

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.

*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.

*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?

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.

*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.

*Wood Street Revitalisation

We're looking forward to sharing the design for the permanent upgrade of Wood Street soon.

Remember that right now we are still in the interim design phase for the revitalisation of Wood Street public areas. The temporary materials remain in place through to the second half of 2023 when the permanent design for Wood Street will be implemented.

*Kaiwaka wastewater improvements

A new pump station has been installed in Kaiwaka, supporting the flow of wastewater through the main line.

Strong support for proposed land purchase

In September, we approved the purchase of a 5.8 hectare block of land in Mangawhai Village for future use as public sporting and recreational facilities. The decision was unanimously made by Elected Members following a community survey in which almost 93% of residents supported the purchase.

New zones to complete MAZ skatepark

\$400,000 has been granted to Mangawhai Activity Zone (MAZ) to fund a Flow Bowl and Street Skateboarding Plaza at MAZ. The Olympic standard zones will put MAZ on the map as one of the best skate environments in the country and open up new recreation and economic benefits for Mangawhai.

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

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.

*Work starts on second phase of shared path

Work has started on the second phase of the Mangawhai shared path and includes a collaboratively designed boardwalk running alongside the causeway.

Phase Two continues from the end of Phase One (approximately 80m past Estuary Drive) through to Mangawhai Central.

The work is part of a wider shared path network planned for Mangawhai, improving safety and connectivity between its two centres, and making it easier to travel by foot, bike or scooter along busy Molesworth Drive.

Balance tank update

Construction of a new wastewater balance tank for the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme is well underway with completion expected in the first part of 2023. Building the balance tank is part of a long term strategy to increase the plant's capacity.

*New toilets for Mangawhai

New toilets are open on Alamar Crescent, near the boat ramp, and new facilities at Lincoln Reserve will soon be open for use.

*Funding for Rangiora Road reserve and carpark

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.