



OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

He Kaunihera kei te whai whakaaro i nga hiahia o nga tangata katoa.
He mea arataki, hei tautoko, hei koi ake i a ratou.

A Council in tune with the needs of the community providing direction, leadership and support.

MAYOR'S REPORT

TAUPO DISTRICT – ACTIVE AND PROGRESSIVE

As I go about my business in the District, I am always struck by the sheer amount of activity that seems to be a part of everyday life in the Taupo District. There is nearly always a pleasant 'hustle and bustle' in the Taupo CBD and, of course, the District really gets moving whenever we have one of our many events.

Council, of course, plays a large part in the support that needs to happen behind the scenes, to allow our townships and people to function.

Council organises our towns and designates different parts of them to create an orderly flow. We plan the roads and the footpaths, identify high traffic areas and ensure adequate parking is available. We create industrial zones, residential zones and rural zones to provide for all of the different types of people and lifestyles that need to fit together to make a community.

We provide the pipes and pumps needed to get the drinking water, the waste water and the storm water to where it needs to go. We also provide the proper treatment to make sure the health of our people and the health of our environment are protected.

We support our business communities, and help to nurture and progress the ideas and initiatives that improve our economy, and provide employment opportunities.

The objective of all of this activity - the planning, the consulting and the building - is to create a great place to live, to work and to bring up our children - to build a sense of pride and community.

The Taupo District has so many things going for it. We have clean streets, great gardens and beautiful natural landscapes. Not only is our environment wonderful to look at: we can make the most of recreation by enjoying our natural environments, such as the lakes and rivers, mountains, and bush.

We have vibrant and active communities that embrace recreation and sports, arts, music and Maori culture. Our environmental efforts to preserve and improve the quality of our Lake and protect our rivers from threats, are nationally recognised.

Taupo is a district on the move and this Council is right there, at the forefront, helping to keep things moving. We are proud of our District and the part we play in it, and we are keen to keep moving forward.



Clayton Stent
Mayor

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

This is my first Annual Report here in Taupo District after having spent nearly six months in the area.

The Annual Report aims to measure and report on progress in achieving what Council said it would do in the Long Term Council Community Plan. It is great to be able to tick off these actions.

COMMUNITY

Council is currently undertaking a lot of work aimed at making a difference in our community. Over the past year, we have initiated many improvements that will make our communities a better place to live, work and play. These improvements have been justified with increased use and additional revenue being generated.

- Both the Turangi and Taupo libraries are undergoing significant upgrades
- Planning for the Turangi Turtle Pool is being finalised
- The Taupo Urban Housing Strategy was produced for public consultation, our Community Halls were reviewed, and a Public Art Policy and Cemetery Bylaw were adopted
- The New Year's Eve Concert, Charter Parade, Youth Awards and Youth Council were held
- Land for the Turangi Community Health Centre project was purchased with our assistance
- The Museum was rebranded and there was a huge [70%] increase in visitor numbers from 13,742 in 2005/06, to 23,427 during 2006/07
- The Great Lake Centre achieved a four star Qualmark rating, and had a 14% increase in events (from 227 to 259) events
- The gardens in Tongariro South Domain have been awarded the prestigious 'Regional Garden of Significance' ranking, an endorsement conferred by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture
- The Taupo Events Centre hosted a total of 70 days worth of events in 2006/07, up from 50 days in 2005/06.

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

There is a good level of ongoing consultation happening with groups and individuals around the District. This is set to increase in the future, and I believe we will achieve much better outcomes for the District by working more closely together, well in advance of making any firm decisions.

The Mapara Valley Structure Plan is a good example of a partnering process, with talks and information sharing happening well ahead of any formal process taking place.

