

Community Connection

Issue 233 FEBRUARY 2026



Bernie Wanden

Message from the Mayor

Kia ora Horowhenua,

A huge thank you to everyone in our community for looking out for one another during the recent severe weather event.

I'd also like to acknowledge our emergency services, contractors, and Council staff who gave their time to support the response and clean-up efforts.

While we experienced fallen trees, debris and other impacts, we were fortunate not to see the large-scale damage that some neighbouring districts have faced. I want to commend our Emergency Management Team and emergency services for their coordinated and proactive response.

Having faced two severe weather events in as many months, it's a timely reminder of how important it is for us all to stay prepared for the impacts of extreme weather.

Earlier this month we had our first full Council meeting of 2026, and it was a good opportunity to look ahead and set a clear direction for the year ahead.

A big part of that discussion was the proposed rates increase for the 2026/2027 Annual Plan. After working carefully through the budget, Council was able to reduce the proposed average increase from 11.6% to 5.8% after growth. That came from taking a close look at our spending, weighing up options, and making sure we stayed aligned with our long-term financial strategy.

Our goal has been to find the right balance – continuing to deliver the services our community relies on, while keeping the increase as reasonable as we can. It's not always easy, but it's important we get that balance right.

We also made decisions that strengthen safety across the district, including support for new firefighting equipment to better protect our rural and lifestyle communities. As Horowhenua grows, we need to make sure our emergency services grow with us. That's about being prepared and looking after one another.

Outside the formal meeting, Councillors have been busy with workshops and tours across the district. Visiting facilities and places such as the

Levin Wastewater Treatment Plant are extremely valuable. They give us the chance to see projects first-hand, talk directly with staff and better understand both the challenges and the good work happening across Horowhenua. That on-the-ground insight helps us make practical, informed decisions around the Council table.

We have opened consultation on proposed fees and charges for the 2026/2027 financial year which closes on 17 March. These reviews help ensure costs are shared between those who use specific services and the wider community. If you have an interest in this area, I encourage you to have a look on Let's Kōrero and share your feedback.

Waitangi Day was a lovely time across the district. It was great to see people coming together, catching up and enjoying the reopening of Muaūpoko Park. It was special to see this space being used and appreciated again. I also visited the Foxton and Shannon celebrations which were lively with many people also taking the opportunity to acknowledge this important day.

As part of supporting the back to school road safety message, I recently visited Shannon School and then Manakau School alongside Constable Fala Matua, our Horowhenua School Community Officer. These visits were about acknowledging road patrollers, and reinforcing simple but important messages – stop, look, listen, think, and buckle up every time. Drivers, remember that our tamariki are relying on us to keep them safe. Road safety is something we all play a part in.

There's a lot happening across Horowhenua at the moment, with a few more community events taking place over the next month. I would like to say congratulations and well done to the organisers of the Horowhenua A&P Show, Waitangi Day celebrations, Medieval Market and the Shannon Spectacular Car and Bike Show - what a fantastic turnout at each event. Thank you for your hard work, community spirit and ongoing commitment to making our district such a vibrant and connected place to live.

Ngā mihi,

Mayor Bernie Wanden

Council Meetings

23 Te Awahou Foxton Community Board
Monday 23 February 2026, 6pm
Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom, Foxton

25 Community Wellbeing Committee
Wednesday 25 February 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin

18 Council Meeting
Wednesday 18 March 2026, 10am
Council Chambers, 126 Oxford Street, Levin

Meeting dates and times are subject to change.
horowhenua.govt.nz/Council/Council-Meetings

Local voices appointed to Central Districts Water committee



Local leadership and iwi voices will help guide the future of water services across the region, with representatives now appointed to the Central Districts Water shareholder committee.

Central Districts Water is a jointly owned council-controlled organisation that will begin operating from 1 July 2027. While councils will continue to own their water assets, the shareholder committee provides

shared oversight and ensures local priorities are reflected as the new entity is established.

The committee includes each council's Mayor, a councillor, and an iwi representative endorsed by mana whenua collective Ngā Tapuwae o Hau, reinforcing partnership and local input.

