

BAY BUZZ

Nº57 • MARCH / APRIL 2021 • HAWKE'S BAY UP CLOSE, IN DEPTH

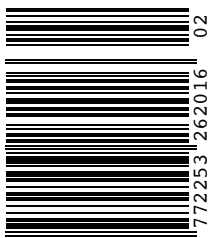
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BayBuzz March/April 2021

Housing crisis in Hawke's Bay. Napier floods. Climate blueprint. CHB's water infrastructure "frightening". Tech firms abound in region. Bringing big-time events to HB. Councils bite LTP bullet. Supply chain woes thwart recovery. Buy local art. What happened to cooking? Meditation or masturbation?

Cover: Thomas Oliver at the Outfield Festival, Te Awanga. Photo: Michelle Hepburn. This page: Outfield Festival. Photo: Michelle Hepburn.



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Featured Contributor



Amy Shanks, writer

I was five-years-old when I proudly announced to my mother, ‘I’m going to be a journalist when I grow up’.

Fast forward years of creative writing, a weird poetry phase, an English Degree and post-graduate diploma in journalism from Canterbury University – I made it. Before long I was swept up in the news current at *Hawke’s Bay Today* – covering everything from cat shows to car crashes. My passion for entertainment and lifestyle writing prevailed, and took me to the *New Zealand Herald’s* Digital Entertainment desk. Ironically, it was the Hawke’s Bay lifestyle that drew me home and into a digital marketing role. Now I have my own creative copywriting and digital content business called Frankly, based out of Otane. I’m passionate about the place we live in, and the people who have unique stories to tell - I can’t wait to share more of them!

Photo: Florence Charvin



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Outfield Festival, Te Awanga. Photo: Michelle Hepburn



Above: Benny Fernandez
 Right: Alex Walker
 Photos: Florence Charvin



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FROM THE EDITOR
TOM BELFORD

I write this just back from a Sunday morning walk at bustling Ocean Beach, perfect blue skies, 25°C, cheery people, happy dogs ...all's well in the world.

Except that it isn't ... outside our cloistered paradise.

Coronavirus still killing thousands a day. Xenophobia rampant throughout the world threatening social stability. A fragile global economy threatening really bad news any day. And global warming harming the planet at a quickening pace.

Against that backdrop, it is kind of 'another day at the beach' here in New Zealand and Hawke's Bay.

We should enjoy, celebrate and be thankful for it. There's plenty on offer, as Keith Newman writes about in *Events mojo*. But we must do everything we can as individuals to preserve it ...

Keep track of our whereabouts as carefully as we should in case Covid-19 strikes here.

Be appreciative, welcoming and respectful of our neighbours of differing race, creed, origin or belief.

Be mindful, not just that systemic poverty and disadvantage must be addressed here in Hawke's Bay, but also that any one of us might face or be already struggling with personal health, mental wellness or financial burdens brought on through no fault of our own. In short, be kind.

Take care of the environment that sustains us and our fellow species, recognising our moral obligation to future generations to whom - on our current path - we will otherwise bequeath a planet in shambles.

Accepting those as our personal responsibilities, we can then demand the best of our political leaders in return.

They need to front up, craft policy frameworks and provide leadership on the larger issues we do face as a community, even on our sunny Sundays.

Affordable housing is one of those ... an issue of major consequence here in Hawke's Bay, not just headline-grabbing Auckland. Although key policy settings and resources need to come from Wellington, our councils have a critical role to play as well, as Mark Sweet explores in his article.

Managing our water is another of those humongous local issues, whether it's safe drinking water, waste and stormwater, water for economic use, or water for swimming, recreation and most importantly, the well-being of our natural environment.

Our present councils are dealing with these issues. Our past councils have botched them badly, to the point where one could argue malfeasance except for the legal protection given our elected officeholders for their poor decision-making - "they did the best they could with the information at hand".

There's no charitable way to describe the public infrastructure neglect our previous councils have bestowed on our present councillors (not all of whom are innocents).

Read Amy Shanks' interview with Mayor Alex Walker, who describes CHB's infrastructure situation as "heart-breaking" and "frightening". Or read Abby Beswick's account of Napier City Council's handling of its latest (increasing frequent) rainfall events - probably well-managed in the aftermath, but certainly not well prepared for over previous years.

So now, hundreds of millions of legacy costs for Hawke's Bay come to roost. You will face them as ratepayers as the latest Long-Term Plans are adopted in the months ahead, as discussed in my *Political update* article.

The failure of our politicians over the years to adequately address infrastructure issues gives little reason for optimism when one considers the policies

and leadership required by climate change.

Just like with decrepit hidden pipes, this is another issue to fob off to future generations.

But if ever there were a rock-solid case for acting now, while mitigation of effects might be possible, more affordable and even economically beneficial, climate change presents that opportunity - as NZ's Climate Change Commission establishes with its recent blueprint.

Sure, the overall policy framework needs to be enacted by Government, but then it's all hands on deck, including our five HB councils.

Arguably, with infrastructure neglect, politicians 'merely' shifted higher costs to future ratepayers (some 5,000 victims of water-borne illness in Havelock North would dispute that). But if we shift the burden of addressing global warming to future generations, we're consigning them to a bleak existence over which they will have little or no control.

So, on that cheery note, it's March ... take off the jandals and put on the work boots, there's heaps of work to get done.

Tom Belford
tom@baybuzz.co.nz

Tom has been a two-term HB Regional Councillor. His past includes the Carter White House, building Ted Turner's first philanthropic organisation, doing heaps of marketing consulting for major non-profits and corporates.

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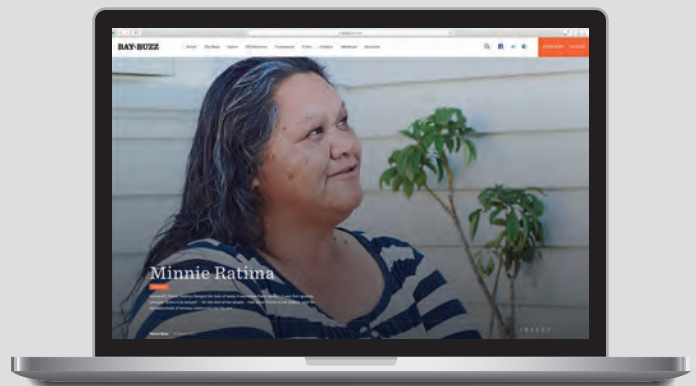
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Photo: Florence Charvin

Harvest Heroes

These Year 13 students from Taikura Rudolf Steiner School answered the call to help out with the harvest, spending their summer holidays in various orchards across Hawke’s Bay, tying trees, thinning apples, counting fruit.

Working full-time over 5-9 weeks in the hot Hawke’s Bay sun, they described it as “consistently hard work” but nothing too difficult or back-breaking, and overall “a lot of fun”. It’s a summer they’ll remember, they

say, not least because they were in it together. “The money was good and we spent it unwisely”. ●

Left to right: Jamie, Emily, Alejandro, Baxter, Lucas, Eamon and Marcus

LIVE HERE GIVE HERE



HAWKE'S BAY
FOUNDATION



Limor Strong at Napier Family Centre. Photo: Florence Charvin

NAPIER FAMILY CENTRE - SUPPORT WHEN LIFE IS TOUGH

Sometimes life is tough. Tough for families living with violence, mental illness, money worries or separation and tough for children dealing with grief, bullying, uncertainty at home – the list goes on.

Thankfully, Napier Family Centre offers professional support to take the pressure off families and get them on the road from merely surviving to thriving.

Situated in Wycliffe Street, Napier Family Centre was established in 1983 after research commissioned by a group of Napier church parishes revealed that many families were under severe stress, and were not coping with social pressures.

Napier Family Centre Family Services Manager, Limor Strong, says their services change depending on community needs, but the most common services sought currently are for children/teenagers behaviour management, child custody and access, mental health and addictions, housing issues, self-esteem, domestic violence, trauma, relationship issues and disabilities.

“Our purpose is to work with families to support them in making changes for a better future.”

The demand for Napier Family Centre services increases each year. Last year there were 293 referrals to social work support services, compared to 2015 when there were 192.

“Our purpose is to work with families to support them in making changes for a better future.” Limor Strong

“The number of referrals is increasing but due to an ever widening gap between what we are funded to do and the actual need of the community, Napier Family Centre is under pressure to meet demand.”

A \$5000 grant from Hawke's Bay Foundation for operating costs has gone a long way in ensuring the services are available for as many people as possible.

“Our organisation has to raise approximately \$200,000 per year so we couldn't continue the high levels of service without funding from trusts like Hawke's Bay Foundation,” Limor says.

SUPPORT WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Napier mother of two boys, Monique Jeffares, found herself in an overwhelming and somewhat scary new role as she began maternity leave with her new-born baby and toddler.

Monique admits that going from one child to two, who were both very dependent on her was a difficult transition to cope with, and if it wasn't for the Napier Family Centre's support she could've ended up in a “very dark place”.

“My older son was two when his little brother arrived, so it was a big adjustment for him as well as the rest of the family,” Monique says.

“I started to feel anxious and overwhelmed until one day I reached the end of my tether and knew I had to seek help.”

While Monique had a very supportive husband and family, she plucked up the courage to call the Napier Family Centre to seek information about parenting toddlers.

“Initially I phoned to see if I could do a parenting course, but after speaking to the lady on the phone she offered to have a social worker visit me at home.

“The difference in my self-confidence from my first session to the last was amazing! And my family benefited too as they had a happy mum who didn't feel overwhelmed anymore. I am so thankful for the support Napier Family Centre gave me.”

HAWKE'S BAY FOUNDATION: A better and more lasting way to give

Hawke's Bay Foundation provides a simple way to support your local community for generations to come. We receive gifts and bequests from individuals, families and businesses – these are pooled and invested forever, with the income being used to support local charities like Napier Family Centre. hawkesbayfoundation.org.nz

BAYBUZZ

BayBuzz is pleased to support the Hawke's Bay Foundation

Did You Know?



2



12



1



6

1

Great news for style-lovers in Central Hawke's Bay – TenKu has arrived! The gorgeous new store stocks design, homewares, clothing and a myriad of other goodies, curated by CHB locals Amy Tennent (the talent behind hit blog Milo & Mitzy) and Emma Kupa, whose background is in operations and hospitality. The brand range includes Remain, Hux Baby, Fog Linen, Veja Shoes, Just Another Fisherman (for the blokes), among others, plus you can take a seat for eight-thirty coffee and Ya Bon pastries. You'll find TenKu Collective Store on the main street of Waipukurau, next to Property Brokers.

2

New Zealand apples are shipped to over 100 countries and have been exported since 1890.

3

March is New Zealand's Kidney Health Month, timed to coincide with World Kidney Day on March 12.

4

One of the biggest benefits of Covid-19? The return of all these interesting and talented people! Originally from Wellington, with the whānau now in Havelock North, photographer Antony Nobilo has spent the last decade or two working, living, shooting and exploring in the US, London, Europe and more recently Sydney. His focus has been mainly fashion editorial work. Now Antony has established his own studio in Napier's AMP Building (where the Wine Centre was).

5

The redeveloped Hawke's Bay Airport (scheduled for completion in April) will see the terminal space increase from 2,500m² to 4,340 m².

6

Stretch is hitting the road this April! HB's favourite troubadour is making 2021 the year of cool, stripped-back gigs in special venues. Just him and his guitar, playing songs from his last two albums, Stretch will be in Wairoa at Eastend Café on April 3, Creative Arts Napier on April 10, the Paper Mulberry in CHB on April 17 and finally, Hygge at Clifton on April 24.

7

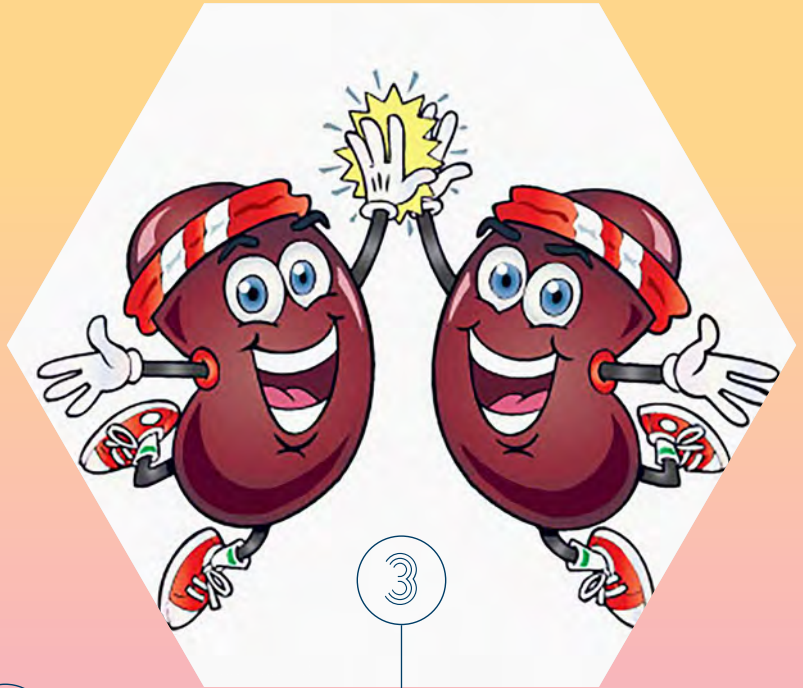
Over 200 Hawke's Bay residential properties sold for more than \$1 million in 2020.

8

Last year we had a lock-down Easter. 64 people were prosecuted for breaches of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act or the Health Act over that 'holiday weekend'. Here's hoping Easter 2021 is a whole different egg-hunt!

9

The trend for co-working in Hawke's Bay continues, with another shared space opening early March. Here Collective has a fresh-feeling design and layout upstairs on Hastings Street in Napier, opposite Chantal Foods. It offers individual offices, board room, dedicated desks, hot desking and a range of contract lengths and membership options – you can get day passes, and even sign up for a month just to give it a go!



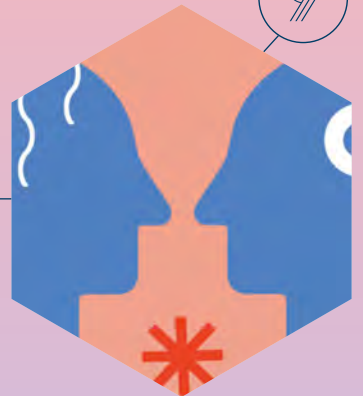
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10

SPA_CE Gallery has moved. Megan and Martin Poppelwell's contemporary art space has had a couple of homes in central Napier and has now landed on Market Street, just off Tennyson Street.

11

The Heretaunga Women's Centre Art Exhibition and Sale, *Sweet as Banana Pudding* returns after being canned last year due to the lockdown. The show serves as a major fundraiser for the centre, and features a terrific range of work from emerging and established artists based in the region. The ticketed opening night is on April 9, and the exhibition runs until April 16.

14



12

In 2020, the HBRC planted over 100,000 trees around waterways, on farms and in the regional parks.

13

Inner Napier wine retail pop-up Deco City Cellars is on the move. Carl Hayes has rebranded his store as Cellar and moved it from Emerson Street to Bridge Street in Ahuriri, where parking is easier – helpful when you are loading cases of the curated wine collection into the backseat!

14

Now's the time to pull on the sneakers and hit the running track. The Sotheby's Hawke's Bay Marathon weekend is coming. There is still time to train for May 15, whether it's for the full 42km, the 2degrees Half Marathon or the Havana Coffee 10km.

Cows, cars and coal – will New Zealand confront climate change?



Of course the biggest development recently regarding climate change mitigation on the global scale was the defeat of Donald Trump. President Biden has pulled the US from the denier abyss with already a huge collection of executive appointments, orders and actions, including re-commitment to the Paris Agreement.

Here in New Zealand, PM Ardern and Climate Minister Shaw would do well to be studying the full range of initiatives Biden has undertaken to mobilise the entire executive branch around the urgency of this issue.

But while we eagerly await evidence of that urgency from Government, we can take hope from the sweeping recommendations recently made by the Climate Change Commission.

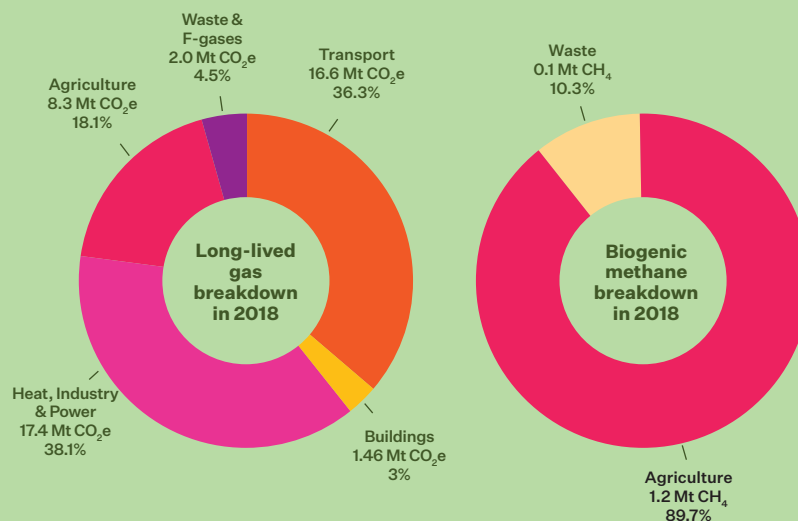
As required by the Zero Carbon Act (enacted 2019), the Commission has presented its first three 'budgets' which recommend detailed pathways for how NZ should meet its national goals for greenhouse gas reductions as well as meet its international obligations. Each budget covers a five-year window, reaching to 2035.

Public consultation on these draft budgets has been underway and the Commission must promulgate its final recommendations by May 31. The Government must take the non-binding recommendations into account when adopting its official climate plan no later than December 31.

Clearly presenting the disappointing reality, Commission documents that current policies do not put NZ on track to meet its recommended emissions budgets or the existing 2050 targets. Emissions would decline, but not enough.

In 2018, gross greenhouse gas emissions in Aotearoa were about 45.5 Mt CO₂-e of long-lived gases, and 1.34 Mt CH₄ (biogenic methane). "Our analysis shows if policy stayed as it is now, Aotearoa would fall short of achieving the 2050 net zero long-lived gas target by 6.3 Mt CO₂-e. Biogenic methane would reduce 12% below 2017 levels and fall short of the current target of 24-47%."

Below is our current profile.



1: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS NZ

However, the Commission has concluded that "there are achievable, affordable and socially acceptable pathways for Aotearoa to take".

As the chairman, Dr Rod Carr writes: "Now we must decide where our ambition lies ... To achieve a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable future, no emission reduction is too small - or too soon ... This means we need to change how we get around, and rethink what we produce and how we produce it. We need to reconsider what we buy, what we do with what we have used, and how we can reuse more of what we have left over."

So what needs to be done?

Strategically, achieve real reductions. The report strongly emphasises that NZ must *decarbonise* and *reduce* emissions at the source and not rely on forests to meet our climate change targets: "We can't plant our way out of climate change". Nor should we avoid real reductions by 'buying' our way out with overseas offsets.

Most important - and probably most politically contentious - is what happens on the land. In 2018, agriculture emissions made up about 90% of biogenic methane and 18% of long-lived gas emissions (CO₂e). The Commission calls for reducing animal numbers and better animal, pasture and feed management. Dairy, sheep and beef animal numbers would reduce by around 15% from 2018 levels by 2030. This

“To achieve a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable future, no emission reduction is too small – or too soon ... This means we need to change how we get around, and rethink what we produce and how we produce it. We need to reconsider what we buy, what we do with what we have used, and how we can reuse more of what we have left over.”

DR ROD CARR, CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION CHAIR

compares with an 8-10% reduction projected under current policies.

The Commission says that farmers can make changes now to reduce emissions on their farms while maintaining, or even improving, productivity, estimating that NZ can achieve methane reductions of 24% by 2050 without any technology developments, such as vaccines or inhibitors.

As for trees, the Commission notes that pine trees will still play an important role in getting to 2050 and could support a future bioeconomy, as bio-energy to replace fossil fuels and as timber for building. Additionally, existing forests, small blocks of trees, soils and wetlands can all store more carbon. The report calls for work to better understand this potential and how to include this in accounting systems.

The other flash point in the recommendations involves transportation and particularly Kiwis’ love affair with their cars.

In 2018, transport emissions made up 36.3% of total long-lived gases. The Commission notes that emissions from domestic transport have continued to rise even as emissions from other sectors (e.g., farming-produced methane) stabilised or decreased.

Yet the Commission insists NZ - given existing and fast improving technology

- can cut almost all transport emissions by 2050. The technology already exists and is improving fast. “We want to see the majority of the vehicles coming into New Zealand for everyday use electric by 2035.” No further internal combustion engine light vehicles would be imported after 2032. The goal: at least 50% of all light vehicle (cars, SUVs, vans and utes) and motorbike imports should be electric by 2027 (both battery EV and plug-in hybrid EV).

Recall that the Government in its first term, under resistance from NZ First, abandoned its rather whimpy intention to require more fuel-efficient cars and financially incentivise EVs.

The Commission advocates moving freight off the road and onto rail and shipping, gives the customary nods to public transport and cycleways, and says the use of low-carbon fuels, such as biofuels and hydrogen, needs to increase, particularly in heavy trucks, trains, planes, and ships.

Heating, industrial processes and power represent the third key area of focus. In 2018, heat, industry and power emissions made up 41% of total long-lived gases. Most significantly here, the Commission calls for sharp reductions in the use of coal, eliminating it in food processing (by 2037) and public and commercial buildings,

phasing out coal fired baseload generation, and shifting throughout the economy to electricity produced renewably.

All in, the Commission targets increasing renewable energy to at least 60% by 31 December 2035.

The Commission sums up the potential impact of its recommended path over the fifteen years to 2035 in the graph below.

There’s a heap of detail in the Commission’s 187-page report and recommendations, which are supported by 577 pages of evidence.

The argument going forward will be about pace, the policy mix and fairness across sectors. It should *not* be about the facts presented in this meticulous body of work, and it cannot be about the goals.

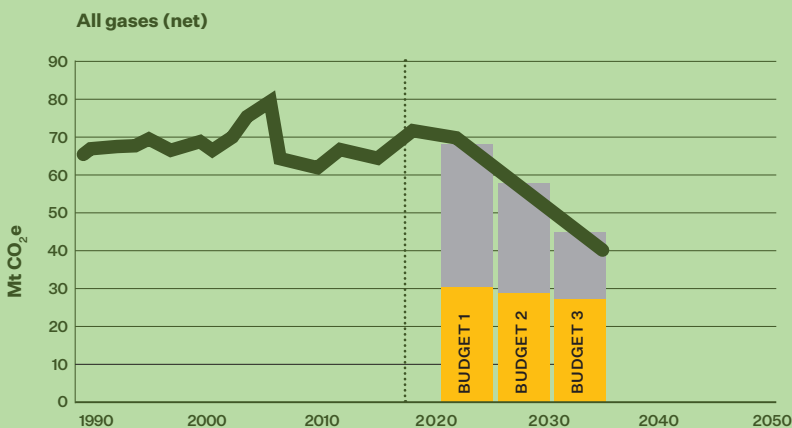
As NZ charts its domestic path to mitigate greenhouse emissions, the nation’s contribution to the global effort must also be weighed.

The Commission finds that the Government’s commitment (under the Paris Agreement, the current global benchmark) to reduce net emissions by an average of 30% from 2005 emissions levels over the 2021-2030 period is not compatible with global efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The Commission observes: “If Aotearoa is to play its part as a developed nation, the NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution) would need to be strengthened to reflect emission reductions of much more than 35% below 2005 levels by 2030.”

Such further reductions for NZ would go beyond the pathways the Commission has recommended at present. And so the Commission kicks this one to touch: “We consider that these judgements, and the decision on the level of international commitment, should be made by the elected government of the day.”

