



Kaipara te Oranganui
**KAIPARA
DISTRICT**
Two Oceans Two Harbours

Dear Ratepayer

Enclosed with this letter is the last of four rating invoices that you will receive for Kaipara District Council's financial year ending 30 June 2015.

As you plan ahead, you will be interested to know what your rates will be in the next financial year. I cannot advise these yet, but I can provide you with background on the process as we consider priorities for Council expenditure.

In order to set rates for the year ahead, a planning and community engagement process has been taking place. Commissioners have been involved in this exercise – to review Council's activities and service levels, to review the maintenance required on Council's assets of \$590 million, to review capital investment plans, and to consider Council's financial position and the most appropriate way to fund its operations and capital needs.

The results from this exercise were set out in a consultation document called "Looking Ahead – The Draft Long Term Plan 2015/2025", which was made public in early March. A series of meetings have been held around the District to discuss this Plan.

Community feedback on this Plan is now being considered. The Long Term Plan will be adopted at the Council meeting on 30 June. The adoption of this Plan will set rates for the year beginning 1 July 2015. The Plan will also indicate rate levels for the following nine years, through to 30 June 2025.

In my previous letters, I have advised you of the determination by the Commissioners:

- To manage Council's infrastructure better and to monitor contractor performance more directly
- To keep tight control on expenditure
- To focus expenditure on the core business of Council like roads, stormwater and parks
- To bring debt down and leave the Council in a sound financial position when the Commissioners' term comes to an end
- To leave you with a high performing organisation.

Good progress is being made in all these areas.

In a reputational sense, Kaipara District Council will take some time to recover from its past transgressions. Let me assure you however, that the challenges confronting it in 2012, when Commissioners were appointed, are being overcome. Examples tell the story.

- Your Council was the last council to file its annual accounts and plans in 2012, breaching the requirements of statute. Over the past two years, it has been one of the first councils in New Zealand to make such filings.
- Your Council nearly lost its Building Consenting Authority status in 2013. We looked at where good systems were in place (thank you Selwyn District Council), cleaned up our systems, adopted new technology, and we are now saluted as a model to learn from.
- Your Council was heading further and further into debt in 2011/2012, and had been incurring large operating deficits. Today, it is generating operating surpluses and is one of the few councils in New Zealand where debt is declining.

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Kaipara District Council is no longer a "cot case". We have made significant organisational changes, and are continuing to strive for excellence. Staff, under the leadership of Dr Jill McPherson, are turning the organisation around.

We are in a sound financial state. And most importantly, Council staff are proactively engaging with the many communities of Kaipara so that Council can serve you in the best way possible.

If you have any questions for Commissioners, please feel free to contact us through my email address, jrobertson@kaipara.govt.nz.

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Sincerely

John Robertson, Chair

On behalf of the Commissioners