

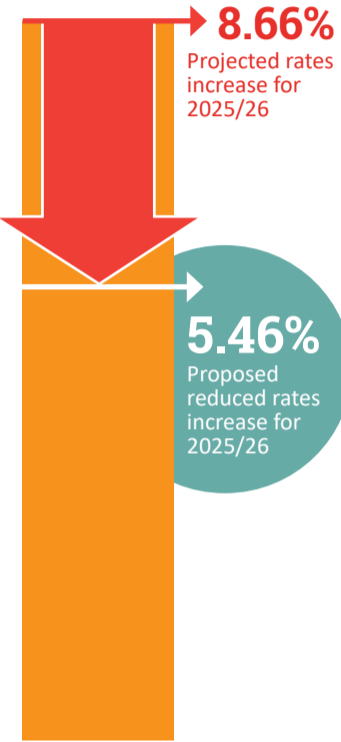


District-wide partial water restrictions on now.



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

Council Reduces Rate Rise



South Taranaki District councillors agreed to implement a range of cost cutting measures totalling almost \$1 million to reduce this year's average rate increase from 8.66% to 5.46%. Councillors signed off on the measures at Monday's (24 March) Policy and Strategy meeting, although this still needs to be formally ratified at Council's ordinary meeting on 14 April.

Rates had been projected to increase by 8.66% according to year two of the council's Long-Term Plan (LTP). However, to minimise the impact on ratepayers, councillors asked officers to find ways of getting it under 6%. Measures approved included cutting some community funding, reducing roading and district plan reserves, re-allocating some budgets and removing budgets where government policy has changed.

South Taranaki District Mayor Phil Nixon says the savings identified are practical and realistic. "As a Council we have always been conscious about keeping costs down. It's our responsibility to be as prudent and careful as

we possibly can be with every ratepayer dollar we spend," says Nixon.

"I believe we now have a better balance between providing the funding needed to maintain our current services and infrastructure to a good standard while keeping rates more affordable for our community. We will continue to prioritise and focus on the areas our community have told us they want to see improvements such as better roads, our towns amenities looking good and an improved dog control service.

However, affordability is a big issue for many in our community and with the cost of living being what it is, now is not the time to be burdening our ratepayers with high rate increases," he says. "With these savings I can confidently say to ratepayers that we have been rigorous in our efforts to identify and eliminate unnecessary expenditure, and demonstrate to them our commitment to being good, prudent governors of their money."

Amazing effort, South Taranaki

Since the new fortnightly kerbside collection was introduced last October, the total amount of food scraps South Taranaki has diverted from landfill and made into valuable compost over the last five months is 163.4 tonnes - the same weight as one and a half Blue Whales!



Taranaki Councils seek government deal to become Strategic Energy Zone

Fast Facts

- Taranaki's economy (gross domestic product) was valued at about \$11.3 billion last year (Infometrics).
- With about 130,000 people, Taranaki had a per capita GDP of \$80,000, compared with \$75,300 nationally (Stats NZ).
- Taranaki has about 16,500 businesses and 64,000 people in work (Infometrics).
- The average household income is almost \$114,000 (Infometrics).
- Dairy farming and processing, and oil and gas together make up 34% of Taranaki's economy (Stats NZ).

Taranaki's councils have put forward a proposal under the Government's City and Regional Deals initiative, highlighting the benefits of closer collaboration to accelerate key actions in Tapuae Roa – Taranaki's Economic Development Strategy. The proposal includes recognising Taranaki as a strategic energy zone for New Zealand.

New Plymouth, Stratford, and South Taranaki District Councils, alongside the Taranaki Regional Council, are seeking a strengthened partnership with central government to harness the region's strengths, unlock economic growth and investment, and enable region-wide planning for housing, infrastructure, industry, energy, and sustainable food and agriculture. The proposal builds on the region's well-established energy sector, existing infrastructure, and skilled workforce.

With its abundant natural energy resources, Taranaki has significant potential to drive both regional and national economic growth. Large-scale renewable energy development could attract investment, create new jobs, and enhance skill development opportunities. Recognising the region's strategic economic role would also support long-term, integrated planning to ensure future infrastructure and workforce needs are met.

"The initial proposal builds on the Tapuae Roa regional economic strategy, aiming to work closely with central government on initiatives that will turbo-charge our regional economy for the benefit of the entire country," said Taranaki Mayoral Forum Chair and Stratford District Mayor, Neil Volzke.

Key opportunities outlined in the proposal include advancing the Applied Innovation Centre Taranaki, with a focus on green gas, biogas, and biomethane research and production. The centre would attract scientific and engineering talent while fostering emerging biotechnology companies.

The proposal also highlights the success of Branching Out, a regional diversification initiative led by Te Puna Umanga Venture Taranaki. Branching Out has made significant progress in developing high-value products such as medicinal plants, hemp fibre for construction, and sustainable vegetable and grain crops. A long-term funding partnership with central government could accelerate investment, unlock underutilised land, and support regulatory reviews to remove barriers to hemp production and export.

The Government will assess city and regional proposals against the City and Regional Deals Strategic Framework, with the first regional deal expected to be finalised in late 2025.

Upcoming Meetings

Public are welcome to attend

Risk and Assurance Committee
Monday 31 March, 1pm

Ordinary Council
Monday 14 April, 4pm

Unless specified, meetings are held at Camberwell Lounge, TSB Hub, Camberwell Road, Hāwera.

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