

# ME KŌRERO MAI HAVE YOUR SAY

ON THE

MAHERE Ā TAU

## ANNUAL PLAN

2023/24





# He pānui nā tōu kaunihera o A message from your council

## Kia ora koutou

October 2022 saw changes for Far North District Council following the local elections. Your new council has set up portfolios and is settling into a new governance structure. Elected members and staff have turned their focus to delivering the key infrastructure and services Far North residents require. This mahi comes at a time when our district and Aotearoa New Zealand face growing economic challenges and there is heightened uncertainty globally.

In February this year, the North Island faced one of the most destructive weather events of this generation. While the Far North fared better than many others during Cyclone Gabrielle, we still face a long road to recovery, particularly for the district's roading infrastructure. Lessons we have learned from this event will help us to better prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.

Council resources and budgets are under pressure due to damage caused by a series of extreme weather events. This has been compounded by the highest levels of inflation New Zealand has experienced in over 30 years. Like the rest of Aotearoa, this has imposed significant extra costs on the council. In response, we've reassessed our spending line by line. We want to minimise impacts to our budgets, while continuing to deliver core services to residents.

In this Annual Plan we are proposing an 8.63 per cent rise in the total rates take.

We have done everything we can to keep this increase in line with the 5 per cent rise that was forecast in the Long


Term Plan 2021-31. Nationally, efforts are being made to slow inflation, which is the leading cause of this increase. However, the cost of projects the council has committed to in our Long Term Plan 2021-31 have gone up much more than we could have predicted. To keep an increase to our rates as low as possible, we have delayed some of the projects that we committed to.

Next year, we will be developing a new Long Term Plan. This will provide an opportunity to review our goals for 2024 to 2034, and factor higher inflation into our budgets.

Later this year, we will ask what you would like to see in the Long Term Plan 2024-34 and what you are prepared to remove. To keep rates in check, we need to seriously consider which council services have priority. We will need your help to make those decisions and are now working on a plan that will make it as easy as possible for all residents to make meaningful contributions to that discussion.

Until then, we invite you to share your feedback on the options presented for this Annual Plan 2023/24.

## Ngā mihi nui



Take a look and let us  
know what you think  
We need your feedback by  
Monday, 24 April 2023

## He aha rā te kaupapa o tēnei pūrongo? What is this all about?

Our Annual Plan sets out what we plan to do over the next 12 months to achieve outcomes we identified in our Long Term Plan 2021-31 (LTP). The Annual Plan outlines the council's activities for the coming year and includes detailed budgets. It covers much more than what is included in this short document.

This is called a consultation document. It highlights two key proposals that were not included in the LTP but have the potential to impact rates. We are seeking your feedback on these two proposed additions.

## *Te mahi tahi ki te Turner Centre hei whakapai ake i te tuku o ngā mahi toi me te ahurea mō te rohe • Partnering with the Turner Centre to better deliver arts and culture for the district*

The council is proposing to take over ownership of the Turner Centre building with The Centre at Kerikeri Limited continuing to manage the facility.

The Turner Centre is a regional arts facility that was built by a community-owned charitable trust and opened in 2005 to serve community and commercial purposes. The Turner Centre's vision is: "Te Ranga Toi Waka. To be the vessel that weaves all of the arts together, for our community." The centre aspires to be relevant, representative, and to resonate with our diverse community focused on engaging tamariki and rangitahi, and inspiring them through arts, culture and creativity.

The Turner Centre is a regional asset, supporting schools from across Northland and attracting national and international acts that the Far North would otherwise miss. It is the only facility of its kind in Te Tai Tokerau. In 2022, there were 420 bookings at the centre, 329 of these were community events that attracted discounts worth more than \$150,000 (Turner Centre Community Discounts Policy 2023).

The council has an obligation to support art and culture under the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act. Embracing art and culture helps communities build resilience, cohesion and vitality. For the council to provide another facility like the Turner Centre would be prohibitively expensive, costing ratepayers upwards of \$150 million, so partnerships with organisations like the Turner Centre are required to deliver on well-being priorities. Even the world's most successful arts centres rely on partnerships to survive. Unless we change the way that the Turner Centre operates, we risk losing it as a venue.

