

FROM THE Mayor's Desk

Tena koe, the Whanganui District Health Board have provided COVID vaccination statistics for the Rangitikei region and these show that from the end of the week 15 October our District is sitting at around 46% fully vaccinated. We really need to be aiming at in excess of 80%. Marton is leading the charge (50%) followed closely by Mangaweka (48%) and Taihape (43%). These figures do not include those who have had only one dose of the vaccine. Unfortunately, where we sit geographically – on the main state highway corridor - makes us susceptible. I hope many of you were able to take advantage of the Super Saturday vaccination drive to help boost our district's numbers and I encourage those of you who have not yet been vaccinated to get out and get the jab – let's deal with it before it becomes a crisis position. 58% of people infected with Covid-19 in the latest Delta outbreak have not been vaccinated and the talk of Government introducing a vaccination passport is a very real possibility.

Earlier this month, I attended the Mangaweka Volunteer Fire Brigade Annual Honours Awards night. Under Covid restrictions this was one of the few award evenings that could go ahead because it was held off site. Congratulations to Mangaweka for allowing the awards to continue, it was a very enjoyable evening.

While I was in Taihape recently, I called in to see progress of the new Fire Station build. The building certainly looks impressive and has gone up very quickly with steel structures visible and virtually all in place.

The Chief Executive and I met with the Chairs of our Community Boards and Community Committees including Marton, Bulls, Taihape, Rātana, Hunterville and Turakina. We are hoping to have a regular six monthly meetings to enable us to give Chairs and communities a very early heads up on issues that are coming before Council and their respective communities. The meeting went really well and future meetings will provide the opportunity for us to understand the needs and wants within those communities.

The Council Meeting on 30 September was one of the longest Council meetings we have held, starting at 1pm and adjourning well after 6pm. The meeting was continued on 7 October to allow us to discuss seven projects from the Project Management Office. We approved, around \$13m worth of work. Some of this work included wastewater projects at Rātana and the new pipeline between Marton and Bulls, looking at projects at Mangaweka with toilets and shower block, work being done on the Mangaweka Bridge replacement and the Taihape Amenities Build. We will see spades in the ground this summer with the commencement of a lot of work. Traffic management and construction sites will be visible across the district and there will be plenty of information on our website so you can see for yourself what's going on. I applaud the Project Management Team for the way they have tried to make as much public as they can.

Finally, people will be starting to see our Korero mai - Have your say touch screen podiums in public spaces to give us day-to-day feedback on your experience at those amenities. We want your feedback on things like cleanliness and staff helpfulness at the time you use the facility rather than relying on an annual survey. These will help us address any issues at the time. Our feedback podiums will be in place at our offices, libraries, facilities and events around our district.

Ngā manaakitanga, **Andy Watson**, Mayor of Rangitikei District.



Bulls 'Mushroom' tower could be getting a makeover

A proposal inspired by a New York project where artists create artwork and murals to beautify decommissioned water towers was discussed by our Assets/Infrastructure Committee last week.

Operations Manager Jessica McIlroy's proposal to explore options and costs to beautify the old Bulls water tower was agreed to by the Committee.

The proposal identified that there are sources of funding for "place-making" available, so it could potentially be a low cost project to beautify the tower.

Committee Chairman Cr Dave Wilson said the plain concrete tower was a prominent landmark so the idea had merit, "It could be a further enhancement to Bulls, which is the gateway to the Rangitikei District," Wilson said.

Built in 1956 to support the growing number of Defence Force families based at Ohakea, the earthquake-prone structure at Taumahi Street has not been used for several years.

The tower had been earmarked for demolition last year to reduce the risk to a new reservoir at the same site, however after public consultation in favour of keeping the tower, Council strengthened it.

There were a range of suggestions identified at the meeting for beautification of the tower including lighting, shaping it into a UFO or setting up a walkway and viewing platform on top of the tower.

Once the initial investigation is complete, the results would be presented at a full Council meeting to decide on options for public consultation.



Our Event Sponsorship Scheme 2021 is now open

This Council fund is intended to support events in the district that help to develop community cohesion and reinforce economic growth.

Applications are open to groups whose events take place within the Rangitikei, and that are not funded by the Rangitikei District Council ratepayers through other means. There are two funding rounds per year offering grants up to \$50,000.

Round Two is now open and closes 6 March 2022.

For more information visit Events Sponsorship Scheme on our website or scan this QR code with your smart device.



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Market Day unable to go ahead this year

After careful consideration it is with a heavy heart that we announce the cancellation of Marton Market Day 2021.

The current regulations set by the government for events such as this means that Alert Level 1 is the only level where we would be able to continue safely. While the government has signalled that new regulations are being developed, which may allow events to continue at various alert levels, they are not yet in place to give us and stall holders sufficient confidence and time to plan and invest in Marton Market Day 2021.

These times are hard for anyone that works within the event sector. We have seen all of our districts large, iconic events cancel for 2021. Our consolation prize is believing there is an end in sight and that 2022 events throughout the Rangitikei District will likely be back on the calendar and better than ever before.

Council would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the ongoing support that Marton Market Day continues to receive from the community, stall holders, suppliers, and visitors and we look forward to seeing this event and others come back to life again next year.



Building and Resource Consents Deadlines

Our Regulatory team have confirmed the following days for Building and Resource Consents acceptance and processing times over the Christmas/New Year period:

- Any Building and Resource Consents submitted after **Friday 17 December 2021** will not start to be processed until **Tuesday 11 January 2022**
- If you would like your Building and/or Resource Consent to be processed before Christmas it needs to be submitted by no later than **Friday 19 November 2021**.

For further information contact our team on 0800 422 522 or info@rangitikei.govt.nz