



## Council makes changes based on submissions

Council's Long Term Plan attracted 123 submissions covering 183 topics. 43 people wished to be heard. And Council certainly did hear, making changes to several key proposals based on submissions.

Council thanks those who put forward ideas and suggestions. As a result of submissions the rate revenue increase has increased from 1.26% to 1.8%.

"Council changed its thinking on some proposals due to the submissions," said Mayor Neil Sinclair. "It is always encouraging when Council receives the kind of engagement from its community that assists us to make quality decisions."

Responses to the tickbox questions indicated:

- A general acceptance of our nine strategic outcomes with particular mention of support for business development (economic growth), community and assets.
- Mixed feedback on Council being involved in water quality and allocation. Points raised included avoiding duplication with regional council, a focus on iwi liaison and economic implications.
- Support for Council's continued involvement in economic development, district promotion and community development.

- Feedback on the Logan Street Skatepark indicated that the park remain at Logan Street (35 submitters), against 14 who opted to move the facility to the Memorial Sportsground. The main reasons for not moving to the sportsground was children having to cross the state highway and the current site being accessible to users. Following the submissions, Council will be investigating other alternatives. Council also intends to bring the skatepark development forward by one year, from the 2017-18 year to the 2016-17 year.

- Council appreciates the passion from the users of Strathmore Park about staying at the reserve; and we agree that is the best option. The results of the tick box submissions indicated that 31 submitters wanted to stay as is, 13 indicated a preference to move the current users to the Memorial Sportsground and five indicated Council reduce the size of the area maintained. Long term, Council remains keen to explore opportunities to create a central hub for sporting activities.

Other issues that were raised by several submitters include:

- Council considers that the Putāruru i-SITE has served the local community well but is not being used in the manner it was set up for in servicing tourism clients. Council intends to close the facility on 30 June 2016, at a cost saving of \$100,000.
- Contrary to its proposal to bring the Plaza back in house, Council has decided to leave the management of this facility with the South Waikato Arts Trust. Council will be clarifying expectations around focussing on meeting the potential of the facility as a performing arts centre, highlighted as a high-calibre sub regional facility through the Waikato Creative Arts Infrastructure Plan.
- Council will remain with its original proposal to close the Tirau Library on 30 June this year. The usage figures are extremely low and Council staff are confident that a Library Link service will meet requirements

of users. Operating out of the Tirau Information Centre, the service will include free wifi, access to Council's library system, browsing function and an outreach service from Council's Putāruru Library. Staff will review the system in six months' time to seek further improvements.

- Council intends to go ahead with the Additional Unit Rate (AUR) as proposed. This impacts 140 commercial buildings. This corrects an anomaly in the current rating method and brings greater equity across the district rates.

Following submissions from a number of commercial property owners about the pressure the increase would place on businesses, Council will stagger the increase over a five year period. The increase for the coming financial year (2015-16) will be \$120 per AUR; this will increase to \$240 in year two and so forth until we reach the full additional charge of \$600 in five years' time.

"... Council changed its thinking on some proposals..."

### IN brief

- Thirty six children participated in the Library School Holiday Programme in April.
- The Honouring Youth Awards were held on Wednesday 27 May at the Council Chamber; over 20 Youth Awards were presented on the night.
- The annual shut at the pools was undertaken without any issues. Work included painting changing rooms, cleaning surrounds, air conditioning repairs and other works.

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### IN house

Produced in-house for the South Waikato community by the South Waikato District Council.

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# District plan activated!

**Council is mighty proud that its replacement District Plan is on the verge of being signed and sealed by Council. It is a tribute to the fantastic efforts of Council's planning staff, the dedication of the District Plan Hearings Committee and the tremendous engagement from stakeholders and affected parties. The support from consultants and all Councillors throughout the process was excellent.**

The District Plan is developed and managed under the Resource Management Act, the Act of Parliament that regulates land use. All councils have to have a District Plan.

Early in the project Council identified key focus areas and potentially interested parties. We worked closely with these individuals and groups initially through an informal engagement process. This enabled us to identify a number of issues and concerns and work them into the draft plan prior to starting formal consultation.

A significant milestone was when we did formally notify the draft District Plan we received only 52 submissions which is impressively low for a District Plan.

