

**Name: Kelly Stratford**

**Ward: Bay of Islands - Whangaroa**

**Date: 18 Mar 2026**

**Meetings Attended**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Topic</b>	<b>Comment</b>
9.12.2025	Northland CDEM hui	Regional emergency management hui
	FNDC Civil Defence	Induction for elected members on emergency management response at a local and regional level
10.12.2025	Te Hiku Community Tour	Tour across Te Hiku looking at council assets, as part of our induction
11.12.2025	Council hui	
15.12.2025	Citizenship Ceremony	
16.12.2025	Northland Forward Together	Briefing from Northland Inc, presentation of our regional Infrastructure Plan, presentation by Office of the Auditor General on local government insights report <a href="https://oag.parliament.nz/2025/local-govt">https://oag.parliament.nz/2025/local-govt</a> & we had local government reform discussion
17.12.2025	Bay of Islands – Whangaroa Community Board	
23.12.2025	FNDC Lifetime Achievement Awards	
9.1.2026	Resident hui	State of Rawhiti Road in particular the potholes
12.1.2026	Informal councillor catchup	
14.1.2026	Resident hui	Tapuhi Road, Hukerenui regarding the health & safety issues of potholes and corrugation. And lack of work since they reported it in November.
15.1.2026	Grad Student interview	Interviewed on our Single Transferable Voting system being established and how it has changed representation
18.1.2026	3 News Interview	January Storm impacts and advice
20.1.2026	Civil Defence Hui	Urgent hui regarding FNDC response

	Northland CDEM & NRC hui with Emergency Management Minister	Heard from locals impacted and the Minister acknowledged their experiences and spoke about the support from central government
27.1.2026	Civil Defence Hui	FNDC response update
28.1.2026	SLT 100 Day Plan	Presentation from staff on how they will implement the Long Term Plan priorities identified in 100 day plan
	Reforms and Submissions workshop	Workshopped the reform storm and direction and decision-making for submissions
29.1.2026	FNHL Governance workshop	Getting to know the FNHL board members and executive staff
	Te Puāwaitanga Appointments panel	
1.2.26	Te Maruata Te Tai Tokerau	Gathering of Te Tai Tokerau Māori elected members in advance of Waitangi Week
2.2.26	Te Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail	Executive members hui advancing key issues outside of the monthly trust hui
4.2.26	Haruru Falls Road	Karakia and speeches of acknowledgement for the completion of this crown funded sealing
	Kaeo-Whangaroa Liaison Working Group	Received updates on stage 2 of the Kaeo flood mitigation project which will decrease flood levels and improve interruptions to the roading networks. More info under appointments
5.2.26	Lodore Road site visit	Site visit with board member, resident and roading staff re maintenance regime and building a case for upgrade
9.2.26	Te Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail	Discussion about CAPEX and OPEX budgets for annual plan
10.2.26	Extraordinary Council hui	
	Emergency Management	Impacts on Bay of Islands and Whangaroa
12.2.26	Te Puawaitanga Appointments Panel	
13.2.26	Climate Adaptation kōrero	
16.2.26	Climate Change impacts	Interview with student for her thesis on the impacts of climate change in Waikare
17.2.26	BOI Rec Centre advisory group	Advisory group meets to go over maintenance and operations, FNDC staff member usually

		attends to take on any contract issues. Need staff assistance on the terms of reference refresh.
	Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail Hui	Monthly trust hui
18.2.26	Te Kūkupa Committee	First meeting of the triennium
19.2.26	Road maintenance contracts workshop	
	Te Puāwaitanga EM Workshop	
20.2.26	Hui re catchment Planning	Kaumatua sharing with me where they are at with a catchment plan for Waikare. I attended the first hui for this Kaupapa so it was good to see the progress
24.2.26	Te Koekoeā Committee	
25.2.26	Te Koukou Committee	Attended online to listen to deputations
26.2.26	All of Local Government	Session notes are below
27.2.26	Rural & Provincial	Session notes are below
3.3.26	CDEM Joint Committee	
	Te Kukupa work programme	
5.3.26	Council hui	
6.3.26	Pou 2 – Tangata Whenua Climate Adaptation	Waikare Marae catchment plan, sharing tools that they may like to use in their work
	Te Puawaitanga	Appointments panel
	Te Kukupa	Agenda preview
9.3.26	Te Pou Herenga Tai Twin Coast Cycle Trail	Exec hui ironing out issues still to be addressed
11.3.26	Civil Defence Preparedness	Further debriefing to ensure FNDC preparedness across all functions
13.3.26	Zespri Ngati Hine	Harvest karakia, good learnings regarding the kiwifruit industry

