

FROM THE

Mayor's Desk

It is almost March! It's nice to be back on deck having recovered from recent knee surgery mid-January. I'm very appreciative of the medical staff and have tried to obey their guidelines and the result is I am far more mobile and in less pain than a month ago.

The Long Term Plan adoption for consultation will be made by Council on 25 March. We are also presently loading onto the Council website locations and timings of a huge number of public consultation meetings where you can have your say and ask for further information. Please engage in this process. I would have to say that this has been the most difficult process that I have been involved with during my time on Council. There is so much uncertainty that we face from Central Government around who will deliver what services throughout the Country such as the provision of water and disposal of wastewater. This is the biggest decision that Councils in New Zealand will ever face. If these services are no longer to be provided by Councils in the future, it comes into question what will be the core function of Councils? The disappointment I have is that we can't raise this within the Long Term Plan because we have no knowledge of what will or will not happen. The recent revaluation for the district has seen a number of properties especially in the urban south dramatically increase in value. This variation in the increases of capital values throughout the district creates rating issues. Council has limited availability to smooth these effects. This is one of the reasons why the submission process this year is incredibly important. We will go out to everybody that we possibly can within the district and explain the implications of the Long Term Plan and give indications as to the likelihood of their personal rates positions.

At the February Council meeting we also inducted Coral Raukawa as the new Southern Ward Councillor. I congratulate Coral on gaining the position and her demonstration of Council commitment in the past, having served on several Council Committees.

We also received the summary report for the lessons learned from Te Matapihi - Bulls Community Centre build. In some parts it is sobering reading and I am happy to discuss this along with any other issues independently to the Long Term Plan submission process to any group or individual. Please pass on that request through my office or I can be contacted directly on 027 617 7668.

Over the last month there have been a number of civic events through the district that I have attended. It was a huge pleasure for example to sit in the Bulls Domain and listen to the music at Rhythm in Bulls. Unfortunately I could not stay as long as I would have liked because I travelled to Taihape for the Farewell Functions at the Taihape Fire Station. It was nice to be able to sit with past and present fire personnel that have given so much voluntary time to their district.

I have been aware that there have been many callouts for our rural firefighters over the last couple of weeks. We have had a large spring flush of grass growth which is mainly now tinder dry. We are asking that everybody considers fire risk when they have their barbecues and undertake normal farming operations.

There has been public notice on the closure of the Kuripapango Bridge in Taihape. This is the bridge that is on the boundary between Hastings District Council and Rangitikei District Council. Its closure effectively means that heavy transport is not available during that time. Because of the seasonal nature of these farming stations I apologise for the timing of the bridge closure and the impact it has both financially and logistically on the operation of these stations.

For those travelling through Mangaweka it is worthwhile popping down to the old Mangaweka Bridge which provides a magnificent view of the piling structures going in for the new bridge. It is pleasing to see this work finally underway.

Ngā mihi, Andy Watson. *Mayor of Rangitikei.*



New township signs welcomed by community

Marton recently received new welcoming township signs at three of the major entrance roads into town on Wellington, Wanganui Roads and Calico Line.

These signs were a joint project with Lions Club of Marton, Rangitikei District Council, local iwi and the community. The new signs include a new town hub logo incorporating heritage and cultural elements of the district.

More signs promoting visitors to explore Marton will be installed along State Highways 1 and 3 in the next coming weeks.



Elements of the new Marton Town Hub Logo

- **Wagon Wheel:** Eight spokes of the vintage wagon wheel represent the eight roads into Marton
- **Barley:** Historically Barley was grown in the Marton region in abundance
- **Wheel Hub:** The koru wheel hub resembles a pikopiko/fern frond which represents and highlights the different cultures in Marton and its township.

Help us plan for a bright future in the Rangitikei District.

Soon, Mayor Andy Watson and Councillors will be attending Community Meetings to discuss Framing Our Future. Rangitikei District Council is looking at the Long Term Plan for 2021-2031 and we want to make sure that our plans for the next 10 years best serve the communities who live in our district, so we need your feedback.

We want you to take part in discussing some key issues and challenges that we need to prepare for, including: rates, event sponsorship, economic development, the Taihape Grandstand and more...

Formal Consultation for the Long Term Plan starts on 12 April 2021 and we welcome

everyone, from townships and rural communities, right across the district to participate in Framing Our Future. Your views are important, and having your say means everyone's voices have the chance to be heard.

If you can't attend a meeting in person, please tune in for one of our online live events. You can find more information including engagement dates online at www.rangitikei.govt.nz/framingourfuture



Councillor Raukawa ready for duties

Congratulations to Coral Raukawa, being elected as a Southern ward Councillor.

Coral has lived and worked in the Rangitikei most of her life. She is passionate about education, employment and training opportunities and hopes to use her experience, ability and common sense to guide a better, smarter economic and community focused Council into the future.

A swearing in ceremony with whānau and friends was held at the Council meeting in February.



Councillor Coral reading her declaration at the swearing in ceremony in February.



With the warmer weather here, it's time to start thinking about how much water we are using to avoid water restrictions later.

There are many ways to reduce the amount of water we use. Here's one super handy tip to remember...

Using a little less can make a big difference