"It is likely that the reason we received so few submissions was all of the stakeholder engagement we did prior," said Patrick McHardy, Council's Planner who has headed the District Plan Review.

Council conducted hearings during 2013 and issued decisions in 2014; on which we received 14 appeals. Council has worked with the appellants through mediation to reach agreement; which is much quicker and less

expensive than going through Environment Court. Council appreciates the willingness of other parties to foster this facilitative process.

"The Resource Management Act detailed some new matters that we were required to incorporate into our District Plan, like providing for Significant Natural Areas and an increased focus on the Waikato River Legislation," continued Patrick.

"In the long run, increased level of stakeholder engagement and a focus on these and other key areas has ensured a plan that is environmentally responsible while allowing for development opportunities."

## What is a District Plan?

The District Plan is a document that regulates how people can utilise land and subdivisions in the district. Basically the District Plan is a regulatory document that indicates what types of activities can happen where and how they need to be managed to mitigate effects on the environment.

It is easier to explain by using an example. Say for instance someone owns a farm that

is 20 hectares. And they decide that they want to subdivide five hectares to create a number of lifestyle properties. It is the district plan that regulates that process. If the desire to create lifestyle properties adheres to the rules in the District Plan, a key one being zoning, then it is considered a 'controlled' activity and must be approved by Council, albeit possible for us to place conditions on the development. If the development does not adhere to the rules, it is called a non-complying subdivision and involves a lengthier process including affected party input. Council has to look at the plan's objectives and decide if the development should be approved or not, and if it is, what conditions are needed.

The District Plan managed by your local Council is not the only system that manages land; several environmental aspects like erosion proofing, riparian protection of waterways and others are managed by the Waikato Regional Council.

The new District Plan will be active on Council's website from 1 July 2015.

*Pictured is Planner Sylvia Shepherd, Senior Planner Patrick McHardy and Graduate Planner Marnie Rydon.*



On Wednesday 1 July Tirau's new Library Link outreach service kicks off. Operating out of The Dog in Tirau the service is available seven days a week, increasing the Tirau community's access to WiFi and public internet.

"The new Library Link outreach service follows its decision to close the physical Tirau Library due to low user numbers," said Amanda Hema, Council's Community Group Manager. "The service will cater for a number of existing services including book pick-up and drop-off, item reservation, reader's advisory service, information services, online catalogue, free WiFi and public internet."

"We appreciate that some people will miss the physical library, however we believe that an increased level of service can be achieved for the users, many of whom already regularly use other district libraries; as the figures have shown."

The Library Link service will be manned by a Council librarian intermittently during a three month transition period.

## July

Wednesdays and Fridays  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> from 2:30pm - 5:00pm  
Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> from 2:30pm - 5:00pm

## August

Wednesdays ONLY  
5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> from 2:30pm - 5:00pm

## September

Wednesdays ONLY  
2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> from 2:30pm - 5:00pm

Council staff will review the Library Link outreach service in six months to seek further improvements to better cater to the needs of library users in Tirau.

**BOOKed**  
for 1 July start





# South Waikato Sport and Events Centre

## Two and a half years on and still going strong...

Two and half years have passed since the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre (SWSEC) opened its doors to the public, and Council couldn't be happier with the success of the centre.

This year alone, SWSEC has been host to a range of sporting leagues, weddings, conferences, expositions, birthdays, local and regional sport trainings, comedy nights, reunions and more. To say the centre is well used would be an understatement!

A particular highlight this year was the Waikato Bay of Plenty Kia Magic vs Fiji Pearls elite netball game in February. Over 300 tickets were sold with additional seating added due to high interest from the community.

"It was an exciting match, and with such a great turnout we're definitely keen to host more games of this calibre at our Sport and Events Centre in the future," says Craig Hobbs, Council CE.

Another popular event was that of young New Zealand comedy act Jimi Jackson, supported by J-Geeks Māori comedy music group.

"In the past the South Waikato would often miss out on these types of events such as they would go to the likes of Rotorua or Hamilton," says Sport and Events Centre Programmes Coordinator Leleina Tolovae, "It's so cool to have a venue that's attracting such awesome events to our district."

But it's not only Council who are happy with the Sport and Events Centre's success; it seems you are too!

Feedback has been fantastic, with users complimenting not only the venue but the staff as well.