BayBuzz will report on the Commission’s final recommendations and the crucial debate over the coming year that will test the Prime Minister’s leadership and resolve. ●



2: IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED PATH



Unison is pleased to sponsor robust examination of energy issues in Hawke’s Bay. This reporting is prepared by *BayBuzz*. Any editorial views expressed are those of the *BayBuzz* team and do not reflect the views of Unison.

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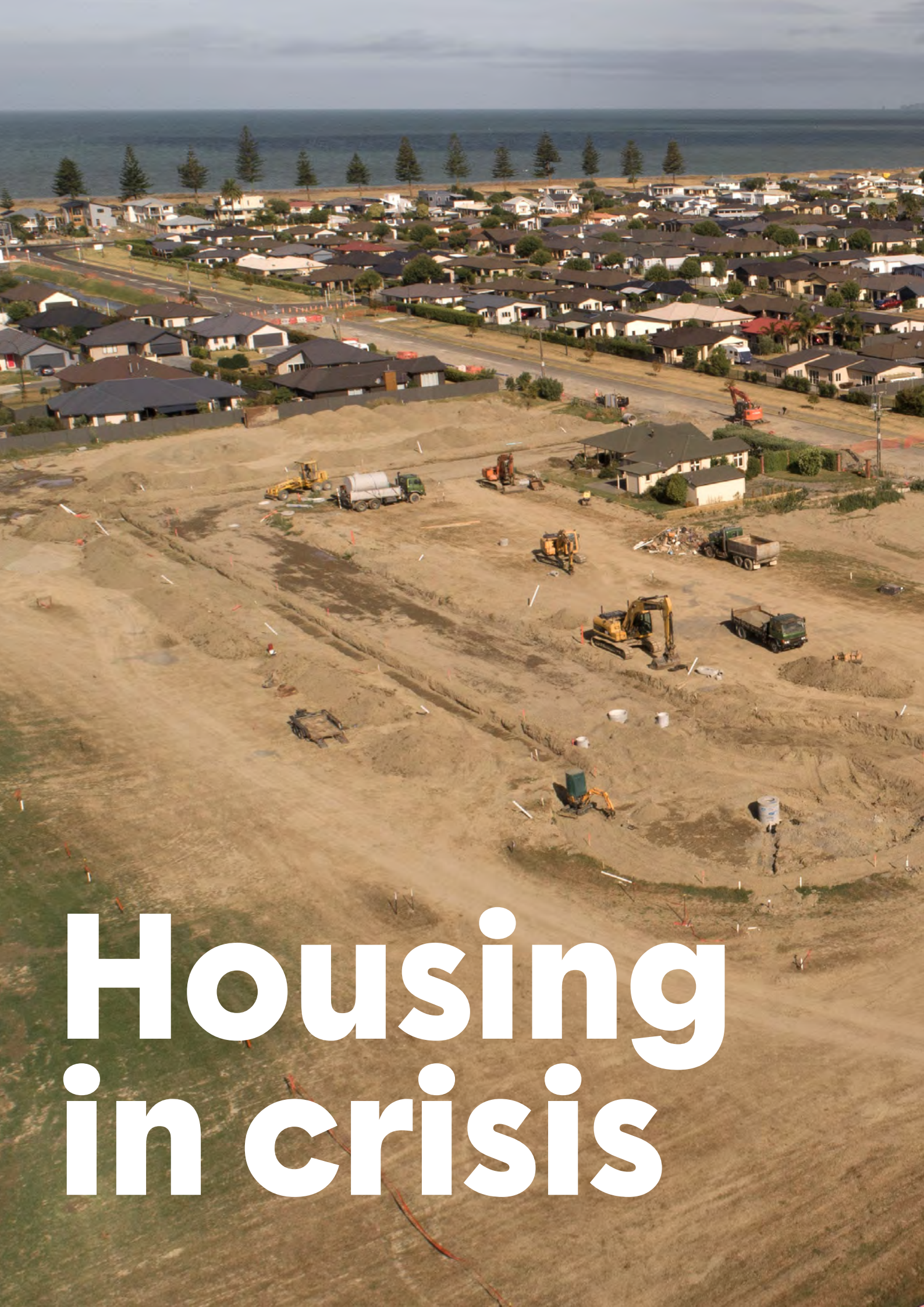
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Housing in crisis



Media is saturated with stories about the housing crisis, including here in our region.

Story by Mark Sweet

We'll come to Hawke's Bay in a moment; first the national context.

Emergency housing demand is greater than ever, waiting lists for social housing are longer, and the price of buying and renting continues to hit record monthly highs.

There are stories about working poor, made so by having to spend up to half their weekly earnings on rent, and how a whole generation of young New Zealanders will likely be renting all their lives, unlike their home owning parents.

Rack-renting landlords are getting a battering, and the Government is being criticised for doing too little to tether the boom.

Opinions on causes and solutions abound. Agreed by all is that we are a country obsessed with residential property ownership.

A popular trope is that Bob Jones planted the seed in 1977 with his book, *Jones on Property*, and with his 'how to' seminars that followed. When the Stockmarket crashed in 1986, many burnt investors turned to property, never returning to shares.

In January 2021, 30% of house buyers were investors, 21% were first home buyers, 49% were owner occupiers moving to a new house. (CoreLogic)

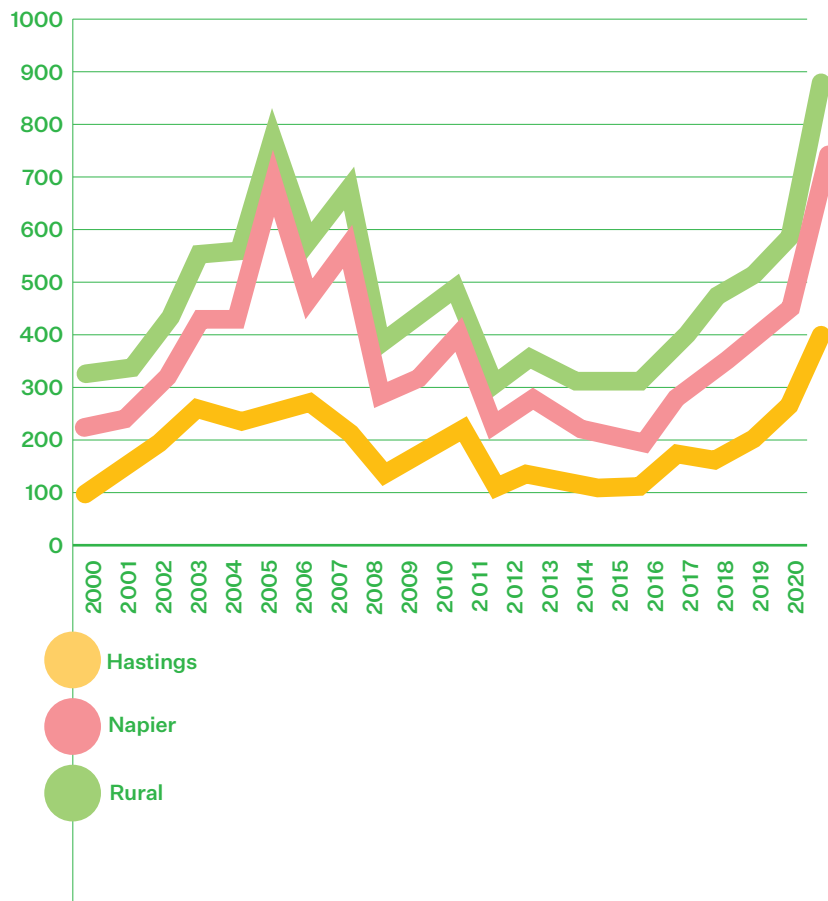
A popular trope is that Bob Jones planted the seed in 1977 with his book, *Jones on Property*, and with his 'how to' seminars that followed. When the Stockmarket crashed in 1986, many burnt investors turned to property, never returning to shares.



“The approach was to protect the soils by intensification within boundaries and move away from big greenfields developments like Arataki and Lyndhurst, but with some smaller greenfields to round off the boundary.”

MARK CLEWS,
HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Napier / Hastings new dwelling consents



There’s no doubt investors skew the market and drive up prices, and as they compete in the same price range as first-home buyers, every purchase for rental deprives a first-home buyer.

If investors weren’t a component in the market, there would be 30% more supply of houses, and we wouldn’t be experiencing a property boom nearly on the scale we are today.

Lack of supply is the major factor in house price and rent inflation. And the reasons for there being more buyers/renters than sellers/landlords in the current market are: failure of successive governments to facilitate more house building, historically low mortgage interest rates, a decade of high immigration, Covid returnees entering the market, and for investors, rentals offer better returns than depositing in the bank.

Steps have been taken by Government to intervene in the market by increasing the deposit needed by investors to 40%, and they must own five years before selling, or pay income tax on capital gain. More restrictions on investors have been signaled but not yet announced.

The Government assists first-home buyers with First Home grants and loans, and the KiwiSaver first-home withdrawal scheme, with deposits as low as 10%.

So that’s the national context, now let’s look at Hawke’s Bay.

Land available

But if increased supply is the key to stabilising the real estate market, building more houses is what’s needed. That’s happening at speed on existing subdivisions in Hawke’s Bay, both in the private sector and through Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities.

Land supply, while currently ample, is limited in the future by the need to protect the productive soils of the Heretaunga Plains.

Both Hastings District Council (HDC) and Napier City Council (NCC) are encouraging greater density within existing boundaries, and partnered with the Regional Council, in 2017 agreed to the current plan for future growth until 2045, the Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy (HPUDS).

Mark Clews, principle advisor district development, started at Hastings City as a town planner in 1985, and has been involved in the evolution of urban planning strategy from the outset.

“After amalgamation in 1989 both Councils did twenty-year strategic plans for urban development. Napier had NUGS, and Hastings had

HUGS. There were five-yearly demand reviews to see if we were on track, and the 2005 review recognised HUGS was coming to the end of its life.”

As a way forward, discussions seeking a collaborative approach were initiated between Hastings District, Napier City, and the Regional Council.

“Getting all the ducks in a row for the necessary implementation actions to be put in place,” took five years.

In 2010 HPUDS was established with the purpose of providing comprehensive, integrated, and effective growth management strategy for the Heretaunga Plains.

“The approach was to protect the soils by intensification within boundaries and move away from big greenfields developments like Arataki and Lyndhurst, but with some smaller greenfields to round off the boundary.”

With protection of fertile soils being a key aim of HPUDS, ring-fencing urban boundaries, “is what councils are working towards”.

Arataki and Lyndhurst subdivisions in Hastings, and Parklands and Te Awa in Napier, were well underway when HPUDS was initiated in 2010.

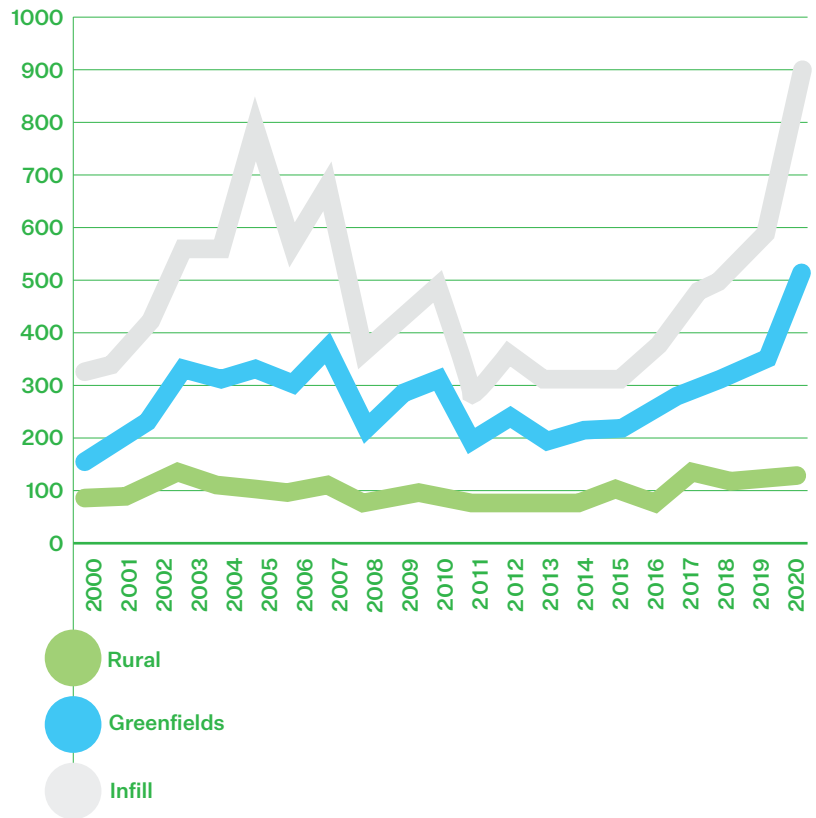
The latest update (30 September 2020) on availability of greenfields subdivision sections indicates the current



“We’ve got a tsunami hazard and we’ve got liquefaction problems. All of the flat land is not ideal land for residential.”

RICHARD MENNUKE,
NAPIER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Combined new dwellings by type



supply of zoned and serviced land is likely to be sufficient for 10 years. The calculation, based on the five-year average building rate, might be optimistic, because greenfield development builds over the last year to 18 months are more than twice that of the preceding two years.

Mark Clews confirms, “There’s more growth than we expected,” and points to the 2020 building consents “being the highest for 20 years”.

Currently there are 225 sections available for building in existing greenfields subdivisions, and the capacity on land already zoned residential (but not yet to the stage of titles being issued) is 1,393 standard residential allotments.

Additional large capacity brownfield subdivisions (within existing boundary) planned for Hastings in the next two years are 340 lots in Iona Road, Havelock North, and 290 in Howard Street, Hastings.

In Napier, Richard Mennuke, director city strategy, recognises the importance of protecting productive soils, but points to other factors that must be considered in Napier.

“We’ve got a tsunami hazard and we’ve got liquefaction problems. All of the flat land is not ideal land for residential.”

He’s referring to Te Awa subdivision

in Napier South, which is below sea level, and Parklands in Tamatea, which was a tidal swamp before being heaved up in the 1932 earthquake.

Napier City Council inherited Parklands from the Harbour Board in the 1989 amalgamation. Unable to find a developer for the subdivision, NCC assumed that role, which “has been good for the ratepayer because it’s an income other than rates”.

Mennuke inherited both subdivisions when he joined NCC in 2015. “We have to finish Te Awa and Parklands (10 years’ supply). Then we would like to go to the hills.”

Mission Special Character Zone was created in a district plan change in 2017 covering 289 hectares of land behind Mission Estate Winery.

“Council entered into a partnership, or memorandum of understanding, with Mission Holdings and used a design-led plan change to develop up to 600 sections. Next step is the development plans, which include subdivision design, roading, and provision of all services.”

Mennuke expects there will be “a mixed typology of housing” that might include high-density town housing on the land closest to the city, to large sections with panoramic views attracting

premium prices.

A novel aspect of the development is a catchment basin for stormwater, which feeds a subterranean river flowing to the Heretaunga aquifer, eliminating the need to connect with Napier’s stormwater infrastructure.

HPUDS’ latest quarterly report estimates that the Mission, Iona Road, and Howard Street developments will likely provide a further 5-7 years’ capacity, while the remaining HPUDS capacity is expected to add another 15 years to the supply.

Intensification

It’s obvious supply of land is not a factor in the current property price explosion; however that availability is mostly in greenfields subdivisions, where sections average \$300,000 and to build a three bedroom home costs \$400,000. This sector of the market is well catered for, and construction on subdivisions is booming, but the entry price is prohibitive to most first-home buyers.

In an effort to encourage affordable housing, both Napier City and Hastings District Councils are promoting intensification in existing suburbs.

Napier’s Richard Mennuke points to “intensification on the fringe of the city within the walkable zone, so people can



“Increasingly we’re designing layout working in co-operation with the client, surveyor, and planning consultant. Section sizes, the layout of sections so they’re orientated to the North with access from the South, is maximised to make best use of the site.”

SOL ATKINSON,
ARCHITECT



live their lives enjoying the city.”

He envisages 3-5 story apartments and town houses on the CBD fringe.

In an effort to pin down where such building is suitable, NCC is “entering into a spatial planning exercise which will basically be a big map showing what is going where, so we can consult, and reach agreement from all the stakeholders.”

Consultation on the spatial plan is in process and will be merged with the district plan currently under review.

Hastings District Council is actively encouraging residential intensification in existing neighbourhoods through Design Guide 2020, launched at a Building Industry and Land Development Forum on 10th February 2020.

The Guide provides useful ideas and solutions to common design and development challenges. By following the Guide, development concepts are more likely to have a smooth passage through the consenting processes.

Unlike Napier, where the CBD is compact with limited suitability for intensification, Hastings’ commercial zone sprawls along Heretaunga Street and fringes, with many buildings no longer fit for purpose.

HDC is encouraging developers

interested in retro-fitting commercial buildings to residential, with incentives, including a proposal to provide some funding.

Napier-based architect, Sol Atkinson, is involved in several intensification developments, not only designing the houses, but also subdivision design.

“Increasingly we’re designing layout working in cooperation with the client, surveyor, and planning consultant. Section sizes, the layout of sections so they’re orientated to the north with access from the south, is maximised to make best use of the site.”

In Te Awa Fields he has designed “a little node of eight duplex houses which act as a keystone” to the entry to the subdivision. A bigger development is, “28 two and three bedroom duplexes, built by a private developer in contract with a social housing provider”.

As an example of intensification providing affordable housing on existing sites, he points to a 1600 m2 section in Hastings, where an existing four bedroom villa in disrepair is removed, and replaced with seven two-bedroom houses, four being duplexes. Another achieves eight houses on a corner site with similar sized plot of land.

“From one household of four bedrooms we achieve seven households

with fourteen bedrooms.”

Building-cost efficiencies are achieved “through duplication and by leveraging the design and technology we have to make it as efficient as possible to do design variations and changes”.

Affordability

Affordable housing, both for ownership and rental, is the desperate need. Currently in Hastings, there are around 600 households on the social housing waiting list, and 1,700 people are in emergency housing, mostly motels, costing around \$9 million last year.

An idea, born at a hui at Waipatu Marae in April 2018, and officially launched in December 2019, has made significant progress in delivering affordable housing.

Hastings Place Based Plan is a pilot scheme, the only one in the country to have all the relevant agencies sitting at the table: Hastings District Council, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, Kāinga Ora, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Social Development, Hawke’s Bay District Health Board and the Department of Corrections.

Iwi representation is a vital component in the success of the Hastings

Place Based Plan as Māori disproportionately figure in those in need of permanent housing. Having iwi and hapū embedded in the urban regeneration process is a game-changer in providing homes for whānau.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is responsible for policy, monitoring, and advising Government on strategy.

Kāinga Ora, formed in 2019 by merging Housing New Zealand, Kiwibuild, and HLC (Home, Land, Community) is focused on providing public housing, with a mandate to undertake urban development on its own, or in partnership with others.

Currently Kāinga Ora have around 150 homes completed or under construction in Hastings, and 31 new houses are being built in Maraenui, Napier. More are in the consenting process.

A model example of the coordinated agency approach is the 120 dwellings, Waingākau Village, at Te Aranga Marae in Flaxmere.

Hastings District Council is the consenting authority and infrastructure provider. Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga (iwi social services provider) is the developer. Te Puni Kōkiri is offering pathways to home ownership with funding and rent-to-own schemes, and

Government has provided funding to HDC to assist with infrastructure costs.

Waingākau offers a unique concept of co-housing, where dwellings range from one to three bedrooms, with the opportunity for intergenerational occupancy.

Clustered around communal open space, with vegetable gardens and a food forest, Waingākau aspires to be a village embracing Māori values of community.

Papakainga is another pathway to delivering homes for Māori by building on ancestral land. This is happening apace at Waipatu, Waimarama, and Waiōhiki.

Another component of supply, which has for many years taken rental houses out of the market, is the provision of accommodation for the 4000 RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) horticultural workers from the Pacific Islands.

In August 2020 HDC addressed this with a variation to the proposed district plan to allow greater scope for employers to provide accommodation. Self-catering clusters on the sites RSE workers work can be greater than the previous 125m² limit, and larger buildings will be allowed on industrial zones to house seasonal workers.

On yet another front, how much

Papakainga is another pathway to delivering homes for Māori by building on ancestral land. This happening apace at Waipatu, Waimarama, and Waiōhiki.

existing house stock will come to the market by retirees buying into the 800 homes currently being constructed in retirement villages in Napier and Hastings is difficult to determine. With a minimum entry point over \$600k it can be assumed most of the new residents will be selling homes at the average sales prices or above.

Population growth

Lack of house supply in the marketplace is shared by every metropolitan area in the country.

In Hawke's Bay, the current growth in the economy and population was not predicted. Addressing housing supply was not a council priority.

As Richard Mennuke points out, "For years Napier and Hastings were flatlining in terms of growth, and we responded to that."

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In 2009, Hawke's Bay's economic growth was minus 1.5%, sluggish for the previous and following years, recovering to 2% in 2020. Population growth 2006/2013 averaged 0.5% a year. In 2020 growth was 2%, the greatest increase on record.

Planners rely on data and, with the compromised 2018 census, no one foresaw the growth.

"We're flying blind to some extent. It's very hard to build a picture with anecdotal facts rather than real statistics."

Mark Clews concurs. "The 2014-17 stats didn't project massive growth."

Council wheels turn slowly, restricted by rigid urban planning rules and consenting processes, making it hard to respond to rapid change.

However, with initiatives like the Hastings Place Based Plan, and Napier's inclusive spatial plan, the councils are addressing the affordable housing supply.

Both Councils are currently reviewing their district plans, and enabling affordable housing by making it easier for developers, be they private or public, to build new, and reconfigure existing buildings, through more flexible planning rules.

However, Richard Mennuke casts a warning. "Fundamentally I see my role as a planner is to try and make a great city for everybody, and that means not just pleasing the developers, or the real estate sector, or even a desperate demand for more housing. We have to balance everything. There are lots of different pressures. We need to plan wisely and thoughtfully. But it strikes me it could easily flip into the opposite if we're not careful."

Back to the Beehive

So, if local councils are proceeding with felt urgency, what about Government? Here's my view.

In April 2019, the Coalition Government rejected the Tax Working Group recommendation to introduce a Capital Gains Tax (CGT) on all property except the family home. In doing so they threw away a useful tool for dissuading speculating investors.

CGT was so unpopular, Jacinda Ardern neutralised it as an issue in the 2020 election by saying it wouldn't happen while she was Prime Minister. That New Zealand is the only country in the OECD to not have CGT is an indictment on political courage. New taxes are never popular, but like the introduction of GST in 1986, concerns

soon fade as the policy beds in.

There is a way the Government could introduce CGT by stealth: extend GST to include all capital gains, except the family home. Labour is sitting on a pile of political capital. It's time to spend some in bringing fairness to the housing market. That speculators can buy and sell without paying any tax on their unearned profit, is grossly unfair to every wage and salary earner who pay tax on their earnings.

The hope for first-home buyers is that the market stabilises, and with Government intervention doesn't spiral out of control again. In the meantime, increasing wages, without house price increases, will make home ownership more achievable.

