that will be felt by communities from the top to the bottom of the country.

Here in Opotiki, we are not immune to the same price pressures and inflation. And while we are absorbing as much of the cost as we can, we still need to continue to function. Our dollar is buying less and inflation is hurting our activities, materials and resources cost a lot more than they did even a couple of years ago. There is no way around it and it is upsetting – none of us around the table



Mayor Moore and Outward Bound participant, Pohutu.

or at council want to put more pressure on already stretched households in the district.

We will be carefully considering our options, delaying or deferring things where we can and using all the tools available to us before leaning on rates rises. But I encourage people to talk to their councillors and provide feedback on the annual plan when they can.

David Moore, Opotiki Mayor



Have we got the right mix?  
Tell us what you think by 5pm Friday, 28 April 2023

Kōrero mai  
Let's talk

Draft Eastern Bay of Plenty  
Local Alcohol Policy 2023

## Local Alcohol Policy

### – have we got the mix right?

**The three Eastern Bay councils are currently reviewing their Local Alcohol Policy (LAP). We have a LAP to try and find a balance between responsible sale and supply of alcohol and the clear and often obvious harm that alcohol can do in our communities.**

The Eastern Bay LAP sets out important things like hours that liquor stores and bars can operate, where they can set up shop and the sorts of conditions that can be put on special licences.

We want to make sure that we have got the mix right so we encourage you to have your say on the draft policy. More details are on the council website.

## Cyclone Gabrielle community response

**When Cyclone Gabrielle was set to hit our shores in February, it set off a massive community response as we declared a local state of emergency, evacuated hundreds of low-lying properties at risk of coastal inundation and the community set up many evacuation centres for those moved out.**

We were so fortunate that we were spared the worst of the storm and we were in a position to help and support our neighbours and other parts of Aotearoa in various ways.

It was an incredible community response – iwi response teams, hapū and marae, schools and kura, and many many individuals showed whanaunatanga, care and help during and after the event. As always, some things went well and some things could be done better.

Council’s civil defence has had a number of debrief sessions with our iwi partners, councillors, other emergency agencies (like fire and police) and the community. If you have more you would like to add, please don’t hesitate to send an email to [info@odc.govt.nz](mailto:info@odc.govt.nz).

## Is your household prepared?

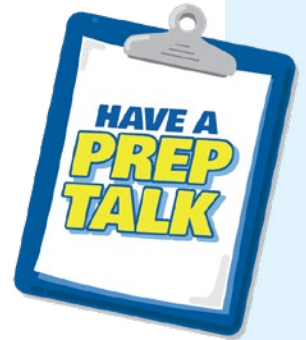
**Tē mōhiotia āhea ki hea rānei te ohotata. Kia takatū. Kia mataara.**

Emergencies can happen anytime, anywhere. They could be a cyclone like Gabrielle. Or an earthquake, flood or even tsunami warning.

Here in the Bay of Plenty we live with our share of risks and hazards and if Cyclone Gabrielle taught us anything, it is that it pays to be prepared!

It doesn’t have to be difficult – just have a plan (and make sure everyone in your whānau knows it!) and start getting some bits and pieces together that can help if you are on your own for several days (water, food, pet stuff).

The best place to start is [getready.govt.nz](http://getready.govt.nz). You can also find heaps of amazing local information on the website, Facebook and Twitter accounts for Bay of Plenty Civil Defence. Have a Prep Talk today!



**GET READY**  
[.govt.nz](http://.govt.nz)

## We HEART Wairoa

**LGNZ has started a national campaign for councils to adopt a hard-hit community as they work to deal with the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle. We are supporting and partnering with Wairoa through this difficult time for them. It takes a long time for communities to get back on their feet and we have promised to be there when the cameras leave and ‘back to normal’ still feels far away.**

Supporting Wairoa doesn’t mean we aren’t helping other communities! We have natural links to Gisborne and smaller communities like Te Karaka and Whatatutu. We know how busy our community already is moving people and resources to help where we can. This doesn’t change. We just want to show Wairoa (which is further away) some community-to-community love too.

Keep an eye out for local fundraising opportunities in the coming weeks and months.



## Need internet?

**Government’s Remote Users’ Scheme is there to help people in rural or remote locations that have very poor or no broadband access.**

If this sounds like the situation for your small community, you can apply for assistance to extend broadband to where you are. Please share this information anywhere you think there are communities that might need a helping hand with better broadband.

A good place to start is the Crown Infrastructure Partners website to get some answers to your questions. [www.crowninfrastructure.govt.nz/faq](http://www.crowninfrastructure.govt.nz/faq)



# Harbour update

The Ōpōtiki harbour development team are working on the end of the western wall getting it ready to place the 15 tonne hanbars, the biggest hanbars that have been cast.

The hanbars surround and protect the 400m long seawalls being built to provide year-round river access to Ōpōtiki town and wharf. Casting of over 12,000 units was completed in October last year with sizes ranging from 2 tonne to 15 tonne. The larger units stand about 2.4m tall!

Search hanbar on our page to learn more about their design and construction (and the great local businesses involved in that), their use, and even some extra special ones that have been painted by local kura.



## Getting the benefits from the Harbour

Central government funded our harbour build back in 2019 (you may remember the street party just days before the country went into the first covid lockdown). That funding was provided based on projections for economic growth, new and better jobs and incomes.

