

### MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Kia ora koutou,

This month we paused to remember and honour those who served our country at our ANZAC Day commemorations across the district.

Thank you to everyone who attended services in Ōtorohanga and Kāwhia, to our RSA members, volunteers, schools, service personnel, and community groups who helped make these occasions so meaningful.

ANZAC Day reminds us of the values of courage, service, sacrifice, and community spirit - values that continue to shape our district today.

It was heartening to see people of all ages standing together in remembrance. These moments matter, and they help keep the legacy of those who came before us alive.

Thank you also to everyone continuing to contribute to our district in big and small ways each day.

Ngā mihi nui,

Rodney Dow  
Mayor of Ōtorohanga District

### A GREAT START FOR OUR LITTLEST LEARNERS

**A new initiative in Ōtorohanga is helping give the district's youngest residents a strong start in life - one book at a time.**



Te Puna Pukapuka - Babies Need Books is a programme led by Ōtorohanga District Library, supporting whānau from the very beginning of their child's reading journey. Through the initiative, every new baby in the district will receive a free book, along with helpful information about library services and early childhood programmes.

The programme is made possible thanks to the generous support of Ōtorohanga Rotary Club, who have funded the initiative, alongside a strong local partnership with Plunket. Packs are provided to whānau through Plunket visits, helping connect families with books right from the start.

Library staff say the programme reflects a shared community goal - supporting tamariki and their whānau from the earliest stages of life.

"Reading, talking and singing with babies helps build strong foundations for language, learning and connection," they say. "It's something simple that can make a big difference, and it's never too early to start."

Ōtorohanga District Library is a welcoming space for babies, children and whānau, and the team is looking forward to meeting families as they begin their reading journey.

"This is a real community effort," staff say. "We're proud to be working alongside Plunket and grateful to Ōtorohanga Rotary Club for making this possible."

Check out what you can do at the library today! Visit: [www.otodc.govt.nz/our-district/libraries](http://www.otodc.govt.nz/our-district/libraries)



### LEADERS CONNECT WITH LOCALS AFFECTED BY THE ŌTOROHANGA FLOODS

**It was a special day at Ōtorohanga Kiwi House, where locals affected by the February floods shared their stories with Leader of the Opposition Chris Hipkins and Mayor Rodney Dow.**

Chris said it was important to hear people's personal stories, and to let them know the community hasn't been forgotten. Rodney said it was valuable to listen to people share their experiences. The Kiwi House brought a special guest, Remy the kiwi. He was a little shy, but brought a quiet sense of hope - just like the resilience we're seeing across our community.

The Minister met with some of the Ōtorohanga District Council staff who worked alongside Waipā District Council staff and hundreds of other people, including from other councils, in the Western Waikato Emergency Operations Centre. The centre supported the Ōtorohanga and Waipā communities over 11 days during the severe weather event.

The centre was a collaborative effort across many councils, Māori Wardens, emergency services, community groups, iwi and hapū, marae, the Rural Support Trust, NZ Response Teams, National Emergency Management Agency, Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group, the Ministry for Primary Industries, Fisheries NZ, and many more organisations and people.

Ōtorohanga District Council is now coordinating a recovery programme across our district, working with Waipā District Council and alongside iwi and hapū, agencies, lifeline utilities, community organisations and industry partners. Together, we're focused on helping our communities reconnect and rebuild.



### ROADING & RECOVERY UPDATE

**Work continues across the district to repair and strengthen roads and infrastructure impacted by earlier severe weather.**

Thank you for your patience as crews continue this important mahi. Please take care around work sites, follow signage, and allow extra travel time where needed.

For the latest updates, visit [engage.otodc.govt.nz/our-road-to-recovery](http://engage.otodc.govt.nz/our-road-to-recovery)

### UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public are welcome to attend Council and Community Board meetings.

<b>Ōtorohanga Community Board</b> Council Chambers, 17 Maniapoto Street, Ōtorohanga	Monday 4 May - 4.00pm
<b>Kāwhia Community Board</b> Kāwhia Community Hall, 141 Jervois Street, Kāwhia	Thursday 7 May - 4.00pm
<b>Elected Member Workshops</b> Council Chambers, 17 Maniapoto Street, Ōtorohanga	Tuesday 12 May - 10.00am
<b>Council Meeting</b> Council Chambers, 17 Maniapoto Street, Ōtorohanga	Tuesday 26 May - 10.00am

Agendas and meeting information are available on our website closer to each meeting date.

### STRONG RESPONSE DURING CYCLONE VAIANU

**Earlier this month, Cyclone Vaianu brought wet weather across parts of the upper North Island.**

We're pleased to report impacts across the Western Waikato were minor and localised. Ōtorohanga worked closely with neighbouring councils and partner agencies through a joint Emergency Operations Centre to monitor conditions and respond where needed.

Thank you to staff, contractors, emergency services, and community partners who helped keep our communities safe.

