



April 2023

Chief Executive's message



If ever we needed a reminder to prepare for emergency events, February's deluges were it.

Cyclones Gabrielle and Hale pummelled our road and infrastructure. This was more than an inconvenience, at its extreme, cutting off whole communities and access to many of our roads and bridges.

The cyclones prompted the three Wairarapa Councils to think about emergency management like never

before. While our roading crews were out there re-opening access and feeding information back to our communications staff, we were also contributing to a co-ordinated Wairarapa-wide emergency response.

As you'll see in the Mayoral Relief Fund story, that response is ongoing.

However, in a disaster, it will probably take time for emergency services and Council to get to you. Check out the website at Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO)* to see what you can do to be ready.

Talking about severe weather, the Council's new climate change and environment committee held its first meeting in March. This committee will bring climate change into the conversation for all our work. Waste management, planning, emergency preparedness and our climate change strategy were all topics of the first meeting.

Every year at this time, Councillors and officers are working hard to finalise the next budget. A Long-term Plan is required every three years with an Annual Plan in intervening years. The 2023/24 year is an Annual Plan year. Obviously there is little desire to increase rates, but with costs rising everywhere, we are in a difficult place.

Hard questions have to be asked about whether we can progress some projects and services, defer them, or retain a simple maintenance approach. These conversations will include property owners and residents before the plan has to be adopted at the end of June – please keep your eye out for more details on our website and social media about the Annual Plan in April.

A rating review is also underway to review whether the current basis for charging rates is the best model for our district. This will be implemented and form part of the LTP process and review for 2023/24.

Ngā mihi

Harry Wilson
Chief Executive

* www.wremo.nz

EcoReef

As climate change was making itself felt in February, a second EcoReef was being installed along Cape Palliser Road. An interlocking wall of hexagonal concrete shapes filled with aggregate, EcoReef replaces boulders which are often washed away by the Cape's tough conditions. After an initial positive trial at Whatarangi last summer, the Council has installed a second reef at Turners Bay, another known erosion point. Cape Palliser is one of the coastlines expected to be most affected by sea rise, and EcoReef is expected to pay for itself quickly, in terms of lower road damage and disruption. Our thanks to EcoReef and Fred Waiker's Agmar Tools company for their assistance.



Credit: EcoReef

Mayoral Relief Fund

Applications are open for financial support from the Wairarapa Mayoral Relief Fund for people affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

If you have been affected by the cyclone, you may be eligible. Priority will be given to:

- provision of essentials for daily life, transport needs and household contents
- rebuild/recovery costs of buildings damaged by water or storm damage
- essential items not covered by insurance or other funds.

Online applications can be made at the wairaparecovery.nz website and hard-copy application forms are available at offices of the three Wairarapa District Councils and the local libraries.

Understanding our flooding issues

Some necessary work is about to begin to tackle Featherston's water issues.

Firstly, work will begin this winter on a new pump station at Donald Street. This work, funded by Council and carried out by Wellington Water, will help pump wastewater away more effectively from the area south of Fitzherbert St and the Donald's Creek stream, an area where wastewater has sometimes backed up in heavy rain.

Further research is also being done on the wider flooding issues in Featherston. Wellington Water and Greater Wellington both have flood modelling projects planned or underway in the town this winter.

Flood mapping helps increase our understanding of flood-prone areas and enables us to make better investment and planning decisions.



Wellington Water's work on modelling surface water flows in urban areas has already been completed in Martinborough, Greytown and Featherston, while Greater Wellington Regional Council (GW) is about to begin mapping the river catchment in the next 18 months.

They plan to hold joint engagement sessions to ask the community for insights, photos and observations to validate their data. Details will be confirmed shortly.

Flood mapping is a strategic decision-making tool that can be used not only by GW, Wellington Water and our Council, but also by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) and other government agencies.

Annual Report on the way

Our Annual Report, which measures our progress against our priorities, is audited every year by Audit NZ. This year, because of a shortage of auditors at Audit NZ, some Councils have had the audit of their Annual Reports delayed. Our 2021/22 report is in this camp. However, Audit NZ is aiming to complete all outstanding audits and opinions by 31 March. Our Council anticipates adopting the report in May 2023.

New face on Greytown board

Congratulations to Neil Morison, who has been elected by Greytown voters to fill a vacancy on the Greytown Community Board. The next Greytown Community Board meeting is on 3 May, 7pm at the Greytown Town Centre.



Hinekura update

Work is well progressed on the Hinekura Hall to make it safe and comfortable for community events and functions.

Funded by a \$30,000 grant from the Department of Internal Affairs, the repairs began after a major landslide which severed the community's main access road last winter.

