

# Ngā pārongo hou

Latest council news

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## Kaikohe park to be transformed

An upgrade to Memorial Park in Kaikohe will transform it into a space where whānau can meet, play and relax based around a wheelchair accessible playground and picnic area.

New playground equipment will include a wheelchair accessible merry-go-round, in-ground trampolines, slides, sand play area, swings and an eagles' lair rope climbing tower. New park entrances, upgraded footpaths, a learn-to-ride and balance track for tamariki, fully accessible amenity block and a wide loop track linking all areas are also part of the revamp.

Construction on the \$750,000 project is due to begin soon. While the aim will be to minimise disruption to Memorial Park users, parts of the park will be closed to the community during the build.

It is anticipated finishing touches to the upgrade will be completed in time for the Christmas break.



Playground concept designs by Playground Centre and Play Matta indicate how the revamp of Memorial Park will look.

## Storms cause massive road repair bill



This slip on West Coast Rd has isolated North Hokianga communities.

Early estimates indicate that the Far North now faces a road repair bill of \$6.5 million following last month's torrential rains.

Rain in excess of 200mm fell across much of the Far North in just 48 hours (from Thursday 18 August), causing widespread flooding and numerous slips. Gales also brought down dozens of trees blocking roads and cutting power to many residents. On the morning of Friday 19 August, 50 district roads had been impacted with many reduced to one lane or passable only by four-wheel drive vehicles. Of those, 14 roads were closed temporarily to all traffic.

August's extreme weather capped off about four weeks of heavy rain that had caused floods, slips and downed trees. The council was already facing an estimated road repair bill of \$1.55 million before the August storm. That estimate has now ballooned to \$6.5 million.

CEO Blair King says Far North District Council will be seeking funding assistance from central government.

Of greatest concern for council is a slip on West Coast Road between Kohukohu and Panguru. Engineers have now managed to assess the site, but it is still unclear when this key link for North Hokianga communities will be reopened.

## New Kerikeri Domain playground opens



The new playground at Kerikeri Domain may have been officially opened on a rain-drenched morning last month, but that hasn't dampened enthusiasm for the facilities.

The playground which cost around \$800,000 to build includes in-ground trampolines, towers, tunnels, new swings, slides, a climbing wall and more. It is designed for toddlers to early teens and, as part of the Kerikeri Revitalisation Project, sits alongside the new skate park and full-sized basketball court. These elements of the community-led project have already proved a huge hit with domain users of all ages.

Not all of the new playground's facilities have been opened. The flying fox requires turf to be established before it can open safely, and this is dependent on drier weather. Product delays have also meant that toddler fencing around the sandpit and rubber matting area are yet to be installed. Shade sails to protect users will also be erected ahead of summer.

## Thefts and vandalism cost communities



Ongoing thefts and damage to community amenities is impacting council budgets and could see residents miss out on new facilities at playgrounds, sports fields, and reserves.

Two recent cases highlight the issue and have resulted in ratepayers being billed thousands to repair or replace council-owned community assets.

Within days of being installed at Ōpononi in July, the door of a Wi-Fi smart bin was ripped off by someone who had accidentally dropped a \$40 phone top up card into the bin. Instead of asking the council to retrieve it, the person smashed open the bin, causing over \$1000 in damage. The person was identified and the police informed.

Meanwhile, at Nisbet Park playground in Moerewa, fencing around a mobility swing has been repeatedly stolen. The Liberty Swing is designed for children and adults in wheelchairs. Replacing the fencing costs ratepayers around \$5000 each time.