

GUARDIANS ON BIKES KEEPING INNER CITY SAFE



City Safe Guardians and parking wardens now patrolling the inner city on mountain bikes.

Over the past few months Rotorua Lakes Council's City Safe Guardians and parking wardens have been getting around on mountain bikes. Inner City Operations supervisor, Richard Horn, said feedback from retailers and the public had been positive since the teams started using the bikes over the Christmas and New Year period.

"Being on bikes gives our teams the ability to cover more of the inner city, including Government Gardens and Kuirau Park. Our response times are quicker as well." He said there was also added health benefits for staff members being on bikes. Gina, a City Safe Guardian, said she was enjoying being part of an initiative that

supports clean transport. "Members of the public also say it's lovely to see us out on the street among other cyclists," she said. Meanwhile, the council is encouraging staff to use bikes when attending nearby meetings as a sustainable transport option, and to cycle during lunch breaks to promote health and exercise.

POSITIVE SIGNS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Two new economic reports show Rotorua's economy is making progress.

The reports, by two independent national economic research consultancies, Infometrics and BERL, present an increasingly promising picture of Rotorua's economic future says Rotorua Lakes Council's Economic Growth Portfolio lead, deputy mayor Dave Donaldson.

"We're starting to see an independent view of change which can give Rotorua some real confidence for the future," says Mr Donaldson.

"The picture is far from complete but it shows things are moving in the right direction.

"The reports confirm retail sales are up, visitor spending has gone through the roof, and people are returning home from overseas in growing numbers because they see better job prospects here.

"On top of that forestry export prices are recovering and unemployment is trending down. These are strong indicators of change."

Infometrics December 2014 Quarterly Economic Monitor says Rotorua's economy grew at a "healthy rate" throughout 2014 and is now 15 per cent larger than its post-Global Financial Crisis trough.

It identifies a 4.8 per cent growth in sales on electronic cards in the retail sector over the

Christmas period, international visitor spending up 26 per cent during the final quarter of 2014, domestic visitor spending up 8.3 per cent, forestry export prices recovering 8.4 per cent since their September 2014 trough, and sawn timber sales forecast to benefit from the country's rising building activity.

Conditions in Rotorua's labour market have also improved with the unemployment rate reducing to 7.4 per cent in 2014, down 1.3 percentage points from the 2013 average of 8.7 per cent.

The reports says better job prospects have reversed previous years' net outflow of people, contributing to a migration inflow to Rotorua of 433 people in 2014.

A separate report (February 2015) on population projections by economic research consultancy BERL, shows increased expectations for population growth over coming years.

Under their 'Reality Check' scenario, BERL says Rotorua is projected to enjoy a growing workforce. Total employment will rise on average 1.5 per cent every year - from 28,545 in 2013 to 42,110 in 2036, an increase of 13,565 extra jobs over the period.

BERL forecasts improved employment leading to a population increase of nearly 14,000 people, to reach 78,901 in 2036.

SUBMISSIONS STEADY FOR TE ARAWA PROPOSAL

With just three weeks to go before the submission period closes, more than 400 residents have already taken the opportunity to give feedback to Rotorua Lakes Council on the proposal for a new partnership model with local iwi. The last day for submissions is Friday 17 April.

Around 300 people have also attended a series of 10 public information meetings held across the district over recent weeks.

Acknowledgement of the need to develop a more effective relationship between Te Arawa and Rotorua Lakes Council goes back to an Environment Court decision in 2012 which was critical of the council's consultation with iwi. The Local Government Act requires councils to facilitate participation by Māori in council decision-making. Te Arawa and the council

together reached the same conclusion - that the Te Arawa Standing Committee was no longer meeting the council's obligations to Māori under legislation and changes were needed.

After the 2013 local government elections the incoming council and Te Arawa representatives committed to developing a new partnership model together. The Rotorua community also signalled support for a stronger relationship with iwi when the council consulted residents on the new 'Rotorua 2030' vision and goals for the district.

