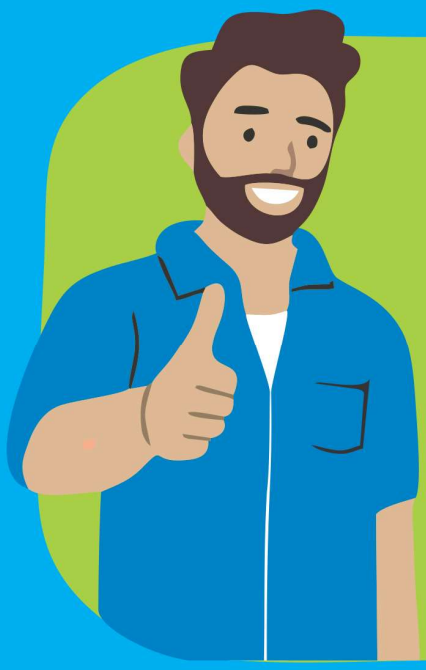
Taranaki
Regional Council

2024/2034
TE MAHERE ROA LONG-TERM PLAN
Consultation Document



Have your say

Whākina mai o kōrero

on the 2024/2034 Long-Term Plan

Here's your chance to help us finalise our new 10-year plan.

In this document you can read about the key issues facing the regional community, our options for dealing with them and what those options might mean for you.

www.trc.govt.nz/longtermplan

Ngā rārangi take

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What are the key dates?

27 February 2024
Consultation Document and supporting documentation adopted.

10 March 2024
Consultation period opens and submissions begin.

12 April 2024
Consultation period ends and submissions close.

6-8 May 2024
We hear and consider submissions.

May/June 2024
We adopt 2024/2034 Long-Term Plan.

He pānui tiamana

Message from the Chair

Ka mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, greetings to you all. Thank you for taking the time to find out more about the issues our region is facing over the next decade.

Our mission is to work with the Taranaki community to make the region an even more amazing place to live, play, work and do business. Our focus is on improving lifestyles, supporting livelihoods and taking the region forward while adapting to the rapidly changing environment in which we all live and work.

To address these challenges and meet our statutory requirements, we are developing the 2024/2034 Long-Term Plan (LTP). The plan sets out our key focus areas for the next 10 years and the decisions which have to be made in those areas. It sets our strategic direction and how we will fund the services provided to the community.

The world in which we're living is rapidly changing and the LTP has to respond to this. This is our plan to ensure we're fit-for-purpose to not only meet our existing responsibilities but are ready to meet the challenges ahead, particularly in how we care for our environment. It's fundamental that as kaitiaki of Taranaki that we continue our leadership role in this area and make the right decisions for our region.

Your views are crucial to this decision-making on the priorities for the next 10 years. It's through a community conversation we find out what is important to people across the region and where we should focus our time, money and resources.

The key decisions focus on six areas:

- Improving resource management
- Delivering on freshwater
- Adapting and mitigating to climate change
- Maintaining possum control
- Considering the future of Towards Predator-Free Taranaki
- Protecting indigenous biodiversity

Freshwater has always been a major focus, but we now have more work in this area to meet the changing government policy settings and the expectations of our community. This is also a big part of how we improve resource management.

Controlling predators to protect biodiversity is an area we're passionate about and we want to continue building on the achievements we have made. It's vital work but comes at a high cost as it's resource-heavy to achieve results. We also are considering how we can better work alongside the other councils in Taranaki to implement new approaches to protecting indigenous biodiversity.

Adapting to climate change also comes at a high cost: the potential for not doing enough today can have consequences in the future as the world's environment radically shifts.

This document provides the information you need about the six focus areas and the ways you can let us know your opinions and thoughts. Your feedback on other areas of our work is welcomed.

We are working in an environment where government policy settings continue to evolve. This means that we will need to adapt to change quickly but in the meantime, we need to move on with undertaking some key mahi that needs to be completed regardless of the changing government policy settings.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Charlotte Littlewood
Chair, Taranaki Regional Council

Our Plan for the future

Ngā take ā mua

Ngā mahi uaua

Challenges

Our priorities have been shaped as a response to how our environment is changing, as well as what funding is available.

From how we manage freshwater around te Maunga to what measures we take to protect native biodiversity, external factors like the regulatory framework and funding sources determine what we have to do and what we are able to do.

The next 10 years will bring significant change. Resource management reform, three waters reform, climate change response and questions about the broader future for local government all introduce significant uncertainty that we need to factor into the LTP. We must be nimble so our approach can change with Government policy. And strong regional leadership will be needed to ensure outcomes that provide for Taranaki communities.

Improving the way we manage freshwater remains one of the biggest challenges we have ever faced. While government policy settings in this area continue to evolve, the real change driver is that our community is calling for better freshwater outcomes. Our existing Regional Freshwater Plan is more than 20 years old and the way we manage and protect freshwater needs to evolve to be consistent with community expectations Our freshwater consultations have shown our community is passionate about freshwater and we will provide additional resourcing to ensure we meet your expectations in safeguarding this precious resource. To achieve this, work will gather pace on the development of the region's new Land and Freshwater Plan, we will roll out freshwater farm plans and develop our water monitoring network.

A new national policy statement on indigenous biodiversity came into force in August 2023. While the new Government has indicated they will re-write this document, we know there is still plenty of work to be done in supporting indigenous biodiversity in Taranaki. In the first instance, there is an opportunity for better coordination to more effectively protect and restore biodiversity.

We are facing uncertainty around how we deliver biosecurity services to protect biodiversity. This has been an incredible success story with the community strongly supporting efforts to control predators but there are question marks about the funding for Predator Free 2050 initiatives such as Towards Predator-Free Taranaki and how we control possums more broadly.

Climate change is another area of uncertainty. We do know that the world is getting warmer and the Earth's temperature is expected to be 0.5°C to 1.5°C higher by 2040. What impact this will have on our region needs further investigation so we can further preparations for adapting to a changing climate.

Why do we need a Long-Term Plan?

