



Tuia Taitonga Southlink

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

South Taranaki and Stratford back two-council proposal for Taranaki's future

South Taranaki and Stratford District Councillors voted to support a proposal for two unitary councils covering Taranaki as part of the Government's Head Start pathway for simplifying local government.

The preferred option was for the South Taranaki District Council and Stratford District Council to amalgamate to form one unitary authority which takes on both district council and regional council functions for southern and central Taranaki.

South Taranaki District Mayor Phil Nixon says the decision reflects a strong and consistent message from the south and central Taranaki communities, iwi partners and key stakeholders that local voice, local decision-making, and local control over the services provided must be protected through any future local government changes. "Our community has been very clear. People understand change is coming, but they do not want south or central Taranaki's voice to be lost in a single, region-wide council," says Mayor Nixon. Mayor Nixon's comments were supported by strong community feedback which saw 1,392 responses being received through South Taranaki's Head Start survey, with an overwhelming 94% supporting a two-council model. Stratford District Council's survey reflected similar results with 83% of the 633 responses also supporting a two-council model.

"This decision gives us a clear position to take into the next stage of the Head Start process. It supports change where change is required, but it also recognises that Taranaki is not one single community with one set of needs, priorities or interests."

Stratford District Mayor Neil Volzke says the two Councils' preferred model is a balanced approach.

"It would simplify local government in Taranaki, while keeping decision-making closer to the communities most affected by those

decisions. We believe a Stratford and South Taranaki unitary council would better reflect

the needs of our rural and smaller-town communities, while still allowing regional functions to be managed in a coordinated way where that makes sense. As we develop our proposal we want to continue to work collaboratively with New Plymouth District Council and the Taranaki Regional Council to ensure that existing regional functions that need to continue being delivered regionally, will be."

The Government's Head Start pathway gives councils until 9 August 2026 to submit outline proposals for new unitary councils. Unitary councils combine the responsibilities currently carried out by district or city councils and regional councils.

Mayors Nixon and Volzke stressed their Councils' decision does not create a new council or make any immediate changes to services, rates, representation, or staffing.

This is about confirming our preferred option so we can continue to work together to develop an outline proposal that we will submit to Government by 9 August. Any proposal would still need to be considered by Government, and there would be a great deal of further work, analysis and engagement before any final decisions are made.

"We recognise that New Plymouth District Council has been considering its own position in relation to local government reform and we remain committed to maintaining a constructive regional dialogue and to working collaboratively on matters where a regional approach will deliver the best outcomes for the people of Taranaki," says Mayor Volzke.



Upcoming Meetings

Eltham-Kaponga Community Board
Monday 3 August, 10.30am
Mangamingi Hall, Morea Road, Mangamingi

Extraordinary Council
To confirm the Head Start Proposal
Monday 3 August, 1.30pm

Te Hāwera Community Board
Monday 3 August, 4pm
Wharepuni Marae, Fraser Road, Normanby

Taranaki Coastal Community Board
Wednesday 5 August, 10.30am
Te Kiri Hall, 2716 Eltham Road, Ōpunakē

Pātea Community Board
Wednesday 5 August, 4pm,
Hunter Shaw Building, Pātea

Te Kahui Matauraura
Wednesday 12 August, 10am

Environment and Hearings Committee
Monday 12 August, 1pm

Policy and Strategy Committee
Monday 17 August, 1pm

Risk and Assurance Committee (MERCER)
Monday 24 August, 11am

Water Services Committee
Wednesday 26 August, 1pm

Ordinary Council
Wednesday 9 September, 4pm



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

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Council takes step to improve Eltham water taste

Council is working towards improving Eltham's drinking water taste, with the installation of Granulated Activated Carbon filter at the Eltham Water Treatment Plant.

The filter will help reduce the taste and odour issues that can occur during the summer months when algae levels rise in the water source. While Eltham's drinking water consistently meets national drinking water standards, Council acknowledges that taste and odour remain a concern for many residents.

Installing the filter is scheduled to take place between 20 July and 28 August 2026, weather permitting.

