



Ōpōtiki District Council
STRONG COMMUNITY STRONG FUTURE

Pānui

Issue 89 // April 2022

Keeping you up to date with Ōpōtiki District Council

From the Mayor

Councils around Aotearoa are grappling with a huge number of priorities and an extensive reform agenda from central government. We have changes happening in three waters, housing, resource management, climate change planning and even most recently the announced changes to rubbish and recycling. This is all happening during two long years of the covid pandemic and all the change and uncertainty that it has brought to the world.

Ōpōtiki has done its best to position itself well for all this change. We spent decades building our vision and having a plan ready to go. We rebuilt and refurbished pipes, upgraded infrastructure and planned ahead to be ready for future generations. That meant when government funding became available, we were the first to put our hands up and say “we’re here and we are ready to start work right away”. Our harbour entrance, Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi, the mussel processing factory, cadetships and apprenticeships, training opportunities, a new pound, Rawinia Rangi Reserve, cycleways and horse trails. These are all less than two years old and are the rewards for all that work for many many years.

And the innovation and flexibility hasn’t stopped. I was up in Te Kaha in March for the announcement from Minister Nash for millions of dollars to support the new spat hatchery planned for the town. It is cutting edge technology and a unique business opportunity right here in our district.

“We spent decades building our vision and having a plan ready to go.”

But the pace of change is hectic and we need to make sure we are holding the reins tight and keeping our eye on the end goals. We don’t just want change for change’s sake.

In one area we feel that this change won’t get the outcomes it should, is with the government’s Three Waters Reforms. We joined the group Communities 4 Local Democracy He hāpori mō te Manapori (C4LD) to make sure Ōpōtiki’s opinion on the Three Water Reforms is heard in Wellington.

I joined representatives from other councils (there are now 31 member councils in the group) and we met with Minister Mahuta at the start of April so that she understands our concerns and listened to the voices of so many New Zealand communities. We want the same things – safe and environmentally sound three waters systems throughout the country. But we don’t want to hurry through changes that will have implications for generations of New Zealanders without careful thought and true partnership. You can read more on the C4LD proposal at communities4localdemocracy.co.nz

Another way you can make sure your voice is heard is in the Local Government elections in October this year. If you voted in previous local or parliamentary elections, you should still be enrolled. If you have moved recently, you may need to update your details and you can do that on the Electoral Commission’s website – www.vote.nz.

Lyn Riesterer, Ōpōtiki Mayor



Two years since harbour funding announced

It was two years ago in February that government announced that Ōpōtiki's funding bid for the Harbour Development Project had been successful and would be supported by Kānoa, the government's regional economic development and investment unit. This investment is on top of the \$20 million from Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Regional Infrastructure Fund.

The \$100 million redevelopment to re-establish the Ōpōtiki harbour has passed the halfway mark, with the two training walls over 60% of their final length. They'll be completed by the end of this year and then the new entrance will be progressively opened while carefully closing the existing river mouth. The river will be flowing fully between the new seawalls by the second half of 2023.

The development is already bringing many benefits to the district with more than 90 direct employees working on the project and more than 140 new jobs at Whakatōhea Mussels (Ōpōtiki) Ltd's processing factory in town. There are also many new jobs, cadetships, apprenticeships and training available in associated industries.

The newest addition to the aquaculture industry is the exciting new spat hatchery planned for Te Kaha. This world-leading facility - Te Huata - will have a significant impact locally and nationally.

At the same time as we are building the infrastructure, Council is working to improve the town, facilities and infrastructure so we are ready for this growth and can make sure everyone benefits from it.



FUN FACT:

The Ōpōtiki skyline has ten times the number of cranes per person as the rest of New Zealand. The RLB Crane Index last quarter noted that there were 150 cranes operating around New Zealand. We have three of them right here in Ōpōtiki!



Paying your rates



With this Pānui, you will have received a flyer from Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council explaining changes to how you pay your regional council rates.

Pay this current invoice as usual. Your next rates notice will be in July 2022 and will not include Regional Council rates so the amount to pay Ōpōtiki District Council will be lower. The first Bay of Plenty Regional Council rates payment isn't due until the end of October 2022.

It is a good time to consider your payment options and what will work best for you.