Every three years, we put together a new Long-Term Plan. It's a requirement of Section 93 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002.

It's an important strategic document that sets the strategic direction and priorities for the next 10 years. The LTP sets out a detailed plan for the first three years, and an outline for the remaining seven years. As well as setting out what our priorities are, the LTP contains funding information on everything we do.

Our rates remain among the lowest in New Zealand. However, to deliver on our plan for the future, our budgets must rise.

For most ratepayers the financial impact can be measured in tens of dollars over the course of a year. The overall rates increase for 2024/2025 is 16.32%

Key issues and key questions

We're facing some key issues going forward and need your feedback

Improving resource management

Delivering on freshwater

Adapting to and mitigating climate change

Our approach to possum control

The future of Towards Predator-Free Taranaki

Protecting indigenous biodiversity

Issue 1

Improving resource management

There is an opportunity to improve resource management in ways that work best for Taranaki.

What is the issue?

There are significant opportunities for better coordination across the region in delivering resource management services. Initial planning to implement the now repealed Spatial Planning Act 2023 (SPA) and Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 (NBEA) highlighted ways we and the three district councils can better work together to align planning outcomes and involve tangata whenua and communities in decision-making. Unencumbered by the requirements of the SPA and NBEA, we can do this in a way that works best for Taranaki under existing legislation.

In particular, we think spatial planning is a good idea. A regional spatial plan would give Taranaki a consistent and coherent plan for future development and environmental protection. It could map out growth areas, infrastructure corridors, environmentally significant areas to protect and areas at risk from natural hazards. It could also provide a powerful tool for supporting climate change action. A spatial plan can identify the areas most suitable for renewable electricity generation or sequestration activities. It can also indicate where future infrastructure will be needed to combat worsening flood risk and sea-level rise.

The region has all the tools it needs to progress a regional spatial plan under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Local Government Act 2002. We can design a process that both better supports coordination among all Taranaki councils and infrastructure providers, and facilitates the active participation of tangata whenua and communities. The lessons we learn from this can then be taken and applied elsewhere over time.

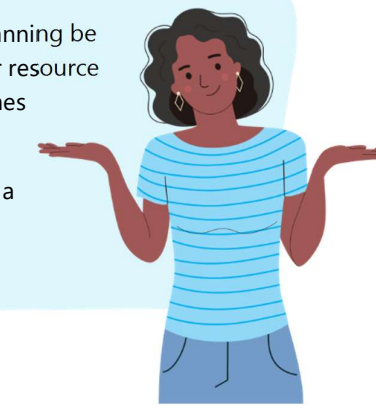
We are proposing to progress a spatial plan gradually. The first three years will be focused on getting the process right and information collection. Depending on how the new Government advances its resource management agenda over the next three years, we can then easily pivot our approach if needed.

We are wanting your views on the opportunities presented by spatial planning, if we should proceed, and if so, what the key matters are that we should focus on.

What do you think ?

How could spatial planning be used to deliver better resource management outcomes for Taranaki?

What matters should a potential spatial plan focus on?



What are the options?

	OPTION 1: Status Quo	OPTION 2: Regional Spatial Plan
Description	No spatial plan for the region is developed, with effort focused only on traditional plans and policy statements under the Resource Management Act.	A regional spatial plan is developed to guide development across all of Taranaki and drive better alignment amongst the four councils.
Impact on costs	This option would not incur additional costs.	In the first three years, this option will cost us $540,000 to implement. Year 1: $90k, Year 2: $200k, Year 3: $250k
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	No impact on rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service level	No impact on service levels.	Increase in the service level of the resource management group.

Our preference: Option 2

A regionally driven spatial planning process is an opportunity for Taranaki to map out its own resource management future, unencumbered by requirements imposed by the Government. This can deliver long-term certainty, more efficient and effective resource management processes and coordinated infrastructure planning.

Issue 2

Delivering on freshwater

Freshwater quality is an ongoing, significant and complex challenge.

What is the issue?

Regional councils are on the frontline of implementing wide-ranging changes to freshwater management in New Zealand. These changes aim to protect and improve the health of our rivers, streams and wetlands. Key responsibilities for regional councils are:

- Implementing the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-FM), which contain national rules that must be applied
- Providing for the greater participation of tangata whenua in freshwater management
- Implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM), which requires developing a new freshwater plan for the region and expanding our monitoring network
- Implementing the freshwater farm plans regime to manage risks to freshwater on a farm-by-farm basis.

In meeting our responsibilities, we are fortunate that we are building from a very strong base. This is thanks to the major efforts the community has already made on protecting our freshwater through initiatives like our highly-successful riparian management scheme and hill country erosion control through the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme.

But there is still a long way to go before communities can be confident their freshwater is safe, healthy and able to support their wellbeing. Achieving this requires substantial investment. Over the next three years, working in partnership with the community and tangata whenua, we propose to prioritise:

- Developing our monitoring network so we have a better understanding of the specific challenges facing different waterbodies and how we can tailor our approach
- The development of the new Land and Freshwater Plan for the region, replacing the existing 2001 plan. This is the primary tool for delivering improved water quality for the region
- Rolling out Freshwater Farm Plans.

We have to do these things to meet our legal and statutory obligations. And while the new Government has indicated it will make changes, we know improvement is still needed. We want your views on our priorities and how we should advance them.

What do you think ?

What is the right pace of change for improvements in freshwater management?

Which option best delivers on your aspirations for improvement in freshwater quality?

What are the options?

	OPTION 1: Implementing the new regime with a focus on core activities	OPTION 2: Enhanced implementation with additional value-add activities
Description	Work alongside the community and tangata whenua to focus on the core factors needed to improve freshwater management in Taranaki.	Enhanced environmental data monitoring, especially coastal and wetlands, and an innovative joint management model with tangata whenua.
Impact on costs	In the first three years, this option will cost an additional $4.04m to implement. Year 1: $955k, Year 2: $1.67m, Year 3: $1.41m There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.	In the first three years, this option will cost $5.17m to implement. Year 1: $1.32m, Year 2: $2.04m, Year 3: $1.81m There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service level	Increase in the service level of the resource management and catchment management groups.	Increase in the service level of the resource management and catchment management groups.