After 12 months of research and consultation with iwi, a Te Arawa working group presented their recommended model to the mayor and councillors on 18 December last year. In a 10-3 vote, the council approved the model in principle, and

subsequently released a proposal for public consultation ahead of final decisions to be made by the council in May.

If adopted by Rotorua Lakes Council, the proposed Te Arawa Partnership Model would see iwi interests represented by an independent Te Arawa Board sitting outside of the council, with board members elected by the Te Arawa community.

The board would forward nominations for certain council committees, RMA consent panels and strategic working groups, with the appointments being made solely by elected councillors and the mayor.

The two appointed representatives on the Strategy, Policy & Finance Committee, and Operations & Monitoring Committee, would each have a vote alongside the 12 councillors and the mayor on the committees.

A formal 'statement of proposal' provides more details on the council's preferred option, other options the council also considered, and answers to a series of frequently asked questions.

Copies of the 'statement of proposal,' submission forms and other information are publicly available from the council website and from the council's Customer Centre in Haupapa Street. Submissions can also be made online on the website.

After the public feedback period closes on 17 April, the council will hold hearings later in the month for submitters to speak in support of their individual submissions.

All submissions will then be considered by the mayor and councillors at meetings open to the public, before final decisions are made on a new Te Arawa partnership model.

TE ARAWA PROPOSAL Q&As

Q. Why does the council need people on some committees, to provide a Maori perspective, when there are already some Maori councillors?

A. Councillors are elected to represent all residents of the district, and they take an oath to represent the interests of the wider community.

Q. If a non-elected person was appointed to a council committee would this set a precedent?

A. Many councils appoint people to their committees as it is permitted under local government legislation. In Rotorua the council has previously appointed non-elected people to committees and sub-committees, recent examples being appointments to the council's Tourism Committee, Te Arawa Standing Committee, and Audit Sub-committee.



FORMER MAYOR'S LEGACY FUNDS BOULEVARD GARDENS



Concept impression of entrance to proposed Boulevard Gardens area, integrated with Green Corridor cycle and walking path.

Stage One of Rotorua Lakes Council's proposed Boulevard Gardens project in Kuirau Park is set to become a reality as a result of a \$273,000 grant from the Francis Moss Boord Trust. Mayor Steve Chadwick said the council was extremely grateful to the Francis Moss Boord Trust for its generous donation to the special community project. "It seems very fitting that a philanthropic trust set up through the will of Rotorua's

well-respected former MP and mayor, the late Ray Boord, will contribute to such an important community project as this." Speaking on behalf of the Francis Moss Boord Trust, Perpetual Guardian's client manager Jan Middlemiss said the \$273,000 grant for establishing new gardens, walkways and picnic areas in Kuirau Park was the most significant distribution of funds ever made by the trust. "The project fits very well with

the objectives of the trust to benefit the Rotorua community, and it certainly honours the legacy left by Ray Boord." The Boulevard Gardens concept is for a series of five specialty and feature gardens in Kuirau Park. They will be connected by a combined public walkway and cycle path, integrated with the new Green Corridor currently under construction, and linking key attractions and activities within the unique geothermal reserve.

COMMUNITY REPS APPOINTED FOR PRE-ELECTION REVIEW

Community representatives have been appointed to the council's Representation Review Working Party. They are former Daily Post deputy editor Jill Nicholas, MP electorate agent Aroha Bray, and retired Methodist minister Brian Eagle. The trio will join councillors Merepeka Raukawa-Tait, Charles Sturt and Tania Tapsell on the council's six-person working party. This year's review will look at matters ahead of the next local government elections in 2016, including the number of councillors to be elected, whether or not there should be community boards, and whether councillors should be elected by wards or 'at large'. Working party chair, Cr Merepeka Raukawa-Tait, said they would engage with residents to hear their different perspectives, assess the feedback received, research what's happening elsewhere, then make recommendations for the council to consider. "Ultimately the mayor and councillors will need to formally decide on the final representation arrangements to apply for the 2016 and 2019 local government elections," she said.