Council commissioned a report, Te Ara Moana a Toi Initial Benefits Assessment, into whether the harbour was meeting expectations and delivering on intended benefits. It makes for excellent reading to date, even before the harbour has opened!

You can read the full report on the council website.



## Funding for creative projects available now!

The Creative Communities Scheme is aimed at increasing participation in the arts at a local level and expanding the range and diversity of arts available within the district. It has funded some iconic and amazing projects around the district and applications are open for the current round of funding.

Creativity and arts are what make us special and unique, a vibrant and loved place to live. If you or your group have a project that could do with a funding boost, apply now.

More details, criteria and application forms are on the council website.

## WHAT'S ON

**Brrrr – don't let the colder autumn weather keep you away from some of the amazing community activities you can get involved with.**

Whether you want to join a walking group, play bridge, learn more about rongoā, enjoy some Scottish Country Dancing, indoor bowls, join a service club, sewing and craft, art, sport, health support, table tennis or just social get togethers. There is so much to keep you warm, active and connected this winter.

Get in touch with the lovely team at i-SITE to find out more about what's on in the district.  
07 315 3031 or email [infocentre@odc.govt.nz](mailto:infocentre@odc.govt.nz)

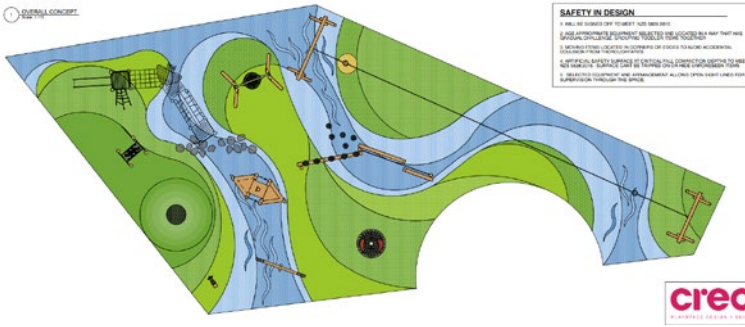


# Playground on the way

A new playground to be installed near the skatepark has generated a heap of discussion on our Facebook page. It looks like young and young-at-heart are equally excited to see it in real life as we are!

We worked closely with Healthy Families East Cape and a couple of local kura to get them to draw and describe their dream playground. And we have made it happen (except the free ice cream truck – aroha mai tīma)

You can see the video fly-through and get a sense for how neat this future space is going to be on our Facebook page. It would be perfect (if everything goes to plan) to open on time for local Matariki celebrations.



## Need help paying your rates?

You may be eligible for a rates rebate of up to \$700, but you need to apply.

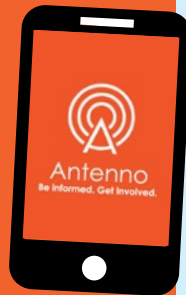
The amount you could be entitled to through the government’s rates rebate scheme depends on a combination of your income, the amount of rates you are charged and the number of dependants you have. You can only apply for one rebate a year but you can apply any time throughout the rating year (so you have until 1 July to apply for this year).

Our rates staff know the process well and are happy to help you through it. They’ll make sure your regional council rates are also included in the application process because it is now a combination of both rates.

If you haven’t checked with the online calculator recently, it is worth checking if you are eligible because the annual rebate amount and income thresholds have recently changed. You can read more on the council website, including links to the Department of Internal Affairs calculator.

Download the free mobile app, Antenno, to receive notifications and alerts about places you care about – things like community events, changes to rubbish collections, road works and more.

Antenno also makes it easy for you to submit feedback or report issues such as a damaged footpath, road pothole, graffiti or to submit feedback or an idea to Council. So if your phone is never far out of your reach, neither is Council!



# IN BRIEF

Keep an eye out for a chance to have you say about **changes to speed limits** near our kura and schools in the district. We have been working with schools and kura and seeing what sort of solutions will work best for them for their school. We are working to reduce speed in sensitive areas so that our young people feel safer walking, scootering or biking to school. You can read more about why this is important on our website.

If you have a **pohutukawa tree** on your property, then there are a few unique rules that you must follow. Under the District Plan you are allowed to prune them to keep them healthy or for safety reasons, but you must get a suitably qualified person (an arborist) to explain what needs to happen and how. And then you must lodge that explanation with council BEFORE work gets underway. If you don’t do that, you’ll have to go through a lengthy resource consent process and council may field calls from worried members of the public.

The Water Services Entities Bill had its third and final reading and gained royal assent in December 2022. It is now the **Water Services Entities Act**. The Act provides the basis to establish the Water Service Entities. We are part of Entity B which takes in 22 local authorities from south of Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki and Whanganui. While we have lodged our opposition to this process on many occasions, we are engaging with the transition in good faith and working with the Department of Internal Affairs closely to make any future transition as seamless as possible. The government are reviewing the direction of this reform and we are monitoring the situation.

Don’t forget, you don’t need to be at our Ōpōtiki building to visit the Ōpōtiki District Library **Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangī**. There are hundreds of online resources that are available wherever you have internet – books, free movies, audiobooks, research resources, newspapers, ancestry, games and puzzles. All online and all free. And if you need a hand with internet and wifi they can help with that too.