



OUR PLACE

Ko Konei

Your Whakatāne District Council Community update July 2014



The Whakatāne District Aquatic and Fitness Centre has a new mural thanks to the Whakatāne Community Board. The mural, which is already proving popular with the public, is by local artist Marc Spijkerbosch, whose work has been featured throughout New Zealand and the world.

Whakatāne District Council Annual Plan adopted

The Whakatāne District Council's Annual Plan and Fees and Charges for 2014/15 have now been adopted and are in effect.

A report setting out the key changes from the draft Annual Plan was received at an extraordinary Council meeting on Monday and confirmed a 2.95 percent increase in the District's total rates requirement for the year. The Council had previously indicated that average rates across the District would rise by less than three percent and Mayor Tony Bonne says the final outcome reflects the determination by elected members and staff to hold rates increases to an affordable level.

"There's always a balance to be struck between affordability and the need to improve the services and infrastructure the Council provides for the community," he says. "I think that balance has been achieved, because we've been able to accommodate extra spending in some key areas, such as stormwater improvements in Whakatāne and Ōhope, covering an increase in the cost of waste disposal and lifting maintenance standards on the District's unsealed roads, while keeping the average rates increase very close to the 2.91 percent indicated in our draft Annual Plan."

Also adopted at Monday's meeting was the Rates Resolution for the 12 months commencing on 1 July 2014, which sets out the exact charges to be levied for general rates, the Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) for all rateable properties and the various targeted rates applying to services such as roading, stormwater, sewerage, water supplies and refuse removal. The first rates instalment for the year will be payable on or before Friday, 22 August 2014.

New course for senior drivers

A Senior Driving Safety Course has been launched in Whakatāne to help older people avoid traumatic driving situations and stay safe on the roads.

According to the Ministry of Transport, senior drivers are 3.5 times more likely to be seriously injured or killed than a young person involved in a crash of similar severity. This is largely due to senior drivers' increased fragility and vulnerability, rather than their driving ability.

The new course helps older drivers recognise the effects that ageing has on driving and analyse how their driving could be affected, as well as passing on strategies for coping with these factors.

Course coordinator Chris King-Hazel, from the Whakatāne District Council, says the first course went very well.



Coordinator Chris King-Hazel (standing) and course participants.

"It was a great day. All the participants enjoyed it, and they all took something different away. They've all said they'd highly recommend it to other drivers."

Future courses will be run on demand. To register your interest, contact Whakatāne District Council on 07 306 0500.



Council signals preferred social housing option

The Whakatāne District Council's Policy Committee has signalled a clear preference for the future provision of social housing in the District.

The Social Housing Review – Issues and Options report, received by the Committee on 26 June, sets out six possible options for the future operation of the Council's 79 pensioner housing units. Mayor Tony Bonne says Council elected members believe that option five – transferring the ownership of the units and delivery of the social housing service to an approved Community Housing Provider (CHP) – offers the best way forward.

The Council is now seeking the community's views on how the social housing service should be delivered. Preliminary consultation on the proposal opened on Monday, 30 June, and submissions will close at 5pm on 30 July 2014.

Mayor Tony Bonne says the review has been prompted by changes in the way central Government funds social housing, together with the need to meet a significant increase in demand arising from a predicted doubling of the District's elderly population by 2031.

Support for social services

Groups providing social services to the residents of the Whakatāne District are invited to apply for annual grant funding to assist their activities. Preference will be given to groups whose services feature strong voluntary input. Total funding of \$12,000 is available for allocation.

Application forms can be obtained from any Council Office, or accessed via the Council website - www.whakatane.govt.nz. Contact Janie Storey on 07 306 0530, or email janie.storey@whakatane.govt.nz for further information. Applications must be received by 5pm on Thursday, 31 July 2014 and addressed to The Chief Executive, Whakatāne District Council, Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne 3158.

Moutohorā Muttonbirds fly high in Melbourne

Whakatāne District Council's Moutohorā Muttonbirds were just half a point away from taking out the top spot in the 2014 Australasian Local Government Management Challenge.

The challenge sees teams from local government organisations compete in problem-solving exercises addressing real industry themes. 110 teams throughout Australasia entered the competition and the Muttonbirds achieved an extremely creditable second place overall, having won the right to represent New Zealand in the Melbourne finals by taking out the national event in May.

Marty Grenfell, Whakatāne District Council Chief Executive, says the outcome is a testimony to the hard work put in by the Muttonbirds team.

"This is the first time that Whakatāne has entered a team, and for us to feature on the podium in Australia is absolutely outstanding."



The Moutohorā Muttonbirds

Tourism conference proves popular

Nearly 70 people attended a recent forum organised by the Whakatāne District Council for local tourism providers. Council Promotions Officer Nicola Burgess says the level of interest in the forum showed how important the industry was for our District and how eager local providers are to engage with the wider industry.



Rhys Arrowsmith, Nicola Burgess & Chris Roberts at the tourism forum.

"We were very lucky to have two excellent guest speakers – Chris Roberts, incoming Chief Executive of the Tourism Industry Association, and Rhys Arrowsmith from Tourism Bay of Plenty. Chris, who grew up in Whakatāne, discussed marketing programmes that focus on special interest tourism – golf, mountain biking, walking, tramping and fishing – all of which are highly relevant to the Whakatāne District."