

Otorohanga awash after weather bomb

FROM P3

Owner Guy Whitaker says the carpets were soaked and he's waiting for his insurers to assess the damage and sort out what happens next.

He says he was told what was happening by retailer John Haddad who called shop owners who'd shut their doors for the day at 5pm.

"I got up there about 7.15pm when the storm was pretty much over," says Mr Whitaker.

"It was a bit of a mess and the worst of it took a couple of hours to clean. At that time a lot of other people were still mopping up their premises.

"I've never seen anything like it – a real freak of nature."

Maniapoto St clothing retailer Peter Burton had water from flooded guttering pour down the walls of his store, mostly in the menswear section.

"The stock damage isn't too bad because most of it was protected by glass shelving. The carpet is pretty damp though," he says.

"We've got the driers going so hopefully we'll be back to normal in the next few days. We were lucky - other main street retailers have been far worse affected."

Otorohanga Business Association president Kylie Mouat says: "It was pleasing to see a large number of residents pitching in to help move stock, salvage goods and clear water from shops.

"The nature of people doing business in Otorohanga is not to dwell on misfortune and with the many extra hands at the ready, they'll get on as best they can.

"They're coping remarkably well, given the weather bomb was a big shock."

PITCHING IN

Otorohanga's Kiwiana Leisure Park co-owner Aaron Hearfield says a drain overflowed in the reserve above the new business turning his cricket nets and 18-hole mini golf course on Alex Telfer Drive into a lake.

"The cricket turf was covered in mud and the golf greens were a mess. It was like a river running through here.

"We had to work desperately hard to open up for the long weekend – an important time for us



CRICKET WASHOUT: Wednesday's weather bomb dumped mud and debris over Kiwiana Leisure Park cricket nets and 18-hole mini golf course on Alex Telfer Drive. PHOTO SUPPLIED

as a new venture."

Met Service meteorologist Lisa Murray says the "significant" thunderstorm caused more than 2000 lightning strikes in 24 hours over the North Island with 873 in the Waikato concentrated over Otorohanga.

"We issued a severe thunderstorm watch for parts of the North Island, including Otorohanga through our website, Facebook, Twitter and to regional councils," says Ms Murray.

"This thunderstorm brought torrential rain and we rarely use that word, but you guys had it.

"Met Service experts estimate you received 76mls in a three hour period. That's a lot of rain."

Mr Murphy agrees "it was a doozie", but says the deluge has been "soaked up like a sponge" on his Mangawhero Rd farm.

"Our transformer was hit by lightning leaving us without power but, boy, we needed that rain.

"Farmers in our area are grinning ear to ear."

Amalgamation not on local election agenda

LOCAL body elections loom in October.

And once again, the perennial question of whether councils would/should amalgamate has risen its head, accompanied by the pros of reducing costs and therefore savings to ratepayers.

Both councils in the North King Country, Otorohanga and Waitomo want to remain independent – as do the 10 other councils in the Waikato – as they do not see any advantages to be gained by going down the amalgamation track.

Even at a central governmental level, there is no longer the fervent desire as it's accepted that one size does not fit all.

LOOK CLOSELY

Minister of Local Government Peta Sam Lotu-Liga urges councils and communities to look closely and critically at their respective circumstances and consider options that best meet the needs of their region.

That's exactly what has happened in the Waikato region with the formation of the Waikato Mayoral Forum (WMF) in 2012, which both North King Country councils support.

In essence, the forum is a pseudo-type amalgamation of councils where it brings together voices from all 12 councils in the province.

"Both Waitomo and Otorohanga councils are members of the forum

and have committed to full participation in its governance and programme development work, says Waitomo district chief executive Chris Ryan.



CHRIS RYAN

"The effort is wide-ranging to date, with some shared services projects in development, some collaborative procurement to leverage savings and the sharing of staff capabilities to develop common policy and procedures."

Otorohanga chief executive Dave Clibbery agrees.

BENEFITS

Since the formation of the mayoral forum the benefits of collaboration can be seen in the millions of dollars saved in costs by neighbours working in a co-ordinated way to save when procuring services.

This includes combined professional services, insurance brokerage, roading, water treatment, economic development, waste management and purchasing of materials.

ENCOURAGED

Mr Lotu-Liga says he is encouraged by the initiative in which regional mayors are working together to deliver better, cost-effective services and infrastructure for their ratepayers.

So while amalgamation is still on the table that decision remains entirely with individual councils and the communities they serve.

THE PROFESSIONALS



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SUMMER SUN SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PETS

Summer is well underway and the majority of us enjoy time away with our pets. Car trips can be fun. However, being left in a hot car can potentially be fatal for your pet. Car temperatures can soar to 50°C, very quickly. Dogs and cats do not sweat like humans; they pant to cool themselves and sweat through their pads.

Heat stroke is dangerous, as your pet is unable to cool themselves down. The best preventative is to leave your pet at home for the day or make sure you have regular stops and cool water. The beach can be a fun place to visit, but beware of black sand which can burn your feet and your dogs' paws. Dogs should also be offered shade and cold water on the beach.

Animals with exposed pink skin – noses in particular - should have animal sun block applied. Dogs may not want to run around as much in the heat of the day. Evening or early morning walks are a safer, cooler option and cats seek out cooler places during the day. As a final tip, pop ice cubes in your pet's water bowl to keep their water cool.



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THE NUTS & BOLTS OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS

New Zealand employment law requires all employers to have a written employment agreement with each employee; it ensures both parties are clear on the terms and conditions of employment and acts as a referral point in the instance of any dispute. While many Individual Employment Agreements are many pages long, there are actually only 9 mandatory clauses required by law. These are:

- The names of the employer and the employee
- A description of the work to be performed (job

- description)
- The place of work
- Hours of work
- Remuneration details (hourly rate or annual salary)
- Services available to resolve employment relationship problems
- Provision for remuneration for working on public holidays
- An employment protection provision that will apply if the employer's business is sold or transferred, or if the employee's work is contracted out

- A reference to the fact that personal grievances must be lodged within 90 days of any incidents occurring. There are also a number of optional clauses we recommend, including other matters agreed upon, such as trial periods or probationary arrangements. And as an employee's situation changes, due to an increase in remuneration or change in job title, a variation to agreement must be written and signed by both parties. Maybe it's time to review your existing agreements to check you've kept your employees' details up-to-date.

For professional advice contact us at:



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