

Hōngongi July 2023

## Revaluation objections miss rates deadline

Far North ratepayers who lodged objections with Quotable Value (QV) over revaluations of their properties are being advised not to wait for a decision before paying the first rates instalment due on 20 August.

Over 900 objections to property revaluations have been lodged with QV by Far North property owners, more than twice the number normally received following the three-yearly assessments. The council uses updated land value information included in revaluations to help it calculate rates on individual properties.

The volume of objections lodged following this latest round of revaluations has significantly compounded delays already experienced with the revaluation process. QV normally sends revaluation letters to property owners well ahead of the council setting rates for the new financial year on 1 July, as required by the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002. Due to reasons beyond the council's control, October 2022 revaluations were not posted to Far North property owners until mid-May 2023.

Property owners have the right to object to the QV assessment if they believe their property has been under or over-valued, or that the information is incorrect. Due to the delay in receiving revaluations, the deadline for objections was extended to 29 June 2023.



To tackle the backlog, QV has sent valuers to areas in the Far North with a high volume of objections to inspect properties. If the assessor agrees with the objection, rates for that property must then be manually recalculated by council staff. Each recalculation can take an hour or more to complete. Due to already compressed timeframes and the volume of objections lodged, it will take several more weeks for revaluation decisions to be made and rates recalculated. If a change is made to the rates payable on a property, the difference will be spread over the next three rates invoices for 2023/24. This will include any overpayment made for the first August instalment.

Property owners can still lodge an objection to their QV revaluation if they can prove they were unable to do so by the 29 June deadline due to 'extenuating circumstances'. Far North councillors have requested that this category be extended to include those affected by recent extreme weather events, including Cyclone Gabrielle.

Property owners wishing to object to a revaluation can write directly to QV via its website: [www.qv.co.nz/services](http://www.qv.co.nz/services). Printed objection forms can also be found at council service centres and libraries, or property owners can write to QV directly at: **Quotable Value Limited — Business Support, Private Bag 39818, Wellington Mail Centre, Lower Hutt 5045.**

### Key revaluation facts

- Property owners must pay the first rates instalment due on 20 August.
- Do not wait for a decision on a revaluation objection.
- Failure to pay the rates when due risks incurring penalties.
- Any change to rates will be reflected in subsequent invoices for 2023/24.
- All NZ properties are revalued every three years.
- FNDC uses land value to help set rates on individual properties.
- Valuations often have only a moderate impact on the total rates assessment.
- The council has no influence on valuations, which are based on market trends.

### We're here to help you

If you are struggling to pay your rates, please contact us. There are options available to help.

Contact our revenue recovery team:

☎ 0800 920 029

✉ [revenuerecovery@fndc.govt.nz](mailto:revenuerecovery@fndc.govt.nz) to arrange an appointment.

## Council agrees to 6.78% rate increase

Far North District councillors have agreed to increase the district's total rates take for 2023/24 by 6.78 per cent, less than the 8.63 per cent increase initially proposed in the Annual Plan.

The 6.78 per cent rates increase applies to the total amount of rates the council requires for operational expenditure. It does not mean all ratepayers will see their rates rise by 6.78 per cent.

The increase was confirmed when councillors adopted the Annual Plan for 2023/24 during a meeting on Thursday 29 June at Council Chambers in Kaikohe. That followed a marathon seven-hour council meeting held on 1 June when councillors debated how to

fund the delivery of key infrastructure and services at a time when residents and the district face significant challenges. These include back-to-back weather events requiring major repairs to the district's roading network, combined with high levels of inflation that have increased budgets across the organisation.

Far North Kahika Moko Tepania says councillors are very aware that many residents are struggling to pay their bills due to high inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Property owners can find out what rates will be applied to their properties for the 2023/24 financial year by checking the Rating Information Database on the council's website.

## Fees and charges updated



The new financial year for the council started on 1 July. Our fees and charges are reviewed annually to ensure they line up with inflation and other financial indicators. The Ngā Utu Fees and Charges document is available on our website and has been updated for the 2023/24 financial year.

Go to the Far North District Council website and search for 'fees and charges' to find the document.

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

## Memorial Park upgrade celebrated



A large crowd including Kahika Moko Tepania, councillors, council staff, iwi, hapū, school children, families and community groups gathered on Friday 23 June for the blessing of a major upgrade to Memorial Park in Kaikohe. The dawn ceremony unveiled a series of pou at the Station Road entrance to the park. The pou are based on the story of Rahiri and his two sons Uenuku and Kaharau. A female pou represents Tai Tama Wahine and the male pou is Tai Tama Tāne.

The pare is a wheke (octopus) based on the narrative of Te Pū o te Wheke. It is believed that Kaikohekohe (the original name of Kaikohe) is like a wheke using its tentacles to pull in people from all over our takiwā (district).

The \$750,000 project includes a wheelchair accessible merry-go-round, in-ground trampolines, slides, a sand play area, swings, and an eagles' lair rope climbing tower.

The project also built new park entrances, upgraded footpaths, a learn-to-ride and balance track for tamariki, a fully accessible amenity block, a wide loop track linking all areas and seating, and picnic tables and barbeques.

## Kaitāia Market spot continues

Kaitāia's Saturday market will continue to be held at Melba Avenue carpark (the old Warehouse carpark) after the council approved the market's Licence to Occupy for another 12-month term.

The Saturday market has been held at the Melba Avenue carpark since early 2000 under a Licence to Occupy Agreement. The popular market provides considerable value to the town.



Te Hiku Community Board reviewed the licence when it was due for renewal and recommended the council renew the agreement. Its recommendation said the market pulls the community together, promotes local businesses and attracts visitor spending to the area.

## Shade sails for 18 playgrounds

Shade sails appearing over Far North playgrounds are part of a three-year council project to install sun protection over 18 play areas throughout the district.

There are three stages to the project with six playgrounds included in each stage. The first stage includes Te Tii Beach Paihia

Nisbet Park Moerewa, Taupō Bay, Memorial Park Kaikohe, Waiotaraire Reserve Karikari and Coopers Beach.

These playgrounds were prioritised because they are high use areas and as the result of feedback from the community.

Stage two shade sails are planned for Matthews Avenue Park in Kaitāia, Tauranga Bay in Te Hiku, Tōtara North, Cable Bay, Pukenui and Church Street in Kawakawa.

Stages one and two are due to be completed by November this year before the summer sun starts to heat up. Playground sites for the next stage are yet to be determined but will be based on need and ongoing park upgrades.

Each community board – Bay of Islands-Whangaroa, Te Hiku and Kaikohe-Hokianga – has selected different colours for shade sails in their area. The budget allocated for each year of the project is \$360,000.

## Council appoints Interim CEO



Far North District Council has appointed an Interim Chief Executive to oversee council operations while the organisation works through the recruitment process for a permanent CEO.

Bay of Islands resident, Guy Holroyd, has extensive experience in international finance, having worked in London for almost two decades before returning to New Zealand in 2008. He was previously CEO of Ngāti Hine Forestry Trust, a role he was appointed to in 2021.

Mr Holroyd took up his position as Interim Chief Executive on Monday 26 June following a pōwhiri at the council's Kaikohe Chambers.

View a short video on how valuations affect your rates at [fndc.govt.nz/propertyvaluations](http://fndc.govt.nz/propertyvaluations)