



Waīatarua Community News

850 copies

March 2023

From the President

Hello everyone

If you are reading this I hope you and your family are safe and well.

When Erin reminded me of the deadline for this newsletter I was perplexed about what to write about because with the cyclone and its subsequent aftermath, I felt that anything I usually talk about seemed trivial in comparison to what is happening around us. Who wants to read a community newsletter when there are so many pressing concerns, damaged properties, devastated roads, businesses in jeopardy and even the loss of power and internet connectivity which has caused an incredible amount of inconvenience. The numerous calls, texts and messages I've received during the last week is testimony to the extent of damage that the cyclone has caused hence impacting our lives and it was during one of these calls that I realised what to write about, was around me all along. It was about the community itself.

Among the many events of disruption, with each tale of misfortune I've heard, there was an accompanying tale of kindness, consistently with those who went out of their way to offer those affected, whether it was an invitation to share food, power or just a hot drink. In our hours of darkest moments we saw just how special our community truly is. I know in my case when the cyclone struck four trees ripped out of the ground and missed our house by inches, the next morning I had messages and calls from neighbours asking if I needed any help. I didn't advertise my situation, I didn't ask for help but my neighbours came forward and offered because they believed it was the right thing to do and that tells me a lot about our special community.

I'm hesitant to use the word "lucky" especially when you see the damage around but I do genuinely feel "lucky" to be part of this community, a community in which people post updates on the Waīatarua Facebook page (an invaluable source of real-time information during a crisis), a community in which people don't turn their backs on you and will help you if they can. Martin Luther King once said "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge." It's in this time of challenge that our community was measured and it rose to the challenges. In this column I'm not asking you to help because it's obvious you are already doing that. Instead, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you - you are a very special place Waīatarua.



WRRRA AGM

I just want to mention our AGM. It was due to take place on Tuesday 21st February but due to Cyclone Gabrielle and its aftermath the decision was made to postpone the event until further notice. While we all recognise the importance of the AGM I'm sure you understand that for the vast majority of our community there have been greater priorities recently. We endeavoured to ensure that as many people as possible knew about the postponement but given the circumstances (no power etc) there were a couple of people who were unaware of the postponement and only found out when they turned up. To those people, I apologise for the inconvenience caused and I assure you that this oversight was due to the extraordinary circumstances in which we all found ourselves. Your commitment to the community is highly valued.

We are hoping that we will be in a position to announce the new date for the AGM shortly.

Mark Wager

president@waiatarua.org.nz

**** Please note: 2023 WRRRA membership renewal is now due ****

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or the Waīatarua Ratepayers and Residents Association

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Library hours: Thursday 10.00am–12.00pm

Friday 7.00pm–8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday 11.00am–12.00pm

website: www.waiatarua.org.nz

New Government Civil Defence Payment Scheme

Are you aware of the new Government Civil Defence Payment scheme? It's been set up to financially help people who have been affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

The eligibility criteria is as follows. You must be in one of these situations because of the emergency:

- you had to leave your home (e.g. you've been evacuated or you're on stand-by);
- you were away from your home at the time of the emergency and can't return;
- you need help with food, bedding or clothing;
- you can't go to work.

You must also:

- not be able to cover your costs from insurance (or you haven't been paid yet);
- not have access to any other help, e.g: public donations, other government relief funds or charitable relief funds.

To apply you can call Work and Income on 0800 400 100. They're open 7am–5pm. They are getting a lot of calls and you may need to wait a while before they are able to talk to you.

You'll need to them your:

- full name;
- date of birth;
- phone number;
- client number (if you have one);
- normal home address;
- current address (if you've had to evacuate your home).

If you're applying because you've lost income due to the emergency, you'll also need to tell them your:

- IRD number;
- bank account number;
- details of any income you've lost so far;
- employer's name and address;
- contact person's name and address.

As soon as any more initiatives are announced the WRRRA Committee will do its best to make sure you are made aware of them.

War on Weeds postponed to April

The War on Weeds will be shifted to April this year, instead of the usual March dates, to give the community time to focus on cleanup and recovery efforts from the recent floods and storm.

From 1 to 30 April 2023, extra weed bins will be provided around West Auckland to support locals to dispose of invasive weeds from their own backyards.

"We welcome any opportunity to help west Aucklanders do their bit to help keep invasive weeds out of the native bush we all love. But this year, we know many of us have other things on our minds right now," says Melissa Ward, from EcoMatters' Nature Team, who manages the bins.

Making the bins available during April will also help reduce traffic on the roads, so repairs can continue.

"Our community always pulls together, whether that's helping each other in challenging times or helping keep invasive weeds from spreading into the native bush we love," says Melissa.

Invasive weeds accepted at the bins include climbing asparagus, Japanese honeysuckle, jasmine, moth plant, wild ginger, woolly nightshade and more.

