

## FROM THE Mayor's Desk



Kia ora koutou, I am using this newsletter to acknowledge the work done at Papakai in Taihape. For many years people like the late Les Thurston, Joe Byford, Don Tantrum and team have nurtured the bush on the banks of the Papakai and Mt Stewart. They have put in paths, removed Old Man's Beard and unwanted species like the sycamores. Remember also, that they have been the drivers, along with others, of the planting and maintenance of the lookout at the Mt Stewart Reserve.

Tracks through the Papakai native forests were initially established in 1912 for the community from the Power Station Hydro Outlet, to the Papakai Park, to the Memorial Park. This reserve contains Kahikitea, Totara and Matai and was critically endangered. This forest type is regarded to provide high ecological value to New Zealand and is described as being critically endangered. Friends of Taihape Charitable Society's committee undertook the project to rejuvenate the reserve's forest and tracks in partnership with Ngāti Tamakōpiri and Rangitikei District Council. The project connects Taihape township's native reserves along the Hautapu River, delivering a multi-use native flora experience. The essential linking component of the reserves are the bridges, which adjoins both sides of the River's tracks and parks. The upgrade of Papakai Park is in effect the continuation of that vision. Joe and Tash Coogan have done a remarkable job improving the walking tracks and redesigning Papakai Park, levelling and grassing ready for a spring re-opening. They have done all of this by working around the frustrating process of Council building the new pump station.

Matt Thomas and the Friends of Taihape have been the glue that has tied the work at Papakai and the bridges together. This project has been eight years of planning and fundraising to get to this position, Matt has been exceptional in this space.

Moving to the bridges. Frame Group, under the leadership of Geoff Wigley, were contracted to design the bridges to make the access walkways throughout the reserve link together. I have included some of the photos of the bridge team led by our local contractor Matthew Preece and the first bridge near completion. Having named some of the special people involved in these projects it is fitting that I acknowledge several more. Thanks go to Matthew, Sarah and Ben Preece, Jim Haley, Joe Byford, Bennett and Glen Horton, Byford's Read Mix, the Benson Family and Hautapu Pine and Rural Supplies, the Taihape Engineering team, Michael and the One Step Team, Steven Tweeddale, Ōtūpae Station, Rimanui Farms, Don and Conchita Tweeddale, JBS Dudding Trust, Four Regions Trust, Horizons, Daryl O'Hara at Lasercraft and Don Tantrum. Our iwi Reps Richard, Moira, Robert and Dianne with a special thanks also to Council Staff and Councillors Gill Duncan, Piki Te Ora Hiroa and Jeff Wong. I apologise to the many others I may have missed and to the literally hundreds of people who have planted, financially supported or provided assistance in kind.

The team will complete three bridges and then re-assess the budget regarding the completion of the remaining two bridges, where abutments are already in. Any person or organisation who may consider helping with funding please feel free to reach out under confidence to Matt Thomas.

Our district has been built on the backbone of community support and it is great to have the time to tell this story.

Ngā mihi, Andy Watson, Mayor of Rangitikei.



## Marton Rail Hub a step closer with rezoning of rural land

Rangitikei District Council has paved the way for the development of the Marton Rail Hub by rezoning rural land for industrial use in the District Plan.

At its last Council meeting on Thursday 25 July, the Marton Industrial Development Area Plan Change was adopted, and will become operative on Monday 12 August. The rezoning is part of the wider Marton Rail Hub project and will enable industrial development to support local job opportunities and contribute to a growing district economy.

Council has been working on this change since 2019. An appeal process has been underway since 2020, and all appeals and appeal opportunities have now been resolved.

The rezoning provides for 65 hectares of land located south of Marton Railway Station (located between the railway line, Makirikiri Road and State Highway 1) for industrial development. It is focused on providing land for industrial businesses who will benefit from centralised access to both rail and state highway connections.

[www.rangitikei.govt.nz/district-plan](http://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/district-plan)



## Taihape-Napier Road slip repairs to begin in August

Work on repairing 11 major slips along Taihape-Napier Road caused by Cyclone Gabrielle will begin in August and would take up to 18 months to complete.

Because most of the slip repairs would be undertaken within the existing closed lanes, it was not anticipated that there would be significant additional delays for road users. However, the work sites will be under stop/go traffic management, a change from the priority traffic approach currently in place.

Project updates will be posted on Hastings District Council's website [www.hastingsdc.govt.nz](http://www.hastingsdc.govt.nz)

We ask drivers to please be patient and adhere to the direction of the traffic controllers, as they work to fully restore this important connection.



## Otara Bridge Update

Last week a section of the bridge was cleaned and prepared ready for the installation of 22 new hangers.

Unfortunately, the process to galvanise the hangers has been delayed due to technical problems at the galvanising plant in Auckland. Also, technical issues have led to a delay of two days, and work on site has commenced on Monday, 22 July.

The work is expected to be completed by Friday, 16 August (weather permitting)

While this work is being done the bridge will be closed between 9:00am and 3:00pm on week days.

Outside these times, the bridge will be open to vehicles with a weight limit of 6 tonnes, at a speed of 10 km per hour, with one vehicle crossing at a time.

[www.rangitikei.govt.nz/status/otara-bridge-repairs](http://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/status/otara-bridge-repairs)

WHERE'S IT @  
RANGITIKEI

## Rating Information 2024/25

The 2024/25 rates have been loaded onto our website. You can now 'search' your current property rates and history. [www.rangitikei.govt.nz/rates](http://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/rates)