### *The details*

Management of the Turner Centre, as an arts and culture venue, will continue to be the responsibility of the charitable company, The Centre at Kerikeri Limited, with annual reporting to council. Maintenance and core operational costs, like power and insurance, will become the council's responsibility. Ownership of the building would be transferred at zero-cost to council. The council already owns the land.

This proposal will give the charitable trust-owned entity the space and scope to do what they do best; deliver arts programming at a community and commercial level. It will continue to seek external funding opportunities to support this. It will also give the council the opportunity to provide community hall facilities to the wider Kerikeri community.

### *The options*

1. The council takes over ownership of the Turner Centre building with The Centre at Kerikeri Limited managing the facility. This is our preferred option.

This option would add 0.3 per cent to the general rates portion of a property owner's annual rates total. The exact dollar amount would vary from ratepayer to ratepayer but for most it would add little more than the price of a cup of coffee each year.

2. Do not take over ownership of the Turner Centre building. This is not our preferred option.

The Far North risks losing the centre as a key community, arts and culture facility and the future of the building itself would be uncertain.



# *Te whakaahei i te whanaketanga ā-whare ki runga i ngā Whenua Māori Herekore • Enabling housing development on Māori Freehold Land*

The council is required by legislation to enable housing development on Māori Freehold Land through the remission of rates – the suspension of rate payments under certain conditions. This provides immediate social benefits to whānau, and longer-term benefits to the entire district through future rates contributions once the development is complete. While the council is required to have this policy, we do get to frame how it is applied according to Far North-specific conditions. We want to hear from you to understand whether you support the conditions we are proposing.

## *The background*

Aotearoa New Zealand has some of the least affordable housing in the developed world according to the 2022 Demographia International Housing Affordability report. As a result, many people face overcrowding and thousands of families are living in unacceptable housing conditions. When the cost of housing is disproportionate to incomes, it makes it harder for families to break the cycle of poverty.

The recent Rating of Whenua Māori Act acknowledges that Māori Freehold Land is significantly underdeveloped when compared to General Freehold Land. Approximately 17 per cent of the Far North is Māori land. Unused, undeveloped Māori land already qualifies for rates remission. In comparison, 0.5 per cent of land in Whangarei and 0.8 per cent of land in Kaipara is Māori land. This policy provides the opportunity to enable owners to develop Māori Freehold Land for housing which means it will be rateable once developed. Future developments will also go some way toward addressing housing shortages in the Far North.

Enabling development of Māori Freehold Land benefits everyone through:

- Creating employment opportunities
- Building new homes
- Increasing council's rating base over the long term
- Encouraging mana whenua to return home which can mean more support for marae
- Encouraging better use of land.

## *The details*

This policy will give Māori Freehold Landowners the opportunity to apply for reduced rates if they intend to develop the land to provide housing. There are a number of criteria that the applicant needs to meet. These include:

- The land must be suitable for development and have a resource consent
- Applicants must apply for a building consent and code of compliance once building is complete
- Applicants will need to obtain suitable professional advice and appropriate financial arrangements for the development
- If the development does not proceed, rates will no longer be remitted.

Rates will not be remitted indefinitely. If the application is successful, rates will be remitted on a sliding-scale over a number of years.

- Years 1 - 3 - 100% remitted
- Years 4 - 5- 75% remitted
- Year 6 - 50% remitted
- Year 7 - 25% remitted
- Year 8 - 0% remitted

You can find the draft policy in full at [fndc.govt.nz/yoursay](http://fndc.govt.nz/yoursay).

## *The options*

1. The council adopts the draft Enabling Housing Development on Māori Freehold Land Policy with the proposed conditions. This is our preferred option.
2. The council amends the conditions in the draft policy. Let us know what changes you would like to make to the conditions. Remember, we are required to have this policy so not adopting it is not an option.

*Mō ētahi atu whakamārama, ā, e pai ai hoki tō whakapuaki i āu kōrero whakahoki • For more information and to share your feedback*

### **Ipurangi • Online**

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

### **Tuku • Deliver**

whakataka atu ki te whare ratonga kaunihera, ki te whare pukapuka rāinei e pātata atu ana ki a koe  
drop it into your nearest council service centre or library

### **Īmēra • Email**

[submissions@fndc.govt.nz](mailto:submissions@fndc.govt.nz)

### **Poutāpeta • Post**

Far North District Council  
Private Bag 752  
Kaikohe 0440  
Attention: AP Submissions team



**Your feedback must be received by Monday 24 April 2023**