

## COUNCIL'S APPROVAL RATING SKYROCKETS



Mayor Steve Chadwick

The vast majority of Rotorua residents are satisfied with Rotorua Lakes Council services, with approval levels reaching per centage figures in the high 90s. These are the findings of a new

public survey undertaken by research company, National Research Bureau (NRB).

The annual community perceptions survey helps Rotorua Lakes Council independently measure residents' views of the performance of council activities and services, against objectives set out in each year's annual plan.

Mayor Steve Chadwick said she was encouraged by the community's high ratings for the majority of council services, and the equally high rating for the performance of council staff.

"This council organisation has worked very hard to

lift its performance during the last year, so it's pleasing to see those results being acknowledged by residents.

The top rated council service was district beautification and landscaping with 98 per cent of people satisfied, followed closely by high sewerage systems (97%), water supplies (96), rubbish collection (95%), city cleanliness (94%) and stormwater systems (93%).

Other high approval levels were recorded for cycling facilities (89%), parks and playgrounds (89%), roads (87%), sports fields (85%), tourism promotion (85%), city parking (85%), library (84%), footpaths (82%), events promotion

(81%) museum (80%), noise control (76%), dog control (75%), and recycling (73%).

Even services with the lowest ratings recorded approval from a majority of respondents. These were the aquatic centre with 69 per cent acceptance, business and investment promotion (59%), and public toilets (56%). However the council has announced measures in its recently adopted long-term plan to upgrade public toilets and the aquatic centre, and to boost business and attract investment.

A summary of the 2015 NRB community perceptions is on the council website.

## STOP PRESS



### RATES BILLS

Rates bills are in the post. The 400 plus farmers eligible for a remission, because their rates would have risen by more than 10 per cent, will find the reduction has already come off their bill. To find out more go to: [rotorualakescouncil.nz](http://rotorualakescouncil.nz)

## NEW PLAN SETS 10 YEAR DIRECTION

A feature of Rotorua Lakes Council's newly adopted long-term plan is, for the first time in many years, a return to a balanced budget position in seven of the next 10 years.

Mayor Steve Chadwick said the plan addressed big challenges - like funding, wastewater, earthquake-risk building, and balancing the budget.

"It's not filled with 'wants'. It responds to 'needs' - to maintain and future-proof the district's infrastructure, and its reputation as a great place to invest, live and work.

"The plan supports our priority goals - developing a city heart that attracts people and vibrancy; developing our economic base; supporting

residential renewal and sustainable infrastructure; and an affordable and effective council.

"Our organisation has now taken \$8.3 million out of its annual budget and the target is to remove a further million dollars a year throughout the plan's life. But while Council is reducing debt and improving efficiency, this plan still encourages and supports growth and vitality in our district."

Mayor Steve said the plan was about "facing reality and getting the council back on course."

The long-term plan confirms a one-off seven per cent increase in the total amount of rates to be

collected in the 2015/16 financial year - deemed necessary to get the council back into a balanced budget position and to enable infrastructure upgrades and renewals. Annual rates increases are then expected to be held closer to inflation levels in subsequent years.

Rates increases for individual properties this year will vary depending on the ratepayer category they fall into and the impact of new property revaluations.

From today, ratepayers will receive invoices for the 2015/16 first quarter rates instalment, which will be due for payment by 20 August.

The full 2015-2025 long-term plan is on the council website - [rotorualakescouncil.nz](http://rotorualakescouncil.nz)

## ARTIST SCULPTING NEW STREET ARTWORK



Artist Jamie Pickernell

Well-known local artist Jamie Pickernell is preparing a new piece of street art to be installed soon at the intersection of Tutanekai and Haupapa streets.

The four metre high contemporary piece, called 'Shavings,' acknowledges Rotorua's innovative WoodFirst Policy and the importance of timber products to the local economy.

Work is currently underway to upgrade and re-landscape the intersection as part of the council's Inner City Revitalisation Strategy.

## COUNCIL TO CONSULT ON CENTRAL CITY PARKING

Rotorua Lakes Council will consult with businesses and the wider community following further analysis of its free inner city parking trial.

Council has been trialling free time-limited parking to help stimulate activity in the inner city and is now looking to finalise a longer term parking policy.

RLC Strategy and Partnerships group manager, Jean-Paul Gaston, said having received the technical data, Council now needed to analyse other information, understand what businesses and retailers feel has been achieved, and get the community's views before any final decision is made on a long-term solution.

Mr Gaston said by delivering the trial the council was making an investment to support inner city revitalisation and encourage economic benefits for inner city businesses.

"The Council made a conscious decision to forfeit an existing revenue stream from paid parking to test if free parking could achieve improved retail outcomes.

"Sensor information has provided important data regarding the utilisation of parking in the central city. In some areas there is fine-tuning to be done and that's why we propose to seek community and stakeholder input to achieve that."

## NEW CHAIRMAN FOR DESTINATION ROTORUA BOARD



Peter Stubbs

Rotorua Lakes Council has appointed Peter Stubbs chairman of the board of tourism business unit, Destination Rotorua.

Mr Stubbs is also chairman of Rotorua Airport, a RLC-owned CCO (council controlled organisation).

He is a partner in the commercial law group of national law firm Simpson Grierson, heading three specialist divisions of Sales and Marketing Law, Sports Entertainment & Venues, and

Fast Moving Consumer Goods.

His previous role on the board of Tourism New Zealand (1999-2007, board member and later deputy chairman) and involvement with various local authorities has given him an insight into event management and destination marketing.

Mr Stubbs said Destination Rotorua had helped revitalise the tourism industry in Rotorua under the leadership of outgoing chairman Alan Bickers.

"I hope to build on that excellent foundation," he said.



