

Hapori Highlights



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

Kia ora and welcome to Hapori Highlights. This update is sent out every two months. In each edition, we share news about positive community impact, upcoming events, funding opportunities, and more.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Implementation Workshops

We are developing a community-centred DEI implementation framework and want your help to shape it.

This work builds on the Council's DEI Policy, implemented in 2025, and focuses on how we turn that commitment into meaningful action. We're seeking guidance on how best to engage with minority communities and support greater diversity, inclusion, and social cohesion across our district.

Over the coming months, we'll be holding workshops with a range of communities. We've started with a focus group hui with the disability sector, followed by a survey for people with lived experience and organisations that support them.

If you haven't received the survey and would like to take part, please contact Karen Summerhays:
Karen.summerhays@whakatane.govt.nz

Youth Council

We were thrilled to receive 63 applications for the Whakatāne District Youth Council; this is more than double what we received in 2025. It's exciting to have so many rangatahi interested in local government.

The new Youth Council will be welcomed with a mihi whakatau at their first meeting at the end of March, with the Mayor, Councillors, and Community Board members in attendance. We're looking forward to working alongside these young people and are excited about the fresh perspectives they will bring.

Following this initial meeting, the Youth Council will meet regularly once a fortnight and undertake civics-focused and related activities.

Bike Month Recap

February was packed with bike-themed activities across the district, from group rides and BBQs to movie nights and Wheels Days. It was great to see people of all ages across the district getting involved in the events on offer.

A favourite continues to be our twice-yearly Wheels Days in schools, where tamariki are encouraged to get active by bringing their bikes, scooters, or skateboards – with their helmets on! They're rewarded with a fun prize draw and a sweet treat, making it a highlight for many students and a great way to promote safe, active transport.



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

Funding

The second round of the Council's Community Grants and Funding Programme opens on Monday, 13 April. There will be three funds open until Sunday, 3 May. The Community Grants and Funding Committee will meet on Wednesday, 20 May to make the funding decisions.

The three funds that are opening include:

Creative Communities – This fund champions local and community art-centred projects, events, festivals, exhibitions, installations, workshops, and performances.

Te Pūaha Fund – Aims to support projects, activities, and programmes that make the most of the waterways and marine environment in the Whakatāne District.

Community Climate Action Fund

– Designed to empower our community to take real action on climate change. The fund's purpose is to increase community action in the Whakatāne District.

Please refer to our website for more information and eligibility information
whakatane.govt.nz/community-grants

Don't forget that funding is available year-round through the Community Boards Discretionary Fund. This fund supports local initiatives and community-led projects, so head to our website for more information and application details.



Social Sector Network Hui

The first Kōtuituinga Ora / Social Sector Network hui was held earlier this month and brought together a strong turnout, with 25 representatives from 19 different organisations.

Victim Support co-hosted the session and shared insights into their refreshed service model, which now operates without volunteers. They highlighted a clear trend: demand for support is not only substantial but continuing to rise, reinforcing the importance of collaboration across our network.

Karen Summerhays, our Senior Community Development Advisor, also introduced the revitalisation of the Community Wellbeing Project (2022). This refresh will review the focus areas the sector identifies as most important and explore how Council can best support a resilient, well-connected social sector across our district. The review is scheduled for completion by the end of June.

If you haven't received the survey and would like to be involved, please get in touch with Karen Summerhays: Karen.summerhays@whakatane.govt.nz



Upcoming Events

The infamous Amazing Race is back these school holidays. After our successful races in Tāneatua and Edgcombe last year, we'll now be heading to Murupara and Ōpōtiki.

Bring the kids along for an active, adventure-filled day as you crack clues, tackle challenges, and work together to reach the end. It's a great way to get out, explore the community, and maybe even take home some prizes!

Amazing Race Murupara – Wednesday 8 April

10.30am to 2pm – Registrations from 10.30 am at Murupara Library and Service Centre

Amazing Race Ōpōtiki – Thursday 9 April

10.30am to 2pm – Registrations from 10.30am at Ōpōtiki Skate Park

