

TAMAHERE-WOODLANDS COUNCILLORS'

UPDATE DECEMBER 2023

District News

It's a season for change

The new coalition Government has announced a flood of major changes that will impact local government. Waikato District Council is watching for opportunities as details emerge over the next few months.

Changes announced include:

- Establishing a National Infrastructure Agency to coordinate government funding, connect investors, and improve funding, procurement, and delivery.
- Developing long-term city and regional deals for infrastructure. These are partnership arrangements between central and local government focussed on creating economic growth by giving local government the resources to deliver on priority projects.
- Repealing the Natural and Built Environments Act 2023 and the Spatial Planning Act 2023, and introducing a new legislative programme to reform the Resource Management Act.
- Issuing stop-work notices on Three Waters, with assets returned to council ownership.
- Introducing a \$1.2 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund

As we work through the changes – especially Three Waters reform – and as inflation continues to bite and the Capital Goods Price Index (that tracks construction costs and capital assets) soars well above the Consumer Price Index – Council rates will continue to come under strong pressure and are likely to rise. Waikato District Council is reviewing future works plans and budgets to seek savings, but also needs to spend on infrastructure to support growth and to fulfil legislative requirements. Maintaining the right balance is a challenging task.

Local government reform?

As the local government association of New Zealand, LGNZ, says, current funding models for local government are unsustainable, debt is increasing, and so are infrastructure deficits.

Responding to the *Review into the Future of Local Government* which was released earlier this year, LGNZ supports building a new system of government that's fit for purpose; rebalancing the country's tax take between central and local government; creating stronger relationships between local government and iwi; aligning central and local government priorities; and strengthening local democracy and leadership.

It's a bold vision but worthy of support since councils have a critical responsibility for our local communities and their wellbeing.

Construction season – a message from the Mayor

The construction season has started with the advent of good weather. Road works are frustrating, but fixing our roads is vital for keeping our communities connected and supporting our economy. So please don't take out your frustrations on our frontline workers. Please give them a friendly wave or smile as you drive by, and pass a word of kindness to these people working in the heat of summer on our behalf, as we want them to arrive home to their loved ones safe and supported. They're simply doing their jobs to the best of their ability. (For details of major roadworks in our district see the 'Current Roadworks' page on the Council website.)



Local projects update:

- **Tauwhare sculpture** – thanks to artist Marti Wong for the design and Tauwhare Hall chair Lockie Verner for the construction, an iconic sculpture representing Tauwhare, ‘house or place of rest’, has been installed next to the Tauwhare War Memorial Hall. Standing several metres tall, it’s the realisation of a vision that was first set in motion with the availability of a Waikato District Council arts grant in 2016, and kept alive by the ongoing support of a group of local people. Plantings and a plaque will complete the setting for the work which is expected to be formally celebrated at an on-site function in the New Year.
- **Tamahere Park toilets upgrade** – opening set for 10am, 21 December.
- **Jack Foster Reserve carpark, Matangi** – expected by June/July 2024.
- **Hukanui Park playground, Gordonton** – a concept plan is being costed.
- **Flagpole for Eureka cenotaph** – flagpole now raised!

Some of these projects, and others, are listed on the ‘Projects Directory’ page on the Council website so you can follow progress.



New phone app for requesting Council services

Download the **Antenna app** from the App Store or Google Play to your mobile phone so you can tell the Council more easily about things that need attention, like potholes, graffiti or broken streetlights. Open the app, select ‘Report it’ and follow the on-screen prompts. You can even provide a photo if you want. For urgent matters please phone our Customer Services Team on 0800 492 452

Christmas holiday season

Warm wishes for the Christmas holiday season and a happy New Year. Keep safe on the road by giving yourself plenty of time to get to your destination. Enjoy your time with friends and family, and give thought to including someone you know who might be on their own. **Waikato District Council offices will close from midday Friday 22 December until Monday 8 January**, but on-call staff will be available to attend to urgent matters if you phone 0800 492 452.

Contact your Tamahere-Woodlands Councillors:



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