Our preference: Option 1

This is what we require to deliver a fit-for-purpose monitoring network, a new Land and Freshwater Plan and Freshwater Farm Plans. It is already a substantial lift in our level of service. Moving faster is not prudent due to the range of other priorities outlined in this document.

Issue 3

Addressing climate change

As the impacts of climate change intensify, we are considering how we can best support climate action in Taranaki.

What is the issue?

Climate change will have wide-ranging impacts on Taranaki. Temperature is expected to increase by between 0.5°C and 1.5°C by 2040, while rainfall will become more variable, increasing both the risk of drought on one hand, and the risk of floods on the other. Sea-level rise will increasingly threaten coastal communities and these changes will put more stress on already struggling ecosystems.

We have an important role to play in supporting the community to understand and adapt to these impacts. The first step is developing a robust understanding of how climate change will effect specific communities and ecosystems. This information can then be used to inform specific risk assessments, which then inform action plans to reduce risk. We are proposing to first focus on building Taranaki-specific scientific understanding before advancing on a regional climate change risk assessment.

With mitigation being the most effective way to reduce the impacts of climate change, we also have an important role to play in reducing our own emissions. We are proposing to do this through setting specific emissions targets and then we will report on our progress.

We know that our community is worried about the impact of climate change now and in the future. Climate change is something which will affect all of us so we want your views on what you think we should be doing to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

What do you think ?

In what ways can we best support climate adaptation and mitigation in Taranaki?

What option best reflects your aspirations for how we should prioritise its work to address climate change?

What are the options?

	OPTION 1: Status Quo	OPTION 2: Build climate knowledge	OPTION 3: Build climate adaption action plan
Description	We have no dedicated climate change resource and instead seek to support climate action within existing work programmes.	Focus on improving climate science for the region and reducing our emissions.	Fast-track work on a regional risk assessment and adaptation plan, while improving climate science and reducing our emissions at the same time.
Impact on costs	This option would not incur additional costs.	In the first three years, this option will cost $915k to implement. Year 1: $255k, Year 2: $280k, Year 3: $380k There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.	In the first three years, this option will cost $1.515m to implement. Year 1: $455k, Year 2: $480k, Year 3: $580k There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	No impact on rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service levels	No impact on service levels.	Increase in the service level of the resource management and regional leadership and governance groups.	Increase in the service level of the resource management and regional leadership and governance groups.

Our preference: Option 2

This option ensures we build a strong scientific base first. This means the risk assessment and adaptation planning work can proceed and will not be subject to delays due to a lack of science.

Issue 4

Our approach to possum control

We are re-looking at how we undertake possum control to deliver better results and improved biodiversity benefits.

What is the issue?

Since the early 1990s, our principle approach to possum control has been the Self-Help Possum Control Programme. This is a joint approach where we undertake initial control and then the landowner is responsible to keep possums down to acceptable limits. This limit is a 10% residual trap rate – a measure of how many possums are on a property.

However, the self-help programme is facing a number of challenges that have caused possum numbers to breach the 10% rate for the last few years. For example, it is increasingly difficult and expensive for landowners to access the tools they need to control possums, there are limited contractors in the region to assist in control and landowners have an increasing number of other responsibilities that take away from possum control.

To address this, we are considering delivering all possum control ourselves. By limiting possums to even lower numbers, this approach would deliver better biodiversity benefits for the region, lower bovine tuberculosis risk (which possums carry) and reduce the amount of pasture eaten by possums.

While this approach would mean an increase in targeted rates, landowners would save the estimated $2 million per year they currently spend undertaking possum control themselves.

If implemented, a new targeted rate would be created. Land owners in the self-help possum control programme would incur this new targeted rate. Establishing a new targeted rate will result in an amendment to the Revenue and Financing Policy.

We know this is a big change. We are proposing to maintain the self-help programme for now, while we undertake further discussions around whether we bring possum control in-house. However, we want to hear from you if you want us to act faster.

What do you think ?

What are the economic and environmental effects of more possums?

Is possum control best undertaken by us or by landowners?

How fast do you want us to act in changing the approach to possum control?

What are the options?

	OPTION 1: Possum control undertaken by landowners – investigate possum control in-house	OPTION 2: TRC undertakes possum control in-house
Description	Maintain the existing self-help programme while further exploring bringing control in-house.	We undertake all possum control.
Impact on costs	In the first three years, this option will cost $150k to implement. Year 1: $0k, Year 2: $0k, Year 3: $150k	In the first three years, this option will cost $3.65m to implement. Year 1: $150k, Year 2: $1.5m, Year 3: $2.0m There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	For this issue, the funding would be by a new targeted rate applied to land in the self-help possum control programme. All expenditure would be funded by increasing this targeted rate. Establishing a new targeted rate will result in an amendment to the Revenue and Financing Policy in Year 3.	For this issue, the funding would be by a new targeted rate applied to land in the self-help possum control programme. All expenditure would be funded by increasing this targeted rate. Establishing a new targeted rate will result in an amendment to the Revenue and Financing Policy.
Impact on service levels	No impact on service levels.	No impact on service levels.

Our preference: Option 1

We want to ensure this significant proposal of bringing possum control in-house is well planned and thoroughly discussed with the community before we act.

Issue 5

Protecting indigenous biodiversity

We have significant responsibilities to support the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.

What is the issue?

New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity continues to decline. Threats such as climate change, habitat clearance, pests and pollution are pushing many ecosystems to the point of collapse. To protect terrestrial indigenous biodiversity, the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) came into effect on 4 August 2023.

Regional councils have a range of longer-term requirements they must deliver under the NPS-IB. These include assessing the percentage of indigenous vegetation cover in the region and setting targets on how much there should be, recording areas across the region used by highly mobile fauna, adopting a regional biodiversity strategy and developing a biodiversity monitoring plan. We have at least eight years to deliver these things.

