

Kapiti Observer

Thursday, November 26, 2015

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Green light for venue



Kapiti is to get another much-needed performing arts venue, with the green light given to an expanded \$10 million facility at Kapiti College. With most of the funding in the bag, construction work is set to start early next year and the 350-seat centre could be opened by October 2017.

\$10m performing arts centre is all go

KAROLINE TUCKEY

Work has begun on a \$10 million community performing arts centre that backers hope will bring more arts and events to our back door.

The Kapiti College project has grown from an initial \$5 million design for a performing arts centre to suit the school's needs, as well as some community use.

However board of trustees chair Jennie Gutry said feedback to consultation indicated a wide gap in community facilities available and strong interest from outside groups, so the project was

redesigned to better meet demand.

About \$8 million of funds had been raised, and the board gave the project the green light for work to start earlier this month.

The first signs of work at the site have begun, with the removal of trees in the school grounds.

Further site preparation is expected to begin early next year, with the centre hoped to be opened by October 2017.

Plans include a 348-seat performance theatre, a black box theatre to seat 100, and a box office.

It would also house teaching

and rehearsal spaces, such as a drama and dance studio, music and film-making classrooms, practice rooms, and a recording studio.

The new centre would provide "an affordable space for community performers, a modern theatre with quality acoustics good enough to attract national and international acts, with support spaces such as a green room", Gutry said.

The build is to be completed in a single stage, rather than separate steps as originally planned.

Money raised so far includes \$750,000 of Lotteries funds, \$1.6

million from Kapiti Coast District Council, dependent on an agreement about community access to the centre, funds from the Ministry of Education to help meet needs relating to roll growth, and savings by the board.

A public fundraising campaign is planned, to help raise the last \$2 million.

As well as supporting the Kapiti College centre the Kapiti Coast District Council Long Term Plan includes \$20.8 million budgeted for an events centre in the Paraparaumu town centre.

That project would not begin until 2028 at the earliest.



A wide view of the site for a new community performing arts centre to be built at Kapiti College. Construction is to begin next year.