



Registered Charity CC11386

**Mail:** PDC Mourea RD4 Rotorua 3074

30 April 2014

Rotorua District Council  
Annual Plan Submissions  
Private Bag 3029  
Rotorua Mail Centre  
ROTORUA 3046

## **SUBMISSION TO RDC DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2013-14**

The Lake Rotoiti Community Association welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to Rotorua District Council's Draft Annual Plan. The Association is a long standing charitable organisation representing a wide community of interest. As one of the leading community voices in the District, we are appreciative of the strong and eminently productive relationship developed with Council over many years.

We acknowledge that this Annual Plan is largely reflective of the policies and commitments detailed in the 2012/22 Long Term Plan. We trust that the issues raised in the submissions below receive your earnest attention and consideration. Several of the issues are of course ongoing and we wish to further emphasise our concerns and viewpoints with regard to these.

### ***DAP Layout***

- 1) We wish to congratulate Council on the Plan layout. In our view, the Plan is well set out and easy to read. This has not always been the case and we suggest that a similar format be continued in the future.

### ***Financial Strategy (Page 10)***

- 2) The implementation of a new sustainable financial framework is very timely and appropriate. We have been critical several times in the past of the extent to which debt levels have increased and we strongly support a regime to now hold increases to a minimum and progressively reduce the current level. Many of our residents are of the opinion that, up to now, Council has not exercised sufficient diligence in managing cost efficiencies. We are cautiously optimistic over Council's proposed organisational re-structure and would support any directional changes that bring about positive gains for the District and its communities.

- 3) Whilst we acknowledge the intention to set future annual rate increases at approximately 3% inclusive of CPI, any endorsement of this policy would need to be on a year to year basis. The proposed increase for the current year, whilst above inflation, is supported in terms of the present re-alignment of the financial framework. We do not oppose the further reduction of the business differential at this time but we remind you of our firm stance (as detailed elsewhere in this submission) relative to Council's current objective to eliminate differentials.
- 4) We do accept that the effect of the actions above may necessitate the postponement or limitation of some capital projects now and in the future.

### ***Rates and Rating Policy***

- 5) We continue to highlight our awareness of Council's ratification via the latest Long Term Plan of a current intention to remove existing rating differentials over a period of time. The further incremental movement of the Business Differential in this Draft Annual Plan indicates that such transition process is presently being maintained.
- 6) Our submission last year contained comprehensive and objective detail of our opposition to the LTP proposal, particularly without a full review which clearly identifies costs and benefits in consideration of moving to a non-differentiated regime. As previously submitted, whilst we strongly consider that appropriate differentials are the best and fairest method of recognising some of the fundamental and undeniable differences between urban and rural ratepaying properties and property owners in terms of contrasting valuations, service delivery and access to amenities, it is believed that the only equitable alternative would be a comprehensive targeting of rates. An in-depth analysis of rateable activities and determination of compensatory mechanisms for relevant sectors where justified would be essential towards maintaining any non-differentiated equitability. Such action would also meet the prescription of the Local Government Act 2002 as well as the recommendations of the 'Shand Report'.
- 7) As noted, discussions of these issues have already taken place between Council, Lakes Community Board and our various Lakes Ratepayer Groups over the past 18 months. We reiterate that it is proposed to seek continued dialogue with the intention of achieving more consensual outcomes for not just lakes and rural residents but all sectors within the District. As part of this dialogue, we also wish to voice our ongoing objection to the separate targeted rate imposed on ratepayers within the Lakes Community Board areas.

### ***Roading and Traffic Safety***

- 8) We commend Council for its decisions elsewhere to enhance community safety by reducing speeds in other areas around the Rotorua Lakes. However, we wish to draw your attention to residents' mounting concerns over the increasing noise and dangers of traffic using SH33 particularly from the top of the Mourea (Ludgates) Hill towards and through the village. It will be acknowledged that the number of heavy vehicles utilising this highway has escalated significantly over recent years. The tyre noise and engine breaking associated with these vehicles on a road surface which has once again been resealed with coarse chip has become quite intolerable.
- 9) The descent towards Mourea on Ludgates Hill has a speed limit of 100kph reducing to 70kph just east of Okawa Bay Road. Inevitably, many of these vehicles do not reduce speed soon enough and use severe engine breaking in attempting to slow at the 70kph limit, resulting in unacceptable noise levels through the residential area to the Amora Hotel within the village.

- 10) Furthermore, these same issues exist for the residents and ratepayers of Okere Falls, with Rotorua-bound traffic approaching the village down hill too fast and needing to use engine braking to navigate through an, at times, extremely busy and congested area punctuated by several sharp corners.
- 11) It is a fact that the area through Mourea to Okere Falls is significantly populated including a Hotel Resort complex, the Marama Resort on Hamurana Road, two shops, one with a café and bar, and both used quite extensively by locals and visitors, plus several tourist operators. There are also two heavily used boat ramps at Okawa Bay and the Rotoiti Delta which regularly host a large number of holidaymakers and tourists, especially during the summer months. The recent removal of user restrictions at the Okawa Bay Reserve boat ramp has and will result in more and more traffic using the right turn lane at Okawa Bay Road. This turn is particularly hazardous given its location at the junction of the speed limit changes between 100kph and 70kph.
- 12) We are therefore seeking to have steps taken to reduce the impact of ever-increasing traffic flow on this significant community. We believe that a reasonable solution would be to:-
- a) Install fluoro speed warning signs at suitable distances in both locations highlighting the impending reduction to 70kph (as now seen in many communities around the country).
  - b) Establish a *'PLEASE NO ENGINE BREAKING'* zone commencing at Parkliffe Road on the Rotorua side of Ludgates Hill through to Okere Road on the Tauranga side past Okere Falls.
- 13) We also wish to remind Council that in previous Annual Plans, a budget was set aside for a 'pedestrian refuge' to be built near the corner close to the footbridge at Okere Falls to provide the many rafting and kayaking visitors a safe facility to cross this very busy highway. We urge that you provide a timeframe for this be implemented as soon as possible.

### ***Wastewater Disposal***

- 14) We support the development of an Eastern Rotoiti - Rotoma sewerage scheme and commend the Council on the fresh consultative approach it has taken with regards to this scheme as well as to the investigation into an alternative to the current discharge into the Whakarewarewa Forest. We are hopeful that the Steering Groups established for both these issues will, with guidance from their Technical Advisory Groups, help develop schemes that have wide community support enabling RDC to meet its obligations with regards to sewerage and discharge management. We see such consultative Community based groups as providing a model for Council to engage communities in the development and management of other controversial activities and infrastructures in the future.
- 15) We also support Council in its investigations into, and trials of, the Terax plant, and note that budget has been allocated for the full treatment plant to be built subject to due diligence being done on its feasibility and value. We support this approach and hope that the plant does indeed warrant being built as LRCA has long had a strong commitment to water quality in Rotoiti and recognise the overwhelming impact Lake Rotorua has on that. We see efficient and high quality sewerage treatment as being a vital component in the ongoing task of restoring our iconic lakes.

***Reserves***

**16)** We thank and fully support Council in its proposal to construct toilet facilities at the Rotoiti Delta boat ramp and the car park at the end of Trout Pool Road.

We wish to be provided with the opportunity to speak to this submission.

Yours sincerely

**Hilary Prior  
Chairperson**