The NPS-IB also requires district councils to identify, map and protect significant natural areas by 4 August 2028. This is a significant programme of work, although some councils – such as New Plymouth District Council – have already completed substantial SNA identification work. Regional councils have a responsibility to provide assistance in SNA identification and mapping when asked by a district council.

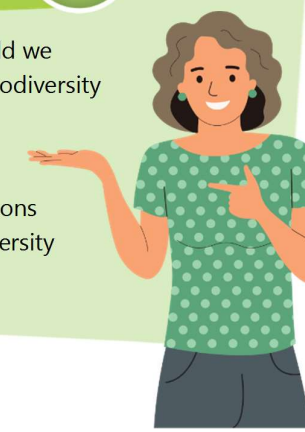
The Government has stated they will review the NPS-IB and direct councils to not advance SNA work in particular. Accordingly, we are not proposing to provide any substantial assistance to the district councils to do this. However, there is still plenty of biodiversity work to be done regardless of the status of the NPS-IB. We think we could still usefully play a stronger role in coordinating biodiversity action in Taranaki, for example through the review of the region-wide biodiversity strategy.

Protecting indigenous biodiversity is a critical issue. We want to hear from you on what role we should take in supporting the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Taranaki.

What do you think ?

What strategies could we adopt to enhance biodiversity in Taranaki?

Which option best reflects your aspirations for delivering biodiversity improvements?



What are the options?

	OPTION 1: Status quo	OPTION 2: Regional co-ordination
Description	Maintain existing services, but we do not provide significant additional biodiversity support.	We take a stronger role coordinating biodiversity work across Taranaki by undertaking work such as the review of the Taranaki Biodiversity Strategy.
Impact on costs	No additional cost.	In the first three years, the total cost to implement this option will be $440k. Year 1: $0, Year 2: $220k, Year 3: $220k There will be ongoing costs at a similar level over the rest of the life of the LTP.
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	No impact on rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service levels	Existing services maintained at current levels.	Existing services maintained at current levels and potential improved outcomes through enhanced regional co-ordination services.

Our preference: Option 2

We want to ensure a consistent approach to biodiversity work across Taranaki and support better collaborative action. This requires regional coordination.

Issue 6

The future of Towards Predator-Free Taranaki

With the future of Government funding for Predator Free 2050 projects uncertain, we need to determine the future of key initiatives within Taranaki.

What are the issues?

Since 2018, the Crown-owned Predator Free 2050 Limited has provided us with more than $15m of funding to combat a range of predators in the region through its Towards Predator-Free Taranaki programme. We have then provided a further $3.2m ($650k per year). This funding has supported three main initiatives, which have all proved very effective:

- The Rural Landscapes Predator Control Programme: Working with landowners, this is a phased roll-out of 25-30 thousand hectares per annum to suppress mustelids (stoats, weasels and ferrets) to very low levels throughout the Taranaki ring plain
- The Taranaki Urban Predator Control Programme: This aims to suppress predators (mainly rats and possums) in urban centres through household-based traps and traps throughout walkways and reserves
- The Zero Density Possum Control Programme: This is a trial to achieve zero possums around Ōākura and Kaitake. 2,000 hectares have been possum-free for nearly two years.

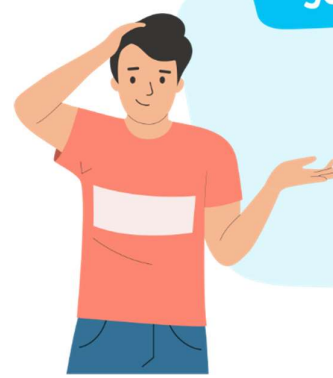
However, Government funding for these initiatives runs out in 2024. The new Government has indicated it will continue to support Predator Free 2050, but no commitments have been made.

Without a firm commitment, we must determine how we will fund these initiatives. It is not feasible for us to fully cover the amount the Government has provided, so some tough decisions are required.

Due to the wide range of cost-pressures we are facing, we are proposing to not provide any additional funding for Towards Predator-Free Taranaki. Our existing funding of $650k per year would continue. But if new Government funding does not eventuate, a significant reduction across the initiatives would be required. We will engage closely with the new Government to try and ensure this is not needed.

We know our community has done amazing work in this area. We want to know what we can do to keep this mahi going. Tell us your views on the future of Predator Free 2050 in Taranaki.

What do you think ?



What impact might a reduction in funding have on the effectiveness of existing programmes?

Which option best reflects your desire for pest control in Taranaki?

Without government funding, what are the options for rural predator control?

	OPTION 1: No expansion to existing programme	OPTION 2: Gradual roll-out of the programme	OPTION 3: Expanded roll-out of the programme
Description	Our current funding for the programme continues. Less community engagement and no expansion in area.	Area covered by the programme expanded by 8,000 hectares per year. Takes 14 years to reach full coverage.	Area covered by the programme expanded by 15,000 hectares per year. Takes 8 years to reach full coverage.
Impact on costs	No additional cost. Existing $650k pa continues.	Additional cost of $1.25m per annum and a total of $3.75m within the first three years of the LTP.	Additional cost of $1.8m per annum and a total of $5.4m within the first three years of the LTP.
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	No impact on rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service levels	Decrease in service level for catchment management if Government funding does not eventuate.	Level of service level for catchment management is maintained.	Increase in the service level of the catchment management group.

Our preference: Option 1

We are committed to continuing our existing support for Towards Predator-Free Taranaki. However, due to financial pressures, we are not in a position to expand our support further.

Without government funding, what are the options for the zero density possum control approach?

	OPTION 1: Revert to control	OPTION 2: Maintain eradication
Description	Management approach reverts to keep possums at very low levels within the area. Zero density will no longer be achievable.	Aims to maintain zero possums in the current area, even without Government funding.
Impact on costs	In the first three years, the total cost to implement this option will be $470k. Year 1: $160k, Year 2: $160k, Year 3: $150k	In the first three years, the total cost to implement this option will be $1.56m. Year 1: $520k, Year 2: $520k, Year 3: $520k
Impact on debt	No impact on debt.	No impact on debt.
Impact on rates	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.	This issue would be funded by general rates. All expenditure would be funded by increases in general rates.
Impact on service levels	Decrease in service level for catchment management if Government funding does not eventuate.	Level of service level for catchment management is maintained.