The Sport and Events Centre is manned by three permanent and nine casual staff, who have made themselves well-known to users through their excellent and friendly service.

The team regularly receives feedback commending their efforts. Ron Wilson of the New Zealand Jet Modellers Association (NZJMA) said "It would be hard to make it (the service and experience) any better."

The Sport and Events Centre also received outstanding results in Council's recent Customer Satisfaction Survey (2014), where they received a 99% satisfaction rating - Council's highest rated service!

*"It would be hard to make it any better."  
- NZJMA*

On top of all the special events, on any given day you could pop down to the Sport and Events Centre and find it a hive of activity.

"The Sport and Events Centre is achieving what we hoped of it: a multi-purpose facility for all of our community to use and enjoy." Heather Gaby



South Waikato crowd enjoying the fast-paced Kia Magic vs Fiji Pearls game.



Photo: Te Ahua Maitland



SWSEC staff with Jimi Jackson & J-Geeks



If you are looking to book a function please come and check out our facilities from concerts to conference, performances and presentations. The Plaza is a 500 seat theatre with a smaller Pavilion room for gatherings.

Sunday 28 June at 2pm - Movie Screening, **And so it goes**. A self-absorbed realtor enlists the help of his neighbour when he's suddenly left in charge of the granddaughter he never knew existed until his estranged son drops her off at his home. Tickets \$8 per person. Rated M.

Sunday 12 July at 2:30pm - The South Waikato Music Society presents two rising young talents in Australian cellist Sam Lucas and Israeli pianist Dorel Golan. The programme will include Romantic and Classical masterpieces. The second half being devoted to Dorel's virtuoso "Concert in G minor". Door sales only. Admission \$30, students free. Contact phone 027 3649 274.

Saturday 15 August, 7:30pm - The South Waikato Arts Trust presents "NZ Blues Brothers Tribute" show performed by Top NZ Band. The Lazyboyz along with accomplished backing musicians is a full show with all the moves, songs, lines and gimmicks from the movie you will not be disappointed. Tickets \$25.

Friday 11 December - The Opus Orchestra combined with the Hamilton Civic and Rotorua District Choir will present Handel's Messiah. With a professional orchestra of 30 and over 100 singers the performance will be like we have never seen before. Tickets \$25, seating can be reserved when you buy your tickets. Contact 027 3649 274.



# Urban CONNECTOR

## South Waikato's new public transport service

Over a number of years South Waikato communities have sought solutions to improve their access to health facilities within the district and region, stay connected with friends and whanau living across our three urban centres, and have easy access to all information regarding public transportation in our area.

Currently a number of individual organisations and groups provide transportation in and around the district for their own specific needs. Some transport solutions are provided on an ad hoc basis, some with regular inter regional services, some funded by health authorities, supplemented by volunteer and community groups, and all attempting to satisfy demand.

The need for a public transport service was highlighted when Council called for submissions during its 2014-15 Annual Plan, and Economic and Community Development \$5million project consultation process. Consequently Council provided \$200,000 to fund the establishment of a trial for public transport service for our residents.

The Urban Connector is our answer to South Waikato's public transport problem and is the joint effort of South Waikato District Council, and the South Waikato Public Transport Steering Group, with support from Waikato Regional Council.

The Urban Connector is a six month trial service starting 22 June 2015 and will provide South Waikato residents with three services Monday to Friday each week (excluding public holidays):

### Tokoroa Circuit...

A circuit route around Tokoroa Township, starting at the South Waikato Medical Centre on Maraetai Road at 9am, 11am, and 1pm each day. Stops are located on the map alongside, and will be signposted around the circuit.

Fares during the trial period:

- Adults - \$2.00
- Children (5 - 14) - \$1.00
- Pre-schoolers - Free

### District Circuit...

Two return trips each day from Tokoroa to Tirau. Leaving the South Waikato Medical Centre at 7.30am and 3pm, stopping at the regular bus stops in Putāruru and Tirau both ways.

Fares during the trial period:

#### Tokoroa to Tirau

- Adults - \$8.00
- Children - \$4.00

#### Tokoroa to Putaruru

- Adults - \$5.00
- Children - \$2.50

#### Putaruru to Tirau

- Adults - \$3.00
- Children - \$1.50

### Information Service...

An information service that provides users with a one stop shop for all information about the Urban Connector, such as bus times and costs, as well as have an up-to-date database of all other transport methods in and around the district, and specialist services to regional health services.