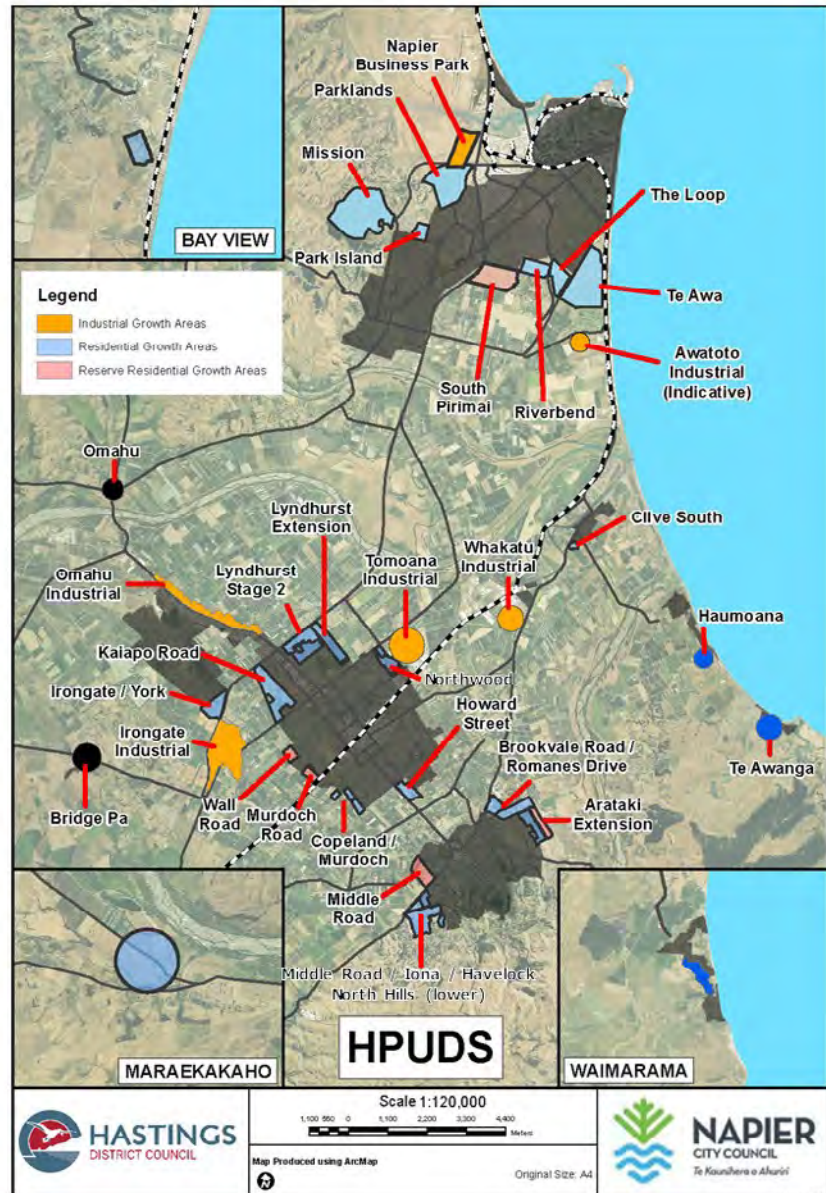
Stabilising the rental market is

easy. Introduce measures to control rents, which could include Rent Tribunal binding assessments, and increases in line with Consumer Price Index.

Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the highest income-to-house price ratios in the world. Simply put, it's harder to buy a house here than most other countries. Decades of laissez-faire, free-market attitude towards the housing market by successive governments, has led us to where we are today.

Hopefully, the sixth Labour Government, can invoke the courage of the first, and regulate the property market.

After all, the Prime Minister has a photo of Michael Joseph Savage on her desk. ●





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Protecting Hawke's Bay's marine ecology

The challenge of fixing what we barely understand.

Story by Bridget Freeman-Rock

When the rain fell in Napier last November flooding the city - 242mm of it in 24 hours - satellite imaging captured the plumes of sediment flowing out from our rivers and estuaries into Hawke Bay.

Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of precious soil some 20km from land, spreading like a Rorschach inkblot to the 12 nautical mile boundary of the inshore, causing untold devastation beneath the waves.

Land-based sediments, once dispersed, smother habitats, hinder fish from finding prey, and diminish plant-life, such as microscopic algae - a vital part of the food supply. What we know, from some of the latest research on estuaries and harbours in Aotearoa, is that when a storm like this occurs, coastal waters become more turbid (i.e. murky), nutrient levels increase, and as a result, biodiversity and ecosystem function declines.

Hawke's Bay's main rivers already contribute an estimated 11 million tonnes of sediments per year to our coastal marine environment. With our highly erodible, denuded landscapes, it's a massive, gnarly problem - many would argue, the greatest threat to our coastal marine environment by far, notwithstanding the loss of critical topsoils from our high-country land.

In the case of the Napier floods,

however, the extent of the issue was made manifestly clear.

Following the plume

As it happened, Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been funding a PhD student, Ted Conroy, to create a hydro-dynamic model coupled with sediment delivery, to better understand what's coming out of the rivers, how it moves around our coastal system, and where it ends up.

Hence Sentinel 2, which created the imaging Ted has been studying.

NIWA also ran an ocean glider (a self-driven underwater robot, or AUV) over the Hawke Bay, which autonomously samples the seawater, measuring temperatures, salinity, oxygen, light and turbidity over a period of time, and Ted has been using the empirical data to calibrate his model and satellite imaging.

He's yet to publish his conclusions, but they're expected to corroborate some surprising findings off the Tasman/Golden Bays coast, as reported by Alison Balance in RNZ's *Our Changing World*.

Since 2016, NIWA's two ocean gliders have been regularly sampling the Cook Strait, discovering freshwater plumes (but without the distinctive brown sediment signals) originating from the Motueka and Aorere rivers far outside

the Tasman and Golden Bays they discharge into. By the rules of ocean processes, river water should have dispersed by then, through tidal and wind movements, and although these are only small eddies (having detached from the main plume) and short-lived (hours to days), they take the connection of land to ocean far further out to sea than we previously knew.

The buoyant layer that floats on the top of the freshwater column and doesn't mix straight away with seawater, travels beyond the visible reach of sediment plumes, and with it, potentially sediments, nutrients, contaminants, etc. The implications for a big weather event, where volume and reach is compounded, is the potential change to marine-water make-up.

Ted's also been studying the amount of erosion coming off the cliffs at Cape Kidnappers and the effects this is having on the marine environment, but that's another story.

His research is an offshoot of a two-year, \$300,000 joint research project, led locally by HBRC marine scientist, Anna Madarasz-Smith, in collaboration with NIWA scientists and the University of Waikato as part of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge. Trialling an ecosystems-based management (EBM) tool for managing two key overlapping



Satellite photos showing sediment plumes on 10 November and two days after the Napier flood on 12 November. Credit: Planet Labs

marine stressors in Hawke's Bay: land-based sediments and physical disturbance to the benthic seafloor.

Benthic structure is important

The soft marine sediments on the flat seafloors of our harbours, estuaries and open coastal environments, are home to a diverse array of organisms and play a pivotal role in marine ecosystem functioning, regulating so-called 'fluxes' of oxygen and nutrients through the bio-complex network of bacteria, microalgae and benthic invertebrates within the sediments. In fact, this network of interactions is so mindboggling intricate, a NIWA info sheet from 2004 warns "a lone scientist in a single disciple" will likely fail to grasp what's happening.

I speak to soft-sediment ecologist Conrad Pilditch, who explains how "The ecosystem itself is driven by these processes in the sediments." If you lose that benthic structure through disturbance (for example, through contact bottom-trawling, or through nutrient overload, which causes eutrophication) or coat them in mud from sediment dumps, then you lose beneficial services you cannot replace.

Horse mussel beds, for example, are highly vulnerable to disturbance, but once lost, the incredibly valuable filtration service and habitat they provide will never be as effectively recreated. If you lose the mussel beds, the efficacy of the system goes down, and then the ability to recolonise the space declines, and so on. And without a functioning benthic structure, you don't have the worms and the microalgae seabirds live on, or a nurturing environment for fish to breed - the implications just ripple out.

"Big shellfish are like the kauri of the seafloor... If you continually 'clearfell' the seafloor, you will be left with weeds."

CONRAD PILDITCH, SOFT SEDIMENT ECOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

The problem is not so much that benthic structure is disturbed - there's a lot

of capacity for recovery in a healthy system and there's always going to be natural factors (such as a storms) that shift the balance - but it's the magnitude, spatial extent and frequency of the disturbance, and that's greatly increased when it come to anthropogenic activities. We've long lost the horse mussel (and other kuku) beds that were once prolific in Hawke Bay.

It's a question of defining the parameters of the disturbance, says Conrad: "How big, how often, and where is it coming from outside the system?"

Cumulative effects and tipping points

Marine stressors such as freshwater sediments can travel long distances, causing cumulative effects that extend over large areas and build up over time, making them extremely challenging to manage. But it's the interactions between things, not a single factor in isolation that determines outcomes.

For creatures struggling but surviving under particular conditions, though, it can take just one more adverse influence to 'push them over the edge'. As was the case several years ago with a big shellfish die-off in



Satellite imaging captured the plumes of sediment flowing out from our rivers and estuaries into Hawke Bay. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of precious soil some 20km offshore.

Whangateau Harbour: there had been a series of low king tides, which coincided with high temperatures (so the inshore was warmer, drier), but the shellfish were also carrying a heavy parasite load. Either condition might have been survivable in isolation, but in combination, it wiped most out of the population.

And then there are background stressors, such as turbidity (a measure of 'murkiness' - the suspended particulates, coliforms, tannins, etc, in the water column), which affects the way light penetrates the water, in turn affecting marine organisms, many of whom are sensitive to different wavelengths of light.

Marine life can cope with turbid conditions but it does create stress, which weakens resilience (the ability to respond to change and recover from disturbance). If turbidity is then coupled with rising temperatures, the extra effort (of dealing with turbidity) plus a warming event can lead to catastrophic collapse.

Thus, stressors can lead to a 'tipping point' where an ecosystem suddenly loses its capacity to cope with change and rapidly degrades.

The ability to detect the early warning signs in an ecosystem, or to even know when a tipping point is being approached, is very difficult, says Conrad, and we don't monitor our marine environments in a way that we can detect them. Namely, because we don't monitor or understand multi-stressor interactions, and the sampling duration and frequency of many marine monitoring programmes are largely inadequate.

In New Zealand, we manage our marine space through setting limits in isolation (catch allotments for individual fish stocks, different parameters for different contaminants, maximum nutrient loads) and then we tend to operate at that limit, he explains. "From a practical point of view, setting limits is a useful tool, but if you don't get it right in a multi-stressor world or you don't know what the actual limit is, there are consequences."

A collective problem

The ocean is a hyperconnected world, and we can't contain impacts to one location or ringfence our actions, as we do on land (and even what we do on land finds its way to the sea).



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HBRC marine scientist, Anna Madarasz-Smith, who is working on an ecosystems-based management pilot as part of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge. Photo: Tom Allan

“You don’t want to rush into anything and suddenly the unintended consequences outweigh the issues you were facing in the first place.”

ANNA MADARASZ-SMITH,
HBRC MARINE SCIENTIST

Moreover, “without understanding how things function, and their inter-connections, you’re managing in a vacuum,” which is largely the case with our oceans and estuaries.

Part of the problem is we don’t value the full suite of ecosystem services the ocean provides. We only see the marine space in terms of food production, but it holds huge potential for carbon sequestration, for instance - if we’re serious about offsetting carbon as a country, says Conrad, then it’s not just forests we should be focusing on, but the rocky reefs and soft sediments in our extensive coastal areas, which actively capture and store carbon.

It’s about expanding the knowledge lens to gain a fuller picture, which means drawing not just on western science and neoliberal economics but on indigenous knowledge - mātauranga Māori - and on the different social and vested understandings we bring collectively to the table.

When it comes to managing the marine space, what’s required is a much more bespoke management system, that is place-based rather than defined by set national limits, that’s more quickly adaptative, and that cuts across the different, intersecting legislative arenas - the RMA (which is now in process of being scrapped), the

Fisheries Act, the Māori Fisheries Act, Biosecurity Act, territorial bylaws, etc.

To this end, in 2018, the regional council and Hawke’s Bay Marine and Coastal stakeholder group (HBMaC) co-created a Research Roadmap for our coastal marine environment, with the vision to “achieve a healthy and functioning marine ecosystem in Hawke’s Bay that supports an abundant and sustainable fishery.” It’s this piece of work that’s laid the foundation for the Sustainable Seas EBM pilot.

Systems-mapping as a tool

When problems are seen in isolation, you can only react to events as they

“We’ve been issuing abatement notices for years and it’s not working. The emphasis on a regulatory body has clearly failed, so we have to move to a more collaborative approach.”

NEIL KIRTON,
HBRC COUNCILLOR

occur. To manage risk, you need to see the trends and understand the interconnected causes and drivers (the systemic structure) and why these are occurring, and, further, to transform the (often unexamined) perceptions and values that underpin them.

That’s the philosophy behind the extraordinarily complex systems-mapping tool HBRC has now co-developed with HBMaC to understand the dynamic multi-sector interactions of multiple stressors in our marine environment (namely sediment inputs and bottom-trawl fishing) and to explore different pathways for intervention. That’s phase 1 of the regional Challenge.

It takes a webinar presentation and supporting documents to be able to make sense of the map if you weren’t at that table yourself (and critics say that’s ridiculous). But the objective is in the exercise itself - it’s intended as a tool for participatory engagement, with the potential to build consensus and support for tangible, evidence-based, future-oriented ‘interventions’.

Using simulation, participants are able to gain insight into the processes involved in “fixing the problem”, from the indirect influences of seemingly isolated factors, to grasping the inherent time-lags whereby changes in the physical structure lag behind the changes in the phenomenon causing it, to realising that “the highest-level intervention area is not necessarily the most proximate to the issue”.

In the obvious case of freshwater sedimentation, for example, the largest gains to be made are in land-based practices far from shore that reduce farm (and forestry) soils from being washed off land and down rivers in the first place.

NIWA’s Carolyn Lundquist, who heads the project, says the systems-mapping exercise helps people realise that “decisions made now won’t

probably have this fantastic result in a year; that it might take a decade, or multiple decades. But the decisions made now really need to happen in order to create that change for the future - we can’t just keep waiting and piling things up.”

This year is all about putting the EBM tools into action (phase 2): co-developing potential management interventions; running these, along with information gleaned (e.g., the work Ted Conroy is busy with) and data collation, through computer modelling and a damage and recovery model; exploring the outputs and implications; and assessing how to navigate the pathway forward for change.

Contaminants

While contaminants have not been included at this stage into the EBM mapping tool, with Ahuriri Estuary in such close proximity to industrial and urban environs, the issue of contaminants in our marine space is of concern to many, particularly as it’s an area that’s well within our purview of local-level action.

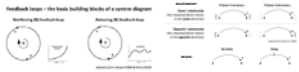
With Napier’s ageing municipal water infrastructure unable to cope with heavy rain, the occurrence of raw sewerage and contaminated

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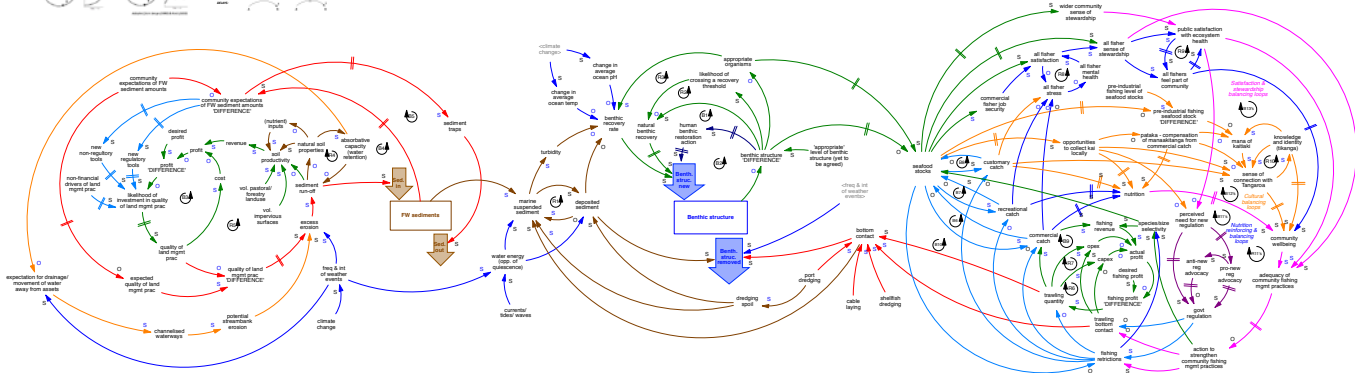
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HBMaC system map Phase 1 of EBM case study 2020.



The system-map of two key marine stressors in Hawke's Bay: sediment inputs and benthic disturbance.

stormwater flowing directly into the estuary is not a once-in-120-year event but an almost annual 'misfortune', while industrial spills into waterways are not uncommon. Both Napier City and Hastings District Councils continue to pipe their municipal wastewater (which includes consented and in-breach-of-consent trade waste, urban stormwater and both treated and raw sewerage) into the sea.

As regional councillor Neil Kirton (who holds the marine portfolio) points out, "There seems to be a legitimising of what is a main source of contaminants" without any understanding or due investigation into the impact these may be having on our marine environment.

He believes the recent industrial hydrochloric acid spill into the Thyne St waterway (which led to 'distressing' fishkill in the estuary and set back years of conservation efforts) is just the tip of the iceberg - "It's a wake-up call for a serious conversation with industry in Ahuriri" - but is dubious that a fine is the way to go.

"We've been issuing abatement notices for years and it's not working. The emphasis on a regulatory body has clearly failed, so we have to move to a more collaborative approach," recognising that there's been a shift in the social licence "for industries to keep doing what they're doing" and that what we're faced with is also a legacy of disregard.

The situation in Ahuriri is "an ongoing disaster as a result of historic planning decisions driven by greed and money, wilful negligence of municipal wastewater infrastructure on the part of NCC over the decades, HBRC's laissez-faire

approach to consenting in the past, and a moribund approach to compliance."

But it's too easy to palm off blame - galaxalides (synthetic fragrances found in common household products) have now been found to weaken shellfish formation in the Ahuriri Estuary, for instance, and that's down to chemicals we unwittingly use in our homes.

Let's stop stalling

Current councils are dealing to some extent with the marine issues - it's not that nothing is happening - but need to accelerate the process, says Kirton. While he supports the Sustainable Seas project and the need for an EBM approach, he fears "we're defaulting action to it; prevaricating."

"We need to accelerate our understanding of the issues and get the answers on the table; we need to accelerate the science." In the meantime, we should be taking all the steps we can, "not just focus on one or two big ones".

While there are complex charges for land-based discharges there's nothing for oceans, for instance, and he's of the view that has to change. "We need to implement a science charge, a 'toilet levy', if you like, which can help fund the science, at the very least, to investigate the effects [of piping waste-water out to sea]."

Neil's biggest frustration is that "we're not prepared to put our money where our mouth is". Council's constrained by lack of investment and there's little community momentum for action. As he points out, Hawke's Bay's marine space makes up a third of HBRC's territorial area but only \$200-300k is spent on it per year, a marginal

sum comparative to size - "It's wholly insufficient." A good chunk of that is spent on land-based mitigation, such as riparian planting, with a small allocation to the inshore itself.

Where we are with the marine space in Hawke's Bay is essentially where we were for freshwater 20 years ago, Neil believes, and says he feels a sense of sadness for "the lack of diligence and attention" given to our oceans. We're facing a critical point, but are choosing to look away because the issues are not directly visible, "We've become ocean-collapse deniers".

Conrad Pilditch, however, is less pessimistic and believes we can turn things around with the science and knowledge we already have on hand, but people need the opportunity to understand the linkages and consensus-building will be key.

"We can achieve quite positive outcomes in a short time when we take collective action. But the capacity to recover won't be there forever, we do have to move now." ●

In this article, you'll note there's little mention of fish - fish have been fulsomely covered in my marine feature last issue (Jan/Feb 2021), 'Who Speaks for the Fish?' and in my 2019 feature on the quota management system, 'Save Our Fishery', both of which can be found at www.baybuzz.co.nz.


For more on the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, ecosystem-based management, and the Hawke's Bay regional study, see www.sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz.

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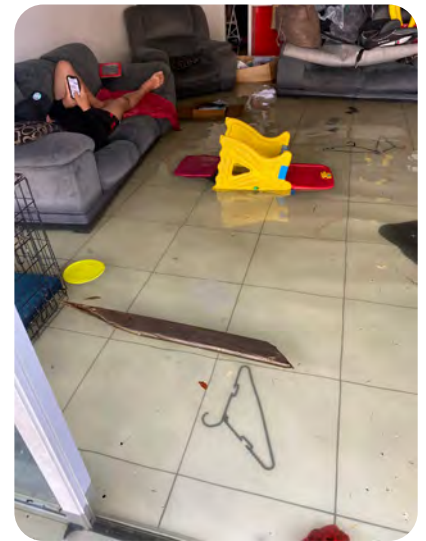
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When the floodwaters subside

The November flood wreaked havoc in Napier, as locals and emergency services struggled to cope with widespread damage, power outages and landslides caused by one of the wettest days on record. Four months on, we speak to affected families still trying to put their lives back together and find out what's being done to safeguard our neighbourhoods for the future.
Story by Abby Beswick



Record rainfall

Around 4.30 pm on November 9, 2020, heavy rain began. Without warning, what started as an everyday event, quickly turned into a deluge of water that caused chaos across Napier. Residents were about to experience a volume of rainfall so rare, it was a one-in-120-year event.

In Marewa, Amanda Patu was heading home from her job from a central city daycare, as the centre had closed early due to flooding. What followed was the single wettest hour on record for Napier, when 54mm of rain fell between 5 and 6pm.

By the time Patu made it to her house in Barker Road, the water was already up to her knees. Her husband had also managed to get home and together with their three children, the couple watched in shock as flood waters entered their home, which backs onto Whitmore Park.

“We were watching it rise against the glass bi-folding doors on the front of our house, and then it started to seep through... All of a sudden there was water everywhere,” says Patu. When she entered the house the rooms were flooded, and several low-down items were already too sodden with water to be saved. Every time a car went past the water would gush into the house in waves - some of the passengers were residents, but many were rubberneckers wanting to get a look at one of the worst-hit streets.

“We were watching it rise against the glass bi-folding doors on the front of our house, and then it started to seep through... All of a sudden there was water everywhere”

AMANDA PATU

Patu waded through her home, throwing things on the bed to keep them out of the water and started grabbing items to salvage while her children and dog took refuge on a couch in the living room. She made a beeline for her wedding dress, and then filled three large plastic boxes with special toys and clothes for the kids, and the family’s laptops.

Outside she heard an alarm sounding that indicated their sewage system had overflowed, so she knew the waist-high flood water around them was contaminated. Eleven weeks pregnant, Patu was concerned about the safety of her baby. “I thought right, we’ve got to get out of here”.

Patu’s brother arrived in his four-wheel-drive to rescue her family, pets and her parents who live in the house in front of them. As their home was built on piles it wasn’t as badly affected, but the rain was still teeming down and Patu wanted to ensure they were moved somewhere safer.

Above left: NZ Police assisting during the floods. Above: Amaada’s Patu’s husband and her sister-in-law leaving the house with some essentials they salvaged. Inside the Patu’s house. Opposite: Barker Road in Marewa.

A state of emergency

Hawke’s Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management (HBCDEM) was instrumental in coordinating the response to the flood - an event that took them by surprise, says group controller Ian Macdonald.

“It was something that was fairly random because the forecast wasn’t for that level of rain in Napier. You could say that’s climate change in action. It’s definitely become more common around the country that you get more of these very localised, sudden onset events, which no system is ever designed to cope with,” he says.

Initially, the focus for Civil Defence was around situational awareness - working out what was happening and communicating with emergency



Kirsten Wise. Photo: Karl Wairama

“What it has highlighted for us is that the areas on our water network that we had already planned to do upgrades on, were the areas that were worst impacted.”

KIRSTEN WISE, NAPIER MAYOR

services, so they could make fast, informed decisions. As the picture of the event grew clearer and emergency services reported receiving a high volume of weather-related callouts, Civil Defence activated their coordination centre in Hastings and called council staff in to help manage the response. They continued to receive intelligence from engineers and to monitor the weather forecast and how systems were coping.

As the rain continued to hammer the city, Civil Defence urged people to stay at home and avoid driving where possible, advising people to self-evacuate to family and friends if they felt unsafe at home.

By 5.30pm fire and emergency services didn't have enough resources to deal with the number of calls coming in. Flooding was sweeping through many Napier streets, causing slips, power outages and damage to properties.

Landslides on the hill were closely monitored, with teams working through the night to assess properties and assist

with evacuations. More than 3,300 homes faced a night without power after safety concerns forced electricity company workers to stop repairs.