- The Town Centre Parking Study was carried out, with this document undergoing public consultation planned for early in the 2007/08 year
- The Mapara Valley Structure Plan has commenced and is to be completed in 07/08
- Variations 19, 20 and 21 to the Proposed District Plan have been notified, anchoring TD2050 into this statutory document
- Officers are working with land owners developing structure plans and plan changes for the growth areas at Whareroa and Mangamawhitiwhiti, Turangi.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND ROADING INFRASTRUCTURE

Roading projects have experienced a number of challenges, but we are still progressing. We did the following:

- Continuation of planning and design work for the East Taupo Arterial (ETA) in making a resource consent application

- Completion of the Wakeman Road extension land purchase, design, and letting of the tender for construction
- Lodging of the notice of requirement for the route designation for the Western Kinloch Arterial (WeKA)
- Seal extension work in rural areas and footpath extension in urban areas
- Poihipi Road seal widening work with benefits for cyclists
- Retaining wall between Wily Terrace and Acacia Bay Road
- Completion of the Taniwha Street and Rata Street upgrades in Mangakino
- Completion of the Broadlands Road / Whites Road intersection upgrade
- Community road safety projects implemented during the year for fatigue, cycle safety and child restraints.

DELIVERING BETTER SERVICE

Council continue to improve internal systems, customer service and response to requests for service, to ensure we are delivering great outcomes to our community.

The majority of the Environmental Services Division moved to Gillespie Plaza to achieve efficiencies in providing a "one stop development shop" for planning and regulatory issues. These efficiencies have been obtained, and include significantly decreasing processing times for consents and approvals, ensuring better customer responsiveness by having all experts on hand for development matters, and establishing a better working environment for customers and staff.

There were 390 resource consents granted during the year, with 98% granted within the statutory timeframe, a spectacular achievement given the complexity and size of the applications faced by Council (it is noted that this places Council in the top few percent of Council's nationwide).

Other outcomes achieved include:

- There were 2,521 regulatory complaints received, with 2,486 responded to within 24 hours. This equates to 98.6% achievement
- Of the known dogs in the district, 97% were registered
- The Taupo Emergency Response Team (USAR) has been called out five times over the 2006/07 year, to assist the Police and Fire Service with search and rescue operations
- A successful pandemic exercise was held in May 2007, with two other exercises being conducted during the year at a Headquarters level.

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As well as working to improve services in the present, Council has a responsibility to focus on the future health and prosperity of the District. In order to position us to respond to future needs we undertook the following long term actions.

- We participated in an Environment Court hearing concerning resource consents for the use of the Wairakei-Tauhara geothermal system to ensure the Wairakei-Tauhara geothermal system is sustainably managed, and the adverse effects of subsidence are addressed
- The 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia Action Plan responsibilities were met
- The Lake Taupo Protection Trust, which will fund initiatives to reduce nitrogen entering the Lake by 20 percent, was formally established on 9 February 2007. Council collects its share of the funding via a targeted rate
- The volume of waste to landfill was 34,920 cubic metres, a reduction of 25.3% from the 1999/00 year. Waste minimisation programmes are being put in place
- Council are improving their treatment of wastewater by: completing the design of Mangakino treatment plant; design and construction of Motutere treatment plant upgrade; design and construction of Whareroa pond rehabilitation and obtaining resource consent for the Waitahanui / Five Mile Bay treatment plant. Turangi has met resource consent conditions since full operations commenced

- Replacement of water mains in parts of the Taupo Town central business district and some residential areas is progressing
- The Lake Taupo Shoreline Erosion Study and Flood Studies are underway however the completion of the Lake Taupo Foreshore and Flood Strategy has been delayed. This is now expected to be completed in 2007/08
- Contracts were developed and monitored for the New Zealand Clean Energy Centre and the Gateway to the World initiatives.

ATTRACTING VISITORS TO TAUPO

A significant part of our economy is driven by tourism and events. Destination Lake Taupo, Council's marketing arm, is dedicated to attracting visitors to our District and providing a great visitor experience. To this end they have:

- Assisted the development of the Great New Zealand Touring Route
- Undertaken trade training and promotional expos in offshore markets
- Implemented a domestic campaign and refreshed and redeveloped the regional website
- Facilitated and hosted 16 major events, expanding the events portfolio into the traditionally off-peak spring and autumn 'shoulder periods'
- Facilitated a Conventions Bureau and organised trade training events for this market
- Private sector funding was secured to meet 52% of the cost of marketing campaigns
- Domestic visitor nights increased 0.9%
- Taupo and Turangi i-Sites open 8.30am to 5.00pm, 364 days a year
- Revenue per visitor increased 5.9% in Turangi and 35% in Taupo, the Taupo result strongly influenced by the A1GP event held in Taupo for the first time in January 2007.

