

Communication and Engagement

As we left 2024 and leapt into 2025, we knew things would be busy, and we weren't wrong! Our team has been working on some great projects, building on our already strong connections and making a genuine impact in our Waipā community.

Between November and February, we issued 66 media releases, keeping our community engaged with and updated on the council's mahi. Many of these were picked up by media outlets either in their entirety or as a basis for broader stories.

We have also had a number of direct media requests for information and commentary on a variety of issues affecting Waipā, with ongoing challenges with recycling contamination, fluoridation in Cambridge and the proposed Te Awamutu waste to energy plant among the most talked-about subjects.

Our social media channels have seen an increase of 2.8 per cent of fans and followers compared to the previous period.

It was also a busy time for consultation and feedback. We ran a large community engagement campaign for Ahu Ake - Waipā Community Spatial Plan, as well as more targeted feedback projects for reserves management plans involving Karāpiro Lake Domain and the four Ngā Pae Whenua reserves. Currently, the draft Lake Ngā Roto Reserve Management Plan is open for consultation.





These projects have provided valuable insights from Waipā residents, helping to shape the direction of future council projects and initiatives.





Digital Engagement Overview

We've seen awesome engagement across our digital platforms – more social media followers, increased website traffic, and great community feedback through Social Pinpoint. This infographic highlights the key performance indicators and achievements across these platforms, providing a snapshot of how we've connected with and engaged our communities.

Social media followers overview



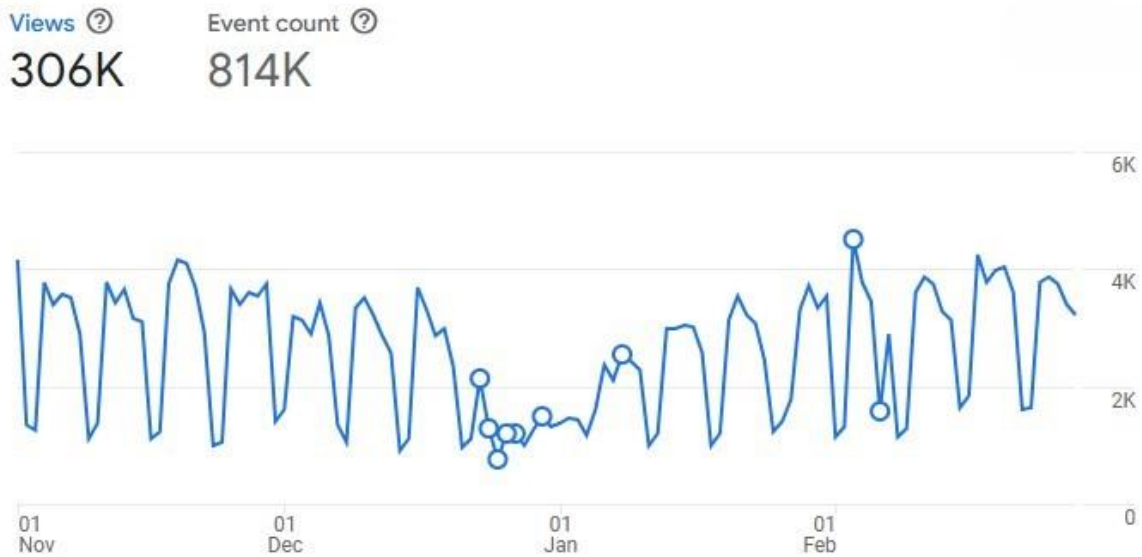
Channels	Highest engagement post	Highest reach post
<p>Waipā District Council Facebook</p>	<p>Cambridge pathway timelapse video 473 likes, comments and shares</p> 	<p>Kihikihi pathway – students cycling skills workshop reel</p>  <p>45,718 users reached</p>
<p>Waipā Home of Champions Facebook</p>	<p>Waka Ama reel</p>  <p>47 likes, comments and shares</p>	<p>Party in the Park reminder event post</p>  <p>7,360 users reached</p>
Channels	Highest engagement post	Highest reach post

<p>Waipā Home of Champions Instagram</p>	<p>Maadi Regatta</p>  <p>858 likes, comments and shares</p>	<p>Waka Ama reel</p>  <p>2,228 users reached</p>
<p>Waipā District Council LinkedIn</p>	<p>End of year video – Growth</p>  <p>123 likes, comments and shares</p>	<p>End of year video – Growth</p>  <p>3,092 impressions</p>

Waipā District Council website performance



Waipā District Council total page views



Engagement Projects Update

Ahu Ake – Completed

The Ahu Ake engagement has successfully concluded, marking a significant milestone in our efforts to plan for the next 30+ years, while taking the community along with us in the decision-making process.