Meanwhile, work continues on engineering options for the damaged part of Hinekura Road. A residents meeting was scheduled for late March to discuss these options and we'll update you in the next issue.

Community forums

Have a burning issue? All three community boards (Featherston, Greytown and Martinborough) and the Māori Standing Committee are holding regular Community Forums to widen communication with the community and guide the development of their community plans.

Forums will be held at dates and locations to be confirmed – follow Council's social media and subscribe to our website for the latest updates.



Keeping Greytown's water flowing

You may soon notice some work taking place around Greytown's Soldiers Memorial Park. A water bore based at the Memorial Pool carpark, which is the town's key water source, has reached the end of its life and needs to be replaced.

Our water services provider, Wellington Water, is consulting with the community, sports groups, mana whenua and other stakeholders on its plan to replace the bore this winter.

Currently the bore, pump and treatment chemicals are housed in containers in the pool carpark.

Of the five options for a new location, the preference by far is to fence off a corner of the pool area and put the bore equipment inside. It will take up a 3m by 6m area near the toddler pool and will be fully secure. This will not affect the existing BBQ and covered grass areas of the pool.

This project will be beneficial on a number of fronts. First and foremost, it will increase the resilience of Greytown's drinking water supply. It'll also improve the look of the carpark and free up space. Finally, it will mean the container for chemical treatment can be relocated around the side of the pool. The building housing the existing bore will be reassessed once the new system is operating.

Before work begins, information will be made available in libraries and a letter sent to local residents.

The pool carpark will be closed during construction but users will still be able to use the Kuratawhiti Street side of the park. Vehicle access to the clubrooms will be limited.



New people bring new energy, fresh ideas and optimism about their new life. They may be starting new businesses, relocating here from other regions, refugees, new migrants, students, or temporary workers.

We want new people to our district to feel welcome, wherever they come from. We want to help them get to know what services and facilities are available to them, and encourage them to get involved in our communities.

Last year our Council was given a three-year grant by Immigration New Zealand to join the Welcoming

Communities programme, an international movement.

We'll be working alongside our communities to understand what it's like for our newcomers to settle into our communities, and create a plan to address the challenges and opportunities we find. Our co-ordinator for the programme is Michaela Lloyd. With her help, we now have an excellent page on our website with more information – do check it out at swdc.govt.nz/welcoming-communities

Information is vital to helping us reach the right people. If you are a newcomer, please check out the survey on our new webpage www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPYG7GLup

Rebates 2022/23

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$700.00 for low income earners. Ratepayers must have been living in the home they own on 1 July 2022.

1. Your rebate will be calculated based on your gross income from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, your rates, and the number of dependants you have. The income eligibility for a rebate is \$28,080 - \$42,000.
2. You must provide details of income from your income provider for ALL forms of income, including interest and dividends. If requested by the Department of Internal Affairs you must provide proof of this income. Application forms will be sent to those who have previously received a rebate in 2021/22. Copies of the form can be obtained from the Council office in Martinborough, Greytown and Featherston libraries, or online www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms and can be obtained by calling 06 306 9611.

Get your rates invoice by email

If you wish to receive your rates notice by email contact rates@swdc.govt.nz

We encourage you to take up this option to allow Council to use the postage savings on projects that benefit the district.

Having trouble paying your rates?

Please contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you on a payment plan. Council will make every effort to work with you on this process. As a last resort, Council policy is to approach banks and legal representatives to recover arrears.

For any queries regarding your rates, please contact our rates team at the following email address: rates@swdc.govt.nz

Payment by direct debit

Council encourages ratepayers to pay rates via direct debit as this ensures the correct amount is paid and you avoid paying penalties for late payment.

We offer **weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly direct debit options** to pay rates. Direct debit is the easiest way to pay your rates as we withdraw the funds directly from your bank account at the very last minute. That way you will get the benefit of your funds for the longest time and avoid penalties. If you would like to pay using

this method, forms are available from the Featherston and Greytown libraries, as well as the Council office in Martinborough and on our website www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms. All you need to do is complete the form and send it to SWDC, PO Box 6, Martinborough 5741, or scan and email it to rates@swdc.govt.nz or drop it off at either the Council office in Martinborough or at the Featherston or Greytown libraries.

Rates 2022/23 Instalment Four

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Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2023.

The last day for payment is 22 May 2023.
Please pay by this date to avoid the 10% penalty.

Please help us to process payments by ensuring you include the property valuation number for all properties you are paying for. If paying online please make a separate payment for each property.

**GET IT
SORTED**

Something needs fixing?
Let us know...

To South Wairarapa District Council,
P.O. Box 6, Martinborough 5741

From:

First name

Surname

What's the problem?

Where exactly?

Street or Road name and number

Your phone number (Should we need to contact you to clarify the details)