INVOLVEMENT WITH NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Council also continued to keep abreast of national issues of significance to our District, and provided submissions on many regional and national issues to ensure Taupo has a voice in Wellington.

- Environment Waikato's Annual Plan
- Local Government Rates Enquiry 2007
- Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy to 2050
- Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change Discussion Document
- Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Variation No. 6 - Water Allocation
- Draft Regional Pest Management Strategy
- Proposed National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission
- Draft National Policy Statement on Flood Risk Management
- Council also participated in the processes relating to the Proposed Variation to the Waikato Regional Plan (Variation 5 – Lake Taupo Catchment).

PLANNING FOR OUR DISTRICT AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Council has an obligation to plan and report on its services, activities and future planning for the District. We also communicate these plans and achievements to our communities.

- The 2005/06 Annual Report and the 2007/08 Annual Plan were completed
- The LTCCP Amendment relating to changes to Council's Investment Policy was undertaken
- We reviewed bylaws, including the Cemeteries Bylaw, the Solid Waste and Trade Waste Bylaw, and the Parks & Reserves/Libraries/Swimming Pools Bylaw [currently out for consultation].

OUR FINANCES

An operating surplus of \$14.4 million was achieved this year. This compares with a budgeted surplus of \$5.5 million, and last year's \$14.9 million surplus. It must be remembered that much of Council's surplus comes from non-cash revenue items such as the infrastructure vested by developers (\$5.2m); recognition of the share of the surplus / net assets of associate, the Lake Taupo Protection Trust (\$3.1m); and net fair value gains in the value of various assets taken through the income statement (\$0.7m). In addition, it should be noted that the surplus includes \$7.1m of profits earned from the subdivision and sale of surplus Council land. This figure is considerably in excess of the \$2m budgeted from this source for the 2006/07 year.

Council's Balance Sheet presents a very healthy picture, reflecting a growing District investing in its infrastructure. For the first time our Balance Sheet shows ratepayer equity in excess of \$1 billion. This result was achieved principally by revaluation gains on land and building assets.

IN CONCLUSION

I would say my overall impression is that this Council seems to have rediscovered its sense of community, has ventured out from behind the walls and really started to connect with the most important aspect of our District - the people.

I look forward to achieving even better results once those projects we have started come to completion. This includes the Taupo and Turangi Libraries, development of Riverside Park, Taupo Foreshore and Flood Strategy, development of the Broadlands Road Resource Recovery Centre. I also look forward to being here as physical work begins on a number of major projects, including the ETA (East Taupo Arterial).



Rob Williams
Chief Executive Officer



THE DISTRICT



Land Area	6,354 km ²
Lakes Area	616 km ²
Land Value	\$6,964m
Capital Value	\$12,252m
Rateable Properties	20,765
Population	34,100
Rates Revenue	\$34.5m

(Rating valuation and property figures as at 1 July 2006, population figures are June 2006 estimates, rates revenue for 2006/07 year)

The Taupo District is located in the Central North Island of New Zealand. It includes the large catchment area of Lake Taupo, the hydroelectric dams on the Tongariro and Upper Waikato Rivers and substantial geothermal resources. The District contains expansive areas of exotic pine forests and farmlands as the predominant land uses, and includes native forests, parts of the Tongariro National Park and Kaimanawa Ranges and the Central Plateau mountains.

Taupo, Turangi and Mangakino are the three main urban areas in the District. There are also many lakeside settlements around the shores of Lake Taupo.

The District's major resources are forestry, agriculture, hydroelectric and geothermal energy, tourism, and scenic and recreational attractions.



ROLE OF THIS ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report is a key accountability document which compares the Council's actual performance for the year against that which was forecast in the 2006/16 Long-Term Council Community Plan.

This Annual Report is prepared under section 98 of the Local Government Act 2002, and conforms to the specific reporting requirements set out in Part 3 of Schedule 10 of the Act. Much of the reporting is centred on the financial and service elements of performance for Council's defined 'groups of activities'— these groups of activities being the strategic themes that Taupo District Council identified in its Long Term Council Community Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LONG TERM COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN AND ANNUAL PLANS

The Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) is a key planning document, normally prepared three-yearly and setting the agenda with a ten year focus. It brings together many of Council's other planning documents and policies. Council is accountable for the direction, actions and budgets set in the LTCCP. For every year other than the first to which an LTCCP applies, an Annual Plan is prepared. The Annual Plan while expected to be consistent with the LTCCP, sets the annual budget and specific performance targets for an individual year.