The committee's first task is overseeing the shortlisting of board members, following strong interest from experienced candidates.

CUPPA WITH A COUNCILLOR

Levin - Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō
Wednesday 25 February, 6pm to 7:30pm
Thursday 12 March 2026, 10:30am to 12:30pm
Wednesday 25 March 6pm to 7:30pm

Foxton - Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom
Thursday, 12 March 2026, 10:30am to 12:30pm

Shannon - Shannon Library
Thursday, 12 March 2026, 1pm to 2:30pm

Let's Move Together Triathlon

Run - Cycle - Swim

20 Shannon
Friday 20 February 2026
5pm to 7pm

22 Levin
Sunday 22 February 2026
10am to 2pm

Register online at:

aquatics.horowhenua.govt.nz

In the Works

Levin wastewater upgrade construction update

Work is continuing on upgrades to Levin's wastewater system to help keep it working safely and reliably for the community now and into the future. Some parts of the wastewater treatment plant are several decades old, and these upgrades will help reduce the risk of overflows, protect local waterways, and support Levin as the town grows.

Construction has progressed well along Adkin Avenue, with trenching expected to be completed shortly. From mid-February, work will move into Grenville Street, where construction is planned to continue through to the end of May.

Traffic management and some disruption are expected while works are underway, and residents directly affected will be kept informed as the project progresses.

horowhenua.govt.nz/LevinWWTP



Let's Kōrero

Proposed Resource Management Act Fees and Charges 2026/27

We're inviting public feedback on proposed fees and charges set under the Resource Management Act 1991 for the 2026/27 financial year.

These fees relate to planning and resource consent services and help ensure costs are fairly shared between those who use the services and the wider community.

Most fees are not increasing. Where increases are proposed, the average increase is 5.7 percent. Three new fees are also proposed, including two

optional fees to help fund a fire appliance in growing areas without a piped water supply.

Consultation opened on 17 February 2026 and closes at 4pm on 17 March 2026. Any approved changes will take effect from 1 July 2026.

We'd love to hear from you. Let us know your thoughts at:

letskorero.horowhenua.govt.nz/proposedfees2026-27



Are you eligible for a rates rebate?

The third Horowhenua District Council rates instalment of the 2025/26 financial year is due to be paid by 15 March, and Council is encouraging ratepayers to check whether they are eligible for a rebate.

You should have received your invoice in your letterbox or inbox by now.

The Rates Rebates Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$805 for low-income earners who are paying rates for the home they were living in on 1 July 2025. Rebates will be calculated based on income, the number of dependents living with you, and the total amount of rates you'll pay from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, including Horowhenua District Council and Horizons Regional Council.

Eligible households can have income up to \$32,210 and get the maximum rebate. Households getting

more than this may still get a rebate, but it will be less than the full amount. SuperGold cardholders and their households can have income up to \$45,000 and get the maximum rebate amount.

To apply, you'll need proof of income (before tax) for the tax year ended 31 March 2025 (this includes any interest at the bank), proof of your spouse/partner's or joint income if living together, and your SuperGold card, if applicable.

If you want your rebate applied to the third rates instalment, you must apply by 6 March 2026. Applications received after this date will have the rebate applied to instalment four.

For more information and to apply, visit:

horowhenua.govt.nz/Rates

Proud to be part of
parksweek
2-9 March 2026

Keep an eye on our channels for more info



horowhenua.govt.nz/parks

FREE WHĀNAU EVENT



SATURDAY 14 MARCH

Neighbours Day 2026

10AM - 2PM, LEVIN ADVENTURE PARK

Come along, meet your neighbours and enjoy a day of fun, food and activities.

horowhenua.govt.nz/NeighboursDay

Horowhenua DISTRICT COUNCIL



COMMUNITY AT HEART

Community Grants and Funding Applications Closing Soon

horowhenua.govt.nz/grants

GRANTS & FUNDING



Download free app Antenno to report issues, as well as receive alerts and notifications.

www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Antenno



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