Our preference: Option 1

We are committed to continuing our existing support for Towards Predator-Free Taranaki. However, due to financial pressures, we are not in a position to expand our support further.

What will it cost?

He aha te utu?

He aha te utu?

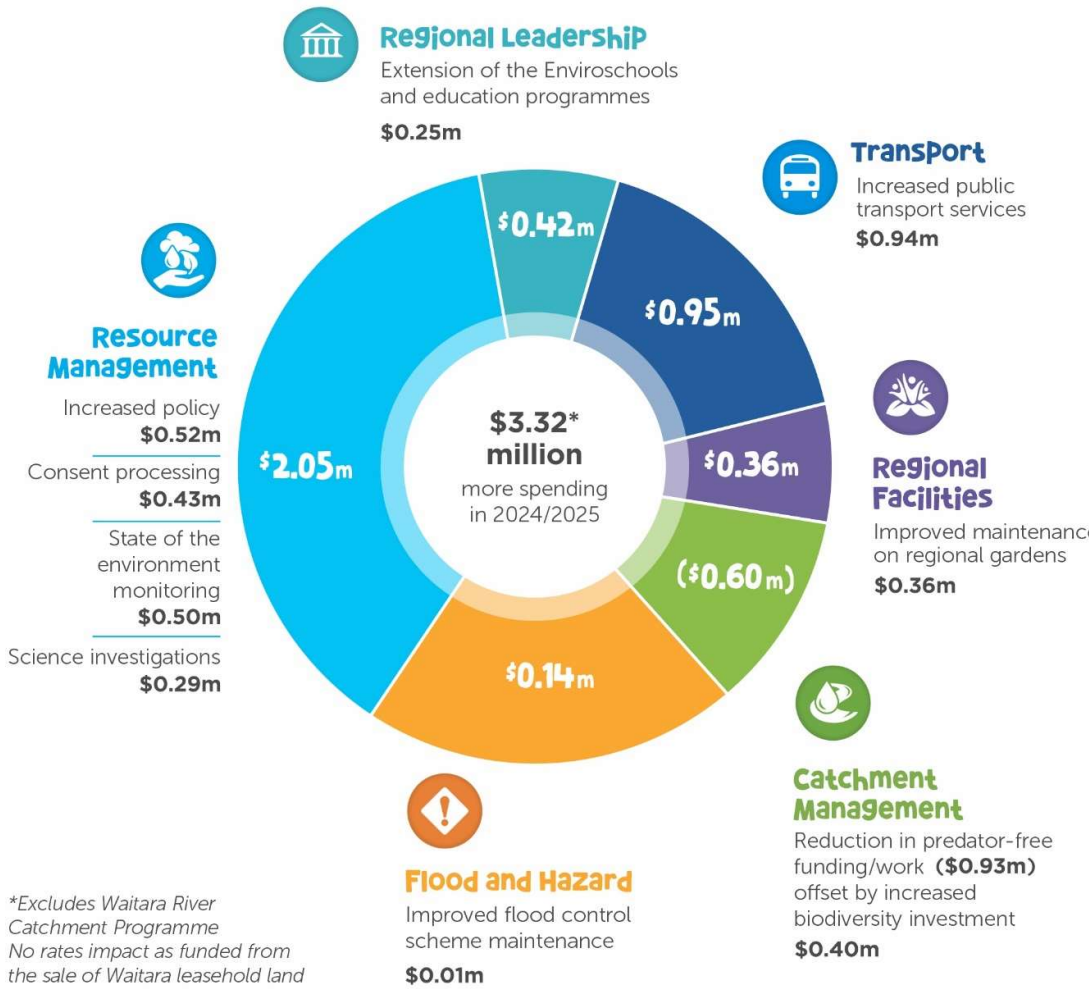
What will it cost?

It's important to understand what delivering the LTP will cost, where the money is coming from and the impact on rates. Below is a snapshot of the significant changes and expenditure in each group of activities.

In 2024/2025 we plan to spend $3.32m more than last year. The graphic below indicates the activities that are changing. The largest chunk of additional resources goes into beefing up scientific monitoring and investigation and increasing consent processing capacity. Smaller funding boosts are provided for building local bus services, extending our education programme within local schools and maintaining flood protection and regional gardens.

The figures below include the budgets for the preferred options outlined earlier in the document.

Only significant changes in activity expenditure are highlighted in the graphic below.



**Excludes Waitara River Catchment Programme No rates impact as funded from the sale of Waitara leasehold land*

Te mātāpuna pūtea?

Where will the money come from?

Our work in the community is funded from a variety of sources – rates account for 44% of total revenue (2024/2025) rising to 51% by 2033/2034.

Other important income sources are investment returns (primarily dividends from Port Taranaki Ltd), user charges and grants from government and others.