A number of roads and early learning centres and schools were closed due to flooding. One of the worst hit, Henry Hill School in Onekawa, was flooded with waist-high water in six of its 12 classrooms.

Napier Mayor Kirsten Wise declared a state of emergency in the city.

Another home and lives destroyed

Across the city in Jervoistown, superannuitants Vanessa Moon and Bruce Staples' semi-rural home suffered serious damage in the flood. Built in 1952 on a low concrete pad, theirs was the only house in the suburb that flooded, with water seeping in from underneath and contaminating everything it touched.

The couple were out of town at the time, so learnt about the extent of the damage when they received a phone call from a neighbour. They arrived home the following day to a devastating sight. The water had affected floor coverings, skirting and some internal walls, which had to be cut, leaving the house uninhabitable. Thankfully, they didn't lose a lot of their contents.

Following the flood, they self-evacuated to a neighbour's caravan for two months and are now staying in a house nearby. Although hugely grateful their insurers acted quickly to fund their

temporary accommodation, for rates relief from the council, and the ongoing support of their community, it has been extremely difficult. “This sort of experience is traumatic. It's your home, it's your sanctuary, it's your safe place,” says Moon.

The couple has been told they'll have to wait until March, or later, for repairs to be carried out due to the level of demand on construction companies.

Picking up the pieces

Patu and her family initially stayed in her brother's lounge, before moving to a two-bedroom unit at council-owned accommodation, Kennedy Park Resort. Their insurance company is covering the accommodation cost. They are one of 46 families who remain displaced by the floods.

It took a team of five people to empty Patu's house - everything that had been touched by water had to be thrown away because of contamination. In total they have lost 95% of their belongings, along with two vehicles. Losing the vintage furniture belonging to her daughter, custom-made children's clothing, and all of her children's baby books was particularly painful, says Patu. She built the house with her brother 11 years ago and struggles with the reality it has been ripped away. “So much was taken away in one night.”

She and her husband have met with a rebuild team, who told them they would be lucky to be able to move back into their house by the end of April. Her baby is due soon after, at the beginning of May.

The experience has changed their outlook, says Patu. “We're just going to live minimally now and try to not have so much stuff. At the end of the day we're all safe.”

For Moon and Staples, the past few months have been emotionally draining and hugely disruptive. The flood has particularly impacted Moon, who lives with chronic illness and anxiety, shaking her sense of security and safety. As the only house seriously affected in the suburb, the couple have also felt isolated in their experience.

A lack of council management and maintenance to local water infrastructure contributed to the impact of the heavy rainfall, they say. Open ditches along the roadside in the area have been designed to act as a holding capacity for heavy rainfall. However, they haven't been maintained for many years, says Staples. On top of this, many of the ditches have been



Clockwise from top left: Salvation Army at the community clean up; Salvation Army Minister Kiri Allan, Stuart Nash. Photos: Karl Wairama

filled in, leaving no drainage for rain, and leaving residents in a precarious position.

“For Jervoisstown they actually need to manage the water. They’ve failed to manage the stormwater here through a number of years of neglect,” says Staples.

The couple want to see the council work more collaboratively with residents and communicate transparently about plans for the city’s water infrastructure. They’d like to see a full and open review of the floods that includes those personally affected and be informed of the council’s plans regarding maintenance.

“What I need is the sense that the council is going to take climate change seriously, and especially in terms of these serious weather events”, adds Moon.

Fixing our water supply

It’s difficult to prepare for an event like this, where you have no warning and particularly when it happens so fast, says Napier Mayor Kirsten Wise.

Early on key staff were able to remotely watch pump stations around the city and monitor how they were coping with the volume of water. They could quickly see which ones were under pressure, including Marewa and Maraenui, and put plans in place to mitigate the pressure, such as using additional pumps, she says.

The floods have reinforced the council’s plans, says Wise. “What it has highlighted for us is that the areas on our water network that we had already planned to do upgrades on, were the areas that were worst impacted,” she said. “It gave us confidence that what we’ve got planned with our infrastructure upgrades over the next ten years are definitely focusing on the right areas.”

The city’s most significant water issues in recent years have been around dirty water and chlorine being added to the water supply. Water

quality and supply remain a top priority for council, says Wise. “That for me when I was elected, was a number one priority and staff have had very clear direction since I was elected that this is one of the areas that absolutely needs to be fixed as soon as it possibly can.”

“Planning over the past year has focused on the whole water network to identify the areas that we need to focus on to deal with things like the rainfall event,” says Wise. However, she stresses no infrastructure could cope with a one-in-120-year event as the cost would be prohibitive. Under regulations the city is required to have infrastructure that can cope with between a one-in-10-year and a one-in-50-year-event, depending on the part of the water network. Our water network meets this standard, and on a day-to-day basis, it is delivering safe water and coping as it should, says Wise.

Locals in low-lying areas that were badly affected by the flood can have confidence any future events wouldn’t have the same impact, after upgrade works are completed, says Wise. “That’s always our goal – to just continuously improve what we have.”



Looking to the future

A total of 242mm of rain fell in Napier in 24 hours to early 10 November – four times the amount usually seen in November – making it the second wettest day on record for the city.

Emergency services reported receiving 350 weather related callouts. More than 130 homes were declared uninhabitable, and many businesses were also forced to evacuate from their premises. Incredibly, there were no significant injuries.

More than forty families remain unable to return to their homes, waiting for construction work to be carried out. Given the industry is already stretched to capacity, it's expected that many will be waiting at least six months. "It's the perfect storm unfortunately," says Wise. "We've tried to

put in as much support as we possibly can, along with all the other government agencies, but it's still not the same as being in your own home."

Council's priority remains helping affected individuals and families to get back to normal, and to their homes as quickly as possible, says Wise. "However, we do not have enough houses outside of the flooding area to do this. We must utilise all of our available housing, especially now as Napier is experiencing a significant housing shortfall."

Flood mitigation is a "key consideration" of the District Plan, she says. Among the considerations are a requirement for all new developments and re-developments to incorporate stormwater management measures. "We are working on identifying the

main ways water flows during rain events and ways to manage these flowpaths in future. We are also proposing to rezone the Lagoon Farm area to allow for stormwater storage in a flooding event."

The final cost of the floods is still being established, but it will be in the region of several million dollars, says Wise. The government gave \$100,000 to the Mayoral Relief Fund to help people get back on their feet.

Henry Hill School was expected to stay closed for the rest of the term due to the extent of the damage, but thanks to huge support from the community and wider public, the school was able to reopen to students less than a week after the flood.

Emergency services are currently going through a debrief of the event, and while there is always room for improvement, they were as well prepared as they could be for an event like this, says Macdonald.

Dealing with the impact of the flood has been particularly difficult for the most vulnerable in our community and will continue to have an impact on society as a whole, says Macdonald. "The uncertainty that was generated around the event just created a lot of social and psychological issues."

Ensuring everybody has their basic needs for food, accommodation and housing met during normal times is key, says Macdonald. This increases resilience and improves people's ability to cope when a disaster like this happens. ●



Dr Kathleen Kozyniak

The rainfall that caused the November floods was initially believed to be a one-in-250-year-event, but it now looks closer to a one-in-120-year-event, says Hawke's Bay Regional Council principal scientist air, Dr Kathleen Kozyniak.

This is because scientists have since had time to confirm and analyse the measured rainfall, rather than just rely

on records prior to the event. However, there is still uncertainty over "return periods", as most of the rainfall took place within 12 hours and we don't have the detailed hourly information for some historic events to provide context, says Kozyniak.

Defining the flood as a one-in-120-year-event is related to the "return period". This is the estimated time interval between events of a similar size. Rather, this provides the probability of an event of that size occurring in any one year. For example, an event with a return period of 100 years has a 1% chance of occurring in any one year, or in the case of a return period of 120 years, it has a 0.8% chance of happening in any one year.

Global warming is undoubtedly having an effect on the frequency of sudden, extreme weather events like the recent deluge, says Kozyniak.

"The return periods for events like the November storm are expected to shorten with the impacts of climate change. If we end up facing a rise in temperature of about 3°C then the return period of that sized storm could roughly halve to 50-60 years."

Adding to the problem is the large number of low-lying areas in Hawke's Bay, making the region susceptible to flooding, says Regional Council team leader engineering, Craig Goodier. Many areas of the Heretaunga Plains are barely above sea level, particularly in Napier where the bottom of drains are often below sea level and require pumping to remove water, says Goodier. "The pumps have been designed to cope with a certain amount of inflow. Due to flat ground and low sloping waterways, the water can only get to the pump stations as fast as gravity causes it to flow."

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Councils to face political heat

by Tom Belford

Something tells me this year will be especially challenging for our region's councils and their ratepayers.

And that's even making the optimistic assumption that life in the shadow of Covid-19 remains relatively 'normalised'.

Life will be anything but 'normal' for many of the region's businesses. Those who rely on exporting and importing, which is most of our primary sector, will be dealing with serious blockages and delays in their supply chains, an issue addressed in two articles elsewhere in this magazine. And our hospitality industry will continue to feel the impact of missing overseas visitors and a likely winter fall-off in Baycationers.

But whatever the business sector turmoil, our councils will roll on.

And the major issues confronting them will be: facing the grim reality of their pending Long-Term Plans (LTPs) for 2021-22 onward, water management and security, and, at least for the Regional Council, the controversy over dedicated Māori seats on the Council.

Public debate and political skirmishing will focus on these questions:

1. How much ratepayer money to levy over the next three years - with the assumption these increases will be significantly larger than in the past?
2. Who will control costs for and delivery of the region's core water services?
3. How big will our water demand/supply shortfall be over the next 50 years, and how will that gap be closed and/or who will get the water?

4. Should governance of natural resources in the region include dedicated Māori seats on the HB Regional Council?

Any one of these makes for plenty of political heat. Add them all up ...!!

Plus, willingly or not, our councils will be dragged into the nation's two greatest challenges - meeting our housing needs and addressing climate change.

LTPs

While our 53 local government elected officials probably don't view it this way, this year's crop of pending LTPs actually raise critical questions about the affordability of local government in Hawke's Bay.

Without significant central government bailouts, at least two of our councils (CHB and Wairoa), possibly three (Napier) can't afford to deliver the most fundamental of services - delivery of drinking water and disposal of wastewater and stormwater. More on this in a moment.

Each of the councils will be proposing significant rate increases in their LTPs, largely driven by finally addressing previously unmet infrastructure needs. Hastings District Council is proposing rate increases of 6.8% next year, 6.5% in year two, and 5.3% in the third (and averaging 7% in rural areas due to roading costs). While other councils are still weighing their LTP options, and coy about them, the Central HB District Council is well along and its rate projections tell a grim story.

Without significant central government bailouts, at least two of our councils (CHB and Wairoa), possibly three (Napier) can't afford to deliver the most fundamental of services - delivery of drinking water and disposal of wastewater and stormwater.

CHBDC is consulting on rate increases of 7.8% in each of the next two years, and 5.8% in the third ... and some out-years include increases over 10%. This reflects gruesome but commendable honesty.

As the LTP consultation document says: "For decades, the Council has historically held rates at an artificially low rate, instead of funding depreciation or putting aside reserve funds for the renewal of our core infrastructure assets."

Read Amy Shanks' interview with Mayor Alex Walker in this mag. The mayor uses words like "sobering", "frightening", and "heartbreaking" to describe her community's financial distress.

This fiasco didn't suddenly arise from nowhere on her watch, but she's too much the politician to levy a charge of malfeasance against derelict former CHB mayors and administration.



And one might look at previous Napier City Council regimes and find the same pattern of neglect.

At the northern end of Hawke's Bay, in comments to *BayBuzz* Mayor Craig Little attributes Wairoa's budget challenges to central government. "The challenge we have is the lack of investment by Central Government where the funding it provides does not match the legislative requirements they set. Therefore, Councils struggle to meet the standards set by Central Government with the amount of money they give us."

He elaborates: "For the past century, while the Central Government spending trajectory has continually gone up, Central Government funding to Local Government has remained the same, literally flatlined. We go out to consultation and our communities tell us what they want but we can't always achieve these aspirations because so much of our budget is sucked up in Central Government legislative requirements."

Mayor Little might be careful what he wishes for. The current Government, having lavished Primary Growth Fund and Covid 'recovery' money on our councils for economic stimulus projects, nevertheless displays a clear tilt toward central control and direction, be that in terms of infrastructure management or freshwater environmental standards.

One might conclude that Wellington regards local councils as either fundamentally inept or politically afraid of their ratepayers.

Water management

Nowhere is this more apparent than with respect to local management of water services (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater) - the so-called 'Three Waters' initiative of the Ardern Government.

Here the Government has recognised a nationwide infrastructure problem for which it so far has committed \$761 million to fix.

However, a recent study conducted for our region conservatively estimates that more like \$605 million will be required here alone to bring Hawke's Bay's ageing water systems up to modern world standards in terms of safety, reliability and environmental performance. That amount, almost twice the \$313 million forecast in our councils' existing long-term plans, is considered conservative.

With these rate implications:

Average three water rates

Council	2018/19	Enhanced status quo 2031/32
Central Hawke's Bay District	\$1,536	\$3,867
Hastings District	\$940	\$1,901
Napier City	\$692	\$1,531
Wairoa District	\$1,288	\$4,380

Hence the refreshing honesty in CHB's future LTP.

The Government has already allocated \$50 million across the region to begin to address the problem (\$10 million went to Mayor Little's Wairoa Council).

But there are serious 'fishhooks' attached reflecting Government's serious doubts that our provinces are well-organised or capable of effectively managing this core responsibility.

In handing over Government's \$50 million, Local Government Minister Nanaia Mahuta made it plain: "The financial investment from the Government is contingent on local councils opting in to the Government's wider water reform programme. The cumulative effect of increasing capital costs, infrastructure maintenance and upgrades, enhanced standards and environmental challenges mean that *the current operational and governance arrangements for water are not sustainable and consolidation is required.*"

[Editor's italics]

Continuing: “Today’s announcement will lend the reform programme’s initial stages very real impetus and *Councils will need to sign up to the wider reform agenda in order to access the Government’s funding.*”

The Government’s preferred arrangement is to create a small number of multi-regional water authorities to make these decisions and run the water systems (in our case, from Palmerston North).

Our local political leaders are horrified by that prospect, which would remove control over the next biggest chunk of their budgets after roads, and eviscerate their balance sheets (by moving all those assets, which underwrite borrowing, off councils’ books)! They’ve conjured up a new regional ‘Authority’ to achieve economies and fairness across the region, but must sell that plan to Government. Stay tuned on that one!

We can’t leave a discussion of water without addressing water security.

Here the ball is in the HB Regional Council’s court.

HBRC is part way through a Regional Water Assessment that aims to project the region’s water supply and demand fifty years into the future. This ‘water accounting’ should be completed by mid-year.

Assuming demand outstrips supply (under current policies and capacities), the Assessment will proceed to identify a full range of ‘policy interventions’ for closing the gap. And that’s where the fun will begin.

Such interventions - some focused on reducing or managing demand and

“The challenge we have is the lack of investment by Central Government where the funding it provides does not match the legislative requirements they set. Therefore, Councils struggle to meet the standards set by Central Government with the amount of money they give us.”

CRAIG LITTLE, WAIROA MAYOR

some on increasing supply - are envisioned to run the gamut from greater incentives (regulation?) for water conservation and efficiency through to changed land use and farming practices to physical water storage in any number of scenarios.

The Regional Council already has some \$30 million from the Primary Growth Fund on hand to explore the ‘supply augmentation’ side of the equation. In Central Hawke’s Bay, some of those funds will be used to experiment with ‘managed aquifer recharge’, where winter and high-flow water is captured and channelled into storage ponds from where it can filter down into the aquifer. On the Heretaunga Plains, the leading contender for water storage is enlargement of an existing reservoir outside Bridge Pā, again

capturing high flow water (in this case from the Ngaruroro River) and releasing it into waterways to support summer low-flows.

The HBRC position, at least rhetorically, seems to be that storage options are probably a last, but necessary resort - they would not be implemented unless the contribution that water conservation and efficiency measures, coupled with water-retaining land management practices, is gauged with more precision and deemed insufficient to close the water deficit. That analysis is underway.

Whatever rationality might ultimately underpin the Assessment, without doubt different sectors and water users will advocate to protect their claims on the water. It will be the Regional Council’s responsibility to protect the environment from the irrigator, industry and municipal onslaught.

Māori seats

Complicating vexing resource management matters for the Regional Council is its fractious relationship with Māori leaders in the region, who post-Treaty settlements are flexing their new muscles in the political process.

Readers might recall that back in July 2018, Toro Waaka, then co-chair of the HBRC’s Regional Planning Committee (RPC) called on Government to replace councillors with commissioners. He considered the Regional Council a hopeless cause when it came to either protecting the environment in general or advancing Māori interests in particular.

The RPC is unique to Hawke’s Bay

**BEST BAR IN THE BAY
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC
OF HASTINGS
ALL CONSUMING
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Control over HB drinking water, stormwater and wastewater up for grabs.

and was created by law. The committee consists of Māori representatives, one each selected by each of the nine Treaty claimant grouping in the region, and the nine elected regional councillors.

Per the legislation, the RPC has a prescribed focus on RMA-related matters coming before the Regional Council, but that said, even interpreting and agreeing upon the scope of the Committee's mandate has been contentious. And the resolution of any given issue has been made often impossible by a requirement for an extraordinary majority to agree on any action (with 80% agreement required, 4-5 members can block any action ... and frequently have).

The legislation provides no path for navigating beyond such disagreement, so decisions on critical issues have been left 'twisting in the wind' for months and, in the case of the hugely-important TANK plan change (which would - if ever adopted - govern water quality and allocation over the Heretaunga Plains) even years.

A 12-member Māori Advisory Committee also exists, with members appointed by each of the four Ngāti Kahungunu Taiwhenua in the region. This Committee can advise on any matter before the Council, but to some there's the rub ... the Committee *advises* only.

Into this fray has leapt the contentious

Ngāti Kahungunu iwi chair Ngahiwi Tomoana blasted the current councillors as racist for demurring on immediate creation of dedicated Māori wards.

issue of mandating dedicated Māori seats on the HBRC, to be elected only by voters on the Māori roll. This proposal was considered by Council at the end of last year, with a decision taken to conduct a non-binding poll on the matter at the time of the 2022 local body elections. The two elected Māori already serving on the Council were divided on the issue.

This outcome infuriated many in the Māori community, who had wanted (and expected) councillors to approve Māori seats on the day.

Ngāti Kahungunu iwi chair Ngahiwi Tomoana blasted the current councillors as racist for demurring on immediate creation of dedicated Māori wards.

Since then, the Government has

initiated legislative change that would remove existing provisions enabling 5% of voters to petition for a binding poll if their council approved Māori seats (i.e., a mechanism to overturn or ratify that action). This provision is deemed by some as an unfair barrier to improving Māori representation; others see it as democracy in action.

In any event, the Government has given councils until May 21 to adopt Māori seats if they wish them to be in place for the October 2022 local body elections.

So, in that context, on February 24 the Regional Council again takes up the issue of dedicated Māori seats (unfortunately, this magazine went to press on the 23rd!). By the time you are reading this, HBRC Councillors will have decided to:

- Adopt Māori seats outright in time for the 2022 election,
- Conduct a high-speed 'consultation' process meant to inform a May Council decision on how to proceed, or,
- Let the existing decision stand, which calls for a non-binding poll on the issue at the October 2022 election.

Check the *BayBuzz* website for our analysis of the outcome and the issues raised.

Whatever the decision on February 24, it is certain that the appropriateness of Māori seats will be debated in

So I foresee a heavier-than-usual workload for our councils and councillors in the year ahead. Just when they thought they might be getting a breather from the exceptional Covid-19 challenge of 2021.

the community - formally as part of a special consultation process leading to a final decision in May, or 'spontaneously' as a result of 'unhappiness' with the decision either way ... whether to defer the matter further or to proceed immediately.

Fast followers

In sum, whether your favourite court-side seat is at the Regional Council or one of the territorials, the year ahead promises some illuminating tests of

political courage, with significant issues of money, accountability, economic viability and governance being contested.

And that's without getting into the two mega-challenges in which our councils need to be - at least - fast followers ... housing and climate change.

As Mark Sweet observes in his mag article, *Housing in crisis*, concerns over housing are ubiquitous these days. Some would say it's a central government issue, let local bodies focus on reserves, leaky museums and road repairs. But elected local officials are on the front line dealing with the homeless, awarding consents, earmarking land, building 'communities' in the broader sense. They clearly have a stake and a role to play in any solution. And our councils do seem to be stepping up.

Similarly with climate change. Again, as addressed in my article, *Climate update*, policy leadership must come from central government, and the Labour Government has been handed an excellent blueprint by the Climate Change Commission. Further, one of the RMA 'replacement' acts announced by Government will set the framework for dealing with our sea and storm


threatened coastal areas.

But most of the *actions* will be taken by individuals and businesses - and councils - in their home communities and regions. Here in Hawke's Bay we will (or will not) deal with flooding, change farming practices, purchase EVs, embrace solar power, build green offices and commercial building, insulate homes, plant trees - make the day-to-day decisions and behaviour changes that show we are determined to take on the threat posed by global warming.

This won't happen spontaneously. And it won't happen from Wellington. It will require steady, vocal leadership from our local elected leaders leveraging their own individual visibility and the resources of their councils - setting local goals and challenging us to meet them.

So I foresee a heavier-than-usual workload for our councils and councillors in the year ahead. Just when they thought they might be getting a breather from the exceptional Covid-19 challenge of 2021.

But hey, we've got a small army of 49 councillors and 4 mayors in Hawke's Bay, they ought to be able to divvy up the workload! ●



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Central Hawke's Bay's "heart-breaking" truths

Amy Shanks speaks to CHB Mayor Alex Walker about the "sobering" challenges facing Central Hawke's Bay.

Photos Florence Charvin

Central Hawke's Bay has more than its fair share of ailing infrastructure, with problems ranging from worrisome wastewater to earthquake-prone buildings and housing shortages.

There is no denying - it's a small district, facing some very big challenges.

CHB stretches across 333,450 hectares including Waipukurau, Waipawa, Ōtāne, Takapau, Tikokino, Pōrangahau, and Ongaonga, with several beach townships at its fringe.

State Highway 2 cuts through the centre, snaking between rural townships towards Napier's port and airport, about 70km away.

In the tight-knit rural community, everybody knows your name; shop owners greet their customers like old friends; and farmers stop to chat in the streets.

The population of 15,250, is dotted across a large geographic area, and requires more water and wastewater treatment infrastructure than its larger counterparts.

Napier, for example, has just one wastewater treatment plant for a ratepayer base of over 25,000; Central Hawke's Bay has six, and is still struggling to keep up.

CHB Mayor Alex Walker says it's a harsh reality she and her council are now trying to tackle head-on.

"Our situation in Central Hawke's Bay is complex and brings with it

unique challenges. We are a small population and ratepayer base, spread across a large geographical region. We require more water and wastewater treatment plants than smaller districts, with larger populations," she says.

"If you add decades of underinvestment in these infrastructural assets to that layer of complexity, you're facing some very sobering realities.

"As mayor of our wonderful district, uncovering these truths has been absolutely heart-breaking. For decades' rates have been kept artificially low, at the expense of the region's assets."

CHB Council's Long Term Plan for 2021-2031, shows just how "challenging" the road ahead will be - outlining gaping holes in essential infrastructure and assets.

Increases to rates, development contributions and Council's overall debt limits are all being proposed in a bid to remedy the "dire" situation.

"We now know more than we have ever known about the state of our infrastructure. Quite frankly, it's frightening.

"We're faced with a situation where we require huge investment in our infrastructure and assets across the district, which now cannot be paid for with rates alone.

"We have pipes that are over 100 years old, infrastructure that is literally crumbling away and buildings that

"As mayor of our wonderful district, uncovering these truths has been absolutely heart-breaking. For decades' rates have been kept artificially low, at the expense of the region's assets."

we thought were earthquake tolerant, which are not."

