

# Hokianga vehicle ferry back in service

Maintenance work has been completed on the Hokianga Harbour vehicle ferry with the vessel now back on the water.

The vehicle ferry was in dry dock for a month-long service and resumed normal services as planned at 1.30pm on Thursday 1 June from Rāwene.

A passenger-only ferry service operated on the Hokianga Harbour while maintenance on the vehicle ferry was carried out. This service continued running until 5.30pm 1 June to ensure that all foot passengers were returned to Kohukohu township so they could collect their vehicles.

The 145-tonne *Kohu Ra Tuarua* vehicle ferry, which operates between Rāwene and the ferry landing at Narrows Wharf about 4km south of Kohukohu, was pulled into dry dock at the Narrows Wharf on 1 May.

The out of water survey and maintenance included refurbishment and repairs to the two hydraulic ramps, as well as major painting works on the hull, bulwarks, deck, and all tanks on board.



Installing an anchor winch helped complete maintenance work on the 145-tonne *Kohu Ra Tuarua* vehicle ferry before it resumed operations.

## Clogged sewers cost ratepayers



Clothing is just one unwanted item blocking the sewer network.

“Pee, poo and paper are the only things that should be flushed down any pipe.” That’s the mantra of Far North Waters, an alliance between council and Ventia, which looks after our water, wastewater, and stormwater services. Its staff say other items are continually being flushed down toilets causing major blockages in networks.

In April alone there were nine pump station blockages. Each time this occurs it costs over \$1000 to clear the blockage. It is ratepayers that bear the brunt of those costs.

Far North Waters constantly maintains and checks each of the district’s 15 wastewater systems and confirms it doesn’t take long for non-disposable items to build up and create blockages. Unwanted items such as clothing, nappies, food, wet wipes and much more are found in the blocked pipes.

Most wet wipes are not biodegradable, even if product packaging claims they are flushable. Wet wipes contain plastic that doesn’t disintegrate like toilet paper. The wipes get stuck in pipes and bind with

fat to create rock-hard fatbergs. These cause blockages, and wastewater overflows, which damage our environment and pose a public health risk.

Wastewater systems are designed for human waste and toilet paper only. Toilet paper is the only non-human waste material that can break down quickly in wastewater systems.

## ‘Design jam’ encourages kids to improve Hone Heke Road

Unleashing the creativity of local school children to overcome obstacles they face travelling to and from school was the aim of a ‘design jam’ held recently at Kerikeri Primary School.

Year 6 students buzzed with solutions to transport issues they identified as discouraging them from walking, cycling or using scooters to get to school on Hone Heke Road in Kerikeri.

The design jams, held in mid-May, are the start of local community collaboration with Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA), council contractors and council staff aimed at improving safety on the road, which is also home to Kerikeri High School and several pre-schools.

After identifying obstacles that they face on the roads and pathways leading to school, the nine and 10-year-olds attended a second workshop held the next day where they were asked to brain-storm possible solutions.

One big takeaway was the importance of incorporating street art and colour to create vibrant environments. Adding street art in low-speed areas to combat a “sea of grey” was a popular solution, as was using colour to highlight courtesy crossings where full pedestrian crossings aren’t possible. Moving painted Give Way lines back from an intersection edge to allow for ‘continuous footpaths’ across side roads was another idea.



Kerikeri Primary School children had plenty of creative ideas to improve road safety and footpath access.

The children’s feedback will be incorporated into concept designs that are now in development. Once completed, the concept designs will be shared with the wider community. Community feedback will help to inform more detailed design solutions, as well as ways to involve school children in creating street art. It is hoped that construction of the final safety measures will start in about a year’s time.

## Roading reports provide greater maintenance transparency

Do you want to know more about maintenance that has been carried out on roads in our district? We’ve made this information easier for you to find with a new council webpage. These reports are provided by Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA), and roading contractors, Fulton Hogan and Ventia. The reports detail the previous month’s activities and will be published online for anyone to review.