The Annual Report is the forum for reporting back on our achievements against the Annual Plan and LTCCP.

Copies of the 2006/16 LTCCP can be obtained from Council.

GOVERNANCE REPORT

TAUPO DISTRICT COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council provides an essential governance role for the Taupo District. The Council has overall responsibility and accountability for the direction and control of the District's activities. This responsibility includes:

- Formulating the District's strategic direction
- Managing principal risks facing the District
- Administering various regulations and upholding the law
- Ensuring the integrity of management control systems
- Safeguarding the public interest
- Ensuring effective succession of elected members
- Reporting to ratepayers.

COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Council (elected members) appoints a Chief Executive to manage the operations of Council under the provisions of s42 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Chief Executive then appoints managers to manage Council's activities.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES / COMMUNITY BOARDS

Council has several standing committees, sub-committees and a community board to monitor and assist in the effective discharging of Council's responsibilities. These include:

- District Regulatory and Hearings Committee
- District Evaluation and Audit Committee
- Taupo/Kaingaroa-Mangakino/Pouakani (TKMP) Committee
- Turangi/Tongariro (TT) Community Board.

The TKMP Committee (incorporating the Taupo, Kaingaroa and Mangakino/Pouakani wards) and the TT Community Board and the areas they each represent are consistent with Council's policy of having two rating areas for general rates whereby, generally, rating revenue from each area will be spent within that area. The TT Community Board has high levels of advisory responsibility and delegated authority from Council in addition to its function of being politically responsible for representing its community.

Although not a constituted 'community', the Taupo/Kaingaroa – Mangakino/Pouakani Committee has a role and delegated authority similar to the Turangi/Tongariro Community Board, relative to dealing with most matters pertaining to its ward areas.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MĀORI CONTRIBUTION TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Activities Taupo District Council has undertaken during the year to establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision making are as follows.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Council and the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board have a Management Protocol in place. The Protocol provides for senior staff from both organisations to meet on a regular basis to exchange information and to seek advice from one another. Council also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Raukawa Māori Trust Board.

Council employs a Strategic Communications Officer who has Iwi liaison duties. The role advises Council managers on their engagement with their respective Hapū committees and/or associated trusts. That role is supported by the Strategic Relationships Adviser who, along with other duties, provides assistance to Iwi and Hapū groupings on Council matters where required. Council also employs a Māori Land Rating Officer. The Officer's role is principally to provide information and education on rating issues relating to Māori land, and to ensure that Council's rates remission policy is applied where relevant.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Council has continued to work on the joint pilot project with the Rauhoto Land Rights Committee to identify and protect sites of significance to Tāngata Whenua. (Note: to date this work is only being undertaken in one area of the District.)

Council has been consulting with Tāngata Whenua at the Iwi and Hapū level on the following variations to the District Plan; Natural Values, Cultural Values, Landscape Values and Historic Values. This consultation has included two hui a iwi and several hui a hapū to discuss the issues. Work has commenced on Tāngata Whenua identifying landscapes that are important to them. This work will continue into the 2007/08 year. It is extremely important that this consultation is undertaken in a complete manner due to the potential significance of these projects to Māori owned land in the District (estimates have been made that approximately 95% of privately owned land subject to the natural and landscape values variations is land in multiple Māori ownership). A range of projects has also been worked on which is location specific and only involves the Hapū with mana whenua status for the area in which the project is located (for example the Second Taupo Town River Bridge crossing).

The Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board developed an Iwi Management Plan in 2003 and this document continues to be used by Council staff. Coupled with this is the Board's Asset Management Unit with its recently established environmental committee, with representatives of all Hapū throughout the Ngāti Tūwharetoa Rohe who review major issues facing the Iwi.

STAFF TRAINING

An internal resource continues to be developed for staff, to provide a readily accessible point where information pertaining to Iwi/ Hapū can be sourced. In the future, staff will have access to targeted training relative to their role in the organisation. This will assist Council staff in their dealings with Tāngata Whenua on a day to day basis.