17.3.26	LGNZ zoom with Minister of Local Government	
	Northland Waters Done Well	
	Te Huia Committee workshop	Chief Executive performance workshop
18.3.26	Te Kukupa Committee hui	
	Workshop LG Reform, Northland Waters and Annual Plan	

### Community Matters

*This section should be completed for matters arising within the community, which Council need to be aware of. It could be related to ongoing projects, requests, feedback etc.*

Topic	Comment
Ness Road	Still await completion of vegetation spraying and line of sight for traffic and have not heard if the culvert issue is resolved (contractor cleaned his driveway culvert instead of the culvert under the road)
Hihitahi Rise	Need to ensure funding is sought to deliver this resilience work. Health and Safety issue with the road, and our water storage at this location. A report was expected to be on the December agenda, still to be addressed but progressing as resident has done two deputations to council and one to Te Koukou.
Ohaeawai stormwater	Following last LTP. Was going to be addressed with existing budget. No urban stormwater, <b>they want to have managed stormwater. Due to the extent of flooding impacting their way of life. LTP please.</b>
Rangiputa Slip	Issue with the slip into the residential area. Awaiting update from staff on land discussions toward a solution.
Rangitane Maritime	Appeal to high court not upheld. Need to review the decision and see if any options meet funding within high court findings and community desire.
Otaha Road	A mound of dirt that NZTA contractors placed on this site has been causing visibility issues – weeds and grass overgrowing. Creating a vegetation maintenance issue for council due to risk of pulling out of Otaha Road on to state highway which is 100km/hr zone
Paihia CBD	Trip hazard, sand is being used. Waiting for an update on permanent solution
Rates Rebate	Good to catchup is progressing, people still very concerned and getting in touch
Unmaintained roads	Toots Drive, Lily Pond Lane, Powells Road (above) have council infrastructure located on and need to be maintained.
Illegal dumping	Connected volunteers in Motatau and Ngaio tonga Saddle with staff for arrangements for waste collection.

### **Te Kukupa Kōmiti: (Strategy, Policy and Regulatory Committee)**

- Appointments to committee reviewed following last hui, where Kaikaunihera that thought they were on draft governance plan, were omitted.
- Have the work programme on next hui – it is fluid there will be bylaws and policy coming to this committee when they are ready.

### **Te Huia: (Chief Executive Performance)**

- Workshop of current KPIs which will indicate potential future KPIs
- Obligations of a good employer and what does excellent practice look like for our committee

### **Portfolio Update: (Community Trust, Participation and Engagement)**

- Sharing clear updates on key decisions, addressing misinformation, and supporting informed public participation
- I've also advocated for community-led engagement and clearer, plain-language communication across council, helping build trust in how decisions are made and how we engage with our communities

### **Portfolio Update: (Creative Communities Funding Assessment Committee)**

- Working through how to level up the profile of this fund as we come into 30 years of it's existence. Wanting to get a youth rep on the committee, discussed the time of day for hui being an impediment. Review ongoing.

### **Portfolio Update: (Housing Delivery & Partnerships)**

- Awaiting staff update on strategy consultation/adoption and housing for the elderly project.
- Staff have been attending hui on housing, need a feedback loop into us as portfolio holders. Starting our portfolio hui much needed.
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### **Council Appointment: (Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management Committee)**

- Adopted the recommendations from the 17a review. And some changes to the reporting we will receive at CDEM.
- January Storm has been a main focus, many discussions with key FNDC staff on ensuring we are ready to support our people when there is need.
- It was good to see our GM Community & Engagement and CEO at this hui.

### **Council Appointment: (Pou Herenga Tai – Twin Coast Cycle Trail)**

- Security of tenure from Kawakawa onwards a funding risk, need update from staff
- Whangae Road a maintenance issue, but certain driver behaviours also having impact on local users of this extension (it's advertised as closed to cyclists but you can't stop cyclists or pedestrians unless you close it to cars too)
- Lacking information on this council asset on our website, followed up with staff
- Potential impact to the route with the housing project in Kawakawa

### **Council Appointment: (Joint Climate Change Adaptation)**

- Have been sharing Pou Two – Tangata Whenua led adaptation planning tools. Really like the funding resource, a lot of mahi gone into this toolkit. <https://www.fndc.govt.nz/district/Climate-Action/adaptation>
- Our first hui as a committee is on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March which is being held in FNDC chambers as we have taken over the administration of this committee.