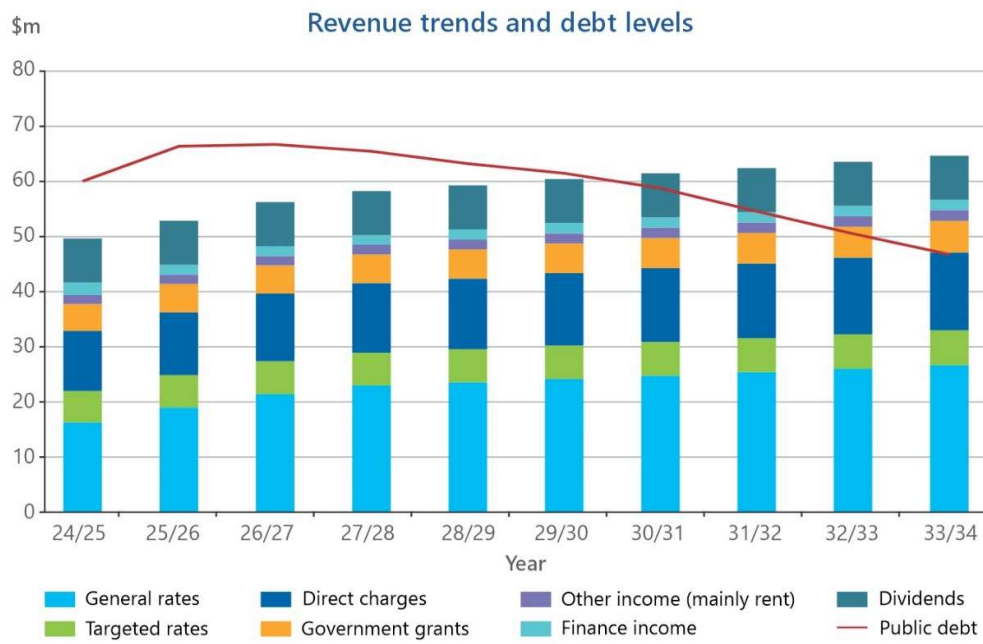
Given challenging trading conditions, we are conservatively forecasting port dividend returns of $8m a year over the life of the LTP. Our biggest financial risk is port dividends falling below forecast levels. Any circumstance that reduces the level of dividend will result in a commensurate increase in the level of general rates.

We intend utilising our Dividend Equalisation Reserve, built up from years when dividends exceeded forecasts. This fund will be drawn upon to help minimise rates increases in the first few years of the LTP. The fund will be replenished in later years.

The graph here shows a breakdown of where our money comes from for the period of the LTP.

We have reviewed our Financial Strategy which remains largely unchanged from the 2021/2031 Long-Term Plan. The Financial Strategy sets limits on rates increases and borrowing. Total rates will not exceed 60% of total revenue and total rates increases will not exceed 10% of total expenditure. Total interest expense on net external public debt will not exceed 50% of total annual rates and levies. Net external public debt per capita will not exceed $1,000. Our proposed Plan complies with these limits.

In 2024/2025, debt levels rise to $60m ($66.4m-2025/2026 and $66.7m-2026/2027) before dropping away to $46.8m by the end of the Plan. The majority of this debt relates to Yarrow Stadium, but under this Plan, we are also incurring debt to spread the cost and to fund policy development work, delivery of our digital strategy, new office accommodation and the use of the Dividend Equalisation Reserve.



He pewhea to mātou whakapau i tēnei pūtea?

How will we spend the money?

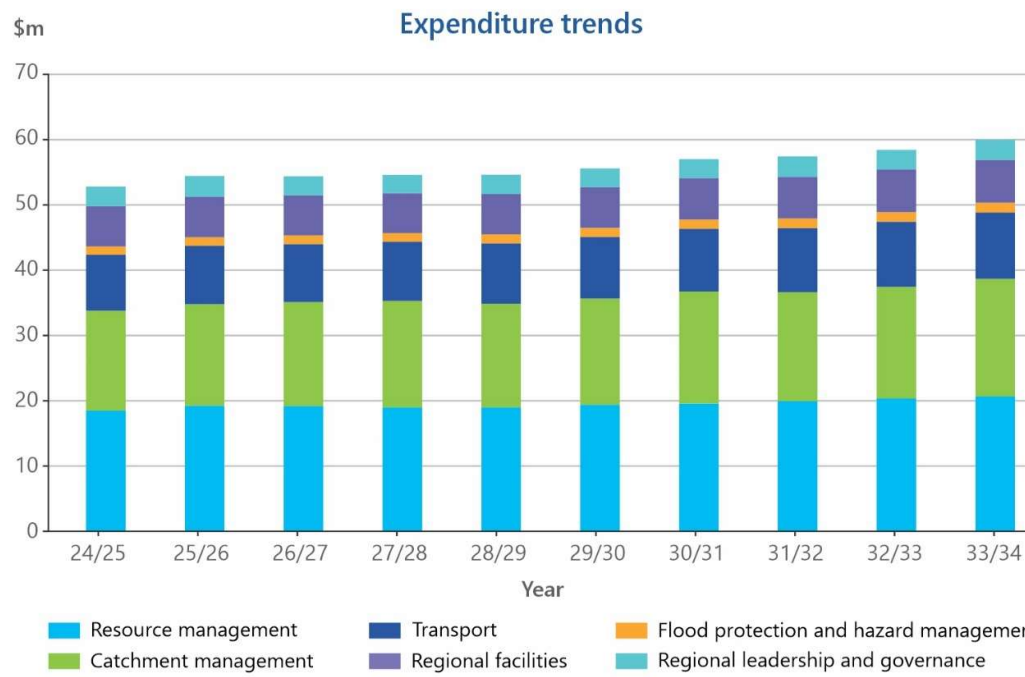
We are working on your behalf to make Taranaki a great place to live, work and play.

Our work safeguards us all from natural hazards, promotes the sustainable use, development and protection of the region's natural and physical resources and represents Taranaki interests on the national stage. We also oversee regionally and nationally significant amenities and infrastructure.

Bearing in mind these key outcomes, our resources are directed to activities and programmes in six key areas: resource management, catchment management, transport, flood protection and hazard management, regional facilities and regional leadership and governance.

Alongside our communities, we are working hard to achieve a prosperous and thriving Taranaki so that each one of us, our children and grandchildren can enjoy all that the region has to offer.

The following graph gives a longer-term picture of how expenditure is forecast to look over the period of the LTP.



He aha ngā tāke kaunihera?

What does this mean for rates?

Despite our costs increasing, we know it's important to keep rates affordable.