Some weeds are already starting to form seed pods in March, so Melissa is also encouraging those who can do so, to bag up the seed pods/heads from moth plants and wild ginger, to stop these from spreading.

Most bins will still be in their usual sites in April, but please double check locations at ecomatters.org.nz/war-on-weeds to confirm. Thanks to the Henderson-Massey and Waitākere Ranges local boards for supporting this project.

Angela Lai, EcoMatters Environment Trust

What's happening in March?...

Waiatarua Playcentre



Open Week

6-10 March: come along for a shared kai, cuppa, face paint and a play - everyone is welcome!
MONDAY 6th and WEDNESDAY 8th 9:15am-1:15pm

Baby wearing workshop

25th March: we have teamed up with slingbabies and are hosting a workshop for all your baby wearing questions (goodie bags included).



Raffle

Drawn 25th March: Be in to win! Great prize packs, perfect for a new arrival or breastfeeding mama. Message us to buy a ticket!

Messy play

Everyday! Pop in for a cuppa and a messy play, your tamariki will love it!



check in on our social media or email us at waiatarua@playcentre.org.nz

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Fire Brigade News

Extraordinary, unprecedented and challenging was the impact of the two weather systems that steamrolled over Auckland and the North Island in January and February. The devastation and resulting loss of life has been hard to process for many. The reach of these events is enormous affecting a significant part of New Zealand's population across both urban and rural communities.

Close to all emergency responders was the loss of fire fighters David Van Zwanenburg and Craig Stevens in the tragedy at Muriwai. We were not directly involved but we know how hard our colleagues fought to alter the outcome, and ultimately how devastated these events have left our organisation. Our flag, like all New Zealand fire stations has been placed at half-mast to acknowledge the loss. On Monday our brigade also observed a moment of silence to honour their contribution and our thoughts are with their loved ones, family and friends.

Total rainfall over the last month for Waiatarua (Bush Road Rain Gauge) was a staggering 650mm, with approximately 70% of this delivered in two short but massive events.

During Cyclone Gabrielle our crew was tasked to support Karekare and Piha, however road damage and landslides quickly cut off access preventing progress. This effectively cut off the west coast leaving Karekare and Piha Brigades to push forward with limited resources on major incidents. The determination of these crews to respond and then take a major role in caring for their communities in the following days is truly amazing and a testament to their commitment and resilience. Well done.

The resulting damage from the January floods and Cyclone Gabrielle is obvious in many locations, but hidden up leafy green driveways are homes that felt the full force of these events with significant property damage or loss. Many of the households we attended will have long term challenges to overcome, the events will leave scars to the landscape but also within the memories of many. Our crew, like every other Fire and Emergency resource, was on the road responding to incidents, supporting in any way we could. Multiple calls, downed trees, flooding, checking properties, vehicles in streams, landslips and collapsed buildings were reported. Across the month we attended 25 incidents all relating to the storms. To put this in context, annually we attend 50-60 incidents so it has been a hectic start to 2023.

Whilst devastating, the events were not without moments to hold onto. A father and son stopping traffic to let us through, fully in the moment and taking action like pro's. Neighbours checking on neighbours and offering a safe place to spend the night, truly a community ready to get amongst it and attempting to change the outcome on somebody's worst day. Many of you stepped forward and gave to others in a crisis. That's a trait we like a lot.

Our brigade reviewed these events last Monday, firstly to process the journey and secondly to plan the way forward. We have equipment and resources but our most important asset is our crew and the families who encourage and support us. Our Brigade is a team supported by many both within and outside our organisation. Our community has been tested but the response and kindness from you all has been outstanding.

Our focus will remain on being prepared, trained and ready and if you feel now is the time to volunteer with Fire & Emergency New Zealand, reach out, we are ready to respond.

The last word should go towards the many linesmen and road workers. The hard graft starts when the storm stops for these crews. Thank you for manning the many road repairs and restoring power to our homes.

Stay strong Waiatarua.

Data: <https://environmentauckland.org.nz/>

Gareth Wilson
Waiatarua Fire Brigade



Advertising & Community Notices

Commercial advertisements are welcome and can be arranged by contacting Erin Kingsleigh-Smith, editor@waiatarua.org.nz, ph 021 355 009. Community Notices are free to current financial members.

