

# Broadband workshop asks for residents views

A DIGITAL workshop on how better broadband could improve the lives of Waitomo people was held in Te Kuiti recently.

Hosted by the Waitomo District Council (WDC) at The Les Munro Centre on August 28, the workshop was delivered by the council's economic development officer Rachael Laver and Bay of Plenty digital technology expert Jenny Barrett of The Writing Room.

In July, the council applied for funding to make Ultra Fast Broadband (UFB) available to more residents as part of the Government's \$200 million

Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) to deliver faster broadband to areas that fall outside the current UFB footprint.

The towns which will receive UFB are expected to be announced in January.

The next step for the local council is establishing a Digital Engagement Plan (DEP) to determine how it can best partner with the business sector and community regarding UFB access.

The workshop in Te Kuiti was held to help WDC identify what projects it would include in its DEP submission to the Government which is required by September 18.

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## GREAT REPRESENTATION

Mrs Laver says the workshop attracted "great" representation from several community groups and organisations and representatives from the tourism and rural sectors

"The workshop was aimed at firstly giving attendees an insight into what is possible with better connectivity and to also discuss the barriers to achieving their digital dreams, such as financial constraints, skill and knowledge, security and confidence," says Mrs Laver.

"It concluded with a brainstorming session to identify potential projects to reduce those barriers."

Ideas included extending community computer hubs (similar to Te Kuiti Library) to other areas of the district, increasing digital support and education for people (i.e. how to set up and connect home computers to the internet) and digital technology open days.

## IN BRIEF

### Recycling shed delayed

WAITOMO District Council's plans to build a roof over the Te Kuiti recycling area have been pushed back off because of bad weather. The decision to cover the recycling area at the Waitomo District Landfill on William St was made to provide a customer friendly, all weather recycling service for local residents. To be constructed by Total Span at a cost of \$50,000 the expected completion date was July but it is now due to be finished early next month. Maniapoto Maori Trust Board is today hosting a reducing waste presentation at the Te Kuiti High School pavilion at 1 pm.

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