



Kaipara te Oranganui
KAIPARA
DISTRICT
 Two Oceans Two Harbours

Dear Ratepayer

Over the past month, Commissioners have launched two important initiatives as we take the steps necessary to get your Council into good shape.

Kaipara District Council (Validation of Rates and Other Matters) Bill

The Bill is designed to address certain rating and related errors from the past. It is named the *Kaipara District Council (Validation of Rates and Other Matters) Bill*.

The Bill is to be introduced into Parliament by the Member for Northland, Mike Sabin. It validates the errors of past Councils, when rating resolutions and some other matters were done incorrectly.

This Bill will have no impact on ratepayers who are up to date with their rates. It only validates the rates that were set and subsequently assessed against each property.

In addition to validating these matters, the Bill seeks to address claims made by some that the late filing of certain Council Plans by the previous Council made the current rates invalid. The Council does not believe these claims have merit but see it as important that the issue is put beyond doubt and hence the Bill also confirms the validity of these matters.

Proposed Amendments to the Kaipara District Council Long Term Plan

When the Commissioners took office, the Long Term Plan was the subject of much debate in the community.

Soon after their appointment the Commissioners undertook to look closely at the Long Term Plan to ensure that it was robust and that Council could deliver the services proposed. We have done that, and we are not comfortable with parts of it, so we are proposing some changes.

Our proposed changes to the Long Term Plan are reflected in the 2013/14 Annual Plan and Long Term Plan amendment which is available from Council offices, local Libraries or can be accessed through the Council's website, www.kaipara.govt.nz.

The changes that we propose include:

1. Adopting a financial strategy that reduces risk over time and ensures that Council lives within its means. To do this we have cut costs, balanced budgets, and are proposing to repay debt faster, from \$80 million today to \$50 million in 2022.
2. Simplifying our rating system. Kaipara has had a rating system that is complex, costly to administer, and difficult to understand. We are proposing to do away with the targeted roading rate introduced in 2012 which means that roading costs will be funded through the general rate. We are proposing to implement a consistent approach across the District for the setting of the operating costs for water, wastewater and stormwater services which will see significant changes to the way in which these services are funded. We are also proposing that four rates notices get sent out each year, rather than six which will help reduce administrative costs.
3. Implementing a new funding regime for the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme. As part of this we are making clear the initial capital contributions required from existing properties who have connected or are currently capable of connecting to the Scheme.

Over the years, different charges have been struck for those connecting to the Mangawhai scheme. A new funding regime was also introduced as part of the 2012 Long Term Plan which led to the suspension of the rating arrangements which had previously been in place. Our proposals aim to tidy this up and to give existing property owners certainty. We are also proposing to reduce the risk associated with this scheme through the introduction of a more conservative funding regime.

We are proposing an overall increase in revenues collected from rates for the year beginning 1 July 2013 of 9.3 per cent. The proposed rate changes to the rating system will affect people across the District in different ways. Council has a link on its website that enables you to check what impact the changes that we are proposing will have on your property.

While an overall rate increase of 9.3 per cent is proposed for this coming year, the years out from this have proposed increases that will be close to levels of inflation. This means that in 2014 Council will be

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in a financially sustainable position and changes to rates will be driven by inflation and the service levels sought by the community, rather than needing to play catch up.

We must stress that these amendments are proposals at this stage. Your submissions will help us to identify any further changes that need to be made. To make a submission, please put your thoughts on paper and get them in to Council. To make it even easier you do have the option of using one of Council's submission forms that are available at the Dargaville Library or any of our community libraries, at Council offices, or online at the Council's website: www.kaipara.govt.nz.

Once you have completed your submission you can:

- DELIVER IT to either of Council's offices in Dargaville or Kaiwaka
- ENTER IT online at www.kaipara.govt.nz
- POST IT to Kaipara District Council, Private Bag 1001, Dargaville 0340
- EMAIL IT to council@kaipara.govt.nz
- FAX IT to 09 439 6756

The submission period is from 19 March to 19 April 2013 and submissions must be received by 4 pm on Friday 19 April 2013.

Other Matters

The current severe drought conditions have created a water crisis that has potentially serious implications for our District. The Commissioners have been monitoring this carefully, and are supporting the executive as plans have been developed to deal with its impacts. There are many in our District who are impacted and hence we will, amongst other things, be reviewing the adequacy of the current water supply systems to ensure that we learn from this current drought event once it has passed.

The Commissioners held public meetings in Dargaville, Maungaturoto, and Mangawhai in February. Further meetings are planned for Paparoa, Kaiwaka, and Dargaville in March.

Your Council has responsibilities to contribute to the advancement of many local and regional matters. Over the past month Commissioners and Council staff have attended meetings of the Raupe Drainage Committee, Taharoa Domain Governance Committee, Sport Northland, Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, Northland Regional Transport Committee, Creative Communities, Kaipara Harbour Political Management Group, Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society, Mangawhai Historical Society, Justices of the Peace Association, Grey Power and the Mangawhai Endowment Fund Committee.

Many of you contribute to projects in our communities. Our service clubs and community groups do a great job. We very much appreciate your efforts.

Conclusion

Now that we have a Local Bill that will shortly be working its way through Parliament to deal with questions over past rating irregularities, we urge those property owners who have been withholding their rates to pay them. We all use the public services provided by Council. We all drive on Council roads. We all walk on Council footpaths. Where we are connected to a Council wastewater system, we use it. All property owners need to pay for the public services that Council supplies to them.

To those of you who are current with your rates, thank you. The issues faced by your Council are being addressed. Your support makes that job easier.

We look forward to any submissions you might make on our proposals to amend the Long Term Plan.

John Robertson
Chair of Commissioners

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