



---

**MEDIA RELEASE: Wednesday 16 March 2022**

## **Wairarapa United withdraw from Central League division for 2022**

Wairarapa United Football Club (WUFC) is disappointed to announce that it will not field a senior men's team in the region's Capital Football Federation Central League this season due to Head Coach, Kale Herbert's, resignation. The club will continue to support a men's under-17's team in the Capital League, women's and junior teams, as well as delivering 'Football in the Community' coaching to Wairarapa primary and secondary schools.

Coach Herbert gave notice of his resignation to the WUFC Committee, Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March. With just two weeks to the start of the season a forty-eight-hour window from Capital Football to find the required NZF B licensed coach proved impossible to close.

"It's extremely disappointing for players, committee members, supporters and the wider football community not to have a Wairarapa team competing in the Central League. A premier side raises the profile of the region and offers developing players the opportunity to experience higher-grade football more readily," said WUFC Chairman, James Taylor.

"We knew this season's roster was young and we were under-par as we waited for Covid-19 restrictions to lift, allowing several more experienced players to run out with us. The team would have been up against sides with a weighting of National League players. Kale felt, and the club agreed, that a season of potentially heavy defeats were not in the best interests of the young talent we have been developing. Wairarapa United will support affected players as best we can and continue to develop players and coaches at junior and senior levels."

The Wairarapa United Football Club has a 26-year history, competing at the highest regional level for the last thirteen years, with a 2011 Chatham Cup win a highlight. The region has a smaller talent pool than neighbouring Wellington but has held its own, with mid-table finishing positions over recent years. The coaching, sponsorship and passion of local business-man Phil Keinsley enabled the club's success through this time.

WUFC has traditionally had its work cut-out to attract players to relocate to the region and supplement home-grown talent. Fielding a team in the Capital Football Federation Central League can cost in excess of \$100k per year for registration fees, licensed coaches, travel, equipment and

other associated costs. With access to a much deeper sponsorship base, Wellington clubs can prove more attractive to players.

“Our club believes in growing and developing men’s, women’s and youth talent within in the region. Building, and maintaining, a regional club is tough for any code with many local sports teams feeling the pinch at the moment. We wish our competitive teams all the best for the season and thank our players, their families, funders and supporters for their ongoing commitment to club football in Wairarapa.”

Wairarapa United Football Club will continue conversations with the Capital Football Federation towards sustainable funding for player and coach development across the region. The federation is aware of the particular challenges faced by rural regions in supporting pathways for development.

ENDS

#### Note to editors

Kale Herbert took up the Wairarapa United Head Coach spot at the end of 2021 following the departure of Coach Paul Ifill, who had been with the club seven seasons.

Contact: James Taylor, WUFC Club Captain: 027 834 8084