This information service will be run by the Tokoroa and Tirau i-sites. You can call them on **0800 SWurbanC** (0800 798 726) or visit Council's website on [www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz) and click on the Urban Connector link on our home page.

### The bus...

The Urban Connector bus is brand new and can fit 22 passengers. New Zealand's Leading passenger transport provider, Go Bus, will be operating the Urban Connector. The bus will be branded, so it will be easy to spot coming down the road to pick you up!

The trial is set for a six month period, however there will be a review after the first four months. If there are enough people using the service the trial will extend to the full six months.

Once the trial period is complete the steering group will consider all the facts from the trial and recommend changes, if necessary, to meet the needs of the users. If the measures of success are met during the trial Council could extend this to become a permanent service. At this point there is a good chance the service will continue with some government assistance.

Our communities need to remember that this is a trial service and if it doesn't get used during the six months then the service will not continue.

*This is a trial service...*

*Use it,  
or lose it!*



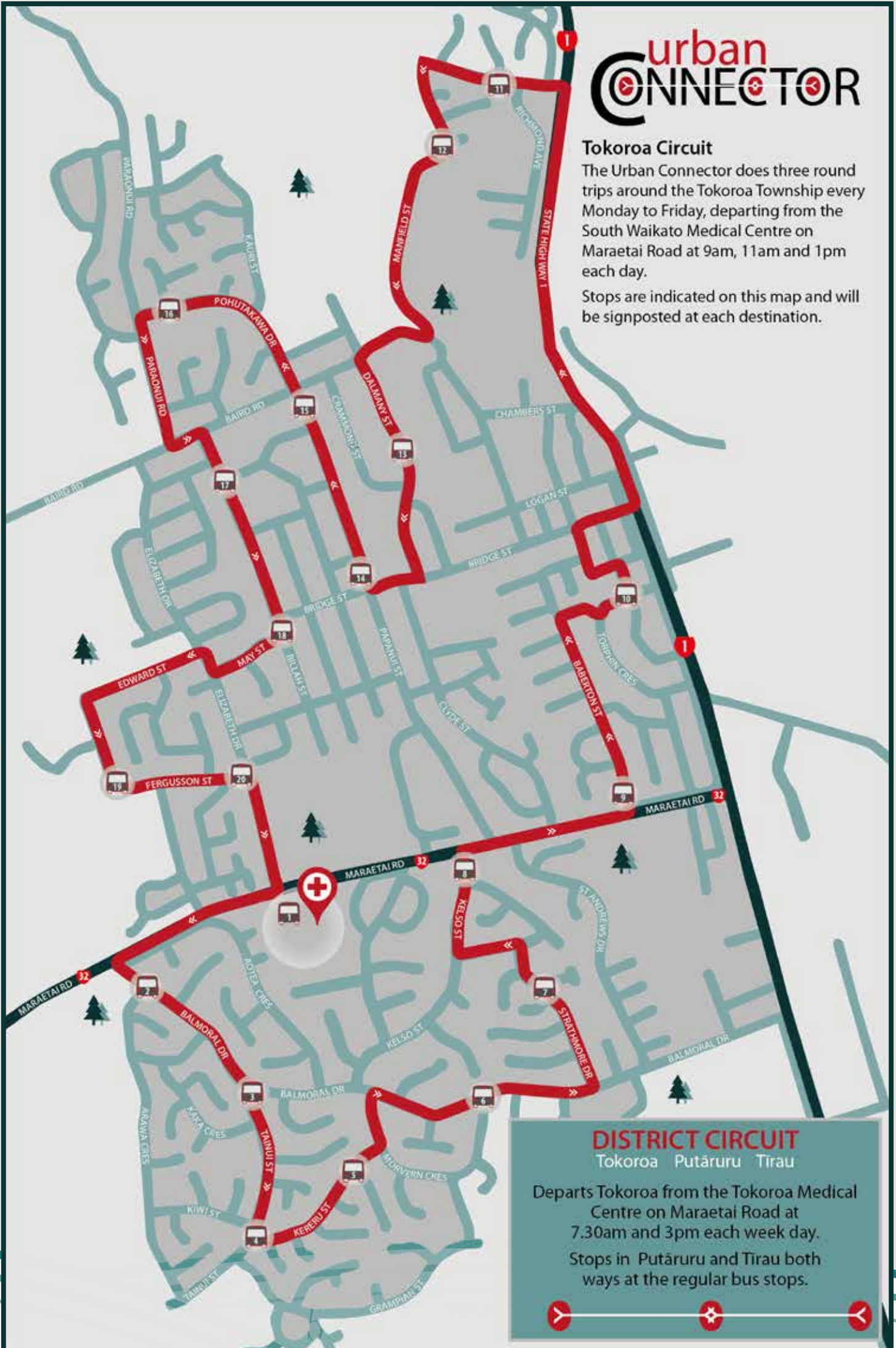


# urban CONNECTOR

## Tokoroa Circuit

The Urban Connector does three round trips around the Tokoroa Township every Monday to Friday, departing from the South Waikato Medical Centre on Maraetai Road at 9am, 11am and 1pm each day.

Stops are indicated on this map and will be signposted at each destination.





## Getting to know our staff...

My name is Julie Cathie and I am one of three Personal Assistants working for Council. If you have ever visited the Mayor or Chief Executive that's where I sit; I have worked in this role since 2007. My role has a two way focus. I prepare a large proportion of Council and Committee agendas and I minute those meetings too. I also assist the Group Manager Regulatory who looks after dogs, health, planning etc. So I find in my role that I have a wide and varied understanding of more than one aspect of Council activities and services. I coordinate most of Council's public notices too.

I enjoy my work and especially the challenges brought about by working in Local Government and keeping up with legislation. I've had numerous opportunities to learn and grow in this role, and I'm very appreciative of the role I have here at Council. Being part of Council's Waiata Group, and the opportunity to appear on the Breakfast Show with Tamati Coffey during Māori Language Week a few years ago, makes me very proud to work for Council.

There is a real community feel in this district, something you don't see so much of in the big cities. I have lived in the South Waikato for over 40 years and don't intend moving any time soon. My parents farmed in Tirohanga and always came to Tokoroa for shopping, banking and to use other services. It was a natural progression to move to the district when the farm sold.

