

*The Right Reverend Andrew Hedge
Anglican Bishop of Waiapu*

The Cathedral Vestry
c/-The Very Rev'd Di Woods
Dean Waiapu Cathedral
via email

Wednesday 18 December 2024

Response to Report from Cathedral Vestry dated 27 October 2024

Dear Dean Di and members of Cathedral Vestry,

The Standing Committee met on 7 November and considered the report received from the Cathedral Vestry dated 27 October 2024. As a result of that discussion it was agreed that I would seek advice from the Diocesan Chancellor on the question of whether or not a decision could be made to cease worshipping in the primary building of a parish.

The advice from our Chancellor is that the proposal made by the Cathedral Vestry could, in the first instance, only proceed for further consideration with the consent of the Bishop.

I have considered the proposal paying attention to the concerns relating to the finances of the parish, and the uncertainty of the future of the building, noting the impact on the people of the parish as a primary concern.

I have also given attention to the unexpected progress made following the successful expert conferencing between representatives of the Diocese and WBDT with the Napier City Council. The result of the conferencing is the agreement by the NCC staff to provide a discretionary pathway for the partial demolition and redevelopment of the Cathedral building. While this is yet to be formalised within the District Plan, all parties see this as a favourable outcome which is unlikely to be challenged by Heritage NZ and has been achieved two or more years ahead of what was our working timetable for potential agreement by NCC.

The decision I have reached is that I do not give consent for the proposal by the Cathedral Vestry to proceed. This means that the parish will continue to function in all regards as it has done within the Cathedral building for the foreseeable future.

By consensus the Standing Committee have agreed that they are understanding of the financial situation of the parish, and the potential for the Cathedral parish to be unlikely to provide a break even budget prior to the redevelopment.

The Standing Committee have also agreed to extra support being provided by the Shared Services team to the Cathedral Vestry.

I have requested Colleen, the Diocesan Registrar, with the support of Neville, the Diocesan Finance Manager, to work closely with the Cathedral Vestry to prepare a financial budget for 2025. The budget will include the normal operational activities of the Cathedral parish and work to limit the exposure of the parish to a deficit.

I have also requested Colleen to work with Steve, the Diocesan Property Portfolio Manager, to work with the Cathedral Vestry to review known maintenance, and health and safety, issues at

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the Cathedral and how they can be prioritised, addressed or mitigated in light of the long-term trajectory for the Cathedral.

The Waiapu Board of Diocesan Trustees will commence discussions in early 2025 with potential developers and funding partners for the strengthening and repurposing work for the Cathedral building.

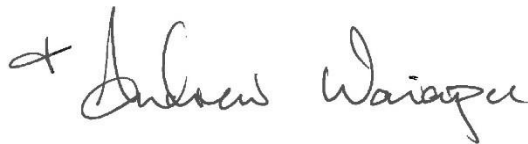
The Napier City Council are due to publish the District Plan in September 2025 which we expect to include the provisions agreed upon during the expert conferencing without challenge.

The exact timeline for the future redevelopment of the Cathedral cannot be quantified at the moment, however the Cathedral Vestry and parishioners will be kept informed about progress as things develop. There will be a time when the Cathedral will need to be vacated to allow for redevelopment. Provision will be made nearer that time for alternative arrangements for worship.

I will do my best to ensure that as plans progress, there will be advanced notice to parishioners and the general public of significant final services, such as the last Christmas or Easter prior to the Cathedral redevelopment.

I appreciate the care for people, finance and plant that members of the Cathedral Vestry have shown throughout the preparation of the proposal. While this decision is not what you have requested I do believe that it is our best way forward for all. In acknowledgement that situations like this can change over time I will review this decision with Standing Committee in November 2025.

May you be blessed this Advent and Christmas with the continuing sense of hope, joy and peace of the Nativity and encouraged in your service of God.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Waiapu". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name below it.

The Rt Rev'd Andrew Hedge
Bishop of Waiapu