- Landslip risk assessments and LiDAR taking place once budget confirmed through NRC (for the areas impacted by January Storm)

### **Council Appointment: (Turner Centre)**

- Recap on presentation by Gerry Paul the 6 monthly report to Dec 2025 highlights - Economic Impact from shows: \$3,206,089.54 and total volunteer labour and wellbeing \$12,105,711.72
- Detail design for rejuvenation project completed. Seeking RIF, and fundraising plan kicking off in April.
- There are parts of this asset and the rejuvenation project which should probably be reported at Te Koukou (building improvements being made); Cultural goals the board has set – perhaps at Te Kuaka.
- Need this asset to be listed as a strategic asset in our Significance & Engagement Policy.

### **Council Appointment: (Kaeo-Whangaroa River Liaison Working Group)**

- Excellent to have an FNDC roading representative in attendance, that could speak to the roading concerns (Dipp and Omaunu Road) and follow up with stormwater staff as well.
- Phase 2 of the flood mitigation project well underway.
- Business case for Tauranga Bay being done.
- Rivers team highlighted the fact Wainui is a small catchment that got more than it's fair share of water in short space of time in Jan storm.

### **Council Appointment: (Taumarere River Working Group)**

- Further works at Otiria have started
- A catchment plan for Taumarere catchment has been prioritised funding by NRC
- NRC asked to investigate the overland flow path behind bowling club – for reconsideration and log deflection devices which could help railway bridges

### **Matters for Discussion**

*This section should be completed for matters which the elected member wishes to raise with wider Council, Community Boards and/or in relation to delivery.*

- Matauri Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant – look forward to an update on this commissioning, and then hand over to FNDC operations. Will need LTP consultation, and conversation with new waters entity.
- Kerikeri Wastewater Treatment Plant – concerns over capacity raised by members of the public and the restraint it's lack of capacity has on development. It would be good to have a working group on this issue.

### **Training / Conference Attendance**

**Name of Event:** LGNZ All of Government Hui - Owning the Change

**Date of Event:** 26 February 2026

**Location:** Huihui Parliament Rooms, Wellington

The LGNZ All-of-Government Hui brought together Ministers, economists, policy leaders and elected members to discuss the significant reform programme currently affecting local government, including regulatory reform, planning system changes, infrastructure funding, emergency management, water regulation and local government financing.

## Learnings

### LGNZ organisational direction

LGNZ leadership acknowledged that the organisation had "got out of step with the government we served" and signalled a renewed focus on becoming a more effective peak body for councils.

LGNZ has undertaken a detailed internal review of its expenditure, including rental space, vacancies and contracts. Through operational savings, moving some hui online and reviewing conference costs, the proposed membership increase for councils is expected to be approximately 3.1 percent, significantly lower than originally projected. Three in-person hui will continue alongside online participation options. LGNZ also indicated it will provide regular online updates following National Council meetings.

A consistent theme was a renewed focus on localism, with statements including "laser focused to lift LGNZ", "localism is behind everything we do" and "one size does not fit all". There was acknowledgement of the strong bonds that form between elected members through shared governance experiences, particularly during challenging events such as severe weather responses and emergency management situations. LGNZ also outlined how it receives guidance from Te Maruata, the national collective of Māori elected members, in relation to honouring Te Tiriti responsibilities within the local government sector.

- A practical action from the session was to ensure elected members are receiving the "Keeping Local" newsletter and are aware of the Ākona training resources available through LGNZ.

Mayor Nick Smith commented on the scale of local government's responsibilities nationally, noting that central government holds approximately \$190 billion in assets while local government collectively holds around \$230 billion.

### Economic outlook and development pressures

The economic panel discussed the wider environment in which councils are operating. Migration trends, population growth and economic uncertainty were identified as key drivers influencing demand for housing, infrastructure and local services.

There was discussion about increasing net migration of non-New Zealand citizens and reduced outward migration of New Zealanders, which may influence planning and infrastructure decisions.

Speakers also noted the potential impact of rapid technological change, particularly artificial intelligence, suggesting that economies and workforces may change significantly within a relatively short timeframe.