It's become a balancing act of servicing the debt the Council already holds, and spreading additional spend over time, in order to lessen the burden on a single generation.

Mayor Walker reveals four key areas where Council is covering swift ground, in order to secure a brighter future for CHB. You can't discuss Central Hawke's Bay's 'issues' without mentioning water - and you can't fix them without a solid plan.



Waste water

Central Hawke's Bay's on-going wastewater woes reflect a system that has long been "broken".

It is the problem child that's cost CHB millions and still fails to meet strict environmental standards.

Despite \$8.4 million worth of upgrades to wastewater plants at Waipawa and Waipukurau between 2013 and 2017, exceedances of ammonia (a form of nitrogen) continue to appear in waste entering the Tukituki and Waipawa rivers.

Nitrogen is an essential nutrient for plants. Small amounts are a natural component of healthy rivers, but agricultural and urban land use, plus infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, can disrupt the natural balance. Too much nitrogen can lead to excessive growth of algae, which in turn, deteriorates river habitats.

"Wastewater epitomises the challenges we have in rural areas," Walker says.

"We meet all consent conditions except the removal of ammonia. Everything else is treated, but that one final part we struggle with. The difference is we are rural and we are discharging into rivers, and the bar for us is higher than for [urban] coastal discharge."

CHB Council has laid out a 10-year

plan to remove waste discharge from local rivers, but it's set to cost them in time, money and infrastructure.

"We do want to approach our wastewater issues and have already made a big investment in wastewater strategy. The Council wants to stop discharging into the rivers as soon as possible.

"First by bringing Ōtāne to Waipawa and Waipukurau to Waipawa to land, then building a super treatment plant."

Like many small rural councils, CHB is in need of further funding to update infrastructure that discharges waste to waterways and to replace ageing pipework.

Enter the Government's \$760 million Three Waters package to bring drinking, waste and storm water infrastructure up to scratch throughout the country.

Of the \$50 million Hawke's Bay is receiving, CHB Council has been allocated just over \$11 million to remedy a "broken" system that "just hasn't worked".

"The money will be prioritised around a second water supply for Waipukurau, which will connect through to Waipawa, and a wastewater pipe from Ōtāne to Waipawa," Walker says.

"It's accelerated our programme of renewals - replacing old sections of pipe is something we have had a

"The failure of the allocation, regulatory and market system over the past 30 years has resulted in large water volumes being held by only a few businesses in Central Hawke's Bay."

problem with historically and we are forever up against."

For councils to access the money, they must commit to the Government's wider water reform programme, including new governance arrangements.

While it's hard to say how this will affect CHB going forward - drinking water and wastewater standards will likely be higher, and more strongly enforced.

Water security

Water is the lifeblood that keeps CHB's primary sector pumping - but securing enough of it is a daunting task.

For many years, water security and aquifer over-allocation have troubled the region, with no new consents

considered by the Regional Council for the catchment since 2008.

A small number of consent holders with a lion's share of the supply, means many in need have not been able to get a look in.

The lock on CHB's water makes it a liquid gold resource, particularly in periods of low rainfall.

"The failure of the allocation, regulatory and market system over the past 30 years has resulted in large water volumes being held by only a few businesses in Central Hawke's Bay. Success for the next 100 years will be righting that inequality and creating a system where water security practices ensure that the mauri, the environment and community values are the top priority," says Mayor Walker.

She added: "Plan Change 6 - now approaching five years in effect - has certainly begun to accelerate that change as some businesses work through the reality of operating to new, stronger, environmental bottom lines." Tukituki Plan Change 6 was adopted by Regional Council almost five years ago to sustainably manage and improve the catchment's freshwater and improve its water quality. It affects irrigation management going forward.

In order to meet rules implemented under Plan Change 6, the majority of landowners are required to complete nutrient budgets and farm environmental management plans.

In a step toward further securing this precious water resource for CHB, Regional Council will roll out a Managed Aquifer Recharge Pilot in the second half of 2021.

The idea is to use peak winter stream and river flows to supplement the region's aquifer through natural filtration processes.

While no 'one shot' solution will solve decades old water storage issues, CHB Council is open to the idea and embraces the science behind HBRC's pilot scheme.

"Storage is key to securing the future for water in our community and Central Hawke's Bay District Council will continue to support initiatives that have water storage at their core," Walker says.

"For the community to have secure access to water over the growing seasons is vital. We have a naturally significant concentration across the Ruataniwha plains of highly fertile soils that could be a kaleidoscope of colour and crops.

"We have a lot of the ingredients to make it happen - the climate, the soil, the creative and committed primary sector."

However, the importance of agriculture to CHB's economy makes it particularly vulnerable to adverse growing conditions and conditions in export markets.

Images of drought-stricken land, and pain on farmers' faces, remain a poignant reminder of the impact nature can have on rural communities.

Severe drought conditions last summer saw 187 farmers in Hawke's Bay use feed transport relief, 143 request feed budgeting assistance and 333 small lifestyle blocks were "feed run" recipients.

The prediction for 2021 is looking brighter, with more feed available and farmers better prepared, though another damaging dry spell can't be ruled out.

Council has come up with a rate postponement for farmers, as part of a wider plan to future-proof farms in the drought prone region.

"The rural community at the moment is fairly buoyant. It has dried out but we had a good early part to the season - supplementary feed is

Caroline Meo

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everywhere if or when we need it," Walker says.

"We have the right people in place, and a rate postponement policy to help those farmers who need it."

Housing

A housing shortage is brewing in Central Hawke's Bay - fuelled by rising sale prices, a lack of rental properties and scarce social housing.

Mayor Walker says the issue isn't a new one, but is being exacerbated by a lack of suitable homes for families in need.

"We've had a minimal presence for social housing for many years - Kāinga Ora (Housing New Zealand) isn't doing much.

"We're trying to move the process forward. In the whole of Hawke's Bay, we have 500 children living in motels - that's terrible! On our own housing list, we have almost 50 families being housed somewhere, somehow, but that's not a long-term solution."

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) reported 42 applicants on the CHB housing register as of December 2019. There were 1030 applicants in the rest of Hawke's Bay.

The Housing Register features applicants who have been through an assessment process, are deemed eligible, and who are waiting to be matched to a property.

MSD reported only 34 social housing tenancies in the district in 2018. Prior to 2017, the number of applicants waiting for a house had not broken single digits since the series started in 2014.

This sharp increase suggests recent house price growth has put pressure on social housing in CHB.

Part of the plan put forward by Council is looking at their own housing portfolio, to see what gaps can be filled.

"First Council looked at the 48 retirement flats we own - what needs to be done to get them up to scratch, and what the future might look like to sell those on.

"We are not selling or leasing those at the moment, just working to get them up to speed."

A growing population of commuters, making the trip to Napier and Hastings for work, means rental properties are also hard to come by. When a new route to Palmerston North opens up via State Highway 3, it will offer yet another option for people to commute.

"42% of residents did not live here five-years-ago, and 1,635 people currently work out of district," Walker says.

"We will have 1,500 new houses in ten years, and 4,000 new people by 2031 - that means our population will be approaching 19,000 by then."

Migration to the region is also pushing up house prices, with recent Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) figures showing the median price for CHB in January 2021 is \$550,000. Up from \$425,000, the same time last year.

Earthquake strengthening

The clock is ticking to complete repairs on buildings that require earthquake strengthening in CHB's main townships.

Tight turnarounds pose a "big issue" for rural areas like Waipukurau and Waipawa with a number of masonry buildings lining their main retail strips.

The district falls within a high-risk seismic zone, meaning owners have 15 years to complete strengthening work; while un-reinforced masonry buildings classed as a 'priority' must be finished in 7.5 years.

"The ball started rolling on the downtown areas that we have to fix quickly, because they are earthquake prone - and the clock is now starting to tick," Walker says.

"Council is being proactive in facilitating other conversations that might need to happen, such as shortages of builders in the region."

Among buildings assessed as "earthquake prone" are the Waipukurau Memorial Hall and the Waipukurau Memorial Centennial Library.

Both buildings scored less than 20% of new building standards, despite earlier remedial work to bring them up to scratch.

The library temporarily closed its

doors in May last year, and now remains closed for the foreseeable future.

The Memorial Hall stays open, with a number of restrictions in place, because it does not have structural vulnerabilities of the same nature or extent.

As part of Asset Management Plans for Council property assets, desktop seismic assessments of a number of key buildings have been completed to inform the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan, and in some cases are ongoing.

New era ahead?

It's not all doom and gloom for the district, some promising statistics reflect a positive future for CHB's burgeoning townships.

Population growth in Central Hawke's Bay District has exceeded expectations in the past three years. By 2018, it had already surpassed Stats NZ's high growth projection scenario of 14,500 people by the year 2023.

CHB's economy is based around primary production, with the largest contributor being agriculture and associated food-processing facilities.

Although accounting for only 5% of Hawke's Bay's regional population, CHB punches above its weight, producing 20% of Napier Port's exports.

Mayor Walker smiles at the thought of a shift away from Kiwi economist Shamubeel Eaqub's "Zombie Towns" to a future that's looking bright.

"If we are going to move forward, we need to invest - invest energy, invest in community. National policy has seen people move from Auckland into Hamilton and Tauranga, now it's flowing into rural New Zealand," she says.

"We will have 1,500 new houses in ten years, and 4,000 new people by 2031 - that means our population will be approaching 19,000 by then."

Hurdles hindering further economic growth in the region are being addressed now, in order to pave the way for a positive future.

Council has also been successful in bringing more than \$50m of external funding into the district, helping to roll out some of the 'nice to have' projects - cementing its proud and prosperous path forwards.

"I know the road ahead is challenging, but I also know that as we face these facts and respond to the challenges together, we will create and secure a thriving Central Hawke's Bay for our future generations."

Mayor Walker is the wind of change helping turn the tide on CHB's most concerning issues ... just in time. ●



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Events mojo rising



Hawke's Bay has its mojo back as an events destination. Despite border closures we're becoming a mecca for sports, recreation, culture, arts, wine and food festivities and have one of the country's most vibrant live music scenes.

Story: Keith Newman

Photos: Michelle Hepburn



The region is moving beyond single focus bursts like Art Deco week, an All Black test or a big name at the Mission Estate, with wider recognition that our capacity, resources and climate are ideal for a multitude of large events.

Napier City events manager, Kevin Murphy, says Covid brought a sharp focus to how important events are for domestic tourism. "There hadn't been much discussion about this before, but when international events are missing you certainly become aware of it."

Murphy provides marketing and support for around 40 events annually, and while most people know Hawke's Bay is busy, he suggests most wouldn't know half of what's going on – if he has his way that'll continue to ramp up.

He claims concerts, tours, big games and tournaments bring about \$20 million annually to Hastings and Napier, and despite border restrictions Kiwi attendance remains high. He recommends Eventfinda (eventfinda.co.nz) as a trusted gig and games guide.

Hive of activity

When *BayBuzz* caught up with Murphy it was peak season and the region was buzzing. He'd hardly caught his breath

after Christmas parades and New Year extravaganzas, Botanic Beats and Night Fiesta events in Clive Square.

Six60 were about to perform at the Hastings Showgrounds before a crowd of around 20,000 and he was putting up billboards for the Blackcaps vs Bangladesh at McLean Park and a Finn family-focused Crowded House scheduled for Church Rd Winery in March.

Dragon were just finishing quarantine ahead of their tour that included Moana Park Winery in Taradale, and the Triple Peaks 21, Aotearoa Rugby 7s, the annual Outfield music, arts and food festival at Te Awanga Downs and Art Deco week on the way.

Variations on the theme of 'summer in the park' were happening most weekends through until the end of March, including music at Cornwall Park and Havelock North Domain.

Murphy believes the twin cities have one of the most vibrant live music scenes in the country. Apart from hardy venues like the Common Room, Paisley Stage and the iconic Cabana, satellite bars have popped up all around the region and vineyards are regularly hosting bands.

A night or an afternoon out in the

"There are only so many event promoters taking the full risk so we need to get alongside them, understand what they want and help them deliver their events here."

KEVIN MURPHY, NAPIER CITY EVENTS MANAGER

Bay might include anything from cruisy jazz, classy choristers, brass bands and bagpipes to DJs, drum and bass and hip hop, or local rock and pop units and tribute bands playing Marley, Elton John, Bowie and Pink Floyd. (Check HBmusicclub.co.nz)

No cold shoulder

The shoulder period from the end of March has fewer but nonetheless significant events with the NZ Pipe Band Championships, futsal tournaments, the National Track & Field Championships (both 2020 and 2021); the Big Easy in April with about 1,500 or so cyclists expected, and in May

the Hawke's Bay Marathon attracting around 6,000 people, and the Kiwi Walk & Run Series.

Taking a phrase from the online world, Murphy says "content is king" and while venues and councils often compete there's a growing cooperation and sharing of information.

"There are only so many event promoters taking the full risk so we need to get alongside them, understand what they want and help them deliver their events here."

Murphy works closely with venue owners, organisers and other councils, including his counterpart at Hastings,

Tanya Jackson, to ensure better regional clout.

And efforts are underway to make events an even more exacting business, including the Event Economics software from Fresh Info, which helps determine how much revenue remains in the region.

Direct financial benefits include accommodation, supermarket spend, wining and dining, entertainment, and the often forgotten hiring of marquees, sound and other equipment and services.

About eight councils using the software will eventually benefit from wider data analysis, including why people purchased tickets, how they valued the experience, and suggested improvements.

Well-rehearsed for role

Being an events manager requires good local knowledge, great contacts and networking skills and an awareness of the national sporting and entertainment scene, something Kevin Murphy has developed over decades.

He worked for NZ Customs before becoming Hastings Swimming Trust pools manager, with voluntary events management a side gig for 15 years before joining Sport Hawke's Bay.

He worked with sports clubs; futsal, football and rugby, ran tournaments, was on the Sportslink Charitable Trust and arranged gigs for various local bands.

He and a group of friends ran the HB Sports Ball for a decade and he was involved in developing the Team Hawkes Bay brand, including creating the Come on the Bay song with Ian Morris and Hammond Gamble in 2007.

Murphy's first contract event was Blues, Brews and BBQs showcasing craft beers and those other icons of summer, live music and sizzling grills.

Despite the hours involved in planning, set-up and marketing, he loves delivering an event and seeing people enjoy themselves.



As commercial manager for Sport Hawke's Bay, he arranged sponsorships, funding and events, including the first A-League Football game at McLean Park in 2013 and the annual Hawke's Bay Sports Awards.

He helped with the Tremain's Triathlon, was "quite involved" in helping market Horse of the Year in the early years and "around the edges" of support for the Rugby World Cup and Cricket World Cup which brought serious visitor value to Hawke's Bay.

"Even the cricket camps that are held here over summer bring in more than an All Black Test. It's a big week with families staying for a holiday. That's what sports tournaments do," he says.

Late to events game

Murphy regularly attended national event conferences and became frustrated Hawke's Bay wasn't up with the play.

Although other councils were working with organisers and had funding to attract events, there was little engagement by Napier and Hastings until about seven years ago.

That changed when Annie Dundas arrived in 2010 as general manager of Hawke's Bay Tourism, and key events industry people convinced her we needed a regional events strategy.

The resulting document urged local councils to get more involved; the upshot was a regional strategy group and both councils employing events managers.

In April 2015 Murphy left his role with Sport HB to join Napier City Council as events manager, tasked with ensuring the region remained on the radar when promoters planned their schedules.

The job merged his passion for sport and music, and his position on the National Event Association Board meant

he knew the potential economic gains from events and bolstering bed nights.

As the go-to man for Napier, Murphy's there to connect promoters with the right people and places, give events a promotional boost, and help cut through red tape, including the regulatory side.

That might mean coordinating street flags or putting up billboards on designated spaces. "I can use contractors but if it's only going to take an hour - I find it's often easier to do it myself."

When pipes are calling

Among the first wins for the region under his watch was the Iron Man Marathon. "They wanted to move from Queenstown to a North Island venue, so we put our hand up early and convinced them we could provide the right support."

The recent Pipe Band Championships at the Regional Sports Park included a three hour parade through Napier on a Friday night featuring 32 bands and about 1,500 people.

Without careful planning, including council traffic and parking management, the swirl and skirl of the bagpipers and drummers and their precision sharp left and right movements could have been a logistical nightmare.

"We needed to figure out how this would best work for the city and for them and to help them navigate through all of this," says Murphy. A highlight for Murphy is working across councils and with Tourism HB on developing and promoting The Big Easy and Little Easy which attract about 1,500 cyclists annually. The Easter event takes advantage of the region's interconnected cycle trails.

Another win was FAWC (Food and Wine Classic), an annual summer foody

The Hawke's Bay scene is increasingly well-resourced with more venues supporting touring acts, and professional sound, stage, lighting and other services able to contribute to shows, concerts or tours so promoters don't have to bring their own.

fest celebrating the best of our hospitality, cuisine and wine, which will be back for the winter version in June.

He's involved in ongoing marketing and support for Horse of the Year, Art Deco week, the ever-evolving HB Arts Festival and other growth events like Iron Māori.

Maturity and capacity

Murphy's impressed that so many Kiwi musicians are pulling significant crowds for tours and concerts. "Six60 jumped ahead of everyone else and now LAB are playing to crowds of 10,000, something you would never have seen a decade ago."

He believes a number of factors are aligning. "NZ On Air, Recorded Music New Zealand and APRA are all offering support and have decent funding pots to get behind local artists and producers while promoters and venues are all wanting content ... it's all coming together".

And he says the Hawke's Bay scene is increasingly well-resourced with more venues supporting touring acts, and professional sound, stage, lighting and other services able to contribute to shows, concerts or tours so promoters don't have to bring their own.

Rocket Scaffolding has built stages for Church Rd Winery events, been on the road with several tours, and is increasing its capacity for bigger acts.

"Henry Norton from Sight & Sound Services regularly puts gear into Black Barn and tops up or supplies gigs that go through Church Rd. All this helps build the region's capacity."

And from a venue perspective, Murphy says we're well catered for. At the high end there's Black Barn, Mission Estate, Church Rd, the A&P

showgrounds, Hastings racecourse and the Opera House (Toitoti).

Planning ahead

Murphy's dream event would be hosting the first major concert at McLean Park which can hold up to 25,000. Six60 passed that up for Hastings Showgrounds, so the focus is now on a significant international act once the borders are open.

McLean Park now shares Wellington Stadium's turf farm in Palmerston North, so it can cut and paste turf for areas damaged by a stage, for example.

Murphy's also talking with bigger stadiums, including Wellington, for back-up planning. "If Wellington had a few concerts planned and couldn't accommodate the Hurricanes we might be in a position to pick that up." Covid has made it extremely difficult for events managers and promoters to plan ahead for the best 'content' - so much is being pencilled in but nothing is nailed down.

"Next summer about four different (NZ Cricket) teams are meant to be touring. We just have to know where our gaps are and hope these plans happen. Covid has everything on pause."

And while winter is a good time for the NRL, the Warriors are in Australia and there's uncertainty about the 2022 season. "That's where it pays to be working

in a cooperative way with other councils and promoters," says Murphy.

Similar "ongoing conversations" are underway around the women's T20 World Cup in March 2022. McLean Park had been selected as a venue for the FIFA Women's 2023 tournament until Australia got involved and it got bumped to a training venue for up to three weeks.

From a music promoter's perspective, says Murphy, the challenge is to be ready for next summer and beyond as a lot of content is expected to come on stream in 2022-2023. "The five promoters who bring in overseas content will soon want to pencil-book stadiums."

Accommodation dilemma

Tourism HB's appeal to Wellington visitors has been hugely successful but attempts to boost domestic tourism run into a very real challenge, particularly for large events, as accommodation has been at a premium since October 2020.

Motels, hotels and campgrounds are at capacity with the government paying social housing rent for those in desperate need, exacerbated by those made homeless through the Napier flooding.

Events are increasingly reliant on Airbnb-style accommodation and Murphy, careful not to undermine his own key performance indicators, agrees better longer term planning is needed.

He's hopeful major hotel and

accommodation chains will be incentivised by the region's growing reputation as an events magnet but recommends visitors check bed availability through the i-Sites.

Through Covid, and ongoing, Murphy continues to advocate for a more holistic central government approach to the event industry.

While government tourism, sport and recreation and arts portfolios got major relief, "the industry as a whole wasn't represented, including the suppliers of marquees, sound systems, fencing and everything down that supply chain."

Vulnerable operators had months of no income. "A few have disappeared ... We were the first stopped and the last back on."

The big hope is that local MP Stuart Nash, now holding both Tourism and Economic and Regional Development in his ministerial portfolio, will lead the charge to bring all the elements together.

No doubt that and other related issues will be on the agenda when the twin cities host the first combined NZ Event Conference and NZ Event Awards dinner, in September this year.

That broader coordination and support will be imperative when restrictions lift and a raft of artists, tours, sporting events and a pent-up visitor market are unleashed on our Covid-free utopia. ●



Hub is muso central

The Hawke's Bay Music Hub is proving to be a valuable platform for local musos and songwriters to access mentoring and professional development and promote themselves beyond the region.

The website had its genesis when long-time music promoter, Kevin Murphy, and a group of friends saw the need for backline support to build industry knowledge and grow the profile of emerging and existing artists.

The catalyst was a chat between Murphy and former Split Enz and Citizen Band bass player Mike Chunn from the Play It Strange Trust back in 2013 during the Napier City Showcase emerging artists event.

"We started talking about the massive gap in knowledge of many young artists

and the challenges of moving from local gigs to the national scene."

In 2016, Murphy got together with multi-instrumentalist and composer Tom Pierard, who was running the EIT Music School, and Hamish Pinkham, co-founder and director of Rhythm and Vines, to form the Backline Charitable Trust. They brought in songwriters, performers and music managers to run mentoring sessions and in 2020 got funding to develop the online Hawke's Bay Music Hub.

This "window" now features profiles, contact details and video clips from over 110 bands, singers, performers and live venues. It's the 'go to' place for people wanting bands for weddings and 21st parties, local cafés or wineries looking for performers, and promoters wanting support acts. The Music Hub is continually updated and even offers live streaming of some events.

Murphy says the New Zealand Music

Commission so appreciates what the Backline volunteers have achieved that they want something similar rolled out to the country.

While it's now much easier for artists to record and get themselves online, he says they still need to connect with the industry for broader success and safeguards. That means engaging with a music manager, registering songs with APRA and Recorded Music New Zealand and understanding who owns what in terms of rights.

A current project is a Hawke's Bay vinyl compilation. "We got 39 songs submitted and Mike Chunn, Lorraine Barry, Dave Dobbyn's producer, and producer Devin Abrams selected 10 tracks for a limited 300 copy run to be sent to promoters around the country.

