

## Are you home? Let Council know.



As affected residents are aware, rates payments have been postponed on all properties across the Whakatāne District that were assessed as yellow stickered following the April 2017 flood and storm events. Postponement means that rates are not charged for the time a house is unable to be occupied due to the repair process.

Home owners are reminded that it's important to let the Whakatāne District Council rates team know when homes are reoccupied, so that the rates remission can be calculated. Purposefully not reporting reoccupation could lead to a situation where rates are backdated, leaving residents with a larger than anticipated balance to pay.

A backlog of Rates Natural Calamity forms, from those who have already returned home, was processed in December and letters, confirming the remission amounts and rates owing balances, were posted in early-January.

Council rates team members understand that for some people, payment of outstanding balances may be difficult and therefore the due date was extended for over a month.

Payment plans can be arranged to help people pay any outstanding rates over a period of time that works for them. Please contact the rates department on 306 0500 if you would like to organise that, or have any questions regarding the rates postponement and remission process.

## Update: Edgecumbe Community Plan

Community Plan Strategic Coordinator Vicky Richards says it's heartening to see the progress being made by the recently formed oversight committee.

"The committee is building representation from key community organisations, schools, the business sector and the Kaumatua group and it's exciting to see the shared enthusiasm. We're in the early stages of prioritising the many ideas that came out of the Peter Kenyon workshop in September and from that will flow a process of matching the chosen ideas to groups or organisations that can make them happen."

## Residential Advisory Service visit – Take two.

The Recovery Team thanks those understanding homeowners who had their appointments with the Residential Advisory Service re-scheduled not once, but twice this visit.

Somewhat ironically, adverse weather was the reason, and RAS solicitor Karen Hayes only just made it this Tuesday and Wednesday, having had her original flight out of Wellington cancelled; and then experiencing a problem with the rental car when she finally did get to the Bay of Plenty. Recovery Navigator Cheryl saved the day, making a quick – but not too quick – trip to Tauranga to collect Karen, who then set about her rescheduled appointments.

The Residential Advisory Service offers free expert advice to people facing issues with settling their home insurance claims. RAS personnel have been visiting from Christchurch on a regular basis since mid-October and anyone who thinks they could use their help is encouraged to get in touch – either via a Recovery Navigator or by calling Te Tari Āwhina on 07 304 8656.



From left: Recovery Navigator Cheryl Wilson, Residential Advisor Service solicitor Karen Hayes and Te Tari Awhina Customer Services Officer Grahame Bryce.

## Thumbs up to Red Cross transport service



New Zealand Red Cross is thrilled with the numbers using its free door-to-door transport service between Kawerau, Edgecumbe and Whakatāne.

The service was started in September when it was recognised that the flood event had made it harder for many people to attend medical visits and other appointments, or maintain their social networks.

Red Cross Humanitarian Services Coordinator Julie Forrest says members of the public have used the service just under 400 times to date.

“The response has been so good, we need to find extra volunteer drivers, so if you are keen to help, hold a current first aid certificate and are prepared to undergo a Police check, please give us a call.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Community Transport Service is available weekdays, from 9am to 3.30pm.

To make a booking, call 07 923 4057, or for enquiries, email [rotorua@redcross.org.nz](mailto:rotorua@redcross.org.nz)

## Building Navigator – here to help

Facilitating between builders and property owners; introducing concerned householders to the Residential Advisory Service; and helping to align insurance cash settlements with what’s needed to make a home liveable, are just some of the things our Building Navigator has been helping out with since joining the Recovery Team in December.

The services of the Building Navigator have been extremely well-received by homeowners who have found themselves in the dilemma of having an insurance cash settlement that is lower than their home repair costs. Recovery Manager Barbara Dempsey says the feedback she’s receiving is that contact with the Building Navigator has enabled troubled homeowners to refocus and see that there is a way through their repair issues. Barbara strongly encourages anyone who may be struggling with underinsured repair issues, or who knows of anyone else who could benefit from some help, to get in touch with the Building Navigator, either through a Recovery Navigator, or by calling Te Tari Āwhina on 07 304 8656.



**EDGECUMBE LIBRARY**  
07 304 8656

- **Library services, Recovery Information** (including Welcome Home Pack distribution)  
Weekdays 9am – 2pm
- **Library services only** Weekdays 2 – 4pm
- **Recovery Navigators**  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10am – noon
- **Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa support services**  
Fridays 9am – 4pm



## Reminder to business owners

All business owners in the Edgecumbe area are reminded that they are eligible to be part of the ‘Edgecumbe Back in Business’ promotional campaign. Funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the campaign is providing free advertising opportunities across both local radio stations and in feature pages in the Whakatāne Beacon’s Baylife publication. Please email [recovery@whakatane.govt.nz](mailto:recovery@whakatane.govt.nz) to have your details forwarded to the media organisations, who will then contact you directly.

Remember, this campaign aims to profile the range of retail and other service providers in Edgecumbe, to reconnect local customers and attract others from the wider district – it’s a great opportunity, available now, so please get involved.