Councils were encouraged to ensure planning frameworks and zoning do not create unnecessary barriers to development. Removing zoning bottlenecks and enabling growth was seen as important for improving productivity.

Infrastructure funding pressures were also highlighted. One perspective was that councils may need to rely less on general rates for some operational costs and consider greater use of user pays models and targeted charges where appropriate. Redistribution challenges were noted as particularly difficult for smaller councils.

During this discussion the issue of Crown-owned land was raised, noting that the Crown occupies a significant proportion of land across New Zealand while not contributing to general rates. The response suggested councils review whether some operational costs currently funded through the general rate should instead sit within user pays models where services can be attributed more directly.

Speakers also emphasised the importance of securing democratic support for infrastructure investment.

### International economic context

Economist John Ballingall discussed global economic uncertainty, including potential impacts from United States trade policy and tariffs. His view was that while these issues present challenges for many countries, New Zealand has historically been relatively resilient, with exports often redirected to alternative markets.

Climate policy was discussed in terms of balancing mitigation and adaptation, with recognition that the shift toward adaptation strategies can become politically sensitive if not managed carefully.

Dr Eric Crampton encouraged councils to think differently about their role, suggesting councils should "surprise central government" and "surprise their ratepayers" through new approaches and innovation.

#### Regulatory reform

Deputy Prime Minister David Seymour addressed the hui regarding the Government's regulatory reform programme. He described being an elected member as often a "pretty thankless job" and emphasised the importance of informed advisors in democratic decision-making.

The Regulatory Standards Act will require regulations and bylaws to include clearer accountability statements outlining the purpose of the regulation, the outcomes sought, impacts on citizens and property rights, and costs and benefits. These statements may be reviewed by regulatory standards boards, with the intention of improving transparency and reducing unnecessary regulation. Examples were given of regulatory settings that have affected community activities or facilities, which were used to illustrate the Government's view that regulatory costs can reduce productivity.

The Government also expressed the view that resource management reform may significantly reduce consent requirements and that regulatory reform could help address some of the divide between urban and rural perspectives.

#### Emergency management and resilience

Emergency Management Minister Mark Mitchell reinforced that New Zealand's emergency management system is locally led and centrally supported.

A strong message was the importance of early decision-making. Mayors and chairs were encouraged to declare emergencies early if necessary, with the Minister indicating they would have his support in doing so. He cautioned against underestimating events, noting that lives have been lost during severe weather events when flooding was initially considered minor.

The importance of ensuring mayors or their representatives are included in civil defence coordination discussions was also highlighted.

There was acknowledgement of the value of councils sending staff to assist other regions during emergency responses, both to provide operational support and to give staff valuable response experience.

Infrastructure resilience was also discussed, particularly telecommunications networks failing during prolonged power outages. Communications systems were highlighted as critical lifeline utilities, and the need for improved resilience in these networks was raised.

#### Planning reform and biodiversity

Planning reform discussions highlighted tensions between environmental protection, development, property rights and council financial constraints. Concerns were raised regarding biodiversity protection, noting that approximately 4,000 species are currently considered at risk. Participants discussed the challenges of balancing environmental protection with development certainty and the financial pressures councils face when introducing planning protections.

The replacement of the Resource Management Act was acknowledged as creating a period of uncertainty while the new system is developed.

#### Local government funding and rates capping

The proposed rates capping framework was also discussed. The model being considered would limit rate increases using a formula based on inflation, productivity and population growth.

A key concern raised was that capital expenditure and long-term asset depreciation do not appear to be fully factored into the proposed formula. These costs represent a significant portion of council spending, particularly for infrastructure such as roads, water networks and other long-life assets.

Nick Brunson referenced economic modelling including work by Brad Olsen, noting that infrastructure funding models must properly account for long term asset renewal and depreciation.

There is currently uncertainty around how asset age and depreciation will be measured within the framework. It was also noted that CPI may underestimate the real cost pressures councils face in areas such as infrastructure construction, roading and insurance.

If these cost drivers are not adequately recognised, councils may face increased pressure to rely on user pays models, development levies and other revenue tools to maintain infrastructure investment.

