

foreword from the mayor and chief executive.



His Worship the Mayor
Kevin Winters JP (right)
and Chief Executive
Peter Guerin

Kia ora koutou.

Many residents of Rotorua, property owners, businesses, organisations, investors and others with an interest in the district, accepted our invitation to play a role in shaping the future of this district.

It was encouraging to see so many people keen to engage with their council and to have a say on our draft Ten Year Plan. More than 750 submissions were received and around 150 people also took the opportunity to meet with us in person to give their thoughts about what the council could be focusing on over the next ten years. This feedback was invaluable and we are grateful to all who took the time to participate. A summary of the significant changes made to the draft Ten Year Plan is provided at the end of Volume 2 of this final document.

At the end of June, we adopted this new Ten Year Plan covering the period 2009 to 2019. It is a blueprint to guide the future direction of Rotorua District Council - the most important and far reaching strategic document this council has ever prepared. It sets the district on a clearly defined path towards future growth and progress over the next ten years. And it will help us to achieve the aspirations of Rotorua people – your community outcomes.

At the same time the plan acknowledges the current global environment and demonstrates responsible fiscal restraint.

Under current legislation the plan has a ten year focus. It has meant professional planning, detailed forecasting, careful costing and addressing funding issues for well into the future. Your council has made some very responsible yet progressive decisions in this Ten Year Plan. We have prepared it within a framework that attempts to balance three overriding themes:

- economic growth;
- sustainability; and
- affordability.

There has been comprehensive scrutiny of all costs in an effort to keep rate increases as low as possible. Given the current economic recession, Council has taken a 'steady as she goes' approach, with the view that it is important to:

- Keep moving forward with current commitments eg Civic Theatre upgrade, sewerage schemes and extensions to the Museum
- Maintain existing levels of service in all areas with the exception of community grants where some reductions are proposed
- Explore a range of new projects where funding partners can be found.

More importantly, the council will achieve these things while holding overall rates increases to just two percent in the first year and within the level of inflation for the remaining nine years of the Ten Year Plan. We are particularly pleased that these are amongst the lowest rate increases of any council in the country.

Many in the community have sent a clear message that they want the council to take a much more proactive leadership role in addressing local economic issues being faced in as a result of the current recessionary environment. And they expect action to be given priority and be supported by realistic funding. As a result we have developed a number of initiatives aimed at local economic stimulation and growth, including establishment of the new Grow Rotorua Development Fund with a \$3.5 million budget in each of the first two years of this plan.

We have had to carefully consider the need for our district to prosper and to make real progress, and then balance this with the community's ability to pay for our future needs. Councillors have been very sensitive to the funding limitations of our community. However we are confident that with the 'steady as she goes' approach, Council is setting in place a well planned and affordable direction and as a result we believe this community has a sound and sustainable future.

In developing this Ten Year Plan many residents have joined with us to play a vital role in shaping the future of Rotorua – a place that is...

*admired globally and treasured locally;
unique places and remarkable communities.*

Kevin Winters JP
Mayor

P J Guerin
Chief Executive