

Tuia Taitonga Southlink



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

Rising Costs Impact 2023/24 Rate Increase

Despite cost increases of up to 20%, South Taranaki District councillors to minimise the impact on ratepayers when they approved a 7.19% rate increase for its 2023-2024 Annual Plan at Monday's (1 May) Policy and Strategy Meeting.

South Taranaki Mayor, Phil Nixon says most councils around the country are facing similar rates increases, in some cases double digit rate increases. But by undertaking a range of cost cutting measures and redirecting some government funding, the Council had managed to keep the rate increase around the rate of inflation, without cuts to any services.

"Like households and businesses across the country, Council is facing increased costs for the things we buy," says Mayor Nixon. "Local Government inflation has risen by around 20% over the last two years, for things like fuel, bitumen, and electricity. Contractors' costs have increased by 16%, insurance and compliance costs driven by government requirements have increased considerably and interest rate increases have raised the cost of borrowing and financing debt," he says.

Previously in its Long-Term Plan Council had anticipated a 4.72% rate increase for 2023/24.

"As a Council we are always very conscious about keeping costs to our ratepayers down and over the last seven years we've had a relatively modest average annual rate increase of 2.59%, including a zero % increase in 2020/21 when we were trying to help businesses and households affected by the Covid lockdowns," says Mayor Nixon.

"Like households and businesses across the country, Council is facing increased costs for the things we buy."

"This year we've worked hard to minimise the impact of cost increases on ratepayers as much as possible by undertaking a number of measures such as not increasing our funded depreciation, reducing overall salary and training budgets, increasing some user fees and charges, spreading capital projects over a longer period of time and using reserves where available. As a result, we've been able to get our rate increase below local government inflation without cutting any of our service levels," he says.

Some of the user fees and charges to increase include the kerbside rubbish and recycling collection fee going from \$195.50 to \$220 and the dog registration fee going from \$155 to \$175.

Mayor Nixon says the Council has also applied to the Department of Internal Affairs to redirect \$1.12 million of the Government's \$4 million Better Off funding to go towards its Digital Transformation project and District Plan Review.

The Council will formally approve its 2023/24 Annual Plan on 26 June.

Upcoming Meetings

Ordinary Council
Monday 15 May, 4pm

Risk and Assurance Committee
Wednesday 17 May, 11am

Unless otherwise specified, meetings are held in the Council Chamber, Administration Building, Albion Street, Hāwera

Fourth Rates Instalment

Ratepayers are reminded that the last day for payment of the fourth instalment of rates for 2022/2023 without incurring a penalty will be Wednesday 31 May 2023.

Design Competition for Hāwera Skatepark



Te Hāwera Community Board is holding a skateboard design competition to decorate the fence at the Hāwera Skate Park. Chair, Nikki Watson says the Community Board identified the skate park as an area that could be enhanced and thought the existing green fence was a canvas

looks really funky, and it was important to us that the users of the park be involved in the process so they could feel a sense of pride and ownership," says Watson.

"The current board has an emphasis on promoting youth engagement and we are keen to further develop the skate park as a safe and welcoming place for young people to hang out. The previous community board also recently upgraded the CCTV cameras that overlook the park," she says.

The design competition is being done in partnership with local design company, Zodiac Signs who will turn the selected designs into digital graphics for the fence.

"This will be a time-consuming task and we are incredibly appreciative for their support," says Nikki.

Design templates can be picked up from the Hāwera LibraryPlus or by going to the Council's website www.southtaranaki.com The competition closes on Friday 22 September.

New Eltham Town Signs



Eltham's town entranceways have had a refresh with four new signs installed last Monday (24 April).

The bright new signs, created by local Maree Liddington, depict some of the flora and fauna that can be found at Rotokare Scenic Reserve, one of the towns many drawcards.

South Taranaki District Council community development advisor Hayley Old says these are a sign of things to come for Eltham with work starting on developing new wayfinding signs for the town as part of its urban revitalisation project.

waiting to be painted.

"We were inspired by the surfboard fence in Ōpunake which

Mural Enhances New Public Toilets at Event Centre

A whale-themed mural is the latest project to have been completed in the area outside the front of the Sinclair Electrical and Refrigeration Events Centre says South Taranaki District Council Community Development Advisor Fran Levings.

Local artist Chris Fuller was engaged by the Council to design and paint the mural on the new \$270,000 public toilet and carparking which was completed in late 2022. Fran says the mural will enhance the building and area while also hopefully deter vandalism.

Last year the Council, in collaboration with students from



Ōpunakē High School, rejuvenated the space around the Ōpunakē Skate Park by installing and painting new boards along the back wall adjacent to the Event Centre. The Taranaki Coastal Community Board also contributed \$3,000 to the project. There remains one concrete wall left to paint and arrangements for a local artist have been sought to do a mural there, which will complete the project.

Fran says that apart from the Ōpunakē town centre revitalisation upgrade, building a pump track at Hurst Park is one of the Council's next projects for Ōpunakē.

Museum to Temporarily Close on Mondays and Tuesdays

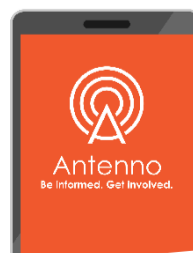
Aotea Utanganui - Museum of South Taranaki will temporarily be closed to the public on Mondays and Tuesdays while staff make preparations to shift part of its social history collection into its new, architecturally-designed building located at 4 Richmond Street, Pātea. The Museum will continue to be open from Wednesday to Saturday every week.



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