

MAYOR'S COLUMN



As further push-back from both communities and council's around the country becomes evident on the Government's Three Waters Reform Programme, the next few weeks could help to reveal a vital piece of the puzzle.

At our recent Council meeting, it was agreed to provide Council feedback opposing the reforms in its present format, citing a lack of relevant information and too many questions left unanswered. The real question now is, will the minister choose to push this reform through as a matter of legislation, rather than allowing the communities to have their say, or will she listen to the feedback and have a rethink? On the face of it, it's too early to know, but mandating these reforms remains a distinct possibility. Minister Mahuta will now take all feedback to Cabinet and is expected to make a further announcement later this month.

In the meantime, there's a stack of further information and resource on Council's website, so if you haven't already, perhaps take the time to visit waimatedc.govt.nz and click through to Three Waters Reform.

In other news, you may have seen the recent proposal for South Island Resource Recovery Limited to build an energy from waste plant, identifying the Waimate District as their preferred location. In case you missed it, the project is estimated to cost around \$350 million to build and intends to create more than 400 direct and indirect jobs – 300 in the construction phase and 100 longer term. It's early days, but I look forward to seeing more detail through the resource consent process and learning more about the project in the coming months.

Elsewhere, spring has arrived and it's great to have the Waimate Lakes camping season now upon us. As the campgrounds start to fill, it's clear we're heading for yet another bumper summer. On behalf of staff, thank you to all campers that followed the new rules and regulations. Your patience was appreciated by all and it was pleasing to see sites being set up in good spirit and minimal issues reported.

SOOLE FAMILY EMBRACE LAKES' LIFE



With wife Ema and their two children in tow, Jordan Soole has traded life in the Far North for a new challenge at the Waimate Lakes Camping Area.

Recently appointed as Council's Camp Supervisor, Jordan was formerly employed by the Kaipara District Council as Domain Manager for the Taharoa Domain Kai Iwi Lakes. The Domain covered more than 500 hectares of public domain, comprising of three lakes, walking and mountain biking tracks and two busy campgrounds.

In addition, Jordan has also served as a warrant officer for Kaipara DC, and a harbour warden for Northland Regional Council – required to enforce respective bylaws and promote water safety.

Transferring his skillset to the shores of Lake Aviemore and Waitaki this season, Jordan will be responsible for the successful daily operation of Council's five campgrounds and surrounding areas. Not dissimilar to his previous role, Jordan will be checking for freedom campers, checking amenity areas, restocking supplies, carrying out general maintenance and being on hand to assist campers.

"A large part of my days over the busy summer period involved checking in campers, helping with queries and genuinely making sure they have a good experience during their stay," Jordan said.

"There were a lot of generational campers who had been coming for 20 plus years that I built a good rapport with, and that's a big part of the job . . . being a friendly face that campers get to know."

With Ema also taking on cleaning duties for the Council, the husband and wife team are looking forward to embracing their new chapter. Outside of work duties, Jordan has a background in conservation, is an avid fisherman and has a passion for photography.

"I have come here from a similar role, but I am looking forward to bringing the knowledge I have gained and getting this season in to full swing. Kyan and Niko (our kids) are the kinda kids that need big open spaces to run and ride bikes and as a family we are passionate about camping and the outdoors, so this role is a great fit. We're excited to be here and we look forward to getting to know everyone throughout the season."

MAJOR QUEEN STREET NETWORK UPGRADE



Work to carry out a major upgrade to the stormwater and wastewater network in Waimate's CBD is set to get underway this month.

In response to historic flooding issues, the upgrade will significantly increase the level of drainage in the area, with the new infrastructure designed to withstand a 1 in 10 year event.

The project, which will be undertaken by contractors Rooney Earthmoving Ltd, will also serve as an opportunity to install the required fibre ducts as part of the Chorus fibre rollout, ensuring the road is not again excavated in the coming months.

The scheduled upgrade, which will also see a new sewer sub-main installed, will commence early this month and run through to mid-February 2022.

Commenting on the project, Council's Asset Group Manager Dan Mitchell said the disruption would be kept to a minimum where possible, but delays and a reduction in on-street parking could be expected.

"We appreciate there is never a good time to carry out civil works in the main street, and in considering the steps to complete this project, Council have been mindful of this fact," Mitchell said.

"Our team have liaised directly with affected businesses and will continue to do so, and for those residents also affected, we appreciate your patience, cooperation and understanding while this critical work is carried out."

The project will commence outside 118 Queen Street and progress through to the corner of Queen and High Street, now known as the Waimate Bakery. All works will be cleared prior to Christmas and recommence mid-January.

In the opening stages of the project, contractors will be on site to locate and mark existing services, though physical works will not be carried out until the second week of October.

The \$750,000 upgrade will be funded by both Three Waters stimulus funding (\$466k) and Council contribution (\$283k).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES NOW OPEN

Council invites applications for financial assistance from clubs, groups and organisations within the Waimate District for the following:

1. Community Grant – provides funding to assist with local community projects.
2. Sports Grant – provides funding to assist with local sporting projects.
3. Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund – provides a travel subsidy for sporting clubs and schools competing in regular local sports and competitions.

Application forms and information are available from the Waimate Event Centre and at waimatedc.govt.nz - all enquiries can be made to the Grants Administrator on 03 689 7771.

All applications must be received by midday Tuesday 26 October 2021 and sent to Grants Administrator, PO Box 122, Waimate 7960, emailed to info@waimatedc.govt.nz, or delivered to the Waimate Event Centre, 15 Paul Street, Waimate.



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