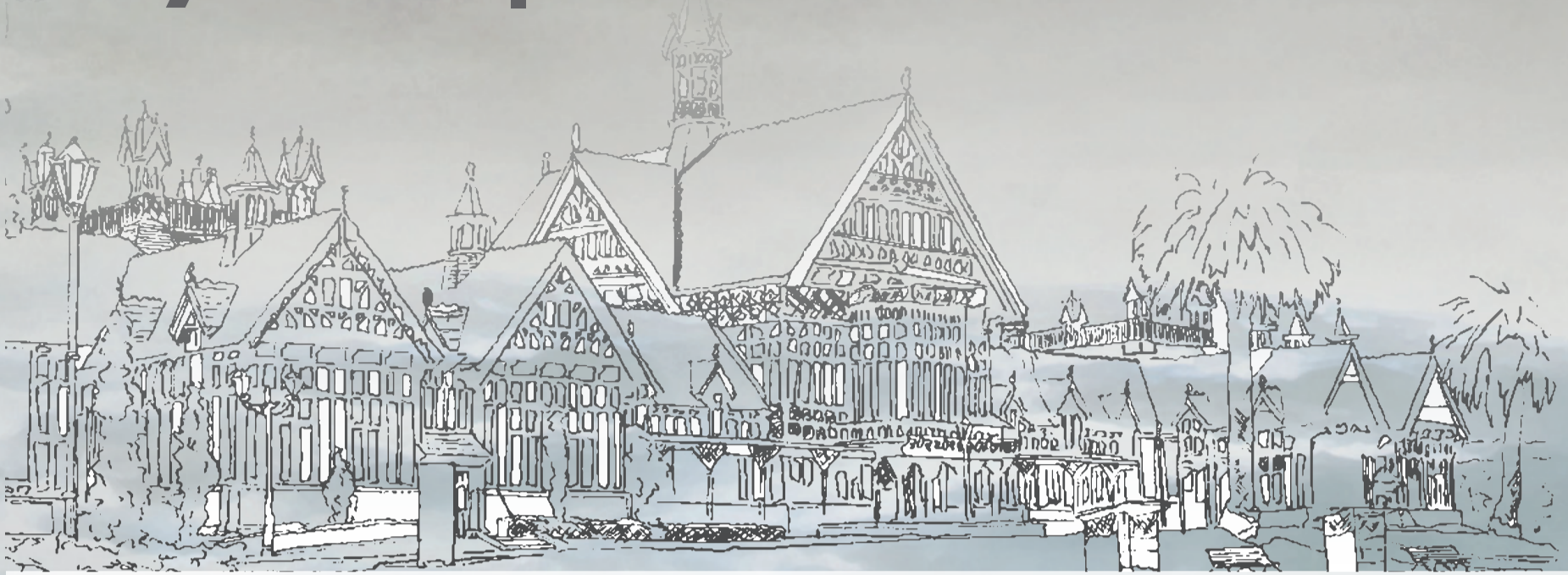


2017/2018 | Annual Plan



Rotorua Museum continues to host thousands of locals and visitors while investigations continue to assess damage to the historic part of the building.

Damage was discovered following last November's Kaikoura earthquake and detailed assessment to ascertain the extent of it will be a lengthy process. However, many education services, events and exhibitions have continued.

Because of the closure the way museum services are delivered has had to change and Museum Director Stewart Brown and his team have taken a proactive approach, finding alternative venues for school programmes, events and exhibitions and running tours of the Government Gardens.

Local support of exhibitions and events has continued post-closure, with 7800 locals among the 13,900 who visited the *Da Vinci Machines & Robots* exhibition in the Sir Howard Morrison Performing Arts Centre.

Nearly 3000 people have attended museum events since the closure, more than 1500 have enjoyed Government Gardens tours and 2200 have attended education programmes including more than 1500 from Rotorua schools.

The museum's popularity in the local community has grown alongside tourist numbers. During the last three years the museum had a 40% increase in local visitors, a 28% increase last year alone. Last financial year there was also a 60% increase in participation in events (more than 14,000 people in total).

The museum had also been achieving record visitor numbers with revenue performance also breaking records during the past three years. Museum revenue from retail, admissions and the café totalled \$2.2m in 2016/17, benefitting from a strong tourist market with growth expected to continue.

Proposed museum recovery targeted rate

The unexpected closure of the museum has impacted on Council's revenue and a museum recovery targeted rate is proposed to help address this.

The targeted rate would apply until the museum re-opens and it is proposed every ratepayer be charged an additional \$14.20 per year.

Museum operating costs have been reduced as much as possible. However, there is still an annual shortfall of \$400,000 which the proposed targeted rate will cover.

By the end of this financial year museum losses will total about \$1.3m, impacting on Council's end-of-year result.

What about insurance?

The museum is insured but the assets of a council are not insured in the same way as most households or businesses.

Insurance on Rotorua Lakes Council assets is 5% of the value or, for heritage assets like the museum, 10% of the value. The museum has a \$50m value so has an excess of \$5m.

Having a higher excess reduces the cost of insurance while still providing cover for significant events. This is normal practice for councils.

Council cannot make an insurance claim until repair costs are known and cannot claim for loss of income until the end of the closure period because until then, the amount of lost income cannot be quantified.

Museum investigations well underway

Investigations to assess the extent of damage to Rotorua Museum is a staged, technical process which, when finished, will provide a full picture of what has happened and what needs to be done.

Following the museum's closure visual assessments were conducted and recorded and research began on previous work undertaken on the building.

Monitoring and mapping began in late January. This involves "invasive" testing which includes scans and core sampling to find out how the building is constructed and what materials were used to help determine the strength of the building.

Because the museum has a Category 1 heritage status (the most important category of heritage buildings) extreme care is needed when conducting these tests to ensure the process doesn't damage

the building. Heritage New Zealand and a conservation architect are required to approve test sites and methods and anywhere sampling has been done must be returned to its original state.

Geotechnical testing, looking at the ground under and around the museum, is also underway.

Meanwhile, an architect has been working on understanding museum plans from 1908 through to 2011. The building has undergone many modifications so understanding what original parts still exist, what has changed, how and using what materials is important.

Once all testing is completed and assessed, a plan to repair and strengthen the building can then be developed.



Above: Museum Director Stewart Brown explains the work underway to elected members during a recent walk-through.