Set up a Direct Debit – you give permission for payments to be automatically deducted from your bank account weekly or monthly or in instalments. It saves time and there is no hassle with postage and no worries about penalty charges like late fees. You do need to make sure you have the money in the bank account on the day it is due.



Set up an Automatic Payment (AP) – this means you have set up a payment from your bank account to council for a fixed amount on a regular date. You can 'set and forget' and easily organise your payments to match your pay days. It can mean you pay too little or too much if your payment amount changes. We recommend checking your AP each July to make sure it is correct for the coming year.

If you pay by AP, you will need to change your payment so that it doesn't include regional council rates from July. You may need to set up a new payment to Bay of Plenty Regional Council.



Pay it online through Council's website

– you can use council's online services to quickly and easily pay for a wide range of council services from rates to dog registration. Paying online means you have all the required forms and payments in one place. Council accepts Visa and Mastercard Credit and Debit cards (with no credit card fees). You can also use Real Time Debit to directly transfer funds from your bank account to council.



Phone banking or internet banking – you can 'pay a bill' by phone or internet banking. You can check out the directions on the council's website to make sure you are including the right references for different types of payments.



Pay over the counter – you can still pay over the counter in Council reception by credit or debit card or in cash. Cheques are no longer accepted.



Stormwater upgrades

Stormwater is the runoff from urban surfaces like roads and roofs when it rains. In the Ōpōtiki township, this runoff can be of particular concern because much of the town is low-lying and overland flow and ponding can cause issues.

Improvements to Ōpōtiki's stormwater network are a key focus in our current Long Term Plan and you can see progress on these upgrades, particularly the current pipe installation on Richard Street.

The Richard Street upgrades and several related pieces of work will reduce overland flow and ponding in Goring Street, the primary school grounds and surrounding St John Street area.

Māori Wards for Ōpōtiki?

This year, at the same time as local government elections, you can have your say on whether Ōpōtiki District Council should establish Māori wards in addition to the current general wards in future council elections.

Members of Māori wards would be elected by people who are enrolled on the Māori Parliamentary Electoral Roll. Electors of Māori wards would not be able to vote for members of general wards. Similarly, people who are enrolled on the General Parliamentary Electoral Roll would vote for members of the general wards, but not for members of Māori wards. All electors would still vote for the mayor and community board members.

After the poll, Council will undertake a detailed review of its representation arrangements including the number of General and Māori wards, the number of councillors and ward boundaries and names. This would go through a full public consultation so that final outcomes can be in place for the 2025 local government elections.

IN BRIEF

Did you know that **local government elections** are in October this year? Get ready early and make sure you are enrolled and have all your details correct so that you can get your postal ballot when it is sent out to you in September. Check your details at www.vote.nz. If you own property but don't live in Ōpōtiki, you may be eligible to register and vote as a Ratepayer Elector. Find out more on our website.



It is still important to get your vaccinations and boosters to protect your whānau from Covid-19. For all the information you need on vaccination events, where to get tested or how to pick up RATs tests, visit the **ŌpōtikiOurWay** Facebook page. You can also find out more about the support available if you are isolating with practical checklists, contact information, flow charts and contact details at www.tewaharoa.co.nz.

After an event-free summer because of Covid restrictions, the Ōpōtiki community is more than ready to celebrate Matariki in style! This is the first year that Aotearoa will **celebrate Matariki** with a public holiday on Friday 24 June. Keep an eye out for details soon on Ōpōtiki's annual celebration with music, food, dance and of course the famous fireworks!

What's on at **Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi**? Have you been in to see the lovely new building filled with local art and heaps of local resources? The bookable meetings rooms and work spaces are proving very popular for zoom meetings and video conferences. There are several **Arts on Tour** events to brighten up your winter evenings and a mountain of digital resources for those who want to research their ancestry, dig into the national archives or just curl up at home with one of their free movies.

This newsletter is produced quarterly by:



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Ōpōtiki District Council
108 St John Street,
PO Box 44, Ōpōtiki.
Phone: (07) 315 3030

Email: info@odc.govt.nz

Web: www.odc.govt.nz

 [OpotikiDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/OpotikiDistrictCouncil)