

Tuia Taitonga Southlink



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

South Taranaki

LONG TERM PLAN
2024-2034



Open for consultation
until Monday 6 May.
Find out more at
[southtaranaki.com/
longtermplan](http://southtaranaki.com/longtermplan)

Have your say!

- www.southtaranaki.com/longtermplan
- Email longtermplan@stdc.govt.nz
- Hard copy feedback form
- Phone 06 278 0555 or toll free 0800 111 323

Easter Weekend

OPENING HOURS

The Council's Administration Building in Hāwera, as well as all LibraryPlus centres throughout the District, will be closed on Good Friday (Friday 29 March) through to Tuesday 2 April. Other facilities are open at various times throughout the weekend, please go online to www.southtaranaki.com/easter for more information.



RUBBISH AND RECYCLING

Urban rubbish and recycling collection will proceed as normal throughout the long weekend. Please continue to put your bins out on the kerbside on your usual collection day.

Upcoming Meetings

- Ordinary Council**
Wednesday 3 April, 4pm
- Te Hāwera Community Board**
Monday 15 April, 11am
- Pātea Community Board**
Monday 15 April, 4pm
Kaipo Marae, Waitōtara Valley Road, Waitōtara
- Eltham-Kaponga Community Board**
Wednesday 17 April, 10.30am
Mangamingi Hall, Rāwhitiroa Road, Eltham
- Taranaki Coastal Community Board**
Wednesday 17 April, 2.30pm
Pihama Hall, 3271 Surf Highway, Pihama

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

Draft Long Term Plan out now!

Increased spending on roads and wastewater infrastructure, and a commitment to getting on with town centre upgrades in the District's smaller communities were some of the big-ticket items in the South Taranaki District Council's draft 10-year plan. South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon says the District is on an upward trajectory and the Council's draft Long Term Plan is about maintaining that momentum while also doing what's needed to look after the District's assets.

"In previous feedback, 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 proposing to increase 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. "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 in the proposed plan, including reducing budgets for things like the Hāwera Town 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 11.29% with an average rate increase over the next ten years of 5.47%.

"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.

According to Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) of 48 Councils surveyed almost 80% are proposing rate increases above 12%, with the average being a 15.3% increase.

"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."

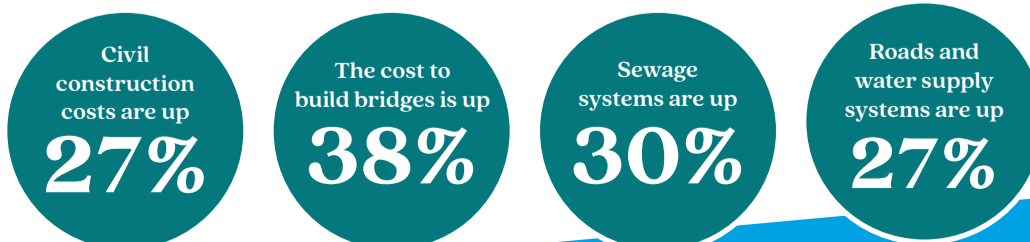
"Given the major cost increases we are facing, we believe our proposed Long-Term Plan will allow us to do what we are required to do and provide the services and facilities our communities expect, but now we want to know what our residents think." Mayor Nixon says public consultation on the draft Long Term Plan runs until 6 May.

Timeline

- Thurs 21 March - Mon 6 May** We are here Consultation period
- Mon 20 & Wed 22 May** Council to hear submissions
- before 30 June 2024** Council adopts final Plan

What is driving rates rises?

LGNZ commissioned Infometrics to analyse increases in local government costs that are driving rates rises. They found costs for councils **were up 20% across the board**. The following essential costs are, on average, more expensive than three years ago:



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www.southtaranaki.com
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