

# Ngā pārongo hou

Latest council news

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## Responding to cyclone-hit communities

In response to Cyclone Gabrielle, food packs, bottled water and other essential supplies were delivered to community-led centres across the district. Deliveries were undertaken by iwi, hapū, Civil Defence, NZ Police, FENZ, NZ Defence Force, council staff and many volunteers.

Widespread power outages caused by wind damage and heavy rain created the biggest challenge in the Far North with impacts to key council infrastructure, such as water treatment plants. Numerous communities were cut off leaving them with only limited access to food and other essentials.

Winds of 141km/h were recorded at Cape Reinga as the cyclone hit the country on Sunday 12 February. A total of 29 roads were closed or partially closed during the storm. The biggest wave recorded during the cyclone was 10.9 metres in the Bay of Islands.

The Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) co-ordinated the cyclone response from council headquarters in Kaikohe. Community-led centres and multiple marae mobilised quickly and were invaluable to supporting local needs, especially in remote areas.



NZ Defence Force, NZ Response Teams and Civil Defence Northland prepare to drop supplies to North Hokianga.



The distribution of essential supplies sent to marae and other community-led centres was co-ordinated by the EOC.

In all, the EOC co-ordinated the delivery of 11 pallets of food supplies; sent water tankers to Rāwene, Panguru and Ōmanaia; and red-stickered one property in the Bay of Islands after evacuating a resident. Hundreds of homes remained without power a week after the cyclone struck despite the best efforts of power supplier, Top Energy NZ.

Representatives from emergency services – police, fire and ambulance – were part of the EOC, along with Civil Defence Northland and local council staff. Civil Defence staff from other regions and national agencies were also drafted in to assist the response.

A week after the cyclone, the cost of clean-up operations directly attributed to the council was \$10,000. This total is likely to rise in coming weeks.

To keep residents updated, the council provided regular updates on road closures and other cyclone-related work to its website and shared these to social media. Kaihika (Mayor) Moko Tepania and Deputy Mayor Kelly Stratford also regularly updated media outlets on the cyclone response.

The widespread loss of power, internet and mobile services proved a major challenge to keeping communities informed and will be a key issue considered as part of a review of the response.



Water was delivered to Rāwene, Panguru and Ōmanaia.



Pakaraka School Principal Vee Singh (left) delivers supplies to FNDC staff. The school fundraised to provide necessities to Waikare Marae.



Far North Kahika (Mayor) Moko Tepania worked with NZ Defence Force, NZ Response Teams and council staff to distribute supplies.

### Mayor launches cyclone fund



Those impacted by the Cyclone Gabrielle can now apply for assistance from the Mayoral Relief Fund.

Far North Kahika (Mayor) Moko Tepania has established a Mayoral relief fund to assist people affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Kaihika Tepania was on the ground visiting affected communities, helping to drop off supplies and assessing damage along with emergency services. He said he received many offers of support for those affected by the cyclone, from across the country.

“The Cyclone Gabrielle Mayoral Relief Fund has been established to allow people to donate money which will be distributed by the council. There will be a cap on how much individuals can claim but we will exercise some discretion around this limit.”

The council has established mayoral relief funds in response to other disasters and emergencies including the Waiharara Fire north of Kaitiāia last year.

People wishing to donate can make payments to ASB account number [12 3244 0022509 04](https://www.asb.co.nz/123244002250904) with reference to ‘MRF’ and ‘Gabrielle’. Those needing to apply to the fund can download an application from our website or email [recoverymanager@fndc.govt.nz](mailto:recoverymanager@fndc.govt.nz).

Applications close on Friday 31 March 2023. management in consultation with the Mayor’s office.