

# Te Radar a huge hit in Tararua

I want to start by acknowledging that the past few weeks have been tough for some of our rural communities. I am really proud to have been part of those communities in the past, and we continue to have wonderful friendships from our time farming in the Tararua.

One thing I know rural communities do very well is supporting their people in times of need, we saw it immediately after the Cyclone and we

continue to see it as we work through the recovery. Checking in on neighbours, catching up with people and being an ear when its needed, keeps people connected and that is so important as we continue to face the challenges ahead.

Alongside the challenges, we have had many positives in our district over the last two weeks.



Don Cameron

The announcement of the contract extension for Enhanced Taskforce Green in Tararua is welcome news for farmers getting remedial assistance on farm, and the job seekers who are upskilling and developing new skills.

And of course, Te Radar's visit to Tararua on Friday 25th August, was a real boost for

some of the roading staff at Tararua Alliance, as well as those from the Herbertville and Pongaroa communities who came together to share a laugh, and share their experience of the Cyclone with such an iconic Kiwi personality. We want to thank Te Radar hugely for offering up his time to spend an afternoon and evening visiting these communities.

It was wonderful to see the Pongaroa hall filled with over

100 people, having dinner and enjoying a colourful game of bingo, hosted by Te Radar. His humour, stories and genuine appreciation for rural people and places really made the night one to remember.

A huge thanks to Rural Support Trust who assisted us in putting this event on, the Recovery Team staff for their hard work to make Te Radar's visit such a success and all the businesses who provided spot prizes for the night.

## Cyclone impacts

Over the last few weeks the Tararua Alliance roading team has moved from a reactive response phase to a planned response phase in our roading recovery, and in doing so, are using two new key tools to manage and report on projects.

To share this progress going forward, the icons below will now show the total number, and then the breakdown, of the high and medium complexity faults in our roading network as a result of Cyclone Gabrielle. The bullet points will show which phase roading projects are in from scope development, detailed design, approval, construction and then completion.

Currently the teams are working hard to get prioritised work planned and coordinated and into the new systems, to maximise the October - March work season and ensure routine maintenance is happening again on our roading networks.

There were 2409 faults in total from Cyclone Gabrielle. 1900 of those were low complexity and out of those, 1087 are complete/closed. We are now focusing on reporting on the medium to high complexity faults.



Total high and medium complexity faults 509



102 high complexity faults



407 medium complexity faults

- Scope development stage : 10
- Detailed Design stage: 9
  - Approval stage: 1
  - Construction stage: 15
  - Complete: 2

## Te Radar in Tararua



On Friday 25th of August, the Tararua Cyclone Recovery Programme and Rural Support Trust hosted well known New Zealand comedian Te Radar in Tararua, visiting some of the people most affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Arriving from Wairoa where Te Radar had also spent time with affected communities, he first caught up with staff at the Tararua Alliance and thanked them for their work on the district's roads. It was then off to Herbertville, a first time visit for the well-known Kiwi, to see the community and see first hand the

impacts of the Cyclone on farmland and the communities east of Dannevirke.

Finally on Friday evening, Te Radar hosted a sold-out bingo night at the packed Pongaroa Hall. Locals were treated to intrepid tales, a lot of laughs, and a real sense of empathy for what the community has been dealing with since the Cyclone. It was a fantastic evening, finishing with a fairly nail biting game of Bingo.

A big thanks to all of those who were able to come out and join us across the afternoon and evening.

## Enhanced Taskforce Green contract extended

After a hugely successful initial eight-week programme, Enhanced Taskforce Green in Tararua will be extended until 1 December 2023.

The programme, which is funded by the Ministry of Social Development, is a regional response to adverse natural or weather events that cause significant damage. It links up job seekers with work experience, and the opportunity to help and support their local community. For farmers it has been a welcome

help in remedial clean ups on farm, post-Cyclone Gabrielle.

Kicking off in Tararua on 19 June, the Enhanced Taskforce Green team have primarily worked to help local farmers with initial clean up and removal of debris from fences, however under the supervision of Mike Brock of Land Based Training, the team have upskilled significantly, and are now repairing and replacing damaged fence lines as well.

On farm recovery co-ordinator

Simon Hales of Rural Support Trust says the success of the programme in Tararua is hugely positive for jobseekers and farmers alike. "It's proving to be an excellent pathway for job seekers to gain new skills and transition into full time work, as well as providing much needed relief for our farmers."

He goes on to say, "Enhanced Taskforce Green have worked on 16 properties so far, with another 22 possible jobs lined up. The team are out there on farms every

day, weather dependent, doing a 40-hour week, and making a real difference for farmers. Any days they are not on farm, they are completing units through Land Based Training to gain qualifications."

Farmers and landowners affected by Cyclone Gabrielle in the Tararua District who would like some help from Enhanced Taskforce Green are encouraged to contact Simon Hales on 027 27 88042.

## Community Marks Opening of the Marainanga Gorge Road

Local community members were among those onsite on Thursday 31st of August to mark the opening of the Marainanga Gorge Road.

The road was extensively damaged during Cyclone Gabrielle, with approximately 300m completely washed away into the Aohanga River, and has not been open to the public since February 14.

The repair has been no small task with the replacement road rebuilt 10m up from river level. Active collaboration has assisted in getting the road open as quickly as possible in challenging winter conditions. "The opportunity to work together with Iwi and Horizons Regional Council,

alongside experienced local contractors is what has allowed the works to progress as rapidly as they have, and what has also given us the confidence to work in a relatively sensitive environment," says Tararua Alliance Capital Projects Manager Andrew Desmond.

With initial works to open thoroughfare complete, further works are scheduled on site to strengthen the remaining roads formation and address resilience issues. Desmond goes on to say, "It's a fragile site and its crucial people keep that in mind when using the Gorge Road. The bank below the remaining portion of road leading down to the river has scoured significantly, leaving

a narrow passageway for about 50 meters. We need people to understand there are risks, and to take it easy on the new road."

Mayor Tracey Collis is grateful for the patience of the local community and the hard work of the roading crews and local contractors in working to get the road rebuilt and open again. "Today is a significant milestone in our recovery. Losing this road so dramatically during the cyclone has not been easy for our people in the surrounding area. It's been a stressful time and some residents have had to endure considerable additional travel to go about their daily lives and run their businesses."

While the Marainanga

Gorge is now officially open to traffic, motorists are urged to remember work on the project is not fully complete, therefore the Gorge Road will be subject to further short closures as work continues.

A strict speed limit of 30kmph is in place through the Gorge, and there is a single lane stretch with a priority give way system operating, which has always been the case. Motorists using the Gorge are advised there is no stopping as they are travelling through.

The road is not recommended for campervans or large buses and to avoid further degradation, loaded vehicles are encouraged to use the alternative route on River Road.