

Ngā pārongo hou

Latest council news

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Getting animated about the Māori Ward Poll

An animated video about voting in the Māori Ward Poll has been created in-house at the council and is live on council YouTube and social media channels.

When voting in the local elections this year, all Far North residents and ratepayers will be asked to vote in a binding poll about Māori wards and constituencies.

While Māori wards and constituencies are elected by voters registered on the Māori electoral roll, the decision about keeping or removing them is everyone's to make at this year's local election.

In the Far North, the Māori Ward – Ngā Tai o Tokerau covers the entire district and is represented by four councillors. The Māori Ward Poll will ask voters to choose between two simple questions:

- *I vote to keep the Māori ward / constituency.*
- *I vote to remove the Māori ward / constituency.*

The questions apply to the Far North District Māori Ward and the Northland Regional Council Māori Constituency. The poll outcome will take effect from the 2028 local elections.



The first-of-its kind animation encourages voting to determine whether the Māori ward and constituency remain in place or are removed.

The video, to raise awareness about voting in the Māori Ward Poll, is the first time an animation has been created in-house. Existing staff were upskilled at no extra cost to ratepayers.

If you're eligible to vote in this year's local election, make sure your voice is heard. Enrol now at vote.nz.

For the full story go to fndc.govt.nz

Savings reduce rising rate costs



Use our online Rating Information Database to check your rates.

FNDC has adopted a 10.95 per cent rates increase for the 2025/26 financial year, the second time budget reviews have seen increases come in below those originally forecast.

Last year, the council delivered the lowest increase of any council at 4.5 per cent, significantly less than a 16.5 per cent increase the council initially consulted the public on.

During a 25 June Extraordinary Meeting, councillors confirmed a 10.95 per cent average rates increase, down from the 11.3 per cent forecast.

The 10.95 per cent figure is an average. Rates levied on individual properties will vary according to the services provided. For example, targeted rates may apply to a particular area only (e.g. wastewater or stormwater targeted rates), and the portion levied by NRC will also affect individual rates.

In setting rates for 2025/26, council staff closely reviewed budgets and achieved cost reductions on day-to-day operations. Savings were also identified in the capital works programme (repairing existing assets and building new ones). However, this was not enough to counteract significant cost increases outside of the council's control.

Building a rates relief policy



Talk to us about improving the policy to ensure it's fair.

Rates are essential for funding the services we all rely on. However, some households can face challenges that make paying rates difficult.

The council is reviewing its Rates Relief Policy to ensure it is fair, easy to understand, and reflects different circumstances that exist across our district. Help us to make sure the proposed updated policy works well for everyone by providing feedback.

The policy helps guide when rates can be reduced or postponed. This might apply to whānau experiencing financial hardship, to unused Māori Freehold Land, or to organisations doing good in our communities.

We are proposing to improve the policy through a series of administrative and technical changes, such as better definitions, and stronger guidance to help with decision-making. The draft policy also recognises and reflects:

- Principles of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993
- The council's commitment to supporting fairness across all communities.

Head to our 'Have your say' webpage by Sunday 3 August to complete a short survey.

Record number of new citizens



Some new citizens have been living in the Far North for decades.

Far North Mayor Moko Tepania welcomed 118 new citizens to Aotearoa recently, during a ceremony he described as 'the largest the region has ever seen'.

The events are held quarterly and normally around 120 new citizens are welcomed during an entire year in the Far North. The recent event held at Memorial Hall in Kaikohe almost achieved that total in one go!

The ceremony began with a karakia and waiata led by the council's Te Hono team, which acknowledged the journey made by attendees and welcomed them to Aotearoa. After pledging allegiance to King Charles III and New Zealand, attendees received their Certificate of Citizenship by Kahika Tepania, assisted by Kōwhai Kelly Stratford and Councillor Hilda Halkyard-Harawira.

The new Kiwis, who have all lived in the country for at least five years, hailed from France, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Philippines, Germany, America, Fiji and Norway.

Several long-standing residents of the Far North were also recognised and congratulated on officially becoming new citizens – some having lived for over 20 years in the district.

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