

Mayor's Memo 21 February 2020

Kia ora

Drought concerns are high on everyone's minds across Kaipara as the record rain-less period extends and the longer term forecast (say, to May) lacks rain to replenish underground aquifers, farm dams and household water tanks. The five municipal water systems of Kaipara District Council are being closely monitored, and we're confident everyone keeping water-wise and holding to the water restrictions will carry us all through. Tank water consumers may be nervously watching tank levels and ordering a delivery from very busy water carriers which may still be weeks away – patience and planning are needed until it's persisting down with rain again. It may pay to check in with your neighbours – maybe share a water load to help spread costs, get a delivery sooner and spread the water around faster. Whatever your situation, a drought is a serious time and people, animals and the environment are distressed. Take special care at this tricky time. Though it may seem as a community in the north we're under the pump, each of us has a part to play in planning our water-wise way ahead.

Coming up ahead is the Northland Fieldays, the largest event in Kaipara, a focus for the annual farming calendar and a kind of a watering-hole around which much of the community gathers. This year look out for the Kaipara District Council site where there will be information about Growing The Kai in Kaipara. At the same time the Kaipara Kai Hub will be opening in Ruawai, a project that's been developed with support from the Kaipara Kickstart PGF funding announced a year ago. The drop-in "hub" is located in the centre of Kaipara District and will help us all make the best of the great Kaipara soils and skills, and to grow more kai in Kaipara. Watch this space, transformation ahead!

Immediately ahead is also the re-opening of the two-lane Tomarata bridge in Mangawhai after significant repairs. The community has been very patient during a frustrating period and it's good to know that the road south from Mangawhai will soon be back to full-flow again.

That's pretty much what everyone's crying out for right now – to be at full-flow again. In more ways than one. Keeping patient and prepared while waiting for better times is something Kaipara people are good at, but I reckon soon we'll be in the swim again.

Nga mihi nui

Mayor Jake

PS In other news: I put in a submission to the Racing Industry Bill supporting Dargaville Racing Club's efforts to keep the value of their assets in the Kaipara if the racecourse is sold; Dome Valley mega-landfill proposal looks like it will be publically-notified in late March; and the Kia Kaha Northland campaign on Facebook and Twitter asking people to "#Back the Big Five" is building momentum.