### **Value for the Organisation**

Key value to the organisation includes improved understanding of LGNZ's evolving role and support to councils, regulatory reform and the implementation of the Regulatory Standards Act, proposed planning system reforms and their potential implications for councils, emerging infrastructure funding pressures and potential shifts toward user pays models, emergency management expectations and coordination between central and local government, and risks relating to infrastructure resilience, communications networks and climate impacts.

The hui reinforced the importance of councils remaining adaptable during a period of significant reform while continuing to deliver essential infrastructure and services for communities.

### **Name of Event: LGNZ Rural and Provincial Sector Meeting**

**Date of Event: 27 February 2026**

**Location: Huihui Parliament Rooms, Wellington**

Focus on infrastructure delivery, localism, water reform, productivity and funding models relevant to rural and provincial councils.

### **Learnings**

A strong theme was the tension between scale and localism, and whether larger structures necessarily deliver better outcomes. Dr Oliver Hartwich spoke to localism as a driver of efficiency and democratic strength, using Switzerland as an example of a highly decentralised system that supports responsive governance and alignment with community needs. It was noted that efficiency gains are not always achieved through centralisation. In rural contexts, geographic distance creates a productivity penalty, with increased travel time reducing time spent on delivery. This is particularly relevant for large, geographically spread districts. The view that size does not dictate efficiency was reinforced. Larger organisations can introduce additional administrative layers, while smaller councils can retain more agile decision making and lower overheads. At the same time, benefits of scale can still be achieved through collaboration rather than amalgamation. Shared services were presented as a practical middle way, enabling councils to work together on procurement, IT and infrastructure while retaining local governance.

Ross Copland highlighted the "politics of scale" and noted that increasing scale alone does not necessarily improve delivery outcomes and can increase complexity.

Infrastructure productivity was a key focus. It was noted that New Zealand's challenges are driven more by governance, culture, incentives and processes than by size or geography. Comparisons with Australia showed higher construction costs and lower delivery efficiency in New Zealand, influenced by labour costs, consenting complexity and uncertainty in project pipelines.

The NZTA Transport Infrastructure Capital Projects review identified key issues impacting delivery, including gaps in accountability, limited in house capability, shortfalls in risk management and contingency planning, and limited independent assurance. Opportunities to improve delivery include increasing certainty in capital pipelines, improving project definition at business case stage, standardising design approaches, including escalation in cost estimates, and reducing post approval budget changes.

There was also a focus on improving productivity through better aggregation and standardisation of data, including consenting information, and more consistent infrastructure design standards across councils.

Funding and financing tools were explored, including national infrastructure funding and financing models, with a focus on improving delivery and return on investment. There was also reference to reducing reliance on general rates through alternative funding sources, including user pays approaches and road user charges.

Water infrastructure was identified as a significant pressure, with approximately 50 billion dollars of investment required nationally over the next 10 years. Many wastewater plants are ageing, operating on expired consents, or require upgrading.

DIA and NIFF outlined a nationally coordinated approach to procurement, financing and delivery of small-scale wastewater treatment plants. This includes modular packaged plants that can be deployed more quickly and cost effectively. Participation options include bulk purchasing, financing solutions and service delivery models, including options for off balance sheet financing and transfer of delivery risk. The intent is to reduce cost, time and uncertainty and move away from case by case delivery approaches.

Taumata Arowai provided clarification on regulatory requirements and timeframes. Smaller supplies under certain thresholds are exempt, while larger supplies must register by November 2028 and achieve compliance by November 2030.

Emergency management, flood mitigation and resilience remain ongoing priorities, alongside ensuring councils have sufficient capability and capacity to respond to increasing demands.

A broader theme across the session was the balance between compliance and growth and ensuring regulatory systems do not unintentionally constrain development. There was a clear message that credible alternatives to amalgamation exist, and that shared services and collaboration should be pursued where they improve efficiency without reducing local governance and accountability.

## **Value for the Organisation**

Attendance provided insight into sector thinking on localism, infrastructure delivery and funding models. Key value includes improved understanding of:

- the role of localism in supporting effective governance
- the limitations of scale as a driver of efficiency, particularly in rural contexts
- shared services as a practical alternative to amalgamation
- opportunities to improve infrastructure productivity through standardisation and collaboration
- emerging funding and financing tools, including NIFF models
- wastewater investment challenges and delivery approaches
- regulatory requirements and timelines under the water services framework
- the balance between compliance, growth and service delivery

The session reinforced the importance of maintaining local voice while exploring opportunities for collaboration and efficiency across councils.