On a personal note, I have been a volunteer with St John Ambulance for the past eight years, having qualified as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) several years ago. I take immense pride in giving back to a community that has been my home for most of my life.



My name is Robert Cathie and I am Council's Road Safety Coordinator. I have been in this role since joining Council in 2004. For the most part my role revolves around providing road safety education, advising the community and internal staff on our annual road safety action plan, ensuring we are aligned with the current government policy on road safety, monitoring and auditing traffic management plans on our roads and I work closely with the roading team on projects advising on safety issues.

The best part of my job is working with groups and individuals in the community from all walks of life, with a common focus of improving road safety for everyone. Working with all of our emergency services to get the Young Driver Expo running as an annual event has been particularly important as it means that our young people learn that driving a car comes with serious responsibility and bad driving can have fatal consequences.

I have lived in the South Waikato for 48 years. Our central location is one of the key reasons why I live here; we are very lucky to be within easy - and very safe - driving distance of lakes, rivers, cities and mountains... it's exceptional!

## Have your say about Census 2018

Statistics NZ wants to hear your views about the next census and is inviting submissions on the content of Census to ensure the 2018 Census is relevant for New Zealand.

Statistics NZ has developed a 'Preliminary view' of content for the 2018 Census based on its review process to date. The best opportunity to influence census content is to make a formal submission, via [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz). The formal submission period is currently open and will close on Tuesday 30 June.

Statistics NZ welcomes all engagement and will listen carefully to everyone's views, but will need to find the right balance between making changes to better reflect New Zealand today and being able compare data over time. Factors such as the length and complexity of the questionnaire will also need to be considered.

Following consultation, Statistics NZ will analyse the submissions and aim to confirm final content for the 2018 Census in early 2017.

Let's make sure they hear from the South Waikato!

## Beware of icy roads this winter

**Winter is here and it sometimes brings icy roads... here's a few good sense tips.**

- Lower your speed, increase your following distances and take extra care when cornering.
- Icy conditions means trips will take longer so allow more time to travel.
- Check your vehicle before setting off to ensure it is safe for travelling on wet and icy roads.
- Check your tyres, brakes, windscreen wipers and lights are all up to warrant of fitness standards.
- Watch for roads in the shade as they may contain black ice even in the afternoon.

