

Hapori Highlights



Your update from the Whakatāne District Council
Community Partnerships Team – January 2026

Kia ora and welcome to the first edition of Hapori Highlights – your update from the Whakatāne District Council Community Partnerships team.

This update will be sent out every two months. In each edition, we'll share news about positive community impact, upcoming events, funding opportunities, and more.



Roadshow Success

In mid-January, our Road Safety Roadshow visited Thornton, Ōhope, Ōpōtiki, Te Kaha, and Kawerau as part of the Eastern Bay Road Safety Programme. Key messages about wearing seatbelts, driving sober, and slowing down were shared while connecting with our communities. It was fantastic to hear people chatting about keeping whānau safe. The roadshow did exactly what it set out to do: raise awareness, build connections, and have fun along the way.

Fatigue Stops help keep Eastern Bay roads safe on New Year's Day

Every year, our district sees a surge in traffic following the Rhythm and Vines festival, with thousands of vehicles travelling through Eastern Bay communities. On New Year's Day, fatigue stops in Ōpōtiki and Matatā provided festival-goers with a chance to rest and refuel, with more than 2,500 cold drinks and sausage sizzles handed out. These stops give young drivers a break, boost energy levels, and serve as an important reminder to slow down and drive safely. The value of these fatigue stops was clear once again this year, with no accidents reported on Eastern Bay roads on New Year's Day, a great result for road safety and our community.



For further information, visit whakatane.govt.nz or phone 07 306 0500

YOUTH COUNCIL APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Do you know any young people aged 14–24 who want to make a difference in our community? Youth Council applications are now open.

Last year, Youth Council members made their mark by helping create the iconic Kiwi Kai mural in Kope—an inspiring example of their passion for making our town a better place. We're looking for that same energy again this year, so encourage the young people in your life to get involved. Applications close at 5pm on Friday, 20 February.

FIND OUT MORE



YOUTH COUNCIL
KAUNIHERA TAIOHI
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APPLY NOW!

Get ready to ride – It's almost bike month!

February is Bike Month, and we've got a fantastic line-up of events across Eastern Bay schools and Whakatāne township to celebrate all things cycling! From Go By Bike Day at Robert Harris to Wheels Days in Kawerau, Whakatāne, and Ōpōtiki, there's something for every rider. Don't miss the Free BBQ and explore Onepū Mountain Bike Park, or enjoy a ride-in movie at our Big Bike Film Night.

Bike Month 2026 highlights:

- Tues 3 Feb: Go By Bike Day at Robert Harris
- Tues 10 Feb: Burma Road Explorer
- Wed 11 Feb: Free BBQ + Explore Onepū Mountain Bike Park
- Thurs 12 Feb: Wheels Day – Kawerau Schools
- Tues 17 Feb: Whakatāne/Coastlands Explorer
- Thurs 19 Feb: Wheels Day – Whakatāne Schools
- Mon 23 Feb: Big Bike Film Night
- Thurs 26 Feb: Wheels Day – Ōpōtiki Schools

These events are proudly supported by the Eastern Bay Road Safety Programme, Bike Whakatāne Trust, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Robert Harris, and Tracks Concrete Ltd.



Community Grants open soon

Funding available
He pūtea e wātea ana

The Council's Community Grants and Funding Programme is gearing up ahead of the first Community Grants and Funding Committee meeting on 18 March. Two funds will be open for applications from 9 February to 1 March:

Reorua Fund

Supporting te reo Māori across the Whakatāne District, the Reorua Fund provides grants for events, projects, and activities that celebrate and uplift the language.

Rural Travel Fund

Helping rural kids (5–18) get active, this fund covers travel costs for schools and sports clubs attending competitions, events, and practices.

To learn more visit:

whakatane.govt.nz/community-grants