



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
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“WAIROA MATARIKI BIGGEST IN COUNTRY” 27TH JUNE – 1ST JULY

Wairoa College’s Sheree Cotter says Matariki is one of those unique events which has the power to bring people together to inspire unity among the district’s various communities.

And that’s what she’s hoping for when Wairoa hosts it’s new format Matariki festival from Monday 27th June to Friday 1 July.

“Matariki is unique because it involves all our people, from Wairoa, Mahia, Mohaka, Nuhaka and Lake Waikaremoana, everyone comes in and it’s massive to see them all together in one place,” Ms Cotter said.

She is the Head of Music at Wairoa College and so is well known among Wairoa entertainers and singers, who will play a big part in this year’s Matariki. And many of the young artists who are to perform for Matariki were from the college’s senior music academy.

“I am also a music tutor for (kapa haka group) Te Rerenga Kotuku which will be performing at Matariki along with K-Line and Dark Horse Blues Band” Ms Cotter said.

“Rose Campbell, who is just 9 years old, will be performing for the fourth year in a row at Matariki, she sings for the younger audience and is a Campbell from Mahia,” she said.

Wairoa's Matariki celebrations will begin at dawn on July 2 with a journey up Whakapunake Mountain. This hiko heralds the start of Wairoa's new format Matariki celebrations organised by two mothers, Sara Rangi and Michelle Tahuri.

"We have the biggest Matariki celebrations in New Zealand so we wanted to extend the activities over a week instead of trying to squeeze everything into one day," said Sara Rangi.

"Last year was a great success but exhausting by the end of it. This year we have planned something special for each age group to make that day memorable for those who come along," said Sara.

Sara and Michelle both work for Sport Hawke's Bay and will host all activities at the Wairoa Community Centre.

On Tuesday 28th June Matariki storytelling will take place 9am to 2pm alongside a community wide colouring in competition.

On Wednesday 29th June Matariki korero to country schools runs from 10am to 11am in the Wairoa Community Centre Function Room, Poi Toa Primary School games from 11am to 2pm in the gymnasium and a rangatahi/youth pool party runs from 5pm to 8pm in the Wairoa Community Centre Pool.

Thursday 30th June will be devoted to Ki o Rahi competitions for Intermediate age students in the Wairoa Community Centre Gymnasium. Kohangareo tamariki will be hitting the dance floor at Po Kanikani from 4.30pm to 6pm upstairs in the Wairoa Community Centre Function Room.

On Friday 1st July at dawn a hardy group will take on the Tri Maunga Challenge.

That night in the gymnasium a karaoke concert will be held about 5pm to "get everyone warmed up" for the entertainment which Ms Cotter said would start about 6pm.

The event will end with a fireworks display outside the community centre.

This will be the seventh year Ms Cotter has helped organize Matariki and it was always an event she looked forward to.

“The fireworks display was something the whole community loved, Ms Cotter said.

“It’s not often Wairoa gets a fireworks display and its absolutely amazing because cars line the banks of the Wairoa river for miles just to see it, people come out especially for the fireworks.

“And it’s really a massive event, we don’t have any problems, people are just there for the kaupapa and there to support the community and the kids who are performing”

“This is the only opportunity where Wairoa gets to showcase it’s local talent, especially local music talent, it’s a whanau atmosphere where the whole community comes out to support Matariki, it’s awesome,” she said.

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