

## Community

# Pānui Update

19 FEBRUARY 2026

## Putauaki Trust sign lease agreement with Foresta

Mayor Faylene Tunui on behalf of the Council and Kawerau community congratulates Putauaki Trust for the executive lease signing with Foresta on 9 February 2026.

The formal signing was hosted by the Minister for Regional Development Shane Jones at parliament. The lease is effective from 1 March 2026 and represents a significant milestone and step towards the advancement of the company's integrated biomass manufacturing facility in Kawerau.

Mayor Faylene Tunui said, "The development of the industrial park by Putauaki Trust unlocks huge potential for current and future generations. These new businesses offer new jobs and incomes that can help people raise their families here in Kawerau".

"Foresta's proposed Integrated Pine Chemical and Wood Pellet Manufacturing Facility in the Putauaki Trust Industrial Zone will couple economic growth with environmental stewardship".

"We know now that it is important to think about the footprints being left behind. We acknowledge all of those existing businesses that have been here for close to 70 years, and welcome new businesses with a balanced view of being good environmental stewards and exploring economic opportunities".

"We acknowledge Putauaki Trust for their foresight to develop this land as the basis for opportunities for high value jobs, upskilling and long-term opportunities – that is a key part of what Foresta intends to invest into this project".

*CAPTION: Back row (Left to right): Putauaki Trust CEO John O'Brien, East Coast MP Dana Kirkpatrick, Mayor Faylene Tunui. Front Row (Left to right): Putauaki Trust Chairman Tiaki Hunia, Minister for Regional Development the Hon. Shane Jones MP, Foresta Executive Chairman*



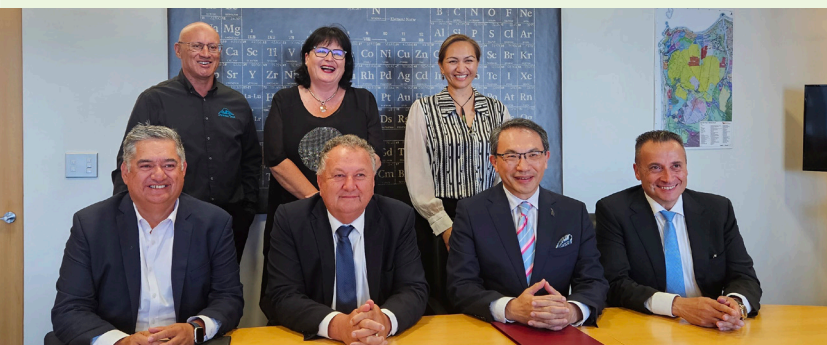
## Influx of visitors to Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre

**Thousands of people travel from around the Bay of Plenty to experience the Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre. There was an influx of 32,000 people utilising the amazing pool complex over the summer.**

The busiest day was December 29, 2025, which saw a peak of 1,031 visitors. At times, the facility reached capacity, and Lifeguards had to stop allowing visitors in, to comply with health and safety regulations. For every qualified lifeguard, we can accommodate 40 swimmers; for each non-qualified lifeguard, the limit is 20 swimmers.

The Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre is widely loved around the Bay of Plenty and beyond. The family-friendly facility has five different pools. There is something for everyone! The complex has a spacious 40-person spa pool equipped with a hoist for improved accessibility. It also includes a dedicated baby pool, perfect for toddlers and babies to enjoy splashing in shallow water.

The Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre is a great activity for families and people of all ages.



## Steam bore issues impact Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre

There are ongoing issues from the geothermal steam bore that provides hot water to heat the Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre.

This is disappointing as the current steam bore was drilled in November 2021, with the funding support of Trust Horizon, which was greatly appreciated by Council and the community.

At a depth of 79 metres, the bore accesses naturally hot geothermal water at approximately 145 °C that flows under pressure (called artesian).

Problems with the heating in 2023 prompted a clean-out of the bore in September 2023, to remove silica buildup. Another major workover was completed in January 2026, which cleaned out calcite down to a depth of 60.5 metres.

Expert advice has been sought since issues began in 2023 from experienced contractors, along with local operations staff at local geothermal power stations and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

The bore has not been performing reliably due which has meant frequent clean-outs and temporary solutions to mitigate:

- Heavy calcite scaling inside the bore (which blocks the flow of the hot water)
- Possible cold water leaking into the bore casing (cooling the hot water and stopping natural flow)
- Insufficient depth (mapping of the the geothermal field shows the hot zone starts deeper than the bore reaches, limiting reliable output)
- Weakness in the bore casing below the 60 metre depth (as shown in 2025 pressure tests)

One of the potential solutions to mitigate the build of the calcite and silica build-ups has been chemical treatments and high-pressure air treatments. In February, Council engaged contractors to install a chemical line which can also be used to inject air via a compressor into the bore.