"It's a snapshot in time of the HB music scene which will also be available on Spotify," says Murphy.

hbmusicclub.co.nz

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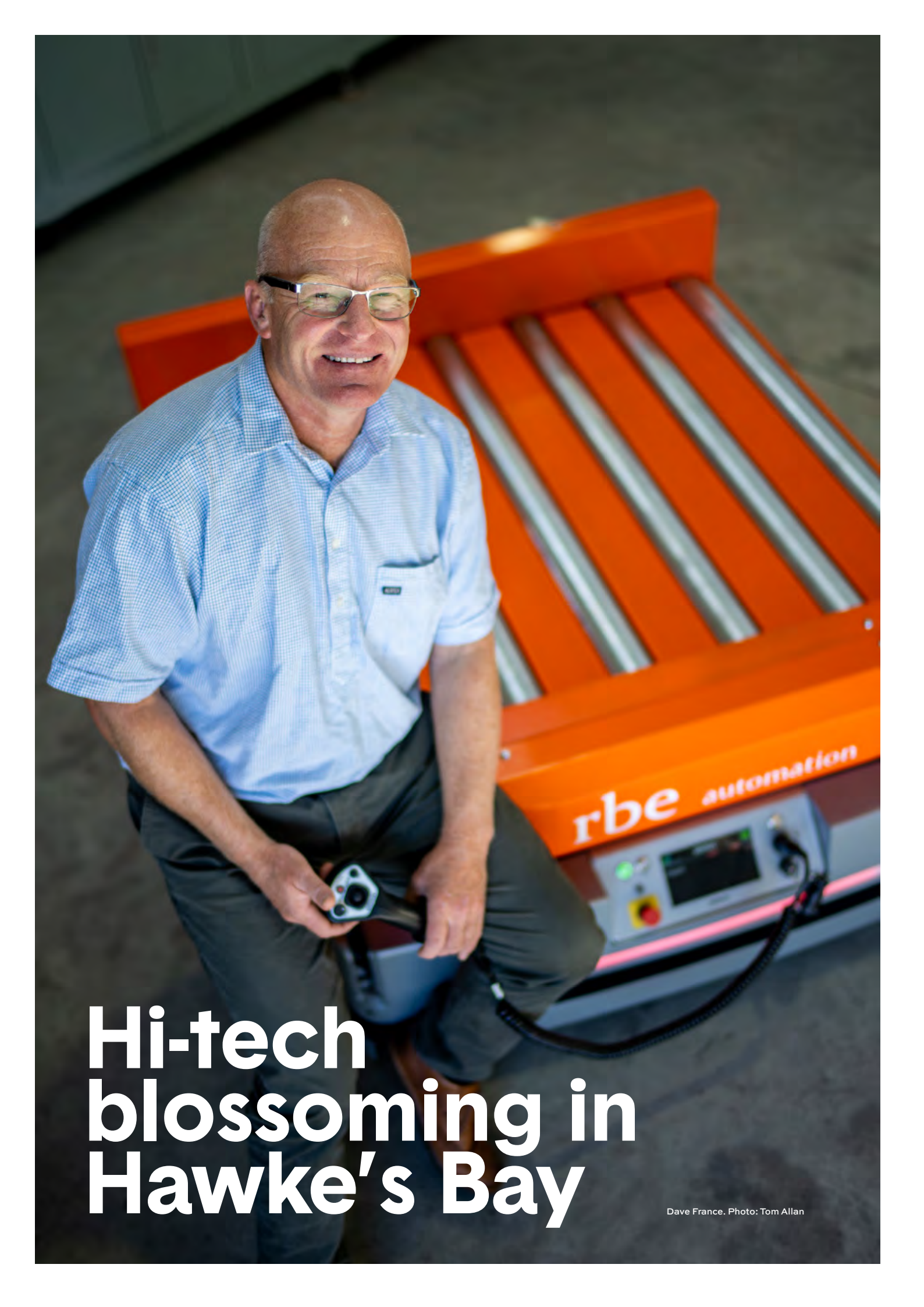
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Hi-tech blossoming in Hawke's Bay

Dave France. Photo: Tom Allan

Hawke's Bay has always been a hot-bed of innovation.

Published records of inventions developed here stretch as far back as the mid-1880s. Napier architect and engineer Otto Peez's centre bit mortise lock made headlines in the *NZ Herald* in 1886 and in more recent years, the region has gained international recognition with inventions from ergonomic furniture to mini apples. Hawke's Bay designers are creating everything from tiny widgets to large scale robotic machines involving high-level technology and invention that is putting the region front and centre on the national tech map.

Dave France is the chair of Hi-Tech Hawke's Bay, a group with a mandate to create a 'dynamic world-class hi-tech ecosystem'.

Hi-Tech Hawke's Bay connects tech specialists across all sectors to attract, retain and develop talent to meet the needs of business, while building hi-tech innovation and knowledge to help businesses scale up or 'tech-up' for future growth. The network is designed to "foster connection and collaboration" and share knowledge across the sector and with educators and employers.

At last count, there were 240 members made up from large tech companies, entrepreneurs and experts across the tech spectrum. Dave says there is an "exciting mix" of companies whose technologies include software, IoT (Internet of Things), data analytics, AI (Artificial Intelligence), machine learning, robotics, augmented and visual reality alongside technology specialists and training providers such as EIT.

"There's a wide range of people in the group including some big names such as Pan Pac and Napier Port, and also a strong base of businesses that support our automation industry such as RBE Hortworx, CR Automation and MHM Automation. All are looking to develop automation to create

efficiencies for businesses," says Dave.

According to the latest TechNZ report, there are just under 500 firms in the Hawke's Bay tech sector, a number that includes high tech manufacturing and ICT (information and communication technologies), employing more than 1,500 people. Those numbers however are likely to be conservative, as many manufacturing, processing and other businesses will have a technology arm developing their own bespoke solutions and software. And a lot of the time, they fly under the radar.

What is hi-tech?

Pinpointing exactly what constitutes a tech company or indeed its 'hi-tech' relation is difficult. Hi-tech covers everything from smart technology embedded in machinery to intelligent manufacturing and production systems, telecommunications, software and digital development and much more.

"If you break it down into sectors, you have quite a number of SaaS (Software as a Service) businesses developing in Hawke's Bay including Ask Your Team, Re-leased and StockX. Businesses specialising in AI and machine learning include prominent local business and 2020 New Zealand Hi-Tech Company of the Year finalist, Fingermark, who is a global leader in this space. Many other local businesses are embedding automation and robotics in their manufacturing, processing and primary sector production processes to improve efficiencies, quality, safety and traceability.

"There are also businesses using the Internet of Things (IoT) to gather data and turn it into useful information. IoT is a network of digital sensors, online portals and apps that collect and exchange data over the internet. Examples are water and climatic sensor information developed by Hawke's Bay companies HortPlus and MyEnviro."

There are also businesses conquering new frontiers, including aerospace

tech company Rocket Lab that uses Mahia in northern Hawke's Bay as its launch pad and satellite preparation facility. The company also actively promotes careers in aerospace through its scholarship programme. A Rocket Lab education centre will be created in Wairoa thanks to a \$6 million PGF grant, which will also see a digital employment programme and a new digital hub established in the town.

"It's hard to define tech as one thing," says Dave. "We're moving fast as a region and even the most traditional industries are using or developing digital capabilities in some form or another. We still have to plant, grow and harvest and sell fruit, but with technology we are improving old systems to optimise every aspect: harvesting, quality, yield, packaging and marketing. We are adding technology to make processes smarter, to deliver to the consumer more efficiently to save costs or improve revenue. Across all industries it's a case of speed up or get left behind."

Hawke's Bay is also a haven of New Zealand where tech entrepreneurs are increasingly choosing to base themselves and their businesses. Xero founder Rod Drury has not only been instrumental in moving Hawke's Bay's tech sector forward, but decided to house a Xero office in the Ahuriri Tech Collective, which is also home to tech businesses NOW, WebFox and Re-leased.

A breeding ground

Dave has a theory about why Hawke's Bay has produced so many tech entrepreneurs and new tech businesses.

"Hawke's Bay has always been a fertile breeding ground for innovators, who traditionally came out of agribusiness and industries like Wattie's and meat processing - large companies that had lots of engineers or techies. They are creative, clever people - geniuses in their own right - and they can build anything. It speaks to our primary



Above: Automatic pallet or bin mover by RBE Hortworx. Photo: Tom Allan

sector DNA, our entrepreneurial culture and our can-do mentality to solve problems. Combine that skill base with a digital skill base and you've got something really unique."

Dave says using technology to make intuitive solutions or using data to mimic what a human brain can do will drive the sector forward. Robotics will continue to make its impact felt, especially when it comes to streamlining hazardous or repetitive tasks. And while most people have got their heads around virtual reality, there are other buzz words on the street including the potential of augmented reality (AR).

AR is a technology that superimposes digital content such as images or text over real-life scenes. AR captured the world's attention in 2016 when the game Pokémon Go made it possible to interact with Pokémon superimposed on the world via a smartphone screen. AR will become commonplace for training purposes, enabling people to learn skills through an interactive screen rather than in a specific workplace.

Hi-Tech Hawke's Bay also has a cluster group focused on the horticulture robotics and automation space. The group is collaborating, finding synergies between them and sharing what they want to achieve.

"Building trust between businesses where they can sit down and have an open discussion about areas they could share tech or source it collaboratively," says Dave. "It's putting people from different backgrounds and disciplines

in a room and finding tech solutions and connectivity to progress both parties."

Dave is also helping the group to access the right skills, talent and funding. Demand for people with essential skills is high in the region, and part of Dave's remit is to build a pipeline of people with those skills, with vocational training playing a key part. "Vocational education is vital to fill the pipeline, from operational roles, programmers and talented people who can translate blue sky ideas into reality."

He adds, "We are lucky that Hawke's Bay is such a nice place to live and when people who were born and raised here come home, they bring their skills with them. Others, such as Fingermark's Luke Irving and Xero's Rod Drury, choose to call Hawke's Bay home. Both people coming back home and those who have picked Hawke's Bay as their new home bring a great richness of knowledge into the region and add diversity to what we do."

The Puhoro STEM is an Iwi-led organisation commencing delivery of its programmes Hawke's Bay in 2021, following success in Christchurch, Manawatū and South Auckland. Puhoro is working to develop a community of future Māori technologists, engineers, entrepreneurs, scientists, innovators and thought-pioneers by going into schools and helping 60 rangitahi or young people to develop their tech skills and talent.

To build further depth in our

"We want to increase productivity in our region and that is driven through talent, technology, innovation and investment. If you can get those four things bedded, that's what will drive the machine and grow our innovation community."

Dave France, chair of Hi-Tech Hawke's Bay

Hi-tech ecosystem in Hawke's Bay will need investment. While Callaghan Innovation provides R&D funding for individual businesses, a larger vision of industry transformation will need central and private sector funding to support growth in our tech sector.

"AgriTechNZ, MBIE and local government support are essential," says Dave. "It's about stamping the Hawke's Bay mark, identifying our point of difference in the tech space. One example is to become the go-to trial region for testing sustainable agritech technologies in New Zealand with our diverse range of pipfruit, kiwifruit, stone fruit, vegetable crops and agricultural industries.

"We want to increase productivity in our region and that is driven through talent, technology, innovation and investment. If you can get those four things bedded, that's what will drive the machine and grow our innovation community.

"Are we Silicon Valley? No. But the future is blindingly bright for Hawke's Bay to become known as a national hi-tech centre and innovation hub." ●



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Big wait for freight

There's no disputing Covid-19's global impact. While New Zealand's Government is managing its Covid response better than many, there are a raft of issues affecting global trade and shipping that have the potential to constrain growth.

Over time, the success of the global supply chain has relied on a "just in time" approach to deliver goods; saving time, money and space. Covid-19 has blown that model out of the water.

Both imports and exports are affected by disruptions that could take the shine off our local economy. The flow of goods has been impacted by shut-downs, social distancing, reduced capacity and a global shortage of empty containers. When you factor in congestion issues at Ports of Auckland and the ripple effect this is having at other ports around the country, then *New Zealand Shipping Gazette's* recent comment that "there are long wait lines to get things in" comes as no surprise.

MPI is now actively monitoring air and sea freight disruptions impacting New Zealand's supply chains; a key concern for the Government as nearly all of our goods import/export by volume, move by sea.

What does this all mean? For a start, it means that we will have to become accustomed to waiting longer for the things we want, and we can all expect to pay more for everything we buy in the coming weeks and months.

What follows is a snapshot of how the supply chain issues are playing out in our region.

Gateway or bottleneck?

Napier Port, the gateway to world trade for Hawke's Bay exporters is at the centre of disruption to shipping and global supply chains.

Port CEO Todd Dawson says that more than 30 export and import commodity products are handled through the primarily export-focused port.

"Shipping capacity and schedules are being disrupted and container supply is constrained and concentrated into the highest-yielding global trade routes, which has the potential to dilute positive regional economic activity and overall growth in containerised cargo volumes."

TODD DAWSON, NAPIER PORT CEO

"There is disruption to global shipping leading to challenges with supply chain movements. New Zealand and Napier Port need empty containers to be available to take exports out.

"Shipping capacity and schedules are being disrupted and container supply is constrained and concentrated into the highest-yielding global trade routes, which has the potential to dilute positive regional economic activity and overall growth in containerised cargo volumes.

"Securing more empty containers has been an area of focus for us as we approach our peak produce export season; in February we have 26 container vessels scheduled to come in which is more than the same period last year, which is very positive.

"Covid-19 has highlighted the fragility of New Zealand's supply chain network, with lots of factors in play in addition to the pandemic. What we need is a joined up, New Zealand Inc approach to supply chain network and infrastructure planning with fresh thinking to solve these issues.

"The briefings to incoming ministers indicate an openness to this and at the start of February I met with the Minister of Transport, Michael Wood, and the Prime Minister's Office to discuss some of these issues - especially as Napier Port has the infrastructure and capability in place already to provide some solutions," says Dawson.

Local freight and warehousing company Tomoana Logistics delivers and collects freight from North Island ports and has a significant third party warehousing operation. Stewart Taylor, executive director, says a number of factors - consumer trade out of China into Europe/USA absorbing all capacity, and regional hotspots such as union action in Australian ports and capacity issues at Ports of Auckland - have created a perfect storm in shipping, accelerating daily freight volumes.

"Vessels delayed in Auckland try to make up time by skipping regional port calls. Hawke's Bay is at the tail end of all of this. The system is less efficient than normal because of all of the pressures. The volatility and delays in shipping are so dynamic that Tomoana's freight coordinators are updating their planning schedules every 15 minutes to keep up with changes. It's really challenging.

"We've hired more people, are working longer hours and will be adding additional capacity to our fleet. We've also added buffers to mitigate the volatility, such as MPI-certified storage to help our customers. At every point there are backlogs and bottlenecks.

"Coastal shipping around New Zealand is impacted as well, resulting in more freight travelling by road. We're seeing extreme levels of demand since August last year and it hasn't stopped. It's increased demand in New Zealand and also overflow from other



Napier Port.
Photo: Florence Charvin

shipping options. We have 30% more load from Auckland to travel south than we have had capacity available. Packaging and ingredients come into New Zealand via Auckland on a just-in-time-basis. The challenge is to get those ingredients into production in the same timeframe as pre-Covid.

“There is a real interconnectedness between what happens in Auckland and what happens here. We’re not isolated. The delays and pressures are extreme, and that’s being felt in regulatory processing as well; we had an email from our customs agent to tell us our shipment was ‘785th in the queue’ before it could be uplifted. That says it all,” Taylor concludes.

HB business impacts

Craig Salter, director at Big Save Furniture, headquartered in Napier that has a large New Zealand supply chain and also imports where it can’t get the volume it needs locally, says that the travel dollar is the biggest competitor to retail of large ticket items inside of New Zealand.

“People can’t travel so that discretionary dollar has come back to retail and spend on people’s homes, with retail spend spiking around the world. Normally with supply and demand, you’ll see different parts of the world boom, while others are in recession. But that’s not the case with Covid. Retail is booming everywhere, and online businesses have grown rapidly. People might not be walking into a store to purchase, but they are still buying,

and that’s been good for us.

“The offshore factories we deal with are operating at maximum capacity which leads to longer lead times, and my understanding is that shipping into New Zealand is at 140% capacity. That means that containers aren’t getting on ships.

“It’s affecting raw materials, finished product, containers and space on ships. Covid-19 stretched last year’s Chinese New Year shutdown from two weeks to seven. It is unknown how long it will take things to get back after Chinese New Year, this year.

“The current situation requires a lot of forward planning and communication with suppliers. We’re working a lot further ahead now - six to 12 months out - because we can’t go and see our suppliers like we used to. It’s a challenge as we’re trying to guess trends and what the volumes in the market place will be.

“Things were very consistent pre-Covid. There was certainty in the supply chain. There are so many factors moving around that never really moved before. The amount of residual inventory held across the retail sector, the buffer stock, that enabled fast delivery to the consumer has all but gone. This means that people might have to wait for their items.

“Because demand is so high, the cost of raw material costs will go up. For example, the cost of foam is expected to increase by 30% to 40%. In shipping, we’ve seen increases of between 500% to 1000%. Consumers should expect price increases whether it’s food, sofas

or cars. No business can absorb price increases like that,” says Salter.

Hawke’s Bay’s food processors are affected and adapting to the supply chain issues, says Mike Pretty, non-executive chairman, Kraft Heinz Company Australia and New Zealand.

“In our case we are not immune to the impact of shipping delays, both incoming and outgoing. To manage this, we have adjusted our planning horizons with the intention of avoiding production shortfalls wherever possible.

“Where appropriate, we have also built greater stock buffers for key imported ingredients and packaging items. As you would appreciate, many of our key ingredients such as tomatoes, corn, peas, beetroots to name a few, are locally grown and at this stage, we are optimistic about a great growing summer season,” says Mike Pretty.

Wood products importer BBI has seen its market “go crazy” post lockdown. Rowe McGregor, general manager says that demand is very strong.

“When lockdown hit, we made a strategic decision to increase our normal orders and hold more stock. As a result, we have been able to respond to the surge in demand for building products.

“Stock from China is the worst affected, with increased retail demand, demand for product and container shortages all coming into play.

“Ocean freight times from China are lengthening and freight prices, skyrocketing. We’ve had to pass those price increases on, which means the end customer is paying more, but

the strengthening of the Kiwi dollar has minimised the impact of price increases to this point.

“We have good inventory levels, but managing freight in and out is our biggest challenge and is taking a lot more time than it used to. We have had to make changes, such as increasing the number of shifts, which has increased our workforce. Our customers, the big hardware/DIY chains, have to plan and forward order more to manage things through. It requires good communication.”

Rowe McGregor says he can't see things improving this year.

“Especially when you have new outbreaks around the world. There's nothing certain in the world today. The big change to 12 months ago is the impact on logistics. Getting product on and off the wharf and then around New Zealand. There's so much uncertainty about when product is arriving. There's more demand out there,

but there is only so many trucks on the road. This means there could be delays in getting product to where it needs to be,” says McGregor.

Anecdotally, the plumbing supplies sector has been affected with lead times stretched, especially for offshore product. The big lesson for all involved is “patience”. New Zealand suppliers are busy and under-resourced and shippers under pressure. It is taking a long time to get goods delivered from regional freight hubs to local outlets. To cope, wholesalers are holding more stock and trying to manage both trade and retail customer expectations. If customers are willing to be flexible or very early in their product selections, they will avoid disappointment. Wide ranging price increases for both goods and freight are expected for this sector in the coming months.

Ross Hill-Rennie, owner of Tile Shed, Hastings says that the biggest impact on his business has been in shipping delays.

“In pre-pandemic times, indent orders would take around 12 weeks to land in New Zealand, and that was timing that we could rely on. That has ballooned to more than double. We're saying to our customers, to get the tiles you want, make your choices early, as we can't guarantee that your first choice will be in the country when you need them, if you delay.

“The tile business is very used to working with long shutdowns such as for Chinese New Year and the Italian summer, and plans accordingly. But the delays we're currently experiencing are new,” says Ross Hill-Rennie.

What can we make of all of this? It all adds up to a big wait for freight. There won't be a solution to the global supply chain problem anytime soon, and price increases seem certain. New Zealand Shipping Federation executive director Annabel Young recently said “delay equals dollars and ultimately the consumer pays.” ♦

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ECONOMIC INDICATORS / BayBiz

1

CONSUMER SPENDING IN
HAWKE'S BAY UP

3.2%

FOR THE YEAR TO DECEMBER '20
(PAYMARK)

2

CONTAINER VESSEL CALLS TO
NAPIER PORT DECLINED

12%

FOR THE DEC 20 QUARTER
COMPARED TO A YEAR AGO

3

NEW MEDIAN HAWKE'S BAY
HOUSE PRICE

\$662k

(REINZ DECEMBER '20)

4

HAWKE'S BAY
POPULATION GROWTH

3500

IN YEAR TO JUNE '20

5

HAWKE'S BAY CAR
REGISTRATIONS DROP BY

500

IN 2020 (NZTA)

6

NZ PMI (PERFORMANCE
MANUFACTURING INDEX) DROPS TO

48.7

LOWEST LEVEL SINCE MAY '20.
INDICATING THAT MANUFACTURING
IS DECLINING

7

JOB GROWTH BY INDUSTRY - TOP 3*

- **Construction 351 (5.1% Growth)**
- **Health Care And Social Assistance 311 (3.4% Growth)**
- **Public Administration And Safety 230 (6.7% Growth)**

*Source Hawke's Bay region 2020 annual economic profile, published by infometrics

8

HAWKE'S BAY AIRPORT
PASSENGER NUMBERS FOR THE
DECEMBER '20 QUARTER WERE

120,819

A DECREASE OF 34% COMPARED
TO 184,154 FOR THE DECEMBER
'19 QUARTER

9

HAWKE'S BAY/GISBORNE
EMPLOYMENT RATE
DECREASES TO

5.7%

COMPARED TO 6.7%
FOR SEPTEMBER
(Household Labour Force Survey)

10

HAWKE'S BAY PRODUCTIVITY
(GDP PER EMPLOYEE)*

\$99,786

COMPARED TO NEW ZEALAND
OVERALL \$124,988

*Source Hawke's Bay Region 2020
Annual Economic Profile

11

HAWKE'S BAY/GISBORNE
EMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES TO

67.6%

FOR DECEMBER QUARTER, COMPARED
TO 65.8% FOR SEPTEMBER
(Household Labour Force Survey)

12

HAWKE'S BAY/GISBORNE
UNDERUTILISATION RATE DECREASES TO

12.6%

COMPARED TO 14.2%
FOR SEPTEMBER
(Household Labour Force Survey)



Supply chain woes

In early September 2020, a local Napier company, a first-time importer, placed an order for an eagerly awaited machine with a supplier in Chicago.

The goods were loaded after being crated in early October and were destined to catch a vessel from the East Coast of the USA mid-October. Vessels were fully booked until as far out as early December from the East Coast, so the goods, in the container into which they had been loaded, were sent on rail to catch a vessel leaving Los Angeles on November 11.

Unfortunately, that vessel was also fully booked and the next sailing to Auckland was cancelled.

The goods finally left Los Angeles Port 20 December and arrived in Auckland 5 January where the vessel spent 8 days out in the stream due to the heavy congestion, finally berthing 12 January.

The container was cleared and delivered for unpacking on January 15 at which stage NZ Customs decided to inspect the goods using their mobile scanner. Due to the increase in freight and congestion in Auckland, Customs staff are very busy and the earliest they could arrive to inspect the goods was a full ten days later.

Following inspection Customs took another two to three days before the goods were released and the machine could be passed to the already busy truckers who are at the tail end of these supply chain glitches. The Napier company will be lucky to receive this item before the first week in February!

That company is Benny Fernandez' (of Georgia on Tennyson fame) Bona Fide Brewing Ltd. Which just underscores you don't need to be a big HB corporate to have business-disrupting shipping woes these days.

So, for a shipment that takes 16 days from port to port, the congestion and delays at each end turn the total transit into 4-5 months.

For a shipment that takes 16 days from port to port, the congestion and delays at each end turn the total transit into 4-5 months.

This is the compounding of issues leading to the shortage of retail goods and supplies for manufacturers.

These are the supply chain glitches that delay the delivery of empty containers for our exporters to load (both refrigerated and general cargo).

These are the drivers that mean shipping lines are cutting or reducing schedules to (and by default from) New Zealand or applying congestion surcharges to every container that transits Auckland port.

And last, but by no mean least, this is the reason for lines charging freight rates at rates higher than has been seen in New Zealand for a very long time.

The cost to the economy will be enormous when an Auckland congestion surcharge is more than the cost of the freight from China to New Zealand in early 2020. That freight price has at least doubled in 2021.

I recently read an offshore article that for a trader, having a good freight-forwarder does not help in this Covid world of shipping delays. I tend to agree, as a forwarder and customs broker I certainly cannot affect the delays shipping lines and ports are experiencing. What I can do is keep looking at innovative ways in which I can obtain containers or space for my clients. This involves investigating multiple options rather than just the favourites or the cheapest. Cheap freight rates are non-existent in the situation where demand exceeds supply, and it makes me wonder if the shipping lines really want a quick solution!

Whilst the physical delays to supply chain are obvious to all, some aspects of the vulnerability of New Zealand companies in that supply chain are not.

