

Railway revamp on track

WAITOMO mayor Brian Hanna is on track to develop a new "centre of life" for Te Kuiti.

He says after 30 years of "neglect", Te Kuiti Rail Station is going to be transformed following a long period of negotiation between Waitomo District Council (WDC) and KiwiRail.

Yesterday, WDC took ownership of the station buildings from KiwiRail for \$1, and now has a 35-year lease over the land where the buildings sit.

Mr Hanna says council is not planning to fund the upgrade through rates and a committee of councillors and community representatives including youth and iwi will be established to manage the project.

"I approached KiwiRail in late 2010, after being elected as mayor, about the possible transfer of ownership/management of the station into WDC's hands.

"I had a vision to see this area developed to create a much needed CBD hub for Te Kuiti to reinvigorate the town and give it a central heart.

"After seeing the success of the Rugby World Cup's Meadville Gallery, I was convinced the community would support the project to return the historic buildings to their former important role as the centre of life in our town."

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Mr Hanna says WDC had to satisfy the NZ Rail Heritage Trust and KiwiRail that it would manage and upgrade the buildings "in a manner befitting their history".

"We are extremely happy that through the gifting of the station to the council the building will be utilised by the community and its heritage value will be conserved," says KiwiRail property manager Neil Buchanan.

Te Kuiti Railway Station is the only B class station with an A category heritage status in New Zealand.

Opened in 1887, the station functioned as an important facility for goods and passengers for more than 100 years until its closure in the late 1980s.

"It was important from KiwiRail's perspective that a local government body was the rightful place for ownership of such a heritage building," says Mr Hanna.

"They (KiwiRail) have had bad experiences of private ownership of rail stations where the heritage has not been maintained."

Mr Hanna says the next step is for the management committee, once elected, to start formulating a clear planned approach to what the area will look like and how the buildings can be utilised.

"One of our key goals is to recognise the history of the many aspects of our heritage including rail, timber and iwi within this complex and also allow for community use," he says.

"Council believes we are holding this valuable asset on behalf of the community and will stage this development over time, utilising community input and outside funding to complete the project."

Mr Hanna says the annual lease will cost \$5000 and hopes the station will provide room for local arts and crafts groups, an education centre, Te Kuiti Youth Action Plan projects, historical displays and a free-of-charge community meeting room.

"The plan is to have some core tenants in the buildings that will enable us to fund some of the building's restoration work like plumbing, sprinklers and roof repairs," he says.

"There are certainly some challenges ahead but I think we'll look back in 10-20 years time and say this has been a great move for the community."



LIFE LINE: Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna and community development manager Rebecca Whitehead are working together with the community to restore the Te Kuiti Railway buildings as the town's hub.

Give way rule corrected

"I GOT it wrong."

Waikato Police Highway Patrol Officer Graeme Hammond has been quick to correct his slip-up in Tuesday's *Waitomo News* article - Getting it right! - regarding a give way rule at Te Kuiti's southern intersection on Rora St.

The rule in question concerns when cars on Waitete Rd and Rora St are both turning onto Awakino Rd.

Several members of the public contacted *Waitomo News* querying Mr Hammond's "Rora St goes first" explanation and correctly pointed out Waitete Rd has the right-of-way.

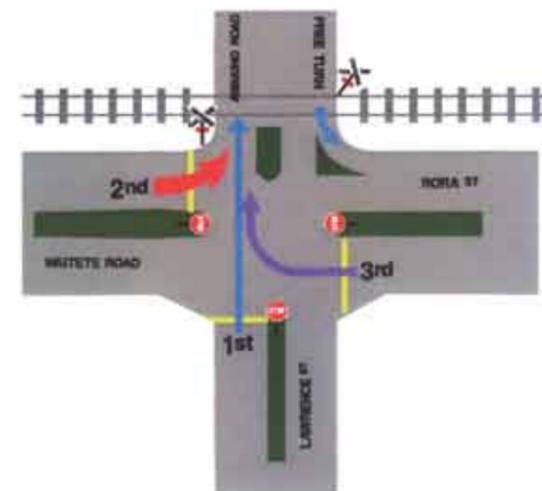
Mr Hammond apologises for steering readers and road users the wrong way.

Clarifying his error, Mr Hammond says as outlined on the New Zealand Transport Agency website - giveaway.govt.nz - vehicles turning left from Waitete Rd have the right-of-way over right turning vehicles from Rora St.

"I acknowledge I got it wrong," he says. "The NZTA website clearly states that what I said Tuesday's paper is incorrect."

Waitomo/Otorohanga districts' road safety co-ordinator Christine Chaplow admires Mr Hammond's swift retraction saying Tuesday's article has sparked some much needed debate.

"This is an intersection where consideration and understanding from everybody is the golden rule," she says.



TO P3

Simply purchase any **Panasonic** small appliance and complete an entry form to be in to win

<p>Breadmaker</p>  <p>\$299</p>	<p>Iron</p>  <p>\$119</p>	<p>Shaver</p>  <p>\$249</p>
---	---	---

Promotion ends 30/09/2012

100%

Te Kuiti

Panasonic

Rora St, Te Kuiti. Ph 07 878 8147