

Tuia Taitonga Southlink



Te Kaunihera o Taranaki ki Te Tonga
South Taranaki
District Council

He karere tā te Kaunihera o Taranaki ki te Tonga News from the South Taranaki District Council

Long Term Plan Focuses on Infrastructure

Increased spending on roads and wastewater infrastructure, a commitment to getting on with town centre upgrades in the District's smaller communities and an increase in the rates subsidy were some of the big-ticket items in the South Taranaki District Council's 10-year Long Term Plan, which was adopted at Monday's (8 July) extraordinary Council meeting.

The Plan's adoption follows a month of public consultation which saw the Council receive 235 submissions and a clean audit opinion.

At the meeting, Deloitte Partner Assurance and Advisory Bennie Greyling thanked South Taranaki District Council elected members and staff involved in the process of completing the Long Term Plan 2024 – 2034.

"Congratulations," says Mr Greyling. "From our perspective it's a clean audit opinion which is good."

South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon says the District is on an upward trajectory and the Council's Long Term Plan is about maintaining that momentum while also doing what's needed to look after the District's assets.

"In the feedback received, our residents have told us that they want to see better roads, our towns amenities and gardens looking good and an improved dog control service. In response, over the next three years, we're increasing our roading expenditure, have committed to continuing town centre upgrades in Hāwera, Manaia, Eltham, Ōpunakē, Pātea and Waverley, and have budgeted to increase resources in the animal control team," he says.

Of the 235 submissions received, 71% supported more money spent on roading, 82% supported an increased rates subsidy, 54% supported earthquake strengthening Eltham Town Hall to 67% of the New Building Standard and 79% supported increasing user fees and charges.

"The big challenge for us is how we afford to do this at a time when local government is facing unprecedented cost increases". Like households and businesses across the country, Council is facing increased costs for the things we buy. Local government inflation has risen by around 20% over the last two years and continues to rise. Fuel, bitumen, electricity, construction, and insurance costs have all increased considerably - in some cases



contractors' costs have increased up to 60%. Higher interest rates have increased the cost of borrowing and paying back debt and compliance costs driven by government requirements have meant we need to spend a lot more on our infrastructure. "This means we need to pay more just to keep doing what we are already doing, without adding anything else," says Mayor Nixon.

Mayor Nixon says the Council worked tirelessly to find savings across all activities to keep

the rates increase as low as possible, including reducing budgets for things like the Hāwera Town Centre revitalisation project, tourism, and events, delaying some non-urgent capital projects works, increasing borrowing and the amount Council's Long Term Investment Fund subsidises rates each year by an additional \$350k.

Despite this, the average total rate increase for the 2024/25 Year is 11.1% with an average rate increase over the next ten years of 5.41%.

"We know the rate increase will be really hard for a lot of ratepayers. It's higher than what we want and higher than we've had over the previous ten years, but it reflects what it costs to simply maintain existing services while ensuring our critical infrastructure meets our community's needs and government requirements," says Mayor Nixon.

"If we don't maintain our assets well, they will cost us more in the long term if we have to replace them sooner than expected or all at once. You don't have to look hard to see places around the country where years of underinvestment by councils has led to unacceptable infrastructure failures and we don't want South Taranaki to be in that situation," he says.

The skyrocketing costs are affecting councils right across the country.

"Councils are acutely aware they need to balance the need for investment with affordable increases, but the pressure has reached a tipping point and I think we need to have a national conversation about local government funding - including the value of the services councils provide to communities," says Mayor Nixon.

Visit www.southtaranaki.com/ltp to view the plan.

Aotea Utanganui Extension

Last Friday (5 July), around 65 people gathered to celebrate the opening of the Stage Two building at Aotea Utanganui - Museum of South Taranaki in Pātea.

The new building, blessed on the day by Ngā Ruahine Kaumatua John Hooker, was designed to display large collection items which includes the Pātea Freezing Works fire engine and other machinery from the District's past.

Mayor Phil Nixon noted the hard work that the Trust had put into fundraising for the project and the support that the Council has provided over many years. He commended staff for the installation of the large agricultural items, many of which he recognised from his own farming background over the years. Council's Libraries and Cultural Services Manager, Cath Sheard, says the new building gives the opportunity to tell new stories. "It's not just about the small objects we can hold in our hands, but the larger items that many of us know so little about," she says.

The new exhibition is open to the public by appointment only.



Upcoming Meetings

Te Kāhui Matauraura
Wednesday 17 July, 10am

Environment and Hearings
Committee
Wednesday 17 July, 4pm

Policy and Strategy Committee
Monday 22 July, 1pm

District Licensing Committee
Friday 26 July, 10am

Unless specified, meetings are held in the Council Chambers, Administration Building, Albion Street, Hāwera.

Notice of Impounded Stock

Section 49, Impounding Act 1955

1 x Billy Goat
Black/brown/white horns.
Approximately two-years-old.
Found wandering on Kent Street, Pātea, on 27 June 2024.

Unless claimed by the owners, this goat will be sold by public auction on 18 July 2024 at 1pm, at the South Taranaki District Pound, Beach Road, Hāwera, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with the Impounding Act 1955.

Antenno

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