

NEW MURAL RAISING AWARENESS

TAUPŌ'S NEWEST MURAL is not only brightening up Tongariro Street but raising awareness of one of our most endangered - and overlooked - native birds.

The mural on the Tongariro Domain toilet block is a cooperative effort by Taupō District Council and the Department of Conservation and features the work of local artist Gary Bennett. It depicts the tarapuka, or black-billed gull, which is distinct from the far more common red-billed gull that we are used to seeing in large numbers.

Nina Manning from the Department of Conservation said the black-billed gulls are critically endangered around New Zealand.

"We are fortunate enough to have several colonies around Lake Taupō, usually by the Taupō lakefront but also

in Motuoapa and Tokaanu, and sometimes even around the i-Site in Turangi! So to have this mural raising awareness of these birds is fantastic - and it's been great to be able to work with Taupō District Council and Gary on this."

Taupō District Council property officer Tonia Absolom also praised the partnership as well as the local tradespeople who had worked to deliver this in December, in time for the summer holiday season.

"We haven't just done the mural on the outside," Tonia said, "we've also upgraded the facilities inside, so thanks to Stu Tipping Carpentry, Taupō Plumbing and Gas and Flooring First for their hard work along with Gary Bennett for working in both rain and shine and making our little building beautiful!"



From left: Nina Manning of DOC, Tonia Absolom of Taupō District Council and artist Gary Bennett.



WE ARE BEAUTIFUL! (BUT WE KNEW THAT ALREADY)

TAUPŌ WAS NAMED the most beautiful large town in the country at the annual Keep New Zealand Beautiful Awards last Thursday night.

The Keep New Zealand Beautiful Awards inspire, recognise and acknowledge individuals, schools, community groups, towns and cities who are working passionately to keep Aotearoa beautiful. In 2018, Taupō claimed the top spot in the same award.

Mayor David Trewavas said winning the prestigious title again was testament to the great community spirit here in Taupō.

"As a council, we are proud of the amount of work we do, and the partnership approach we take with our schools, businesses and volunteer groups like Tidy Taupō and Greening Taupō, to protect and enhance our town," he said.

"It really is a team effort to keep Taupō beautiful and this award really showcases the hard work of both our council and the community in looking after the place we all love."

Taupō's Great Lake Pathway was also a finalist as part of the Kiwi's Choice Award.

MINISTER DROPS IN ON AIRPORT PROJECT



From left: Taupō Airport Authority Committee chairman Chris Johnston, Taupō District Mayor David Trewavas and Tourism Minister Stuart Nash outside the new terminal being built at Taupō Airport.

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF Taupō Airport is well underway and last Tuesday Tourism Minister Stuart Nash called in to take a look.

The airport redevelopment includes a new, larger terminal building and a new carpark. Mr Nash said he was excited to see the project taking shape.

"Tourism is so much more than just attractions, it's about building infrastructure that meets or exceeds the expectations of people flying in and out. For a lot of people this is the first thing they will see when they arrive into Taupō and so it's got to be world class and it's got to reflect what really Taupō really is," Mr Nash said.

"This new terminal is going to be all that and I can't wait to see it finished."

FULL STEAM AHEAD ON MIRO STREET UPGRADE



OUR CONTRACTORS DOWNER have been making the most of the fine weather with excellent progress on the upgrade to the Miro Street road surface.

The work is being carried out between the Crown Road intersection and No. 30 (Taupō Smash Repairs) and will see damaged kerbing and channelling replaced and extensive work done to replace the existing pavement and road surface with a more durable one. Taupō District Council infrastructure manager Denis Lewis said the work was going well, with the existing road surface being completely removed and a new asphalt surface installed.

"We'll be putting down a whole new pavement and surface that will cope much better with the heavy vehicles that regularly use the road," Mr Lewis said. "When this section of road was originally built in 1964 the surface was considered adequate for the types of vehicles using it, but things have come a long way since then!"

"We regularly see very heavy vehicles on this road so we'll be reinstating it with a new surface that has a really solid base and that will stand up to the weight and lateral stresses of the larger trucks. We've been working with our contractor to try to minimise the impact of this work on local businesses, and we'd like to thank all those affected for their patience - this is going to make a huge difference to our busy industrial area."

Mr Lewis said the work was expected to be completed by the end of March, weather permitting, and asked the community to continue to use caution around the work site and to follow the guidance of the traffic management team.

WOMEN'S SUPER RUGBY COMING TO TAUPŌ

TAUPŌ DISTRICT MAYOR David Trewavas has welcomed this week's announcement from New Zealand Rugby that Taupō and Hamilton will co-host the maiden edition of the women's Super Rugby competition.

The competition will start on Saturday March 5 at Owen Delany Park, with two games played in Hamilton, before returning to Taupō for the final on Sunday March 20.

"I'm thrilled to be able to welcome the players, management staff and supporters to Taupō for this exciting competition," Mr Trewavas said.

"We know it's tough to be able to deliver events in the current climate, and I take my hat off to New Zealand Rugby for their commitment to this competition going ahead under the current Covid-19 restrictions.

"We'll be doing everything we can to support the teams and staff to ensure they are able to safely base themselves in our beautiful district."

