

FROM THE *Mayor's Desk*

I am writing this on the first day of autumn, after having just read the Whanganui Chronicle article on Marton. In that article local developers had been approached seeking comment on the number of new houses put into our district.

Hayden Gould and Bain Simpson were interviewed by the Chronicle as well as myself, where we explained that there are about 700 new homes in construction or planned. This is really on top of the new homes that have been built over the last few months.

The growth in Marton and Bulls especially is outstanding and I am often asked as to what has driven this. There are several reasons for it. Council has been quite aggressive in terms of encouraging development throughout the district with incentives being put in place to allow subdivisions and first home purchases. Certainly, the imminent arrival of the Air Force No.5 Squadron coming to Ohakea has played a part, as well as an increased number of people working remotely. Our district is still incredibly affordable in terms of land prices and has so many advantages, the ability to be able to take children to school in a few minutes rather than sitting in traffic congestion, the ease in which you can go and play in our rivers, mountains etc.

With all of that growth people also come to me and ask "Do you have the infrastructure to support it?". We have plenty of water, the only issue with it is the improvements needed around the quality of supply so we have invested heavily within our Long Term Plan to the tune of about \$11m on a new water strategy for the southern part of our district. We are investing in the Three Waters space ahead of the Government's mandated changes to the Three Water entities. This is a "getting first in the queue" type of approach to make sure that our infrastructure is in place.

Having housing and infrastructure is only part of the picture. We have to make sure that our place remains an enjoyable one in terms of leisure. This is part of the reason why we are currently looking at the spatial planning for our district and are also developing a Parks, Open Spaces and Sporting Facilities Strategy. Spatial planning is really around how land areas are used and should not only be about providing land for housing, industrial and commercial growth, it is also about making sure that there are places to play, green spaces to relax in, and nature networks to connect all of these. The public engagement process commences on Friday 4 March and I urge everyone to get involved and have their say.

Our district is going from strength to strength - yes certainly there are speed bumps along the way but our future is incredibly bright. For those new residents we welcome you to our paradise, make sure you introduce yourself to the number of community sports and recreation groups that we have on offer.

Ngā manaakitanga, Andy Watson, Mayor of Rangitikei District.



Finding a solution for Marton's drinking water



For many years some residents in Marton have had drinking water that is sometimes brown, smells unpleasant and does not taste very nice. Over the last few weeks, the water coming through the pipes has been worse than usual in some parts of town. Council is working on a long-term plan to fix the problem.

What is causing the water problems?

The main reasons we have experienced drinking water problems in Marton recently are:

- During the dry summer months, the water levels in the two Marton Dams drops. Periods of heavy summer rainfall (like we had earlier in February) adds a large volume of raw water from the catchment to the Dams in a short period of time, and this affects the raw water that must be treated to produce our drinking water. What we mean by raw water is the water that enters the dam, before any treatment process is undertaken. The treatment plant can produce safe drinking water under these conditions but cannot remove all of the odour and taste that comes from the dams.
- The chemistry of the dam water is constantly changing; this contributes to the unpleasant odour and taste.
- During the summer months the water consumption in town is at its highest, and this means the treatment plant is working at its maximum output. It is difficult to make treatment improvements for odour and taste while the plant is operating at maximum output.

We regularly test samples of our drinking water. Analysis of these tests show that the water is safe to drink even though it may not smell or taste as pleasant as people would prefer.

What we are doing to fix the issue happening right now?

- We are flushing our water supply pipes in the network to make sure all areas are filled with fresh water (water that sits in pipes is not as good quality).
- We are constantly adjusting the treatment process to achieve the best quality drinking water.
- We are mixing in water from our Tutaenui Bore (water from an underground source), so that the water we treat is better quality to start with.
- We have a water filter system at the Marton RSA and Citizens' Memorial Hall to help remove some of the unpleasant taste and odour, so residents are able to go and fill their own clean drinking water containers with filtered water.

What we are working on?

Our water consumption per capita is higher than it should be, so in 2022, we are investigating where there may be water leaks and plan to fix these. This will reduce demand. We are implementing the Marton Water Supply Strategy, a \$11m commitment Council has made in the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan to fund improved drinking water for Marton.

We are looking for a new water source (groundwater) that will not be affected by the same issues as the Marton dams is (i.e. dry summers or heavy rainfall). We plan on finding the new water source and constructing a new bore this year.

We plan to build a new water treatment plant for Marton. The current water treatment plant is old (about 100 years old!). Once the water source has been found, a new treatment plant will be built. It will be designed to deal with the water found in the new bore. The design for the treatment plant is expected to start this year, begin building it in the second half of 2023, and be completed by the middle of 2024.

In the meantime, if you experience problems with your drinking water please advise us by either: Reporting it through our website Report It Form or phoning our Customer Experience team on 0800 422 522.

We'll arrange for a crew to come around and flush the mains pipes in your street, if required.

For more information about the Marton Water Supply Strategy visit:

www.rangitikei.govt.nz/MartonWaterSupplyStrategy

Update on Projects at Taihape Memorial Park



Grandstand Strengthening Project

As part of the development of the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan the public were consulted about the future of the Taihape Grandstand. There was strong support from the community to continue investigating the refurbishment and restoration of the Grandstand, which was assessed as earthquake-prone. There is no legal requirement to vacate the grandstand, so it will remain open, with signage advising anyone using it of the possible risk. Council has now engaged an engineer and architect to do detailed designs for a steel-frame strengthening option. Once the detailed design has been completed it will be presented back to Council with estimated costs and

options on how budget overruns could be funded, which will include the need for fundraising by the community.

Ngā Awa Block (Taihape Amenities Building)

Council is pleased to announce that construction of the Ngā Awa Block (Taihape Amenities Building) in Memorial Park is starting on Monday the 7th of March 2022. At a total estimated project cost of \$4.65 million. W&W Construction from Whanganui were awarded the contract to construct the facility. They will be working alongside Copeland Associates Architects, and engineering consultancy WSP NZ, under the guidance and management of Council's Project Management Office. W&W have extensive public and commercial building experience in the Rangitikei district and will build the 298m² facility adjacent to the tennis and netball courts.

www.rangitikei.govt.nz/projects

Pae Tawhiti RANGITIKEI BEYOND

Rangitikei is growing – have your say.

We're creating a district-wide spatial strategy and plan that will identify how we want our communities to develop to 2050 and beyond. Have your say to ensure we capture your community's aspirations for the future.

We want to hear your thoughts by 5pm Tuesday 19 April 2022.

www.rangitikei.govt.nz/paetawhiti

Kōrero
Mai

