

PHEW! Our financial year from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 was a busy one!
HERE'S SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL ACHIEVED:

WATER PROJECTS

THREE NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANTS COMPLETED, TWO MORE UNDERWAY

We opened three new water treatment plants during the last year, at Kinloch, Whareroa and Omori. These are now producing water that meets the requirements of government water services regulator Taumata Arowai. Work on a new water treatment plant for Motuoapa is nearly complete, with commissioning underway. Work has also begun on the Hatepe Water Treatment Plant and the Centennial scheme will be connected to the Taupō water supply.

WATER NETWORK RENEWALS

During the last year we completed 16.2km of water pipeline renewals throughout the district as follows:

Tūrangi 6.1km

Omori 1.8km

Taupō and Acacia Bay 7.9km

Tirohanga 0.4km

This maintenance replaces ageing pipes with new infrastructure and reduces the risk of water main breaks.

STORMWATER WORKS

Council installed stormwater bunds (earth mounds) on Hawaii Reserve in Taupō. These help reduce flood risk by regulating stormwater flows which can otherwise overload the network.

TŪRANGI VORTCEPTOR INSTALLATION

This huge device, installed in Te Rangitautahanga Rd late last year, improves stormwater quality by separating out contaminants and debris, preventing them from making their way into wetlands and waterways.

WATER NETWORK UPGRADES AND RESERVOIR IMPROVEMENTS

We completed a new 2000 cubic metre concrete reservoir at Tauhara Ridge in Taupō to service the fast-growing southern Taupō area. This included pipeline, access track, pump station upgrade and decommissioning of the pump station and fire tank at Taupō Airport.

WASTEWATER CONNECTIONS COMPLETED

A major new wastewater main between Ngā Roto Estate and Taupō Airport to Taupō Wastewater Treatment Plant was installed underneath Lake Terrace and a new wastewater connection to Waipahihi Botanical Reserve completed.



New water reservoir at Tauhara Ridge.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & RECREATION

NEW CHANGING ROOMS AT HICKLING PARK

The park now sports a new block of changing rooms, providing functional, weatherproof changing spaces with showers and toilets for touch, league, freestyle BMX, skate and hockey codes using the park.

COURT RESURFACING

New surfaces for tennis and basketball courts in Tūrangi, Omori, Motuoapa and Whareroa. New surfaces for netball courts in Taupō, and lighting and equipment upgrades at several reserves.

NUMBERS UP AT DISTRICT LIBRARIES

Our libraries loaned out a staggering 309,325 items over the year, 2 percent up on the previous year. Some 8300 people, many of them children, attended library and museum programmes during the year, an increase of 31 percent.

SPORTSGROUNDS, PARKS AND RESERVES

Shade sails were installed at five playgrounds around the district including the Te Kapua Papa Tākaro in Tūrangi and Tongariro South Domain playground in Taupō. Northcroft Reserve in Taupō received an upgrade, picnic tables and a water fountain.

SWIMMING POOLS

More than 3000 primary school age students attended the Contact Swim Well programme. Swim School gained AusSwim accreditation and AC Baths and Turtle Pools gained Poolsafe accreditation.



Changing rooms at Hickling Park.

ORGANISATION PERFORMANCE

S&P GLOBAL MAINTAIN COUNCIL'S STRONG CREDIT RATING

An independent assessment by financial ratings agency S&P Global maintained Council's strong AA credit rating with a stable outlook, with Council's financial management and liquidity gaining the strongest possible scores in the assessment.



CROWN ROAD INDUSTRIAL SUBDIVISION

Council's new 18-section industrial subdivision in Crown Road (above) has performed well, with 10 sections sold so far. Some \$5 million of the profit made from this development has been put towards paying down Council debt, saving \$200,000 in interest per annum.

GOOD PROGRESS ON EAST URBAN LANDS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

A joint project between Council and a local building consortium to develop Oroko Rise, a new subdivision with a mixture of market and affordable homes aimed at first-home buyers, has been a success in allowing working families to enter the housing market. Some 37 out of the first tranche of 62 sections have sold or are under contract so far.

ROADING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

INTERSECTION SAFETY UPGRADES

Last summer, Council built new roundabouts at the Taharepa Rd/Crown Rd and the Tauhara Rd/AC Baths Ave intersections to improve safety. The Roberts St/Titirāupenga St intersection in Taupō was also upgraded and widened to improve sightlines and parking, plus improve safety for pedestrians crossing in this busy area.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Council has continued with its rural road improvement programme with 1.7km of Broadlands Rd reconstructed and widened.