This last round of consultation on the draft plan received great engagement across several platforms. On Social Pinpoint, we saw 2,574 visits and 593 document downloads, showing strong interest. On Facebook, there was solid engagement, with 217 likes, comments, and shares. Over on LinkedIn, we reached 1024 members. Antenno performed well, too, with 531 people opening the link. Finally, our e-newsletter saw a good response with 68.1 percent of recipients opening the link, showing the content really resonated.

Along with nine traditional media releases and adverts, media pickup proved that we used the right channels to get our message out far and wide.

Karāpiro Lake Domain Reserve Management Plan review – In Progress

This is progressing well, with key groups actively contributing their feedback. This consultation, focusing on balancing environmental, recreational, and cultural needs, has seen strong input from mana whenua and organisations including the Auckland Rowing Association, Cambridge Yacht and Motor Boat Club, Canoe Racing New Zealand, and Karāpiro Rowing, among others. These stakeholders have provided insight into event support, recreational facilities, and environmental outcomes.

To date, the consultation has generated 27 responses, with 907 page views and 506 visitors to the review page. Social media engagement included 66 comments, and 68 reactions on our Facebook post. These insights are helping to shape the direction of the draft Reserve Management Plan, which will be open for further community feedback in mid-2025

Lake Ngā Roto Reserve Management Plan – In Progress

The Lake Ngā Roto Reserve Management Plan review began in late 2024, with initial engagement focusing on key issues like water quality, ecological health, and the lake’s recreational use. So far, we've gathered valuable feedback from mana whenua and the community to inform the draft management plan. Formal consultation began in February, and a recent drop-in session at the lake provided the community with an opportunity to engage directly with the project team. This event helped build relationships, strengthened the project’s foundations, and allowed the community to share their views while learning more about the plan.

Strategic Communication Highlights

A lot of time during the past few months has been spent on developing communication and engagement strategies for the Long Term Plan, Local Water Done Well and the Annual Report. This year we took the time to share the highlights from the previous financial year with the community. This was a multi-channel approach that included social media and traditional print advertising and was well received.

The Long Term Plan and Local Water Done Well approach has required significant planning, outreach, and execution to ensure community involvement and effective communication.

We also continued to inform the community about the financial challenges facing the council, including rising debt, inflation, and the government’s changes to water services. This has been a key part of taking the community on the journey with us, from the Enhanced Annual Plan through to the Long Term Plan. By making the information transparent and inclusive, we’ve ensured our community is with us every step of the way.

More tactical communication highlights included the following media releases, the aim of which was to take a proactive approach to communicating high-profile community issues:

- Possible lifeline for Cambridge Water Tower
- Major reset for Cambridge Connections project
- Council stands strong against waste-to-energy plant proposal
- Waipā confirms support for Waikato Water Done Well
- Double-deckers a ‘gamechanger’ for Waipā bus services
- Drinking water arsenic levels get the all-clear
- Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant Build on Track
- Council speaks out on ‘divisive, harmful’ Treaty Principles Bill
- Cambridge pathway completed at last
- Shakespeare Street to get interim repairs

Event impact and participation highlights

A total of 27 events were supported through the District Promotion Fund, with \$75,000 allocated to help strengthen community connections and boost local economic activity. We supported 13 events through the fund during this period. In addition, 18 non-funded events were processed through event application permitting, with the team providing general support, guidance, and advice to ensure their success. This support helps to foster community connections and highlights the vibrant spirit of Waipā.

Summer events in Waipā have been a standout, delivering an action-packed season. This included large-scale events like the Waka Ama National Sprint Championships, which attracted 3,875 paddlers, a 19 percent increase from last year. Competitors from Aotearoa and internationally including

Australia, Fiji, Tahiti, the UK, and the USA. The event saw strong youth participation, with over 60 percent of paddlers aged 5–23 years old. Local community-driven events like the Cambridge Christmas Festival and Stragglers Charity Car Show also added to the district's vibrancy. Despite reduced funding due to financial challenges, these events showcased Waipā as a fantastic place to live, work, and visit.

The community celebration held on December 13 to honour Waipā's record number of Olympians and Paralympians was the district's largest-ever celebration of its champion athletes. With 20 local athletes, including cyclists, rowers, sailors, and para-cyclists, joined by their coaches and support teams, the event was a proud moment for Waipā. Held at Victoria Square, Cambridge, the Civic ceremony and community festivities attracted many families who enjoyed the sporting themed activities, held in partnership with Cambridge Football Club, Cambridge Athletics Club and Youthtown.

The event also coincided with other key sporting events, including the Karāpiro Rowing Inc Christmas Regatta and the APL New Zealand Grand Prix, further boosting Waipā's sporting profile. Waipā's 'Home of Champions' spirit shone through, as residents came together to celebrate the achievements of their local heroes.