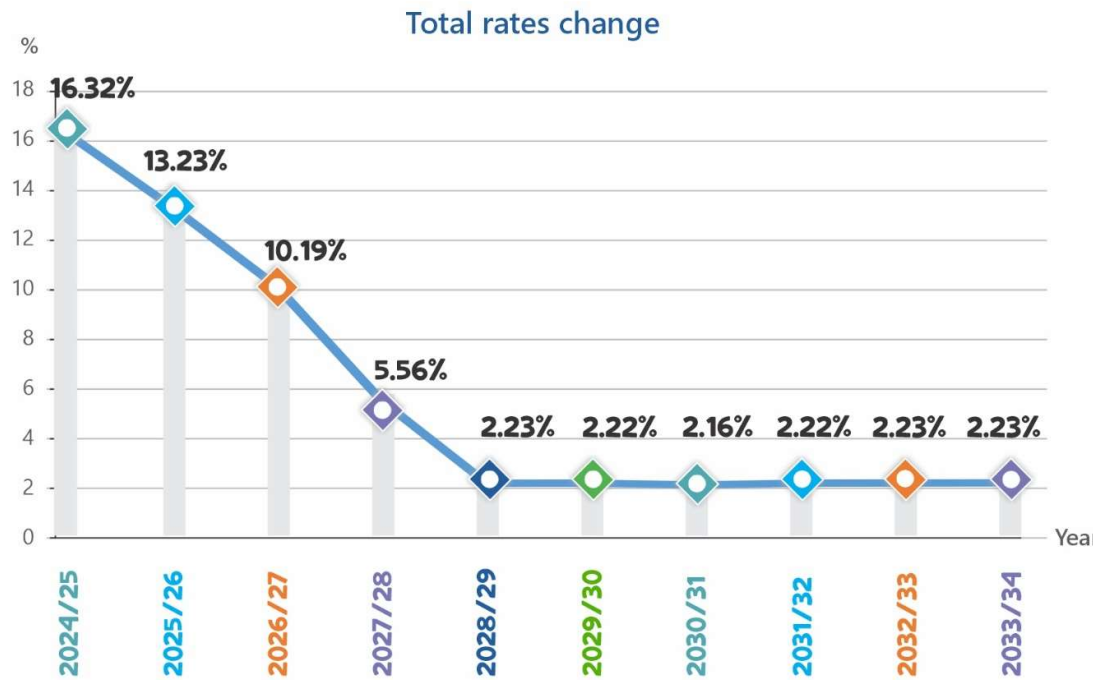
The total rate take (general and targeted rates) is planned to increase by $3.08m or 16.32% for 2024/2025.

For an average residential ratepayer this equates to an increase of tens of dollars - in the vicinity of $50-$60 - per annum. The details are:

- General rate increases by $2.7m
- The uniform annual general charge is $76
- Targeted rates increase by $0.367m
  - Yarrow Stadium rates are unchanged
  - River and flood control rates increase by $0.044m
  - Transport rates increase by $0.32m.

These changes are from a low base and we remain one of the lowest-rating local authorities in New Zealand.

Rate changes are forecast to drop away over the next 10 years. This graph shows proposed rate changes over the duration of the LTP.



Ngā tikanga rereke mo tou tāke kaunihera

Proposed rate changes

For most ratepayers the financial impact can be measured in tens of dollars. The rates impact on your property will be different as the amount varies depending on where you live and the value of your property. Changes in rates across the region and between different property types vary because of the timing of property revaluations across the region, the valuation equalisation process and the impact of uniform annual general charges. The following examples demonstrate rates changes on different properties.

Stratford and South Taranaki Constituencies (all Properties)

Stratford	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$500k	$500k
Total rates	$247.29	$251.24
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $3.95	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 1.6%	

Stratford	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$1.0m	$1.0m
Total rates	$407.41	$401.84
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↓ $5.57	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↓ 1.4%	

South Taranaki	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$500k	$500k
Total rates	$208.88	$242.51
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $33.63	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 16.1%	

South Taranaki	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$1.0m	$1.0m
Total rates	$330.59	$384.38
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $53.79	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 16.3%	

New Plymouth and North Taranaki Constituencies

Residential	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$750k	$750k
Total rates	$324.27	$374.07
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $49.80	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 15.4%	

Residential	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$1.0m	$1.0m
Total rates	$398.56	$460.29
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $61.73	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 15.5%	

Commercial Industrial	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value Land value	$500k $150k	$500k $150k
Total rates	$301.02	$336.82
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $35.80	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 11.9%	

Commercial Industrial	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value Land value	$1.0m $300k	$1.0m $300k
Total rates	$456.04	$513.64
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $57.60	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 12.6%	

Rural Property	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$2.0m	$2.0m
Total rates	$695.73	$805.20
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $109.47	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 15.7%	

Rural Property	2023/24	2024/25
Capital value	$5.0m	$5.0m
Total rates	$1,587.23	$1,839.91
Total $ increase (over 2023/24)	↑ $252.68	
Total % increase (over 2023/24)	↑ 15.9%	

He kupu āpiti

Supporting information

Infrastructure strategy

Our flood protection assets (stopbanks and other physical assets designed to prevent flooding) are the only items for which an Infrastructure Strategy is required. There has been no significant change to the Infrastructure Strategy since the 2021/2031 Long-Term Plan.

Flood management and river control schemes make up a relatively minor component of total operations, accounting for approximately 1.3% of total expenditure. At 30 June 2023, our flood control schemes were valued at $15.6m out of total assets of $140m.

There are two significant flood control schemes on the Waitara and Waiwhakaiho rivers and a number of relatively small and minor schemes to address specific issues.

All flood control schemes are maintained to their design capacity (1-in-100 year flood protection in most cases).

Asset management plans have been adopted for the Lower Waiwhakaiho River Flood Control Scheme, the Lower Waitara River Flood Control Scheme, the Ōpunake Flood Control Scheme and the Ōkato Scheme.

Te arotake pūtea

Audit report

Deloitte.

To the reader:

Independent auditor's report on Taranaki Regional Council's consultation document for its proposed 2024/2034 Long-Term Plan

I am the Auditor-General's appointed auditor for Taranaki Regional Council (the Council). The Local Government Act 2002 (the Act) requires the Council to prepare a consultation document when developing its long-term plan. Section 93C of the Act sets out the content requirements of the consultation document and the Council requested me to audit the consultation document. I have carried out this audit using the staff and resources of Deloitte Limited. We completed our audit on 27 February 2024.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the consultation document provides an effective basis for public participation in the Council's decisions about the proposed content of its 2024/2034 long-term plan, because it:
  - fairly represents the matters proposed for inclusion in the long-term plan; and
  - identifies and explains the main issues and choices facing the Council and region, and the consequences of those choices; and
- the information and assumptions underlying the information in the consultation document are reasonable.

