

# Media Release



20 September 2012

## Taupō District welcomes new citizens

**Mayor Rick Cooper welcomed 24 new citizens to New Zealand at two official citizenship ceremonies in Council chambers on Monday.**

The new citizens were sworn in and awarded a citizenship certificate. A morning tea was held following the ceremonies to mark the occasion. The new citizens were treated to a performance by some of the kapa haka group from Taupō-nui-a-Tia College. The citizens came from as far afield as Britain, Cambodia, the Philippines and South Africa.

Australian, Laurel Ruthe, was one of the second group and says she moved to New Zealand when she married a Kiwi 39 years ago. After sadly losing her husband last year, she decided now was the time to make the place she calls home official.

"I've been divided for years but this is really my home now," she says. "My kids are here, they're not going anywhere." She has been in the Taupō District for 26 years and while her Australian accent is slowly fading, her children have strong Kiwi accents.

Mayor Rick Cooper says it was the first time in five years of being mayor he has attended two ceremonies in one day. "The more people in Taupō, the more prosperous the whole District will be," he says. "Taupō is becoming a diverse town. It's great for the community; it's great for the town to be growing. Taupō District is a vibrant place that attracts people from all over the globe."

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