



Mayor Mike updating the residents of Corcoran Road, Te Pahu, about progress to clear the blocked culvert

Reconnecting, rebuilding, recovering: Waipā’s road ahead

It’s hard to believe it’s already been a month since that storm tore through areas of our district. Like many of you, I still think back to those first few days — the slips on the hillsides, roads, culverts, bridges cut away, and the sense of uncertainty that hung over everything. A lot has happened since then, and while we’ve made real progress, recovery is something we’ll be working through together for some time yet, along with many impacted in the rural sector.

One of the turning points has been the announcement of the temporary bridge on State Highway 39. When the Mangati Bridge was destroyed, it cut more than a route — it cut a daily connection that so many people in and around Pirongia rely on. Hearing that a 40-metre temporary steel bridge will be in place by mid-March has been a real lift for the community. Crews have already cleared debris and built up the approaches, and once the bridge components arrive, it should go up in just a few days. It won’t solve everything, but it’s a big step toward getting people and businesses moving again.

During a recent visit to Pirongia, I stopped in at the local Four Square and had a good conversation with the duty manager about those early days and the challenges ahead. Hearing this firsthand really reinforced how deeply the event affected people on the ground.

Water has also been a major pressure point. Damage at the Te Tahi Water Treatment Plant left Pirongia vulnerable, and while the new backup connection at Frontier Road has stabilised supply, we still need to assess what is needed long-term to strengthen our wider network.

Our outdoor spaces have taken a hit too. Pirongia Forest, Sainsbury Road Reserve and Kakepuku Mountain Track remain closed due to unsafe ground conditions, slips and debris. Drone flyovers and geotechnical assessments are underway, and while reopening these well-loved places will take time, it remains a clear priority.

Support for those doing it toughest continues to grow. The Mayoral Relief Fund has received an additional \$100,000 from central government and \$13,000 from local trusts and organisations, helping more people access the support they need.

What stays with me most is how people across Waipā have shown up for one another. Staff, contractors, volunteers, local businesses and neighbours have all played a part in helping the district back onto its feet. Recovery isn’t quick, and there’s still plenty to do, but we’re moving forward — together.

Mayor Mike Pettit



Waipā Mayoral Relief Fund open to support storm-affected residents

The Waipā Mayoral Relief Fund has been established to support people, families and organisations affected by the severe weather and flooding that impacted parts of the district in February.

The fund has been set up to provide financial assistance to individuals, whānau, small businesses, community organisations, volunteer groups and marae experiencing hardship as a result of the event.

In addition to the \$100,000 start up funding from Waipā District Council and the matching support from Government, there has been over \$13,000 donated to the fund with almost \$45,000 already allocated to help those in need.

The fund is intended to provide short-term support where people have urgent needs that may not be covered by insurance or other forms of assistance. In many cases, it can help with immediate recovery costs such as essential household items, clean-up costs, or other urgent expenses linked to the storm event.

Who can apply

Applications are open to:

- Individuals and families affected by the severe weather event
- Small businesses experiencing hardship as a result of the event
- Community organisations, volunteer groups and marae supporting recovery efforts

How to apply

People who have been impacted and require assistance can apply by completing the Mayoral Relief Fund application form available on our website.

Because funds are limited, applications will be assessed against the fund’s criteria and support will be prioritised for those experiencing the greatest need.

For more information about eligibility or to apply, visit waipadc.govt.nz/relief-fund or contact us on **0800 924 723**.

Your Elected Members Get in touch: waipadc.govt.nz/our-council/our-team/mayor-and-councillors

											
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