The long-term solutions to restore heat to the pools at the optimum temperatures are still being investigated and costed. Council appreciates it is frustrating for pool users not to have temperatures in the pools and especially the spa pool, up to the usual heat.

Staff are working with external partners and contractors to provide various solutions for the heating of the pools and potential funding avenues with the aim of keeping costs to a minimum for the community.

Lastly, a reminder to be kind to our team at the Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre. The issues with the geothermal bore are issues with the bore itself – they have not been caused by lack of maintenance or operational issues.

We will keep you posted, and thank you all for your support, as we work through this challenging situation with mother nature!

## Calling our creative community champions

Your Creative Communities Scheme Committee are committed to growing participation, visibility and presence of the Arts for Kawerau whānau | families and warmly welcomes project applications for Round 2 of the 2025/6 scheme, from Monday 2 February to Friday 6 March 2026, closing at 5pm. Your committee has been working closely with the Creative NZ national and regional team to secure resourcing for Kawerau, and we need you.

Be it Matariki, kapa haka, community choirs, hip-hop groups, musical performances or events, poetry recitals, printmaking, script-writing, crafts, clay and/or knitting, photography and/or film, classic, modern or traditional dance, tukutuku, whakairo or kowhaiwhai for marae, weaving, pottery, carving, wearable arts or public artworks through wananga, workshops, performances or exhibitions – Creative Communities Scheme is here for you.

Project applications are invited by groups or individuals to help your Creative Communities Committee support those within our hāpori | community keen to share their gifts and talents with others as a celebration of our creative, artistic, cultural diversity, to capture and convey Kawerau Yesterday, Kawerau Today and Kawerau Tomorrow.

If you have any questions or need help or pointers to fill out an application, contact our Economic and Community Development Manager, Lee Barton on 07 306 9009

## Plea for Dog Owners to share spaces responsibly

**There has been a significant increase in service requests logged for dogs (barking, roaming, and attacking).**

Over December and January, the animal control team has responded to 161 service requests. 111 were attended by Council staff and related to barking (29), roaming (66), rushes (10), attacks on dogs and cats (6); the rest were general complaints and lost dogs. Six of the attacks on dogs and cats that were reported in December and January were roaming dogs that killed other animals or required vet attention.

If you're a dog owner, it is your responsibility to ensure your dog can share spaces safely with other animals and humans. Dogs must always be under control but particularly when they are in shared public spaces. Your dog may be friendly, but not all other dogs appreciate being approached by unfamiliar dogs. Please keep dogs on a leash where required or around other animals.

When the dog is on your property, ensure they are safely contained. Please check if your property is secure and that gates are properly latched, especially when visitors are coming and going.



## Rates payments due

Rates instalment three notices have been sent out.

If you have not received your rates notice yet, or your contact details have changed, please contact our customer services team on 07 306 9009 or visit the Council Offices.

If you want to learn more about rate rebates or payment plans, please contact Council on 07 306 9009 or visit our website [www.kaweraudc.govt.nz/residents/rates/rates-rebate-scheme](http://www.kaweraudc.govt.nz/residents/rates/rates-rebate-scheme)

## Streetlights

Council is very proactive at reporting issues around the community. In the last two months, Council received 38 service requests for broken streetlights; 37 of these were reported by Council staff.

Repairs are carried out by Horizon Energy, albeit Council passes on all requests for services immediately. 24 of the 38 service requests have been completed, so far. Horizon Energy completed 22 within the 14-day target timeframe. The other two were completed within a 28-day period. All other streetlight service requests are in progress and will be completed within 14 days.

Most issues are resolved quickly; however, lights with cable faults may take longer to repair due to the complexity of the work.

The set target is to complete 90% of faults within 14 days and the remaining 10% of faults within 28 days.