Council's water services operations manager Rahul Sharma says the project responds directly to community feedback.

"While Eltham's water meets all drinking water standards, we

know the seasonal taste and odour issues experienced during the warmer, drier months can be frustrating for residents," says Rahul.

"The Activated Carbon filter is a practical interim solution that will help improve the taste and odour of the water while Council continues to investigate and budget for a permanent long-term treatment option."

Residents are encouraged to use water sparingly while the installation takes place and to contact Council if they experience any ongoing issues.

Council thanks the Eltham community for its patience and understanding while these important improvements are carried out to help deliver a better drinking water experience for residents.

SCOOP THAT POOP!



Please remember to pick up after your dog when using public spaces.

Cleaning up dog waste helps keep our parks, footpaths, and reserves clean, safe, and enjoyable for everyone.

Thank you for doing your part!



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Creative Communities Scheme Funding Applications open on 7 August 2026

Do you have a community arts project that needs some funding support? The next application round for Creative Communities funding opens on Friday 7 August 2026 and closes at 5pm on Friday 11 September 2026.

The South Taranaki Creative Communities Scheme provides funding assistance for community-based arts activities in South Taranaki that take place between 12 October 2026 – 12 October 2027 and meet one or more of the following funding criteria:

- Broad community involvement - A project that will create opportunities for local communities to engage with and participate in arts activities.
- Diversity - A project that will support the diverse arts and cultural traditions of local communities, enriching and promoting their uniqueness and cultural diversity.
- Young people - A project that will enable and encourage young people (under 18 years) to engage with and actively participate in the arts.

Application forms are now available on the Council website at

www.southtaranaki.com/funding or at your local LibraryPlus. For further information, email funding@stdc.govt.nz or phone (06) 278 0555 or 0800 111 323.



LYSAGHT-WATT TRUST
RONALD HUGH MORRIESON
LITERARY AWARDS

Entries closing soon for Lysaght-Watt Ronald Hugh Morrieson Literary Awards

Aspiring writers are encouraged to get their entries in, with less than a month remaining before the annual Lysaght-Watt Trust Ronald Hugh Morrieson Literary Awards close at 11.59pm on Wednesday 19 August.

The competition features Short Story/Drama Script, Poetry and True Story categories and is open to South Taranaki residents and ratepayers, as well as the wider Taranaki community.

This year's awards will be judged by acclaimed writer Tracey Slaughter (Short Story), author and poet Glenn Colquhoun (Poetry), and Taranaki Daily News Editor Matt Rilkoff (True Story).

Council's Community Outreach Cadet Charlotte Stark says the awards are a unique opportunity for local writers to showcase their talent.

"Having respected New Zealand writers and literary professionals judging the competition makes this a special opportunity for people across Taranaki," says Charlotte. Winners in each category will receive \$500, along with having their work published in the annual finalists' anthology.

"We're incredibly grateful to our sponsors, the Lysaght-Watt Trust and the Normanby Lions Club, whose support helps make these awards possible."

"Whether you're an experienced writer or giving it a go for the first time, now is the time to enter. Not only could you win a cash prize, but your work will be read by some of New Zealand's most respected literary figures."

To find out more or enter online, visit www.southtaranaki.com/rhm.

Nominate a
local hero for a
Community Award!



Final chance to nominate a local hero for a Community Award in 2026

Time's running out get in your nominations for the South Taranaki Community Awards!

These awards are for individuals, groups and organisations within South Taranaki who have, by personal leadership, inspiration, sacrifice, or devotion, made a significant contribution to the wellbeing of their communities. The award categories are:

- Volunteer: Individual
- Volunteer: Organisation
- Youth Citizen Award

The Youth Citizen Award is for individuals aged 11-24 years who have achieved outstanding academic successes, sporting achievements, community involvement and arts or cultural achievements in their respective communities. **Nominations close on Friday 31 July.**

Nomination forms are available from your nearest South Taranaki LibraryPlus, at the Council Administration Building, South Taranaki isite, TSB Hub, or online at www.southtaranaki.com/communityawards