



NEWS FROM YOUR WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

24th MAY 2022

Last week's rain was very welcome; I hope there is more to come before the cooler weather arrives.

On 3rd May Councillors returned to Ngaruawahia for meetings. It seemed strange to be dashing out the door at 8.45am instead of making coffee and taking a leisurely stroll into my home office. The new normal I guess. Council will continue to meet via Zoom for some meetings.

On 11th April Waikato District Council adopted its **Dog Control Policy**. There are approximately 15,000 dogs in the Waikato District. After consulting with the community, Council has decided to make changes to the by-law based on the feedback we received. 666 submissions were received during the consultation period; 71 submitters spoke at, or were represented at, the hearings over three days in February. One of the changes to the policy is to remove the proposed permit requirements for rural zoned properties. This means dog owners in rural zoned properties will not need to get a permit for three or more dogs.

In a media release Council wrote - *"Council had originally proposed a permit for more than two dogs in rural zone areas, but we received submissions from an overwhelming number of people who did not support this. Our intention was to consider a different way to address some of the welfare issues we have seen over the past five years, but we acknowledge that a permit was not the best approach. Our sentiment was good – but we got it wrong. We know that the majority of people in our district are good dog owners and we do not want to make it harder for them."* The full media release can be found at <https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/news/media-releases/article/2022/04/11/council-adopts-dog-control-bylaw-with-changes-after-listening-to-feedback-from-dog-owners>

Most of you will be aware that **Telephone Road** was closed in early April, initially for a month. The decision to close the road was initiated by Kiwi Rail after a number of incidents over the last three years of traffic damaging the rail crossing putting trains at risk of derailment. 38 trains travel along this stretch of rail each day; daily train movements will increase markedly when the inland port at Ruakura opens.

I am communicating with Council around this and am very well aware of the inconvenience this closure is causing and that the detour route is onto roads not suitable to carry heavy traffic. An added complication is that Google Maps is sending traffic travelling south via Cambridge down Eureka, Hunter Road, Tauwhare Roads. New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) are trying to negotiate with Google to redirect traffic back to SH1b at Marshmeadow Road.

Waikato District Council, NZTA and Kiwi Rail are discussing solutions so Telephone Road can reopen but the problem is not an easy fix and may take some time. NZTA has commissioned a technical report with possible options for the intersection, to be tied into a business case. When this has been studied by the working group a public meeting will be arranged to be held at Puketaha Hall. This will be advertised on the NZTA Facebook page and other social media and I will mention it in my monthly newsletters.

If you know of anyone who may benefit from our **Rates Rebate Scheme** a reminder that applications close on 30th June. This scheme came into effect in 1973 to benefit home owners who have low incomes.

Application forms are available on line at

<https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/services-facilities/rates/rates-rebates> or forms are available at any Council office including the Tamahere Office located at Block C, Level 1, 65 Devine Road, Tamahere 3283 (next to the pharmacy, up the stairs) Phone: **0800 492 452** The opening hours at Tamahere are: Monday – Friday 9.30am – 3pm

Eligibly and benefits

- The maximum rebate for the 2021/22 rating year is \$665.00
- The Gross Income threshold starts at \$26,150.00 (if you earn more than \$26,150.00 a year you could still be eligible)
- The additional income allowance for dependents is \$500 per dependent.

How to apply

You can find out if you're eligible for a rates rebate by using the [rates rebates calculator](#) on the webpage or contacting our Rates team on 0800 492 452.

Contact me anytime

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