We welcome a heads up about any street lights that are not working within the district. Report a streetlight outage:

- Antenno app, please attach a photo (this will give the exact gps position)
- Take a note of the exact location or number on the streetlight base



Email [info@kaweraudc.govt.nz](mailto:info@kaweraudc.govt.nz)



Phone 07 306 9009

*Thanks for your support to keep our community well lit.*

## Vandalism

**Vandalism and graffiti continue to be an ongoing issue and an increasing cost for Council. There were multiple incidences of vandalism around the Kawerau district in December and January, costing the community \$11,000 in repairs.**

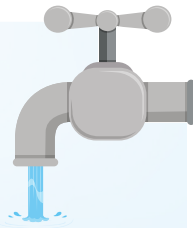
**Vandalism and graffiti around the district include:**

- Eight newly laid concrete sections along Cobham Drive, were damaged, costing the community \$5,000.
- Two windows were broken at the Museum, costing the community \$4,815
- Graffiti at the Skatepark and on Fenton Street, costing the community \$2,052

Please be aware that any vandalism or graffiti on Council owned properties and throughout the district, comes at a cost to the ratepayers.

We need your help to ensure that our community's assets are protected - please contact the Police on 105 in the first instance, if you witness any vandalism or graffiti happening around your district.

## WATER USAGE



**Thank you to everyone who made an effort to conserve water this summer.**

Although there has been lots of rain, and the grass is greener than usual, the amount of water we are permitted to use has also reduced.

Overall, the water used per person in January 2026, was still slightly higher at 334 litres per day, than the amount used per person in January 2025 which was 331L per person per day.

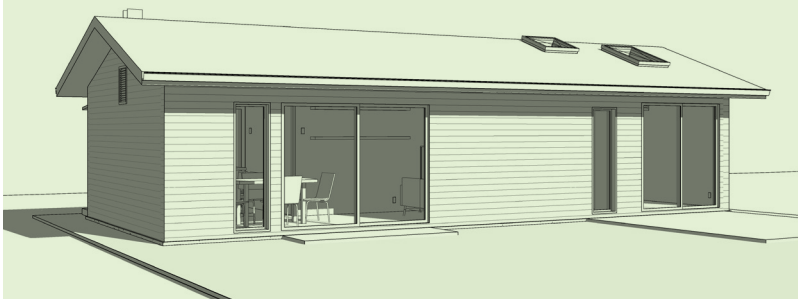
Forecasters say to expect a warm end to the summer season, so please continue to conserve water using the following tips:

- Use handheld hoses for watering lawns and gardens
- Reduce the use of sprinklers and only use for short periods in the cooler morning or evening
- Checking your tank, taps, hoses etc. For leaks and drips
- Limiting use of appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines
- Not using town supply for stock

## New building rules for granny flats

- New regulations on 15 January 2026 mean property owners can now build a single level, self-contained dwelling up to 70sqm
- Although a building consent is not required, prior to commencing your building project, property owners must apply to Council for Project Information Memorandum.
- Once the Project Information Memorandum is granted, owners have two years to complete the work
- Once the building is finished, owners need to lodge the certification for plumbing, electrical work and plans within 20 days which ensures a record is kept with the property file
- Please note: work must be carried out by licenced practitioners (qualified electricians and plumbers for example). Council does not complete inspections or issue code of compliance certificates.

**If you have any questions, please contact Council on 07 306 9009 or visit our website [kaweraudc.govt.nz](http://kaweraudc.govt.nz)**



## Important dates and meetings

### Friday 20 February

Kawerau Youth Council applications close

### Friday 20 February, 5pm

Rates instalment 3 due

### Wednesday 25 February, 9am

Ordinary Council Meeting

### Friday 6 March

Applications for Creative Communities Scheme Round Two closes

### Monday 9 March 4pm – 6pm

Have your say at the Sport BOP workshop for Play, Active Recreation and Sports Strategy, Concert Chamber, Kawerau

### Wednesday 11 March, 9am

Regulatory and Services Committee Meeting

### Wednesday 25 March, 9am

Ordinary Council Meeting

### Monday 13 April, 9am

Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

## Thinking of putting items out for collection?

**Summer is a great time for a clean-up around the home and yard.**

You're welcome to place furniture or similar items on your berm for others to take. However, if they aren't collected, you are responsible for disposing of them.

Sometimes, what we don't need can be snapped up by others when left on the roadside. But if not snapped up, and it's left there, usually people get in touch with Council to do something about it! If Council can identify the owner, they will be charged and invoiced for its removal. Otherwise, sadly, the cost falls onto the community.

This summer, the Transfer Station is open daily (except Christmas day) for sorted recycling (which is free) and for any other items (bar asbestos and other hazardous materials).

Please help us keep the community clean and free of rubbish dumping!

When people dump rubbish illegally, it impacts your friends, family, and neighbours, as the costs fall onto the community. Kawerau residents can report illegal dumping to Council by phone, email, or through Antenno. Our Transfer Station team also keeps an eye out during their daily work.