# It's pooch registration time



There are many ways to be a responsible dog owner. Responsible dog owners walk their dogs on a regular basis, they feed them, play with them, pet them and love them... and yes rumour has it, on the odd occasion they let them on the bed...

Responsible dog owners also register their dog.

Dog owners in the South Waikato will likely have received their annual dog registration papers by now. All dogs need to be registered by law. Your annual registration fee is due to be paid by Friday 31 July. If you don't register your dog by that date, you will incur an additional 50% penalty fee on top of your normal fee; so it is really worthwhile to ensure you pay your registration by the due date.

## Did you know?

- There are 3,758 dogs in the South Waikato
- There are 2,611 dog owners.
- If you are a babysitting a dog on your property for longer than two weeks you must notify Council.
- If your dog passes away, you may be eligible for a refund, so contact Council.
- We have three disability dogs - these dogs are exempt from registration fees and are permitted in areas that are normally off limits to other dogs, like public buildings, CBD areas and public dog restricted areas.
- It is against the law to leave your dog without food, water and shelter.

## Burn better this winter, our HOT TIPS!

When you use your woodburner you can reduce the amount of pollution given off by:

- Using enough kindling to get a hot fire going as quickly as possible
- Scrunching up two or three sheets of newspaper to place on top of the kindling. They will burn quickly, heat the flue and get a draught going to oxygenate the fire.
- Burning dry wood only (not green). The wood you will be burning this winter should have been stored in a dry area for 6-12 months.
- Not burning treated, painted, green or wet wood; plywood or particle board; or recyclables.



If you haven't collected your wood, Council has several Burnwise suppliers who are committed to providing good wood in the community.

Tokoroa Firewood Ltd  
0508 FOR WOOD (0508 367 9663)

Balmoral Firewood Supplies  
07 886 7550

South Waikato Achievement Centre  
07 886 8941

Central Bay Firewood  
07 886 6387

Tokoroa City Lions  
www.tokoroalions.com



Internet banking options are becoming increasingly popular; the details for which can be found on the reverse of your registration form. Alternatively pop into the Council offices in Tokoroa or Putāruru or The Dog in Tirau.

Better you come to us than wait for us to come to you. Just a reminder that in August and September, Council's Animal Control Officers embark on their door to door programme checking for unregistered dogs. If we do find unregistered dogs the costs may be considerable - the full fee, plus a 50% penalty, plus a \$300 infringement for failing to register. It really is best to pay your dog rego fee on time!

Council also reminds dog owners that all dogs under the age of nine years must be microchipped and puppies have to be microchipped by three months old. There are numerous examples of registered and microchipped dogs that have either been lost or stolen, being successfully returned to their owners.

And if you aren't a dog owner, but are thinking of becoming one - check out Council's rehoming service on our website: [www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz) - Our Services - Animal Control - Adopt a Dog.

## What's

Mark your calendar



### NZ Off Road 1000

24 - 28 September  
Organised by the Auckland Off Road Racing Club

### The Taniwha

Saturday 7 November  
Visit [www.thetaniwha.co.nz](http://www.thetaniwha.co.nz) to register. Events for all levels of fitness - walking, running and biking over distances ranging between 7km and 80km - there's an event for everyone!

### Keep up to date with Council news



[www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz)



[www.facebook.com/southwaikatodistrictcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/southwaikatodistrictcouncil)



@SouthWaikatoDC

## Ever wondered what to plant and where?

Council's Parks and Property team has been identifying ideal urban garden trees over several issues of In Touch. You need to choose urban trees carefully as some trees get so large they block sunlight and their roots can cause havoc.

This issue looks at the Sorbus (or Rowan Tree).

Sorbus trees perform well in cool temperate regions so are well suited to the South Waikato climate. They have attractive white flowers in spring but are mainly grown for their richly coloured autumn leaves.

If you enjoy birds in your garden then Sorbus trees are ideal as they produce abundant crops of soft juicy fruit. The average height is between five and six metres and about three to four metres wide so is an excellent size for residential properties. They like to be planted in full sun with free draining soil.