The Ports of Auckland have had major problems with their operational software whilst the volumes of cargo have risen. Because they are reliant on the software they have chosen, they are at the mercy of those who maintain the software to rectify the issues.

The freight forwarding and customs brokerage industry has seen just how vulnerable they are when Cargowise software, which has a monopoly of over 80% of the New Zealand market, failed for nearly 36 hours in mid-December 2020.

This meant that clearing of goods, interfacing with Customs and Biosecurity, and tracking shipments just stopped. This happened at a time when the software company (Wisetech Global) increased the base fees for the software to their clients by up to 300% with a month's notice.

Times like this make us all look very closer at how we operate our business and how we make contingency plans for the day the software we are totally reliant on crashes or becomes uneconomic to run.

This is a timely reminder to constantly review reliance on all parties adding cost to the supply chain and how quickly we can make a change and at what cost. At the end of the day, we all need to make a living, but it is a fine line between profitability and the downward spiral in the current environment.

Hawkes' Bay international traders need to look closely at their logistics requirements over the next twelve months. The art of planning becomes that much more important in the strange market we have in 2021.

If an exporter can negotiate a forward contract with forwarders or shipping lines and nail down costs for



Benny Fernandez. Photo: Florence Charvin

as far forward as possible that would be a huge advantage. Most likely such a contract may well be at a premium rate and will be reliant on the exporter meeting their obligations in supplying cargo when agreed.

Similarly, an importer can also look to negotiate a forward contract; however, the forecasting of production and ship ready dates with an overseas supplier may be a difficult task. The message is the same however - if importers accurately plan and budget as far forward as possible, the more certainty can be leveraged in shipping schedules and freight rates.

Can Napier Port do anything to ease the situation?

It's a matter of being proactive. If Auckland is congested (last shipment I had was 11 days from stream to berth) and Tauranga is stretched, why should Whangarei be the alternative? How

about offering selected lines a one North Island port call at Napier?

Also, something that is not happening here is 'groupage' containers arriving in Napier (that is a container that holds multiple shipments for Hawke's Bay importers). To do this the Port needs to get alongside a forwarder and offer them attractive unpack rates at the port's unpack facilities (Port Pack). This would mean people like my machine importer could bypass Auckland entirely.

But in any event, we are looking at a highly irregular supply chain for all of 2021. Good luck! ●

A licensed customs broker by trade, Murray Painter has years' experience in international trade with a focus on perishable products. He is a former chairman of Export Hawkes' Bay.

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I'm no longer a delusional warrior

"Your business is much larger than mine. How do you deal with the stress?"
"Not well," I reply. "I don't sleep for a start."

"Don't sleep? What does that look like?" she enquires.

"Well, without medication I'll wake at about 3.30am with my thoughts racing. It's like a mild manic experience. Often my brain just keeps going faster and faster. Sometimes it's thrilling, but usually that's the end of sleep. At first light, when I give up trying, I get an extra thirty minutes. Typically I'd sleep 4½ hours a night"

"So how have you dealt with this?" I see her wide-eyed exasperation.

"I take sleeping pills once or maybe twice a week. Now my doctor has prescribed Amitriptyline, which is a low-grade tranquiliser. That has given me another hour or sometimes two, but seems less effective than it was."

"Any side effects of these drugs?"

"Well, Amitriptyline thins membranes, so you get a horrible dry mouth and my ears are dry and itchy too. My dentist says it looks like my gums might have lichen planus. It's an autoimmune disorder."

I see in her eyes a well of instinctive frustration rising.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?!" she barks ferociously. "You're so stressed you can't sleep, so you take drugs. The drugs have side effects and now you have an autoimmune disease. Your body is screaming at you and you're completely ignoring it."

I'm shocked. People don't usually speak to me like this, especially ones I don't know very well. I'm mildly offended, but most troubling of all is the ego-crusher moment. Some audacious woman has just bluntly told me I'm an idiot. And she's right. Time for some change.

Atma grew up in the yoga world and has been a teacher for 30 years, for

the last 12 years running the Ashram Yoga Retreat in the Coromandel. She's just relocated to Hawke's Bay and has offered to help me with relaxation and mediation.

"People like yoga for the poses, but meditation is more important and breathing the most important of all," she says. Advice on deep breathing seems to be everywhere these days and magazines are choc full of wellbeing and mindfulness articles that mention it. "It's all from yoga," Atma says, "just repackaged for the modern world. There was a time when yogic meditation was woo-woo, but these days a CEO that doesn't meditate is probably in the minority. Everyone needs it."

"There was a time when yogic meditation was woo-woo, but these days a CEO that doesn't meditate is probably in the minority. Everyone needs it."

ATMA, YOGA TEACHER

I've always been inclined to the empirical world of science and maths, so sceptical about the 'woo-woo'. Ancient knowledge should be accorded respect though. Practices that are refined though centuries ought to work. You can only imagine that, over time, they threw out what didn't work and kept what did.

So Atma and I breathe, deep yogic breaths, each additional one seeking more capacity within. Then she adds box breathing, the 9 count breath and finally the ujjayi or whispering breath. Here you use the glottis to restrict the rate of airflow in and out. At first it sounds baffling but only takes about three seconds to work out.

Atma has that droll, yogic monotone as she instructs with simplest

and least intrusive of phrases. "Let your thoughts pass like clouds," she says. There are many of them, but as a disengaged 'watcher', they don't trouble me unduly. "Bring your concentration back to the breath. Be aware of the rising and falling of your stomach. Use your diaphragm to push out the last of the breath. Suck in your navel." She brings my attention to how my body feels, to the sound around me and to anything I might see while my eyes are closed.

After only 15 minutes we rise and I feel amazing. I'm filled with a God-like peace; a calmness I've never experienced. I'm told my post-meditation face suits me. The physical and mental stress is gone. On subsequent occasions I feel euphoric, giggly excitement as we begin breathing. There is the anticipation of something magical about to happen.

I try to meditate at home and realise that Atma is the master guide and I the bumbling novice. At 4am in a frenzied mental state, I try and fail dismally. "You can't force it," Atma advises. In that state you need some physical movement to release the energy and perhaps only to try for relaxation."

I've experienced two incredible benefits from meditation. Firstly it takes out the mental and emotional trash. Afterwards I have the clarity to focus with scalpel-like precision. This emotional reset has been life changing. Secondly, yoga-types talk being centred and listening to your 'knowing'.

Essentially this is taking some decision making away from the torturous ambivalence of your brain and making calls with your gut. We've all experienced our instincts screaming at us when we're about to make a bad decision. Our brains get it wrong a lot more than our gut. If we can find sufficient mental calmness, it's surprising what we can discern instinctively.



Paul shedding his warrior ways. Photo: Tom Allan

When you follow these instincts it's a much less stressful life.

Atma talks regularly about the physical benefits of yoga, particularly the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. "Tell me about the dagobah system," I ask. Atma looks perplexed. "You mean the endocrine system?"

"Oh yes, I always get confused between yoda and yoga," I smile. Atma is nonplussed.

"It might be useful to have your back looked at," she suggests.

I've never been to a chiropractor, but the wellness universe is ganging up on me. A week later my wife slips a disk and I find myself waiting at a chiropractor's reception. The receptionist doesn't look too busy, so I chat for a moment and book an appointment.

Emma is my chiro. Later she puts me through a barrage of tests and at furious speed, lurching between pa-

tient and clipboard like she's watching tennis. 'I don't x-ray everyone, but I think we should x-ray you' she says. I don't like the sound of it.

When all of the results are in she takes me through the diagnosis. "You have a lot of issues with your back." I don't believe her, but the tests don't lie and my back groans in agreement.

"You've had some impact here and your neck doesn't turn too well. You've got a craned neck, leaning forward more than it should. There is a lot of tension in your upper right neck and shoulder and see here, you've had a small fracture. Your spine is out of alignment here and you can see your shoulders are not quite level." She reels off the endless list of functions of the spine, sounding like a nerdy Atma. I agree to let her fix it.

Yoga starts with awareness, in this case awareness of my dysfunction. Then comes acceptance and action.

Most of us are somewhat aware but often operating in denial rather than acceptance.

From what I've seen, men are particularly guilty of this; clinging on to a delusional 'warrior archetype' that can grit its teeth and push on. Denial often comes from a noble place; a dutiful desire to do our jobs and care for our families. But by living in a world of weariness and the pain of physical and mental dysfunction, we're living half-lives and denying our capacity to give to others.

I'm learning that self-care isn't a whimsical new age idea. It's about taking responsibility for our lives and realising our potential. The other night I had the best night's sleep for ages.

The following day I drank no coffee and all things seemed possible. ●

Paul Paynter is our resident iconoclast and cider maker. Sometimes he grows stuff at Yummyfruit.



Leadership for a long-haul emergency

Confronting three different disasters, we have seen the Prime Minister rise admirably to the occasion.

The Christchurch mosque massacres, the eruption of Whakaari White Island, and the Covid-19 pandemic have been characterised by rapid governmental response, led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's effective and calming public presence.

These disasters share some distinctive traits. They arose abruptly. The lethal dangers to an unsuspecting public were clear and easily comprehended. Failure to act would have been a massive betrayal of responsibility.

The public expected strong leadership from the Government in each case ... and got it. Who wouldn't pay attention to a gunman on the loose killing dozens or an exploding volcano or a disease that might, as in 1918, kill 9,000 New Zealanders and over 20% of the population of Samoa?

In early December, Ms Ardern loudly proclaimed a fourth emergency. On the surface, the proclamation of a Climate Emergency appeared to be a bold move for the Labour Government and for our country.

The message was well-crafted, timed to perfection. The world's press applauded the Prime Minister. Soon, though, the tide turned, with a growing chorus of critics calling the Prime Minister's declaration a publicity stunt with little substance. More like: Go slow, go easy.

Even teenage activist Greta Thunberg questioned the Government's rhetoric versus its response to climate change. "In other words, the Government has just committed to reducing less than 1 per cent of the country's emissions by 2025," Thunberg said in the tweet.

Why such a different response this time?

The climate emergency is no less genuine than the earlier three, but its reality has emerged slowly, over a matter of decades rather than hours or days. The dangers seem less obvious and less immediate, and the scope is so enormous that they don't elicit the same fear as an instantly emerging disaster.

The Prime Minister has shown masterful skills in leading previous crises, but she will lose public support if she doesn't adapt to a time frame more akin to a wartime effort than to a traffic crash.

The Climate Emergency is a long-haul disaster. A meaningful national response will require a different form of leadership from both present and future governments, with sustained committed action across all sectors of government and society over many decades. Beginning now.

The Prime Minister has shown masterful skills in leading previous crises, but she will lose public support if she doesn't adapt to a time frame more akin to a wartime effort than to a traffic crash.

Just as January ended, the Climate Change Commission released its *Draft Advice for Consultation*.

Critiques of the Draft Advice are already emerging. The commission will consider submissions, then issue its final recommendations by May 31. The Government must then set forth its climate programme by December 31, bound to consider but not necessarily adopt the commission's pathways. The 'Climate Emergency' wheels turn slowly.

How the Government leads the developing national plan may be as important as the substance of the plan.

Whatever the substance of the final plan, here are four ways I'd like to see this Government undertake leadership of our real and urgent Climate Emergency to give the plan a greater chance of success:

First, continue to make a convincing case. Inform the public about the causes of the emergency and consequences of inaction. Like the Covid-19 pandemic, this emergency is global. We can't solve it alone, but to sustain public support, we need to understand the causes and why our proposed actions matter.

Second, act now and be brave. Address the urgency of the Climate Emergency with immediate action. Impacts on the economy, agriculture, public health, and the environment are happening now and will get worse.

Every ministry and government agency should have a visible plan that supports the overall response. These should also inform the public about actions individual citizens can take, as with the Covid-19 notices on every public building and business. Now, only the Ministry for the Environment addresses the emergency on its home page. Why?

The reality of climate change is far more frightening than Covid-19. Its impacts will be many times greater, they are here now, and they will increase for many years before declining. They require action now.

Third, measure our progress in reducing climate-altering emissions – crushing the curve – and report frequently. Dr Ashley Bloomfield's daily accounting of Covid-19 case numbers and deaths provided a forensic basis for national consensus. Informing the public with evidence builds the public understanding to persist in this long-term battle.

STILL a SLOW BOAT



Our Pacific neighbours need our leadership. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nanaia Mahuta, has called for “Indigenous thinking about the environment,” and appears to want to make our environmental leadership a key element of foreign policy.

Fourth, place environmental justice at the forefront of national action. The least advantaged of society are always the most adversely affected in crises. Make sure the national response also reduces economic inequality and creates a better future for all New Zealanders, not just the wealthy.

Reducing our national climate emissions footprint will benefit business, agriculture, and biodiversity. Government actions that reduce economic inequality can build public support and a consensus to pursue our plan for decades.

A focus on environmental justice as a component of addressing the Climate Emergency also demonstrates international leadership. Our Pacific neighbours need our leadership. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nanaia Mahuta, has called for “Indigenous thinking about the environment,” and appears to want to make our environmental leadership a key element of foreign policy.

Beyond her formidable communication skills, the Prime Minister is strongly positioned to lead urgent

climate action. She has the mandate of a real majority in Parliament. Her challenge is not only to develop a strong plan for addressing the Climate Emergency, but also to rise to the new challenges of a long-haul crisis – communicating in a way that builds a national consensus and sustained, intergenerational commitment.

That’s real leadership. ●

Charles Daugherty is Emeritus Professor of Ecology, Victoria University. Awarded an ONZM for his work on tuatara ecology and management. A former trustee of Zealandia, he’s involved with Biodiversity Hawke’s Bay since retiring to Hawke’s Bay, serving as chair of the trust board, but writing in his personal capacity.



Fronting up to the cost of waste

Did you know New Zealand is one of the cheapest places in the western world to dispose of rubbish?

Couple this with the fact we generate the fourth highest amount of waste per person in the OECD and we find ourselves in a truly shameful position. Especially considering the ‘clean, green’ image we portray to the world.

This is set to begin changing on 1 July when the waste disposal levy goes up for the first time in over a decade, and with very good reason.

On the surface the levy may appear to be a topic with less appeal than watching paint dry. However, the coming changes to the levy will have far-reaching impacts on the country, its wavering clean, green image and, critically, the way people and businesses think about waste and how to reduce it.

The levy forms a portion of the total cost of disposing of waste, generating funds for waste minimisation projects and work. It is also a behaviour-change instrument which has failed abysmally as waste to landfill in New Zealand has increased by 1.5 million tonnes a year since the levy’s introduction.

Change is coming, very soon

In mid-July last year, the Government announced significant changes to the levy, which will see it applied to all types of landfills and progressively increased over four years. It will also mean better data on the waste the country creates, and significantly more money available to invest in waste-reduction projects through a contestable fund.

It’s understandable that the thing which may jump out is the increase in the levy. This will take it from the current \$10 per tonne to \$60, over four years, starting on 1 July. The levy has been \$10 since 2009 and is one of the lowest in the OECD.

There is a great analogy that waste is like water – it flows to the lowest price point. If landfill is the cheapest option, there is little incentive to consider or develop other options, such as reduction, reuse or recycling.

Some have incorrectly interpreted the change as a six-fold increase in waste-disposal charges. However, the levy is also only a portion of the total fee when disposing of waste at the local landfill (which varies throughout New Zealand).

Government estimates the increase could mean a weekly council kerbside rubbish bag (where councils offer user-pays rubbish bags) will go up by about 25c.

Cost and behaviour change

There is a great analogy that waste is like water – it flows to the lowest price point. If landfill is the cheapest option, there is little incentive to consider or develop other options, such as reduction, reuse or recycling.

According to the Ministry for the Environment, the amount of rubbish New Zealanders have sent to municipal landfills over the last decade has increased by a staggering 48% – some 30 million tonnes in total. A large portion is material which can be reused, recycled or composted – valuable resources being wasted.

Price is one of the best ways to drive behaviour change and the knock-on effect will see a greater emphasis on reducing waste in the first place. Waste reduction and avoidance will become more important in product design, alternative outflows for waste will be explored and generally landfilling will become less of an attractive,

default solution.

Hawke’s Bay is a good example. Here, there is a disproportionately high volume of organic waste going to landfill due to the amount of primary industry in the region. This is a problem for two reasons.

Firstly, when organic waste breaks down in landfill it produces potent greenhouse gases. Yes, some landfills can capture and use this gas, but not all. And secondly, it’s a significant waste of nutrient-rich material which could be used in other beneficial ways. There would be obvious benefits if composting, bio-digestion, or another circular solution was the most cost-effective option.

More money = less waste

Currently the levy is only applied to municipal landfills, which account for around just 10% of the country’s waste by weight. Other kinds of waste, like building and demolition waste (which makes up around 40% to 60% of waste by weight) currently has no levy applied to it. When the landfill levy was originally introduced, only municipal landfills were required to have weigh-bridge infrastructure and report on tonnage. This new tranche of change will see all disposal facilities required to report to the same standard – leveling the playing field.

The progressive expansion and increase of the levy isn’t the only stick for business and consumers. There is a carrot too – in the shape of money.

Around 50% of the revenue from the levy is allocated to waste minimisation projects, through the contestable Waste Minimisation Fund (WMF). The remainder of the revenue goes to councils for waste minimisation activities.

Currently the levy provides around \$10-12 million for the WMF annually. Once it’s expanded and increased to \$60 it will increase to more than \$100



Omarunui landfill serves Hastings and Napier. Photo: Tim Whittaker

million. The result will be some serious funding available for large-scale waste minimisation projects which could not only reduce waste but create jobs by creating new on-shore processing capability.

Getting to know our waste

If you don't measure, you can't manage. It's an adage which is central to waste minimisation - improving data on the waste New Zealand produces is vital to tackling the problem.

Currently the information is sparse at best. We simply don't know how much of what materials are being landfilled. This means change is slow as there is little to no data to justify it.

Municipal landfills, which are currently levied, gather reasonable data in terms of tonnage while some also do surveys to better understand what is in the landfill. Non-levied landfills, however, don't report any information.

The result will be some serious funding available for large-scale waste minimisation projects which could not only reduce waste but create jobs by creating new on-shore processing capability.

If you were to ask exactly how much building timber, concrete or even window glass is landfilled each year in New Zealand it would be impossible to get an answer.

What does the future hold?

These changes may seem dramatic, especially considering very little has changed in over a decade in regard to how we view or use landfills.

However, we can no longer continue to stumble along blindly landfilling

things at the current rate. It not only makes a mockery of our clean, green image, but wastes a huge amount of potential resources, simply appearing to be the cheapest, easiest option.

There is a clear need to move away from one-way disposal pathways in favour of more circular solutions, and to recognise the value of the material being discarded.

In the future, I believe, we will look back at these changes as a vital part of the country's journey to reducing waste and increasing resources. ●

Dominic works on sustainable solutions at 3R Group. 3R design, implement and manage product stewardship schemes for individual businesses or industry-wide groups. They also help businesses take a fresh look at their waste to first minimise and then recover what would otherwise be wasted.



Understanding your food reactions

When growing up, I don't remember any of my friends or their family members being allergic, intolerant or sensitive to foods.

Now days restaurants offer gluten, dairy, soy and nut free options. Lactose free cheese and milk and gluten free bread is available in supermarkets. Children are no longer allowed peanut butter sandwiches or nuts at school because this type of allergy is on the rise.

One of the main reasons for the increased frequency of food allergies seems to be excessive regular consumption of a limited number of foods often hidden in commercially prepared foods. Other culprits are high levels of preservatives, stabilisers, artificial colourings and flavourings now added to food.

My advice: read food labels!

I'm really passionate about this subject, since I battled with food-based reactions for years. One of the reasons that I became a nutritionist with a special interest in gut health.

There can be some confusion around what allergies, intolerances and sensitivities are and these terms are often used interchangeably. Let's explore the differences.

Allergies are easy to understand because there is usually a pretty quick reaction to the offending food. Symptoms include rashes, welts, swelling of the lips, eyes, face, tongue and/or throat, runny nose, sneezing and so on. Reactions can be subtle, or they can be life threatening.

Food allergies are immune mediated reactions, where there is an overreaction to a normal and harmless food protein. The body will create an antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE) when it is first exposed to the offending food.

When that food is eaten again, these IgE antibodies will signal cells of the

immune system to attack the foreign invaders. These 'immune' cells, will release a chemical called histamine causing inflammation and the symptoms associated with food allergies.

Food allergies are usually identified early in life but can develop in later years. The best way of identifying allergies is through the skin prick test and IgE test.

There can be some confusion around what allergies, intolerances and sensitivities are and these terms are often used interchangeably.

What is food intolerance?

A food intolerance is an adverse physiologic response to food(s). It is due to a 'mechanical' problem such as the inability to break down and digest a food because of an enzyme deficiency. Unlike true food allergies, it doesn't elicit an immune response.

Lactose intolerance occurs when the body doesn't produce the enzyme lactase to break down lactose. Some people have difficulty breaking down certain sugars and these are then poorly absorbed in the small intestine. These dietary sugars are called **Fermentable Oligo-saccharides, Di-saccharides, Mono-saccharides and Polyols (FODMAPS)**. They are thought to play a role in irritable bowel syndrome.

Those suffering from food intolerances are prone to gut related symptoms such as cramping, constipation, loose stools and/or wind. Symptoms can take longer to appear, anywhere from 30 minutes to 48 hours or more

after eating. They are not life threatening, just really uncomfortable and embarrassing for some.

When we cannot break down our food optimally, the gut environment can change and cause an imbalance between good and bad bacteria and yeasts. These food particles can also cause damage to the gut wall, leading to inflammation.

The golden standard for food intolerance testing is doing a temporary elimination diet followed by a controlled food challenge to identify dietary triggers. Breath tests can be helpful in identifying fermentable carbohydrate intolerance, such as lactose and fructose.

What is food sensitivity?

They are food-based immune reactions that can take up to three days to appear. Food sensitivities are IgA and IgG mediated and are produced in response to allergens in the blood, gut and other mucous membranes.

One of the theories is that delayed food sensitivities develop due to intestinal permeability AKA 'leaky gut'. When this happens, large protein molecules get through into the blood stream and this can set the stage for IgG mediated immune responses to food.

Around 80% of our immune system lives behind the gut wall and its purpose is to protect us from infection. Our immune system scans the environment for proteins found on the surface of bacteria, yeast and other nasties. It will tag these proteins for destruction. If food proteins are getting through that shouldn't, our immune system will readily tag and attack these protein structures that it comes into contact with.

Symptoms of food sensitivities are broader than just digestive symptoms and can include headaches, joint pain, skin issues, chronic



What can you do?

If you are suffering from uncomfortable digestive symptoms or experience fatigue, joint pain, eczema, unexplained weight gain, irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's, mood disorders and other conditions, some foods may be impacting your health.

Seek advice from a qualified practitioner who can help you identify food triggers, support your immune system and heal your gut. Over time you may be able to reintroduce some of the foods that you enjoyed in the past. The key is to be patient, since this type of healing can take time. ●

Hazel Thomas is a registered clinical nutritionist with a special interest in gut health, food sensitivities and children's health.

fatigue and many others.

There are a number of tests available, many of which are controversial and not recognised medically. The tricky part of identifying a food sensitivity is that it can be delayed for up to 72 hours or more.

The aim is to eliminate foods that may be causing problems for you. Common foods include gluten, corn,

rice, nightshades, legumes, eggs, dairy, nuts, sugar, alcohol and soy.

Food sensitivities can be supported with dietary modifications. If you avoid the foods you are sensitive to and take measures to heal your gut and improve digestion, you are likely to be able to re-introduce these foods down the track without any adverse reactions.



Royston Hospital is pleased to sponsor robust examination of health issues in Hawke's Bay. This reporting is prepared by BayBuzz. Any editorial views expressed are those of the BayBuzz team.

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Evolution Healthcare





Photo: Florence Charvin

Recipe for disaster

Are we good cooks or does our prowess with tabbouleh rest merely on our ability to read recipes and follow My Hello Bag instructions?

