

Kia ora from the Chief Executive

As I write this, the Kaipara District Council (KDC) Annual Report for 2021/2022 is freshly audited and hot off the press. Elected members unanimously adopted the report in their last meeting for the term.

The Annual Report is a sharply focused rear-view mirror, an independently audited document that we produce each year, marking our progress for the previous financial year and measuring our performance against the Annual Plan and Long Term Plan targets.

The Mayor said, as the report was adopted, that “this Annual Report paints an extraordinary picture of a small council that is getting on with doing its job.”

And we are proud to be doing that job well. The 2021/2022 financial year was a scene-setter for KDC, the first year of our new Long Term Plan 2021-2031. Across the organisation our teams worked towards Council’s vision of “Growing a Better Kaipara”.

The report notes the many significant milestones we have achieved this financial year, among them:

- Becoming an equal shareholder in Northland Inc, Northland’s Regional Economic Development Agency.
- Supporting our communities we kickstarted our adaptive pathways planning, with Ruawai and Raupō areas as the first pilot location.
- Completing \$32.7 million of capital works. We finished a number of externally funded projects including the upgrade of Pahi wharf and a new pontoon, sealing 10 kilometres of Poutō Road, completing 163 kilometres of rehabilitation across our unsealed road network, and constructing two 25-metre bridges in central Kaiwaka. These are huge achievements. We have benefitted from external funding for projects like these, delivering more for Kaipara without burdening our ratepayers.
- Starting construction on a new walking and cycling trail on the west coast (Kaihu Valley Trail), a shared path in Mangawhai on the east coast, and continued with the Kaipara Harbour wharf network upgrades, all of which are helping to build our economy and attract visitors to our district.

- Supporting our district’s growth by starting work on the District Plan Review and keeping up with the huge number of building consents – 780 processed by our teams this last year.

The Annual Report also noted the strong economic activity across the district, driving a significant increase in consents, financial and development contributions. Council’s external debt is unchanged from last year at \$44 million and is \$1.7 million lower than planned. Our cash position increased to \$21.8 million from \$12.2 million last year due to an increase in contribution reserves and an increase in depreciation reserves.

The 2021/2022 year also demonstrated the importance of Council remaining flexible to change. Significant reform and review processes are affecting local councils. The Government is replacing the Resource Management Act with new acts; legislation progressing the Three Waters Reform programme is moving forward; and the Local Government Review is midway through. All three have fundamental impacts on Council and its services. KDC remains an active voice in the reforms and review processes, protecting Kaipara’s interests and focused on achieving the best outcomes for the district.

This newsletter not only marks the sign off of our Annual Report, it also marks my sign off as Chief Executive. I am proud to have held the role for four years and celebrate what we have achieved in this time. KDC is ready to deal with the change ahead, we have a solid financial position and passionate staff who will continue to put our community first; we can look forward with confidence.

Ngā mihi nui



Louise Miller
Chief Executive



What’s happening?

Here are some highlights of what’s happening in Kaipara and in your area.

Community gives feedback on Exposure Draft District Plan

We received more than 240 submissions on the Exposure Draft District Plan during our non-statutory consultation from 8 August until 16 September. Kaipara’s Proposed District Plan will go out for public feedback in mid-2023 before being finalised.

*Kaihu Valley Trail update

Fencing is well underway along the Kaihu Valley Trail – the 45km walking and biking track between Dargaville and Donnelly’s Crossing. The trail is being constructed along the old railway line where possible and will be on low volume roads in some areas. The team are hoping to complete part of the trail, including the Parore and Ahikiwi bridges, before Christmas.

What's happening?

*Spring crops at Kaipara Water sites

New crops will green the Kaipara Water demonstration sites for their second growing season. The two sites are working examples of the ways different irrigation techniques can support land diversification in Kaipara. A 242m centre pivot irrigator will soon irrigate high-oleic sunflowers in Te Kopuru, while a sprinkler system will water Squash Delica on iwi-owned land at Maunganui Bluff.

Changes at Taharoa Domain

A new fees structure for Taharoa Domain came into effect on 1 October, reducing operating costs covered by ratepayers. We're also upgrading security at the Domain in time for the busy summer period. A reminder that the native wildlife at the Domain need protecting too – there is a strict no pets policy at the Domain.

*New wharf at Poutō

Construction has started on a new wharf at Poutō – the last of the three Kaipara Wharves projects to be completed, after the Dargaville pontoon and Pahi wharf upgrade.

No fines for library users

Kaipara libraries are now fines free! Libraries across the district no longer charge fines on overdue items. Our librarians hope the fines-free move encourages people to borrow more books. Lost or damaged books still attract a replacement fee.

Improved Animal Management service

Our Animal Management Team were pleased to report a reduction in aggressive dog incidents compared to the previous year. We joined up with North Auckland Dog Rescue in a campaign that saw 40 dogs neutered, successfully rehomed 22% of impounded dogs and returned 59% to their owners. The district's animal shelter was refurbished, meaning we can now limit our outsourcing to Whangarei District Council – bringing cost savings and providing a much more localised service to our communities.

A new vision for Pou tu o te Rangi and Harding Park

Pou Tu o Te Rangi, Harding Park and Old Mount Wesley Cemetery's new Reserve Management Plan has been adopted by Council, setting an overarching vision for the park, recognising its cultural and historical significance, and providing a guide to the reserve's future management and development.

*Te Kopuru Stopbank

Work will start soon on a trial to raise the height of up to 400m of the Te Kopuru stopbanks. The trial will give a clearer picture of the cost of the upgrade works, so the Council can accurately plan the rest of the upgrade over the next few years.

Kaipara's New New Zealanders

Five Kaipara residents officially became New Zealanders at a Citizenship Ceremony held in Dargaville on 16 September. It was a special occasion for those taking part, and a unique one – being the first Citizenship Ceremony in New Zealand where new citizens swore the oath and allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III.

A boost for arts, culture and heritage

We have adopted an Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy to strengthen and support the arts sector in Kaipara. The strategy was developed following consultation with local artists, iwi and groups across the district.

Upgrading our systems

We've completed an upgrade of the central operating system for our water and wastewater networks across the district. This gives our teams the ability to monitor the network in real-time, identify issues more quickly and efficiently, and ensure our regulatory requirements for water quality, treatment, and management are always met.

*Making our roads safer

The Unsealed Road Improvements Project has seen approximately 163km of roading rehabilitated across the Kaipara roading network.

Community grants for 22 organisations

Twenty-two community organisations were awarded a share of \$100,000 in the latest Kaipara District Council Community Grant. All recipients are not-for-profit entities with a volunteer component to their service.

Review of speed limits

Consultation on proposed speed limits for roads in the Poutō Peninsula – West Coast catchment areas opens on 28 October.

*Funding for carpark improvements

We continue to source external funding opportunities where possible. We successfully applied for the Tourism Infrastructure Fund recently and were awarded grants towards four projects; Pahi public toilet upgrade, Rangiora Road Reserve development, Rangiora Road boat ramp carpark improvements, and Poutō Point carpark improvements.

**These projects are supported by external funding partners.*