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Cost-saving options in the spotlight for ratepayers

A proposal to reduce our proposed rates increase from 5.4 per cent to 3.9 per cent was one of many cost-saving options in the spotlight at an online Hauraki District Council workshop last week.



Mayor Toby Adams says the Council is working hard to find ways to ease some of the financial pressure on its communities as a result of the current pandemic.

"The world has changed since we drafted our initial annual plan with a proposed rates rise of 5.4 per cent. Some councils are going out with zero rates increases but all that does is shift the problem until a little bit later on," he said. "There are a lot of unknowns so our plan is to do what we can now to help address short term cash flow problems in our communities, and then we'll look at options to help stimulate the economy in the longer term."

Although no formal decisions will be made until the next Council meeting on 29 April, there was general agreement that expected operating cost savings, such as significantly lower inflation and interest, should be passed on to

the community through changes to proposed rates rises.

Other ideas included looking at reallocating some of the money in Council's operational budgets and putting it towards assisting the community, as well as tapping into special funds for the same purpose.

"It's too early to know what the specific effects of the pandemic might be and where this money might be needed most, but some of our special funds, such as our ward community assistance funds, are in credit," the Mayor said.

"This means there is the potential to target up to three quarters of a million dollars of this money to projects that help stimulate our local economy."

Thinking local

Blanket changes to Council's capital projects were not on the table, but it was agreed projects would be looked

at on a case-by-case basis in terms of providing work for local contractors and maximising benefits to the local economy. Rent relief for local clubs and community groups using Council facilities was also floated, and while the Council is already providing rates payment holidays, it was agreed further steps to provide rates relief, such as deferring arrears penalties, should be taken.

"I'm really excited about what we've come up with. It still has to go to a Council meeting to be signed off the week after next, but I'm hopeful we'll be able to formalise some of our thinking from this workshop," the Mayor said.

"I'm very proud of the councillors we have at the moment. We have a great team and a great team of staff and we're all on the same page. We're really looking hard at how we can best help our communities."

We will move to Alert Level 3 Tuesday 28 April

Unite
against
COVID-19

New Zealand Government

Getting ready for ALERT LEVEL 3

When you wake up on Tuesday 28 April, we'll be in Alert Level 3. This doesn't mean going back to normality. You'll still need to restrict contact with others as much as possible.

To find out more about what Alert Level 3 means for you at home or at work go to www.covid19.govt.nz

Alert Level 3 will also mean some changes to our business operations and activities. More information will be available on our website from next Tuesday www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/covid-19-council-operations-and-activities

You can also stay updated by following us on Facebook, or signing up to our e-newsletter *In the Loop* www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/e-newsletter

Our number one priority is the well-being of our communities and staff.

We'll do our best to continue to meet the essential needs of our communities in these unprecedented times.

Refuse Transfer Station update



Paeroa and Waihi Refuse Transfer Station skip bins for bagged rubbish and recycling will now be available every Thursday from 12.30-4pm. Due to a large amount of glass and bags being dumped on the ground beside the bottle bank in Waihi, the bottle bank has been moved inside the Refuse Transfer Station gates and will now be available on Thursdays from 12.30 to 4pm only.

For more information about changes to rubbish and recycling due to Covid-19 go to www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/rubbish-and-recycling

Show your Anzac spirit

Covid-19 may have rained on Anzac Day parades and services, but nothing can take away the importance of the day.

Mayor Toby Adams says while traditional dawn services and marches are not possible this year, there are other ways to show our Anzac spirit.

"It's an absolute shame that we can't honour these men and women in the way we've honoured them in the past, but that doesn't mean we can't acknowledge them in other ways," he said.

"We're turning the Paeroa cenotaph red, and participating in the *StandAtDawn* campaign. Please join us and use the day to remember, in your own way, those who have served and are still serving our country in conflicts and peacekeeping."

Standing together, even while apart

We're supporting the NZ Defence Force and RSAs #StandAtDawn campaign www.standatdawn.com/home

Let's show the world our support by standing at our letterboxes, front doors, balconies and driveways at 6am on Saturday 25 April - but please stay within your bubble.

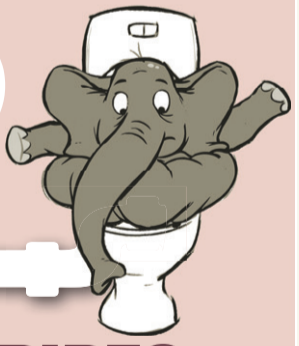
This is a special way that we can remember those who have given their lives for our country, and to pay respect and acknowledge those who are serving or have served, who are called upon to support New Zealand in times of war, conflict and disasters.

Take a photo or a video clip and tag #StandAtDawn #AnzacDay @RSANational @NZDefenceForce @HaurakiDistrictCouncil. You can also tune into Radio NZ National at 6am for the official dawn service broadcast.

Act of remembrance

While there will be no national Anzac Day commemorative services, there will be an act of remembrance on behalf of the people of New Zealand at the National War Memorial. This will be undertaken jointly by the Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshal Kevin Short, and the President of the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association, Mr B.J. Clark. This will not be open to the public or media but will be recorded for subsequent broadcast.

Wipes in the bin,
we all win!



SAVE OUR PIPES FROM WIPES

Wet wipes are handy, but when you've done your wiping, remember to put them in the bin - not the toilet.

At the moment we're wiping more than ever, but our pumps are clogging up more than ever too. It's already costing our ratepayers 100's of thousands of dollars to clean up every year. That's a lot of money, just going down the drain.

Wet wipes are flushable, so they will go down the toilet, but they're made from plastic which means they're not biodegradable and they don't break down in our pipes. Instead they cling together and turn into jumbo fatbergs that block our pumps.

Together we can save our pipes from wipes. If we all make one simple change, we'll save 100's of thousands of ratepayer dollars and it will be better for the environment too. www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/wet-wipes



0800 Helpline for
Waikato people

A helpline for
Waikato residents
struggling due to
COVID-19

A new freephone helpline for Waikato people struggling to get food, groceries, medicine and other household goods and services is available. Call **0800 800 405** to register your needs.

The service, set up by Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group, is available from 7am - 7pm daily and compliments other government helplines and services already in place. It is intended for those facing hardship and will particularly assist the disabled, at risk groups, and people without access to their own transport.

NEED TO TALK? If you're feeling anxious, lonely, or a bit fearful during lockdown and you just need someone to talk to, Freephone or text 1737.

"You may not need it now, but as Level 4 or Level 3 continues, if you experience hardship, please don't hesitate to call"

Mayor Toby Adams



Sign up for our e-newsletters

In times like this where COVID-19 has changed the world as we know it, it's more important than ever to stay informed. Get the latest updates and information on our services and projects or topics that you're interested in - direct to your inbox. Sign up at now at www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/e-newsletter