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# Letter: Who's to blame for dormant town centre?



Dave Stewart

Like Keith Melville, I was in the CBD last Friday and couldn't help but notice a town centre devoid of people and traffic, on what normally is a busy workday.

There were few pedestrians in sight, my favourite coffee shop had few customers, and car parks along The Strand were vacant by the score.

I went home and picked up the paper and found that since the election of the National-led coalition government, 33,000 more people were unemployed, we're in the deepest recession in 30 years (aside from Covid), record numbers of people are

needing government support to get by, free prescriptions have been cut, half-priced public transport has been cut, food bank funding has been cut and all this despite borrowing \$15 billion dollars to fund tax cuts that we were told would fix the cost of living crisis.

While the Government shovelled billions to big tobacco and mining companies, 2700 businesses went bankrupt in the last year, and to top it off I read that Nicola Willis burned \$671 million from the Bank of Taxpayers on no new ferries.

In desperation to seek a culprit, I thought of blaming the Whakatāne District Council, but I decided that would make me look a bit of silly.

Instead I made a mental note to talk to Keith about it next time we sat down for a coffee and get his thoughts. Thanks to his letter, I don't need to bother now.

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