Doers Networks: local, fast internet providers info@doers.net.nz

Free Stuff: I'm decluttering and so far there are about a dozen ring binders, 2, 3 and 4 ring. Free to a good home. Call Tony Bacon, 0274 598 226 or tony.bacon@sthw.co.nz

Handyman Out West: Any work undertaken. House and property maintenance, renovation and decoration eg gutter cleaning, water blasting, deck building, tree felling, painting etc. Reliable and friendly. Ph Mike 814 9708

Indoor Bowls: every Thursday at the Hall 7pm for 7.15pm start. No experience needed. Coffee and tea provided. \$3 donation to the local food bank and CPNZ. Ph Celia: 814 9660

Lawn mowing, ride on work only: Ph Grant at Top Grass Ltd. 814 9493 mob 021 024 75610

Oratia Combined Church: Sunday services at 9.30am, Kids Klub Sunday 9.30am, Fellowship 2nd Thursday in Hall at 1pm, Scrabble/ Rummikub last Friday of month at 7pm. Hall is available for community use. Contact 818 8344.

Plants, crafts etc: Various plants, shrubs and bromeliads. Assorted crafts, scarves, net fruit bags \$2, occasional cards, knitting, sewing, second hand books. All proceeds to Nepalese Educ Trust for Tertiary Scholarships. Phone Margaret 814 9859.

Table Tennis: every Wednesday in the Hall, from 7pm. No experience needed, all equipment supplied. \$2 per week Contact Tony 814 9860, email tony.bacon@sthw.co.nz

Tiler / Stone layer: 30 years experience in the trade available for indoor and outdoor projects large or small. Phone Craig Starr 021 610 408.

Waiatarua Playcentre: Come and have 3 free visits at our bush-nestled Playcentre. We are child led, parent run and full of fun! Open 9:15am - 1.15pm Mon and Weds. Contact waiatarua@playcentre.org.nz or www.facebook.com/waiataruaplaycentre


We are Loud: Modern Music Lessons. Vocals, piano, guitar, ukulele, bass, drums, theory, song-writing & band. Group & private lessons, online & in-person for all ages & skill levels. Visit www.weareloud.co.nz or contact us on 027 470 7042.

Work To Do: Sort out that 'To Do' list for your House, Garden or Property. Clean Ups, Maintenance, Simple Repairs, Tree Trims, Window Cleans, Painting etc. Local and Reliable. Call Chris 027 600 3977.

Yovi's Topstitch: Alterations or sewing projects I can do at your budget, from cushions, squabs etc. Contact Yovi 021 084 36450 or email yovistopstitch12@gmail.com

APRIL NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Copy needs to be with the Editor by 5pm on FRIDAY 17 MARCH



Quiz Night
Every Thursday
at 7pm

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Gotcha....

Just like you, around 2,000 other Waikaruaans are reading this newsletter. And many will come back and read it more than once... The fact is that people do read print publications.

More often than not, their search for a specific product or service starts with something that they have read somewhere. And even if they do additional research and make their eventual purchase through some digital platform, their choice will still be shaped by what they have seen in print.

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Scenic Drive Slip Sandwich

These photos show the Scenic Drive Slip Sandwich. Around 24 homes were blocked in first by a large "underslip" that destroyed the road in the January floods, then by another huge slip during Cyclone Gabrielle. With no way out, no power, phone or functioning water pumps, we managed to send out word via Radio NZ and the NZ Herald. On day five of being trapped an Air Force NH90 did a very low and slow flyover for welfare checks, and dropped supplies at Arataki (just as we made an emergency access path cut by residents, led by Lyndsay Whittle, our digger extraordinaire). You can see photos of this on page 6 of the newsletter. It was great to make contact with the outside world, and even better was making contact with our neighbours and local community. A silver lining of all this weather chaos has been seeing people come together to support each other in our time of need, and knowing that we have each other's back. Our week in isolation certainly wasn't as bad as what others are going through. We live in a great place full of good people.

For updates from AT on roads in your area visit AT.govt.nz/ roadrepairs or check out the Waiaatarua and Oratia Facebook pages for up to date information.

*Chris Fowlie
WRRRA Treasurer and Slip Sandwich resident*



Photos clockwise from top:

The big slip

The underslip at no.421

Slip at No. 412 Scenic Drive with access path cut by residents

Scenic Drive slip sandwich residents distribute supplies dropped by helicopter as Northpower workers arrive

Scenic Drive Elevation CPNZ cordon

Scenic Drive Slip Sandwich big digger, road closed

Photo credits: Chris Fowlie

Helicopters pay flying visit

There was high excitement for the children on Wednesday 22 February when a helicopter collected 40 bales of kindly donated hay from the Oratia District School field to transport to the Karekare community for 17 rescue horses.

A few days earlier an NZ Airforce NH90 helicopter flew low and slow over Waitatarua assessing cyclone damage and later, dropping supplies at Arataki Visitor Centre for those residents stuck in the slip sandwich on Scenic Drive.



Top right: Helicopter on the field at Oratia School. Photo credit: Melissa Matich

Top left: Donated hay for Karekare horses.

Above: Away goes the precious cargo. Photo credits: Oratia District School



Above, bottom left and right; NZ airforce NH90 helicopter in flight over Waitatarua.

Photo credits: Greg Lokes

