

## Introduction by Mayor Steve Chadwick



*E nga iwi puta noa i to tatau rohe o Rotorua  
Tena koutou katoa*

Developing a master plan covering key council services, programmes and projects for the next ten years has been a lengthy and complex task. It has involved a substantial amount of work by councillors and council staff and, most importantly, really valuable input from Rotorua residents and other stakeholders.

The result of this collaboration is a Long-term Plan with shared ownership by Rotorua Lakes Council and our community. It is the council's commitment to Rotorua residents for the next decade, as we navigate our way to a more positive future for our district. It sets out where we're going, how we're going to get there, how we'll measure progress, what it's going to cost, and how we're going to fund it all.

This is the first Long-term Plan under my mayoralty, and I believe it is a particularly transparent, honest and responsible blueprint for the years ahead.

A reality check on our financial position meant some tough decisions had to be made. We inherited a legacy of unsustainable low rates increases from recent years, burgeoning debt levels and a lack of investment in our infrastructure. Reluctantly we have had to bite the bullet and play catch-up, meaning a larger than hoped for rates increase for the coming year to get our finances back into balance.

The pragmatic decision to increase total rates by seven per cent for the 2015/16 year is however a one-off measure and it means we should be able to maintain rates movements at around inflation levels for the nine year balance of the Long-term Plan. And we can start to stem the escalating debt levels of past years.

This is a plan for proactivity and progress for our community. It sets out how we will address five broad areas of challenge that face us. In summary these are:

- funding our services and building financial sustainability;
- developing effective and environmentally responsible wastewater services;
- preparing a comprehensive waste strategy to meet community needs and minimise waste levels;
- maintaining and future-proofing council and community infrastructure; and
- making progress on priorities set as part of our Rotorua 2030 shared vision and goals.

Since the local government election in late 2013 we have made a strong drive for change. Engaging with and listening to our community before we make the important decisions, has become a hallmark of the way we now do business. And this plan is no exception.

Through our Rotorua 2030 shared vision and other community conversations, we have built a sound understanding of the needs and aspirations of our residents. The Long-term Plan - a partnership with our community - sets a direction to help us meet those needs and aspirations over the next ten years.

*Ma te mah itahi, ma te noho tahi, ma te haere tahi  
Ka tutuki nga whakakitenga ka puawai nga moemoea  
Ka tutuki te korero  
Tātau Tātau - we together*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Chadwick'.

**Hon Steve Chadwick JP  
Rotorua Mayor**