# DOLLS, CLAY AND PAINT TO ENERGISE GALLERIA

A collection of works by five local artists is energising the council's public art gallery over the next two months.

'The Energy Within' exhibition showcases the works of Debbi Thyne, Michael Staite, Liz Pearce, Miriam Ruberl, and Michael Smith, and explores Rotorua's geothermal and spiritual environment.

RLC community arts advisor, Marc Spijkerbosch, said he was pleased to offer the community another high quality Galleria showing.

"Miriam Ruberl and Michael Staite have used natural media in their pieces such as local red ochre, while Debbi Thyne and Michael Smith work with acrylic on canvas, and Liz Pearce is showcasing



Liz Pearce with one of her steam punk dolls on display in 'The Energy Within' exhibition.

her unique steam punk dolls." The Galleria brings vibrancy, colour, and community ownership to an otherwise formal space. It also offers local

artists a professional platform, one which has been successful in achieving a number of sales for the artists during the previous two exhibitions.

## INNER CITY REVITALISATION STRATEGY AWARDED

Rotorua Lakes Council's Inner City Revitalisation strategy was highly commended in the 2015 Local Government New Zealand Excellence Awards.

RLC was one of two local authorities to be highly commended in the MartinJenkins sponsored category for local economic contribution.

Rotorua's inner city revitalisation programme, led by Councillor Karen Hunt, is aimed at 'bringing the heart and soul back to the city'.

Judges praised the scheme for its great commitment and partnership with business. They also hailed Rotorua Lakes Council's recognition of the importance of urban design and breathing new life into the inner city.

## BRIEFLY

### COUNCIL LIVESTREAMING MEETINGS

Rotorua Lakes Council meetings are livestreamed.

Links to all YouTube footage of council meetings are available on the council website ([rotorualakescouncil.nz](http://rotorualakescouncil.nz)) or people can search for them on YouTube ([youtube.com](http://youtube.com)).

### PUBLIC TO HAVE SAY ON CITY FOCUS

Inner city businesses and the wider community will be consulted on the future of the City Focus, following feedback during the long-term plan consultation process and a survey of inner city businesses this year.

It was recommended that the City Focus be considered for removal to encourage reinvestment in Hinemoa and Tutanekei streets, achieve a north-south traffic flow and encourage more pedestrian activity.

Public consultation is expected to take place from late August until the end of September.

### POSITIVE AGING ROTORUA FORUM TO BE ANNOUNCED

Successful applicants for the new Positive Aging Rotorua forum will be announced soon.

The group will provide an independent voice for people aged 50 and over and work with Rotorua Lakes Council on issues that affect senior people.

A high calibre of applications was received after council's call for expressions of interest and interviews have been held. Ten people will be appointed to the forum for a 12-month period.

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON RUBBISH AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

Rotorua Lakes Council is consulting on rubbish and recycling collection in the district - with a particular focus on lakes and rural areas.

Feedback from a survey and a series of meetings in lakes and rural areas will help council understand residents' expectations, what services are currently used, and how these can be improved. This will be taken into consideration in decisions made as part of a review of how council manages the district's waste.

The Rotorua Rubbish and Recycling Survey will be on the council website from 3 to 14 August and residents are invited to complete it. It takes

around five minutes to complete. Wheelie bins and kerbside collection are being considered for urban areas but Council wants to talk to residents in lakes and rural areas about options for their communities.

Meetings are being held in Mamaku, Okareka, Reporoa, Atiamuri and Okere Falls from 3 to 8 August, with follow-up meetings taking place from 11 to 15 August.

Meeting locations and times are also available on the council website. In areas where there are no meetings, residents are encouraged to attend one at a location close by.

Feedback can also be emailed to [waste@rotorualc.nz](mailto:waste@rotorualc.nz).

## 'MOTORHOME FRIENDLY' STATUS FOR ROTORUA

Rotorua could be set for an influx of mobile home visitors with the district being accorded official 'Motorhome Friendly Town' status.

Acknowledgement of the district's support for motorhome travellers has come from the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA), which has more than 60,000 active members.

It follows Rotorua's recent development of a free, security camera-monitored dedicated parking area in Government Gardens, specifically for campervan and motorhome vehicles. The initiative is part of Council's programme to encourage

more foot traffic and bring new vitality into the inner city. Council Sports & Recreation Portfolio lead, Cr Charles Sturt, said the new dedicated parking site had been well received by motorhome users and, being just a few minutes' walk from the centre of town, was providing ready access to inner city shops, cafes and visitor attractions.

"NZMCA records show the association's members spend an average of 75 nights away from home each year. "And with on-the-road motor home expenditure exceeding \$650 million annually, this is a market that we're keen to embrace."

## CHANGES AS REDWOODS CENTRE BECOMES i-SITE

Rotorua i-SITE manager Graham Brownrigg says visitors to the Redwoods Visitor Centre and i-SITE will soon notice some improvements to the layout, information displays and range of services on offer.

"We've transitioned the Redwoods Visitor Centre into the i-SITE brand, to provide visitors with the extended services already on offer at our other inner city i-SITE locations on Fenton Street and at City Focus."

Mr Brownrigg said the team at the Redwoods Visitor Centre had laid great

foundations over many years and he wanted to build on what had already been achieved.

"First and foremost it's about forest information and forest safety.

"We'll be enhancing our presentation of information about the various tracks and trails in the area, and telling the stories of the forest through digital media, maps and via free WiFi which we've already made available.

"We want the centre to become an educational hub and enhance what's already on offer," he said.

## YOUNG LEADERS LEARN ABOUT COUNCIL



Cr Glenys Searancke (left) spent time with Aorangi School's Young Leaders and principal Debra Harrod explaining Rotorua Lakes Council's role in the community.