The final section of the \$4.5 million Lake Terrace reconstruction project was completed last December. Taharepa Rd was renewed from Crown Rd to Te Hātepe Ave.

FOOTPATHS, CYCLE PATHS AND ROAD SAFETY

Council completed a cycle path in Mangakino, a shared footpath connecting Redoubt St to Norman Smith St and introduced new e-scooter safety courses in response to demand.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Hi everyone,

As you know, I'm out in the community a lot; and over the last month I've been hearing a lot of misunderstanding about the reasons behind the council's average 6.6 percent rates increase for the year which began on 1 July 2026. The councillors and myself have clearly heard community concerns about affordability.

Let's break it down. Almost half of the increase, or 2.9 percent, went towards water infrastructure. Much of this work is driven by the Government imposing higher standards for water and wastewater. Council has no option not to deliver these essential projects. You will see from the list of achievements on page one of this newsletter that during the year we completed three new water treatment plants and began work on two more. These are major projects, as the new plants are essential to bring our drinking water up to comply with New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.

In terms of non-waters projects, any council projects which could be deferred or put on hold have already been removed from this year's [Annual Plan 2026/27](#). Of the rest of the projects, you will see that all of them are either to improve infrastructure, such as water services and roads, or improve community facilities. Many are essential projects that the Government says we must do,



or that should be done to avoid running down our assets and incurring greater costs in future. You can see the full list at taupo.govt.nz/annualplan.

Council has cut its operational spending for this financial year by \$1.7 million and the following projects have also been deferred or cancelled:

- Widening the Great Lake Pathway from Rainbow Point to Secombe Park
- A Taupō wastewater solids filtrate treatment project
- Community heritage space development at Taupō Library
- Removeable bollards at Roberts St, Taupō

Other reasons behind the rates increase are outside of our control - for example, the need to fund depreciation so that assets can be replaced as needed. Another large cost driver is Government mandates that arrive without any extra funding and so must come from rates.

We're just about to start work on the Long-term Plan 2027-37. To keep rates within the Government's proposed cap, the Council will be coming to the community early next year to ask which levels of services it is prepared to cut or projects to cancel to keep budgets within the target figure.

Because there's no easy way to keep rates rises down, we will all need to be prepared for some hard conversations and difficult decisions.

As always, your councillors and I are available by email or phone, or come along to one of our upcoming [Councillor Connect Forums](#) to have a chat and learn more about the Long-term Plan and what the process will involve.

John Funnell

TAUPŌ DISTRICT MAYOR

LOCAL GOVT REFORM

As this edition of Kōrero went to print, our mayor and councillors were set to consider four different potential options for the future of Taupō District Council. This was scheduled for a meeting on Tuesday 28 July.

The options were:

1. A single unitary authority of all the councils in the Waikato region.
2. A Central North Island unitary authority that could include various combinations of Ruapehu, Waitomo, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato and Taupō district councils.
3. A cross-boundary unitary authority that could include various combinations of Rotorua Lakes, Ruapehu, South Waikato and Taupō district councils.
4. Not submitting an amalgamation proposal, remaining as we are and preparing for a potential Back Stop process (where the Government will decide).

You can find the outcome of this meeting and view the recording here: taupo.govt.nz/ourfuture

WASTEWATER STORAGE TANKS PROJECT BEGINS

MAP Projects, on behalf of Taupō District Council, are installing underground wastewater buffer tanks in the north-west corner of the Wairakei Dr/Norman Smith St intersection as part of our ongoing programme to improve the wastewater network.

This work is being done following consultation with local hapū and marae. The tanks have a capacity of 300 cubic metres and act as a buffer during severe weather events when stormwater enters the wastewater network. This can overload our wastewater treatment plant, which can lead to wastewater overflows. The buffer tanks will allow us to better control flow rates into the plant and help look after the place we love.

The tanks will be installed six metres underground, so once they're in you'll hardly know they are there. Work is due for completion in late October, and we ask people to use caution around the work site.



The site of the underground tanks project.



DO YOU GET YOUR RATES INVOICE BY MAIL?

One of the costs that's risen the most for Council in recent years is the cost of mailing out rates invoices and notices by post. Over the last eight years, the cost of postage to Council has jumped by 317 percent, plus the cost of printing and envelopes.

You can help us bring costs down by opting-in to receive your rates notices and other Council communications online. You'll also receive our weekly newsletter so you know what's going on around the district - don't worry, though, you can unsubscribe from this any time.

To opt-in to receive your rates by email, please go to taupo.govt.nz/optin or call our friendly customer experience team on 07 376 0899 (or 0800 ASK TDC) and they can help you out.



0800 ASK TDC



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