BRIEFLY

ENTRIES OPEN FOR MUSEUM ART AWARDS

Entries have opened for the 2015 Rotorua Museum Art Awards. The biennial awards aim to inspire local artists and highlight the wealth of talent in the Bay of Plenty region. This year there is \$13,000 in prizes up for grabs. Entries close 4 May at 5pm, with an awards night taking place 19 June.

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR ACTIVITY GROWTH

Rotorua's tourism sector is showing good signs of growth, with more international visitors staying and visiting the district's attractions. The latest commercial accommodation statistics show Rotorua continues to experience strong growth in international visitor activity, with January recording a 9.2 per cent increase in visitor nights compared to the same month the year before. January also saw an increase in the number of visits by international tourists to Rotorua's attractions and activities - up 6.9 per cent on the previous January.

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR CIVIC THEATRE SHOW

Local performing artists have until the end of the month to register their interest to be part of Rotorua Civic Theatre's 75th birthday celebrations in July. 'Celebrate 75' will be a celebration showcasing the performing arts over the past 75 years. Community members and groups have until 31 March to register their interest. Forms are available on rotorualakescouncil.nz or by contacting Richard Marshall by phone on 07 348 4199 or by sending an email to richard.marshall@rdc.govt.nz.

DID YOU KNOW?

Across the district Rotorua Lakes Council is responsible for the following:

- Nearly 5,000 street lights
- 123 bridges
- 2,000 metres of retaining walls
- 144 bus shelters
- 35,000 culverts
- More than 1,000 kilometres of roads.

FREE MUSIC FESTIVAL TOPS OFF CRANKWORX



Part of Crankworx Rotorua, the Enduro World Series kicks off on Saturday. British rider Dan Atherton is a former downhill world champ. [Photo: Enduro World Series].

Locals and visitors are encouraged to get along to Crankworx Rotorua's Bikes and Beats music festival at the Village Green today (27 March) from 3pm, and tomorrow (28 March) from 4pm. The Black Seeds, Savage, P-Money and Jamie McDell are headlining the free event, which will also feature The Peacekeepers, ManaLion and Hipstamatics, along with local up-and-comers Strangely

Arousing and Open Arms. There will be live-screen action of Crankworx events, prizegiving, food stalls, carnival rides and much more. Spectators will also get the opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the stars of the international mountain biking scene. Bikes and Beats is an alcohol-free event and tops off five days of world-class mountain biking action.

WARRIORS CLEAN-UP UTUHINA RIVER

Malfroy School children, with help and support from John Paul College students, police and council staff held a big clean-up in a stretch of Utuhina Stream as part of their studies about sustainability and kaitiakitanga (guardianship), with funding from Council's Neighbourhood Matching Fund. Calling themselves the

Utuhina Warriors, they pulled large amounts of rubbish out of the water and from the stream banks including a shopping trolley, a couch, vacuum cleaners, car and bike parts, clothing and shoes, cans and many plastic and glass bottles. Local communities in the area are being urged to help keep the stream clean.

LOCALS INVITED TO MAKE CROCHET POPPIES FOR WWI COMMEMORATION

Rotorua Museum is asking local people to help create crochet poppies for its World War One centenary commemorations this year. Museum deputy director, Pamela Lovis, said Rotorua Yarnbombers and enthusiastic volunteers have been knitting and crocheting a variety of red poppies since last October. "The poppies will be used to create an art installation

in the museum mezzanine in time for this year's Anzac Day commemorations," says Pam. Rotorua Yarnbombers will be at the museum on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 April from 10am until 2pm, where they will help people make simple poppies. Poppy patterns are available online at rotoruamuseum.co.nz, while completed poppies can be delivered to the Rotorua Museum reception.

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

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