Is the ability to identify delicious potential in a good-value cut of meat lost in the annals of Edmonds, Holst, or Beaton?

If we finally got to compete on Master Chef would we be stumped by a mystery box that was bereft of freekeh and ras el hanout?

The pressure to deliver the trifecta of good nutrition, restaurant quality plating aesthetics, and originality is growing.

Little Samphire and Sumac won't settle for sausage, peas, and mash, regardless of how much truffle oil you drizzle on the potatoes. We're embroiled in the age-old pursuit for novel ingredients. Brought to our kitchen table by Nadia, Chelsea, 5% Simon and Yotam.

The speed at which we acquire these new ingredients has increased drastically over the last nine hundred or so years, but the social currency provided by these aromatics is the same as it always has been. Trending ingredients are the stuff of conversations as we one-up our pals with the latest flavour, hoping that they won't gazump us with a sprig of something uber-fashionable from their garden.

The global spice route is now a spaghetti junction of in-coming new discoveries.

Zatar! They exclaim, brandishing organic, boneless, skinless, chicken thighs. Harissa! The leg-o-lamb wavers respond. If you're still using curry powder it's probably best to keep quiet. Shove that tub of Empire Mild to the back of the herb 'n' spice drawer. Tuck it behind the two-year-old mixed herbs.

In the midst of fashion, consumerism and celebrity culture we stand at our stoves researching what we should eat and how we should cook it. The human condition is unique amongst animals. Unlike every other species we have given up on our instincts. We've been encouraged to be distrustful of decisions based on instinct. All except the recently acquired instinct to 'Google it' or read a book about it.

This isn't confined to food and cooking. Collectively, removed as we are, from our natural environment, we rely on the most up-to-date gurus to tell us 'How To Everything'. Our culinary repertoire is full of other people's recipes. Not only do we gobble up their latest ideas, but we also lean on their third party expertise to validate our culinary offerings. "Oh this? It's from Chelsea's latest book"

So are we good cooks? Maybe.

If we're cooking we are doing a good deed.

Following recipes and opening 23 tiny packets of delivered ingredients is OK. It's better than not cooking. If the process facilitates sitting at a table and sharing a meal with family, flat-mates, friends, or strangers then we are cooks and cooks are good people. We are contributing to the fabric of our immediate community.

We are, however, a long way from where it all began around communal fires and we're a long way from having a connection to the soil, bush, and ocean. We may never rekindle that connection.

What we are, in large numbers, is bad shoppers.

We've allowed ourselves to be bullied into shopping as instructed or coerced to. Often because we don't know what to buy. Often because we're swamped with bad food in supermarkets.

If we finally got to compete on Master Chef would we be stumped by a mystery box that was bereft of freekeh and ras el hanout?

My definition of bad food is food with an ingredients list. Particularly a list of more than fifty characters. Especially ingredients that don't sound like food. Often we don't shop well because we shop for the ingredients to a particular recipe. Resulting in half jars and half packets left to die a slow and painful death in the back of the pantry.

The home science skill of finding a bargain in the meat cabinet and then knowing what to do with it is a dying art. In its place is the cooking-by-numbers culture driven by aspiration and hobbyists, and celebrity food writers. It's food porn gone mad! Not only are we ogling images and descriptions of exotic ideas, but we're also getting carefully over-wrapped packages delivered to our doors, full of the wherewithal to get hot and sticky in the privacy of our own homes.

So what if we do love the celebrity food writers and their 'new' recipes and the home-delivery services? Well, aren't we just the Guitar Heroes of the kitchen? Are we picking up skills or are the recipes dumb-ed-down to such a point that it's 90% assembly and 10% heating?

Will we have learned anything from our experiences that will merit passing onto the next generation? I doubt it.

And of course that's not the point. If we learn sound cooking techniques, then the industry of hip cook-books, food-porn mags, and ready-to-cook meals dies.

So let's mix a little more ararat with our humus and drizzle another bottle of pomegranate molasses and rejoice that we are a long way from those primal fires. ●



Support our art economy ... buy local

Story by Kay Bazzard

Tennyson Gallery, Napier.
Photo: Florence Charvin

On May 20, 2020, RNZ Morning Report featured a surprising result for an art auction in post Covid-19 lockdown.

Conducted by the International Art Centre in Parnell, Auckland it featured *“Important and Rare Art”* and, according to the gallery’s director Richard Thomson, it was notable for the extraordinary level of interest with significant numbers of active bidders and higher than expected prices. “The buyers came out in their droves,” he said.

He interpreted this as “very reassuring for artists, collectors and the trade” – and perhaps it might be. But this was a sale of historic art made by dead artists and represents a shift of funds into an investment that “holds its value in good times and bad”.

That is a world away from the 90% of living artists who are struggling make a living from art in New Zealand and the more important reason for owning art – that it touches something within us.

Given the Covid pandemic, there has been a surprising optimism in the New Zealand economy resulting in a year of growth in art sales, with galleries up and down the country reporting a lot of new interest. Each sale represents an investment in a painting or sculpture, often by a first-time art customer seeking to enhance their lives through art instead of taking that \$20,000+ overseas trip.

So, hope is alive and artists can keep on creating while our borders remain closed and the economy holds up.

A rich man’s fancy?

For some art may seem an irrelevance or elitist, but research shows that art making and the sharing of art is as old as mankind and that it is really important for human wellbeing.

Creativity is all around us. The growing number of practicing artists in the arts economy suggests it is a developing interest. Through the arts we express ourselves, tell our stories, validate our emotional lives and enrich our souls, thus resulting in a more humane and gentle society.

By experiencing the visual arts, performing arts or music and dance, we add to the quality of life. Art reduces anxiety, expands horizons of imagination and creativity and brings joy to the heart. It is shown to be good for the mental health of individuals and for community wellbeing, which is why governments at all levels support their arts communities

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life”.

PABLO PICASSO

in order to foster a strong sense of unity and cultural identity.

Attendances are growing

Public participation in cultural events is growing as the public discovers opportunities to engage, note the success of the Hawke’s Bay Arts Festival in attracting locals and New Zealanders from other regions. In recognition of its success, the Festival has received a Creative New Zealand grant of \$150,000, doubling the funding received for the 2020 festival, to be matched dollar for dollar by Hastings District Council. The 2021 festival will be even more amazing, and hopefully, will play to bigger audiences.

Events that celebrate visual art are also experiencing a growth in numbers. The Wildflower Sculpture Exhibition is a resounding success, over the week of the recent show it welcomed 9,000 visitors and over the seven biennial events they have staged, Cranford Hospice has benefited to the tune of \$430,000, and paid out \$1.3 million to artists.

The November opening of Hastings City Art Gallery’s EAST 2020 exhibition was jam-packed with local art lovers with most making repeat visits to fully appreciate the artists’ work. Similarly, the exhibition TIKA TONU featuring 30 Kahungunu artists and curated by Sandy Adsett, attracted big crowds and celebrated the quality of Māori contemporary art in New Zealand.

The Hawke’s Bay Arts Trail over Labour weekend (a recent initiative by Arts Inc. Heretaunga and Creative Arts Napier working together) gave arts patrons the chance to visit their favourite artists in their home studios. Another addition to local calendar is the UKU Clay Hawke’s Bay ceramics awards; it is run biennially and has been well supported by artists and patrons.

Making a living

Art-focused events like these are really important as drivers for new work and for stimulating the cross-pollination of ideas between artists. Their hard work and ideas are validated by exposure, which in turn makes for greater creative risk-taking and fresh unique work. The big benefit is a higher quality of art overall.

Of course, art sales are hugely important to the artist as it pays the bills; but more importantly, it is a validation of the time, energy and inspiration that went into the work. The creation of true art is never just for money, it is about sharing ideas and a form of expression dear to the artist’s heart that is essential to their identity as an artist and human being.

In this country we don’t have a big enough art economy to adequately support the significant number of artists working at a ‘serious’ level and while there are notable exceptions, the majority of artists have to fund their own art practice by other means, leaving only pockets of precious time for studio work.

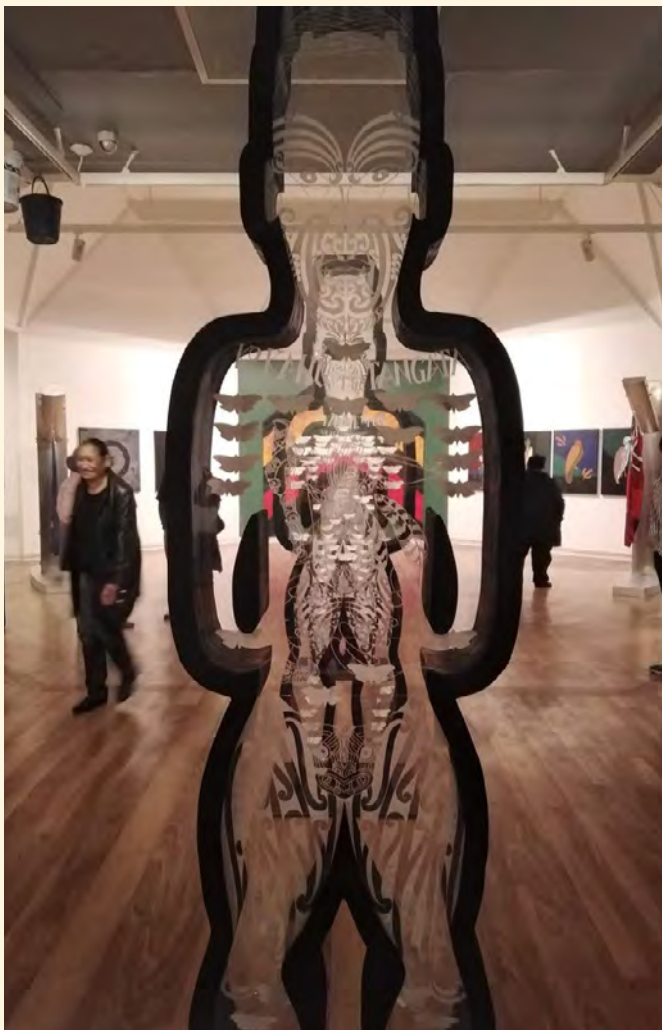
Given that, do we have too many people practicing art? Art for its own sake is good therapy for young or old, while learning the skills to do it well takes persistence on a long-term basis. It is hardly surprising a large number of people are practicing art in some form and signing up for arts workshops and education. Many of them will be content to regard it as a deeply satisfying hobby, others are extending themselves further by creating exciting and unique work that needs to be seen – and sold.

Support our artists – Buy local

We are now an affluent nation where disposable income is used on overseas travel. Travel may be severely restricted at the moment, but for most of us in Aotearoa the good life has continued and the unused travel budget is being redirected to other objects of desire ... and that includes spending on art.

Recent sales figures show that more people are becoming art buyers since the pandemic closed our borders and we are enjoying art at home in a way that we wouldn’t have had it not been for Covid.

Privately-owned galleries are important because most sales happen through them and the work shown indicates esteem and respect for the artists’ practice. Customers recognize this and find reassurance in consulting with knowledgeable gallery staff that listen to their preferences and offer appropriate advice.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The audience showing their appreciation at the Hawke's Bay Arts Festival performance of *Tūtira mai ngā iwi*; the biennial Wildflower Sculpture Exhibition; EAST 2020 at Hastings City Art Gallery; TIKA TONU contemporary Māori art exhibition at Hastings City Art Gallery.

Napier City and Hastings now have enviable collections of showpiece sculptures and murals, and increasingly, Hawke's Bay artists have been commissioned to create them, which is very encouraging. Though we love the Paul Dibble sculptures in Napier and Havelock North, is it being too pedantic to suggest we should be supporting our own community by commissioning local artists for public art?

In any event, let's recognize the quality of our regional talent as evidenced in our independent galleries, public art forums and the major Hawke's Bay art events mentioned above. Art is life enhancing. Our artists are world class and their work reflects our region.

Support the Hawke's Bay arts economy and buy local. ●



THE FOUR SQUARE

LANCASTERZI

Josh Lancaster, *The Beaten Path* exhibition at Muse Gallery, 7 March - 3 April

Upcoming Exhibitions

Boyd-Dunlop Gallery

4 Hastings Street, Napier

16 April - 7 May

Rants and Raves: Ceramic installation by Bernard Winkels

Muse Gallery

5 Havelock Road, Havelock North

7 March - 3 April

The Beaten Path: paintings by Josh Lancaster points from Havelock North to Ocean Beach

25 April - 22 May

Picking Up The Pieces: Kathy Boyle and Beth Charles, print exhibition

Parlour Projects

306 Eastbourne Street, Hastings

1 - 31 March

Still, Here: Billie Culy

Spa_ce

3 Market Street, Napier
(new location)

24 February - 27 March

4:24.02.2021 : Group exhibition Mark Braunias, The Estate of L Budd, Martin Poppelwell, Jake Walker

31 March - 1 May

Orange Quarters: Mark Alsweller

5 May - June 5

Environ: John Eaden

Tennyson Gallery

Cnr of Hastings and Tennyson Sts, Napier

April

Ceramics by Anthea Birch and Elise Bishop

The Rabbit Room

29a Hastings Street, Napier

March, April

Disarray: Pottery installation by Annette Bull

Hastings City Art Gallery

Civic Square, Hastings

5 February - 2 May

The Artist and the Ego: by Jordan Barnes. A variety of mediums

27 February - 9 May

Still Life with Moving Parts: Curated by Anna Crichton. A Group exhibition created by 16 outsider artists.

Variety of mediums

13 March - 23 May

Flirting with Form: Works by TOI AKO Artists

Kaumātua artists, artist collaborators and mentors: Variety of mediums

CAN

16 Byron Street, Napier

19 February - 11 March

'CAN-Do Deco' Children's Art Exhibition

19 February - 11 March

Richard Rogers: An exhibition by the well-known Gisborne artist (paintings)

26 March - 8 April

'Metamorphosis': Sculpture exhibition with a difference (3D mixed media and artist journals)

9 April - 6 May

'Elysian Fields, Aotearoa, 2021' by Richard and Carole Cornes.

An exhibition about journeys in identities

Small Gallery Exhibitions

26 February - 11 March

Danny Blackman and Diane Crompton Collaborative art exhibition showcasing diversity of cultures

12 March - 1 April

Exhibition by Sharlene Hays, illustrator and award-winning photographer

Mezzanine

5 March - 18 March

'What's My Waka?' Seaweed Driftwood Sculpture Competition and Exhibition (call for entries)

Arts Inc Heretaunga

106 Russell Street, Hastings

29 March - 10 April

Hawke's Bay Woodturners Guild Annual Exhibition

12 April - 24 April

Artfully Yours 2021 – Art Hawke's Bay Group exhibition. New venue for annual event – painting, sculpture

26 April - 8 May

Don Wilkie Solo exhibition – drawing, painting

26 April - 8 May

Clayton Guthrie Solo exhibition – painting, mixed medium

10 May - 22 May

Colour My World – Creative Fibre Hawke's Bay Group exhibition



The rights of the reader

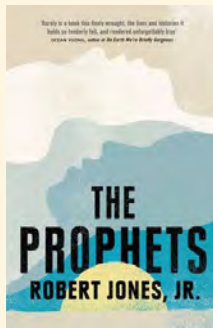
There is a thing called literary snobbery. Does what you read have value? Do you confess your reading preferences to all or do you hide your copy of *Twilight* behind the cover of *Wolf Hall*?

I'm unsure as to whether or not I'm a book snob, but I confess to having irrational, stubborn opinions about certain authors or titles (I have never read Enid Blyton and I refuse to start now. You can keep your magic tree).

I am, however, an advocate for the rights of the reader: the right not to finish a book, to read and enjoy Toni Morrison just as much as James Patterson, to know all the words to *Hairy Maclary*. Here are some things I've read recently with unashamed joy, and some reading habits I have that cause me no shame.

The right to skip bits

The Prophets by Robert Jones Jr. is the heart wrenching, brutal tale of Isaiah and Sam, slaves on a Mississippi plantation and as devoted as a couple can be.



The book explores not only their current situation but that of their ancestors, matriarchal societies that celebrated love in all its forms. Not only was the freedom of slaves stolen but powerful knowledge of old ways that should have been passed on to the generations to come.

There are mystical, lyrical chapters full of beauty and old, old magic ... and I skipped quite a bit of this gorgeous stuff as I was desperate to know what was going on with gentle Isaiah and grumpy Sam once one of their own turned to Christianity and denounced their relationship. Gosh it was good. I'll go back and read the gorgeous bits properly another day, once I've recovered from the power and inevitable violence of the story.

The right to read books intended for children

"A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest," said

C.S. Lewis, and he should know.

All adults would benefit from reading exciting, adventurous tales of derailing-do and rule breaking. *The Voyage of the Sparrowhawk* by Natasha Farrant won the Costa Children's Book Award 2020 and I'm not surprised. Here's what it's about:



Lotti is desperately trying to avoid being sent to boarding school by her awful Aunt and Uncle, has just 'liberated' a caged chihuahua and named him Federico and is missing her French grandmother whose letters have mysteriously stopped arriving. Ben's adoptive father, Nathan, has died and his brother Sam is missing in France; unless Ben can find Sam he'll be forced to leave his beloved *Sparrowhawk*, the narrow boat on which he lives, and return to the orphanage Nathan saved him from. All this is narrated in the two prologues (one for each child) and then Lotti and Ben meet, and the story *really* gets flying.

The children cook up an ambitious plan to get to where they need to be. Ben is cautious, a thinker, used to surviving under the radar. Lotti is loud, brave, unimpressed by obstacles or anything resembling caution. Tiny, bat-eared Federico is obsessed with hunting birds and Ben's spaniel, Elsie, is as devoted to Ben as a dog could be. They're a formidable team who laugh, cry, argue and escape together in a breathless whirlwind of a journey with not one single, solitary boring bit.

This book is squarely aimed at the

9-12 year readership, but read it whatever age you are. Also read anything by Katherine Rundell, Emma Carroll, Gareth Ward, Adele Broadbent, Neil Gaiman. And check out Adele's website, whatbooknext.com for a billion reviews of excellent children's books.

The right to hide behind your fingers in terror

I just read *The Burning Girls* by C.J. Tudor. I like this author because she's from Nottingham and so am I and she writes truly hair-raising horror.



In this story, a vicar, Jack, moves to a quiet village in Sussex with daughter Flo, where, centuries ago, two protestant girls hiding in the chapel were betrayed and the chapel set alight. You guessed it, their unquiet spirits rampage around causing all sorts of mischief and Jack cops quite a bit of trouble.

The plot is tight and upfront about the horror movie clichés. When a character leaves a door unlocked, or goes out alone in the dark, they are keenly aware of their poor choices, making the reader conscious of a clue, a trail to follow in the narrative path that might be something or might be a red herring. Who can we trust? The previous vicar whose tenure ended suddenly and tragically? Flo's new friend, troubled Wrigley? And then there's the powerful Harper family, without whose patronage most of the village wouldn't function.

Mystery, twists, clues, headless burning ghosts, and many dodgy characters.

So many books, so little time. Enjoy your reading, unreservedly and unashamedly. ●



Hastings is Hawke's Bay's best-kept secret... the region's heart and soul

We're a district of creators, innovators and trail-blazers, people who are here to make things happen and bring our community along for the ride.

We're a city with its sleeves rolled up and its shoes off, getting the mahi done. Our centre hums with action led by both private business and Hastings District Council. We have an underground cool, where game-changing businesses work alongside a thriving arts and culture scene, supported by our fiercely loyal locals and captivated visitors.

We don't follow the crowd and we're not content with the status quo. And the results speak for themselves. We're a city of unique opportunities, a masterpiece in motion. And we're only just getting started...

We're hunting out like-minded potential tenants

Opening early to mid-2022, the Municipal Building is the last piece of the Toitoi – Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre puzzle, so we're hunting out like-minded potential tenants for the ground floor of this remarkable heritage space. We want people and businesses who will infuse this space with creativity and passion. As part of Stage One there are several tenancies available. **Contact us for expressions of interest or visit www.municipalbuilding.co.nz for more information.**

Contact: Bruce Allan
Group Manager: Corporate

(06) 871 5019 • 027 767 4646
brucea@hdc.govt.nz





Touchy subject

It's been a year since Lockdown and in that time I've realised all my friends are wankers.

Forget all that talk of mastering sourdough, taking up crochet, reading books ... turns out they've been pursuing more satisfying amusements.

Once I start asking around it seems every woman I see regularly, bar one, is bragging about her stimulating new past-time with a self-satisfied grin on her gob. That one who wasn't soon will be after my mate Muff* sent her a Satisfyer Pro 2.0 in the mail. She's a bit shy about turning it on, but the reviews on the site warn of orgasm in seconds so she'll come around soon enough.

It's not just my circle either. Adult Toy Megastore just issued a media release, I have it here in my hot little hand, telling us that back in March/April 2020 NZ reached pleasure purchasing climax, tripling sales within 48 hours of the Lockdown announcement. "What blew us away," they say, "was it was mainly first-timers". Locked up with little to do, adult-toy virgins took matters into their own hands and picked up a new hobby.

Each time the WHO issued a lockdown notice, sex toy sales boomed. All those jokes about what a hunk Ashley Bloomfield is weren't just talk. He was objectified at every juncture, ammo for the wank bank, with people reaching for their hand-held devices whenever he took to the podium.

My first-hand knowledge of all this is limited. I've been called a prude more than once, mainly by me. Self-deprecation over self-pleasure any day.

Asking around, most of my friends have touching stories about their first forays into self-lust. Two besties told me how their now ex-husbands bought them dildos during the death throes

Once I start asking around it seems every woman I see regularly, bar one, is bragging about her stimulating new past-time with a self-satisfied grin on her gob.

of their marriages. Both were gifted severed tumescent phalluses, veins and all, slightly larger than life-size and with three speeds, one purple, the other a striking, albino white. "I put mine in the bin," says Muff. "I dropped mine and it broke", says Fanny. Metaphorical reminders of the ends of their wedded bliss.

Another friend, Beaver, bought a cheapie some years ago, a Christmas cracker variety that shouldn't get damp and had non-replaceable batteries. She gave it a good crack but wore it out one wet afternoon a month after it came.

The trick, all three tell me, is to buy a toy that looks absolutely nothing like a penis. Beaver recently purchased an egg-shaped contraption she wears while she's doing domestic chores. It certainly livens up the vacuuming. Muff has splashed out on a remote-control dong connected via bluetooth to a controller her partner wears on his wrist. She can cum in the kitchen while he's mowing the lawns, taking social distancing to the extreme.

At a recent toy party (Tupperware can go F itself) Fanny added a glass shaft to her collection. It's hypoallergenic and easy-clean. It's also quite beautiful, and although she hasn't yet used it (the bumpf promises it's shatter-proof but this is a risqué business) it does make an elegant conversation-piece for the dining room table.

It's hard to put one's finger on what makes the perfect hanky-panky doo-hickey, but easy-to-clean seems up there, especially in these hygienically-woke times. Sales of 'satisfyer foaming wash' are outstripping sales of face masks, even among the gimp community.

My circle went through some hard times in 2020. But they are still upright and getting through the day. There's a correlation perhaps. Rather than just relieving boredom, self-pleasure relieves stress, anxiety, frustration, confusion. Maybe it's the best way to find calm in turbulent times. Mindfulness be damned; flicking the bean could be the key to mental respite.

Extrapolating the allegory, the key to respite in general must be self-care.

A year ago, we snuggled up with our loved ones where we could, but better than that we snuggled up with ourselves. Like it or not, love it or loathe it, we got to know ourselves better. We checked in daily, prioritised me-time, went back to basics and ensured we were caring for us. From our health to our wealth we tuned in to what we as individual human beings in this time and place need from life.

Then life got back to normal-ish. We turned away from ourselves towards others. We busied ourselves with the business of being in a family, a job, a community.

But that focus on self still needs nurturing. Selfish maybe, but essential too. We must centralise ourselves, cherish ourselves, lust after us. Then, satisfied and stimulated, we can give others what they need. ●

*Except for Ashley Bloomfield, names have been changed to protect the guilty.



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