

8 May 2020



## MAYOR'S OFFICE

Kia ora koutou,

I hope you are safe and well in your bubbles, homes and workplaces.

We are winning the battle against COVID-19 thanks to the enormous effort being put in by the whole community during the lock-down. We should be really proud of what we have achieved over a short period of time.

It was really exciting to hear the Prime Minister announce yesterday what Level 2 will look like for all of us. There is growing optimism as we start to see more of our normal way of life returning. It is especially good news for parts of our business community who are still not operating, such as our many bars, restaurants, cafes, retailers, gyms, sports clubs, beauticians and hair-dressers who now have more clarity around what they need to do to reopen. We look forward to the government's decision on Monday about when we will move to Level 2.

For our council, the first priority will be reopening all of our community facilities when we eventually do move to Level 2. While we are waiting for further guidance on some of the details, we know that there will still need to be a strong focus on public health so reopening our community facilities will be managed really carefully and safely.

Level 2 means our community can go back to our libraries, pools, art gallery, community centres and the chapel at the crematorium. Due to the rules around Level 2, it is likely some of these facilities will have reduced opening hours and services because of the new restrictions on the number of people gathering at any one time.

By now everyone will be used to sticking to the physical distancing requirements that are keeping us all safe. We will be using Kaitiaki at our community facilities to help manage this inside and outside our buildings during Level 2. We will make sure there is stringent cleaning through our facilities and contact tracing will also be done for everyone entering these places.

Level 2 is about making sure we play it safe and we know our community will continue to respect the restrictions. We will update you next week with further details around when exactly our facilities can reopen when we know more from the government.

As we reflect on the past few weeks, we know COVID-19 has been incredibly stressful for people. Now that we are starting to see signs of recovery, we feel it's time to hold a celebration to recognise how far we've come. So this Sunday we are holding a Hastings virtual concert that will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube called Miharo – a celebration of hope, healing and community.

Everyone was really keen to support this virtual event, from Toitōi – Hawke's Bay Arts and Events Centre and Arts Inc Heretaunga, to the artists themselves. Our local arts industry knows that the arts is often the key to community recovery and resiliency in times like these, so this was an opportunity for them to do what they do best – use their talents to bring healing, hope and joy to our wider community.

We have a wide range of artists involved – from international stars like Phillip Rhodes, Hinewehi Mohi and Kahurangi Dance Company, to local heroes like Mere Boynton and Howie McGuire with the community from Whakatu.

There'll be music, dance, poetry, story-telling and more. And something from almost every genre, so it'll be fun for the whole whānau. It will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube at 4pm on Sunday. Go to the HDC, Toitōi, or Harcourts Hawke's Bay Arts Festival Facebook page to find the event. The link to watch it is on there.

Many locals have told us they want a way to support our local charitable services who are helping our community through Covid-19. So we've partnered with Hawke's Bay Foundation's Covid-19 fund to make that happen. There'll be a website address on the screen while you're watching and any money donated to it during the event will go specifically to Hastings-centric charities during the Foundation's next grants round. Or, if you'd rather support local businesses directly, there'll also be the SOS Business web address, so you can buy vouchers for future services and support local that way.

We are really looking forward to it and we hope you can all tune in for a great afternoon of fun, music, dance and laughter.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend and Happy Mothers' Day.

Kind regards



Sandra Hazlehurst

**Mayor**

**Koromatua**

**Te Kaunihera-ā-rohe o Heretaunga**

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**TE KAUNIHERA O HERETAUNGA**



**HASTINGS**  
HEART OF HAWKE'S BAY