Basis of opinion

We carried out our work in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements (New Zealand) 3000 (Revised) *Assurance Engagements Other Than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information*. In meeting the requirements of this standard, we took into account particular elements of the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards and the International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3400 *The Examination of Prospective Financial Information* that were consistent with those requirements.

We assessed the evidence the Council has to support the information and disclosures in the consultation document. To select appropriate procedures, we assessed the risk of material misstatement and the Council's systems and processes applying to the preparation of the consultation document.

We did not evaluate the security and controls over the publication of the consultation document.

Responsibilities of the Council and auditor

The Council is responsible for:

- meeting all legal requirements relating to its procedures, decisions, consultation, disclosures, and other actions associated with preparing and publishing the consultation document and long-term plan, whether in printed or electronic form;
- having systems and processes in place to provide the supporting information and analysis the Council needs to be able to prepare a consultation document and long-term plan that meet the purposes set out in the Act; and
- ensuring that any forecast financial information being presented has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.

We are responsible for reporting on the consultation document, as required by section 93C of the Act. We do not express an opinion on the merits of any policy content of the consultation document.

Independence and quality management

We have complied with the Auditor-General's independence and other ethical requirements, which incorporate the requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 1 *International Code of Ethics for Assurance Practitioners (including International Independence Standards) (New Zealand)* (PES 1) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. PES 1 is founded on the fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour.

We have also complied with the Auditor-General's quality management requirements, which incorporate the requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 3 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements (PES 3) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board*. PES requires our firm to design, implement and operate a system of quality management including policies or procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

In addition to this audit and our report on the Council's 2022/23 Annual Report, we have carried out engagements in the areas of trustee reporting, statutory audits on behalf of the Auditor General for Port Taranaki Limited and Taranaki Stadium Trust, greenhouse gas emissions inventory report assurance readiness review and qualitative climate risk assessment & scenario analysis for Port Taranaki Limited, which are compatible with those independence requirements. Other than these engagements we have no relationship with or interests in the Council or any of its subsidiaries.

Matt Laing

Deloitte Limited

On behalf of the Auditor-General, Hamilton, New Zealand

He ngawari te tuku kōrero

Making a submission is easy

We want to hear from you. Check out our website for full details about the ways you can get involved.

Online

The easiest way to let us know what you think is to complete our online submission form at www.trc.govt.nz/longtermplan

You can also provide comments via email submissions@trc.govt.nz

Or at www.facebook.com/TaranakiRegionalCouncil

In writing

Fill in the submission form on the next page and mail it to us or drop it in at our office on 47 Cloten Road, Stratford.

In person

You can present your thoughts to the Council by speaking to your submission in person. If you'd like to do this, put in a submission and on the form make sure you select the option to speak to your submission.

He puka tuku kōrero

Submission form

2024/2034 Long-Term Plan

12 April 2024 Submissions Close

Tell us what you think by Tuesday 12 April 2024. Mail your completed form to us at:

Long-Term Plan Submission, Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council, Private Bag 713, Stratford 4352

Submitter details

Full name: .....

I am submitting feedback (please tick)

- ◯ as an individual
- ◯ on behalf of an organisation

Organisation name (if applicable): .....

We're asking for your email, phone or postal address to inform you about hearing times and decisions. Only one is required and your email is preferred.

Email: .....

Phone no: .....

Postal address: .....

.....

Presenting your submission in person

- ◯ I do not wish to speak to my submission
- ◯ I wish to speak to my submission

Privacy statement: In accordance with the Local Government Act 2002 all submissions (including your name and contact details) will be made available online as part of the LTP decision making process. The Council may redirect your submission if it relates to another process or to another council. If there are good reasons why your details should be kept confidential please contact our Privacy Officer on 0800 736 222.

Your views

Tell us below which options you support and provide further feedback or attach additional pages.

Question 1

Improving resource management
[page 5]

- Option 1
- Option 2

Question 2

Delivering on freshwater
[page 7]

- Option 1
- Option 2

Question 3

Addressing climate change
[page 9]

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3

Question 4

Our approach to possum control
[page 11]

- Option 1
- Option 2

Question 5

Protecting indigenous biodiversity
[page 13]

- Option 1
- Option 2

Question 6

The future of Towards Predator-Free Taranaki
[page 15]

Rural predator control

- Option 1
- Option 2

Zero density possum control

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3

Comments

*Attach additional pages if required.

Comments

*Attach additional pages if required.

New Plymouth Constituency Councillors

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Craig Williamson
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Susan Hughes
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Stratford Constituency Councillor

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Taranaki Māori Constituency

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South Taranaki Constituency Councillors

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Donna Cram
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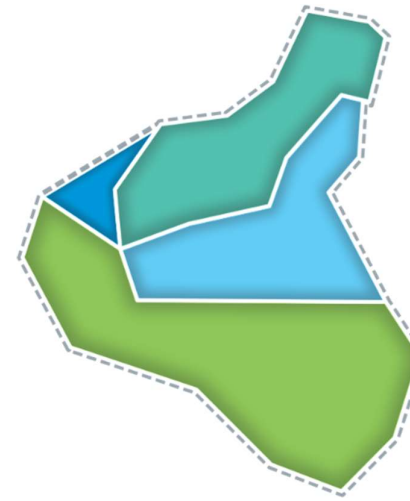

Have your say

Whākina mai o kōrero

Online

www.trc.govt.nz/longtermplan

submissions@trc.govt.nz

facebook.com/TaranakiRegionalCouncil

In writing

47 Cloten Road,
Private Bag 713,
Stratford 4352,
New Zealand

12 April 2024
Submissions Close