Suggested varieties include:

- Sorbus aucuparia 'Scarlet King' are erect growing trees which grow well in cold winters. The leaves are grey green with bright red oval fruit from late summer.
- Sorbus devonensis has a compact oval rounded form, and large rounded green leaves that are grey underneath. Leaves turn yellow in autumn with brownish speckled fruits in summer.
- Sorbus aria 'Lutescens' is a compact small upright tree with bold rounded leaves that have a silvery look, turning yellow in autumn.



Photos compliments of Leafland Sorbus aucuparia



## IN brief continued...

- The welding course at the Trade Training Centre is going well. Discussions with Fonterra and transport firms continue to investigate additional expansion opportunities at the facility.
- Following funding and criteria changes, staff have revamped the Warm Homes Clean Air Schemes - On the House, Split the Bill and Buy Now Pay Later will be officially launched on 1 July - watch out for the next issue of In Touch.
- The Libraries have seen an increase in visitors since the installation of free WiFi. The service has improved access to education and knowledge and has become a portal to apply for jobs online. In addition, people who wouldn't necessarily have visited their local library before, are now and they are seeing the wider spectrum of what our library service offers; it's not just books, but puzzles, toys, magazines and of course specialist advice.
- A new tipping area has been developed at the Tokoroa landfill site.
- Downers has been awarded the five year roading contract.
- The speed indication device shows that since the Arapuni Street refurbishment, speed has dropped by 4%.

## IN the know

You can keep up to date with Council information via: website:

www.southwaikato.govt.nz  
facebook: www.facebook/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil  
twitter: @SouthWaikatoDC

## IN view

If you would like to receive this newsletter in electronic format please email [kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz).

## Councillor Column Marin Glucina

The present Council has served half of the term and even though Council staff and Councillors have worked diligently on both the Annual Plan and the 10 year Plan there is not a lot of change to be seen.

Councillors and the community are waiting to see a draft plan for Leith Place; everyone having agreed that Tokoroa needs to present a new face to State Highway One so it can attract potential customers.

There are other developments taking place on the fringe of Tokoroa which many ratepayers may not have noticed. A road rail siding has been constructed alongside the railway lines with access from Boronia Place. This initiative has been supported by Council on the basis that it will encourage industries to both stay in Tokoroa and come to Tokoroa. Further north on SH1 at Lichfield a milk drying plant is being constructed and now is very visible.

Recent discussions have confirmed the need to make Tirau and Putaruru attractive stopping points for traffic. The Tirau Community Board submitted a number of projects for inclusion in the 10 year Plan, as did Pride in Putaruru.

Putaruru is on a key crossing point with north, south, east and west traffic. It is important that the town capitalizes on the geographical advantages it has.

Recent data indicates that our gross national product has increased at a greater rate than the national average. This increase has confirmed that Council has been able to successfully stimulate growth. Our Business Case Management process continues to gain traction with supporting new business through our processes.

There is hope that the second half of this Council's term will build on the work done to date to stimulate commercial developments which create jobs for local people enabling them to support their families in the South Waikato.

## Councillor Column Jenny Shattock

Here we, are nearly six months into 2015 and almost two thirds of the way through this three year term and we are heading to the finish line of our Long Term Plan.

It's been a good term so far; Councillors have worked well together and we've made some pretty gutsy decisions on your behalf ... of course after consultation. Not all those decisions have been popular for everybody however they have been made with the best interests of all our communities in mind.

The Long Term Plan 2015 – 2025 is our guiding document that sets the direction of Council over the next 10 years. We recently spent four days hearing submissions to the plan. There were 123 submissions and some good ideas that came through and we have taken some of them on board.

It's not easy thinking ten years ahead and planning for where we want our community to be. I'm sure we all have big aspirations for our towns, however we do have to be realistic and look at what is feasible and affordable. I would love to plan for major growth in the South Waikato and include lots of new projects however with our aging population and a slight decline in numbers in the future it is a balance between growth and affordability. We think we've got the balance right.

Just touching on Leith Place development. We've talked about it for a long time... we now have a project plan and a local working group moving it forward ... so hopefully it won't be too long before you see something in the public arena.

And finally a plug for our local JPs. Every Wednesday a JP is available at the Tokoroa Library from 2pm till 4pm to witness and sign documents.

## IN touch

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