

Ngā pārongo hou

Latest council news

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Investing in our communities

A message from Kahika Moko Tepania

A dawn ceremony at the end of April will open a new multi-sports complex at Lindvart Park in Kaikohe. This community-led project is one of three sports hubs being built - Te Hiku Sports Hub in Kaitiāia is due to open soon, and work on Te Puāwaitanga - Bay of Islands Sports Hub is underway.

Funding has been provided by our Long Term Plans (LTP) for these high-quality facilities that encourage participation in sports and recreational activities.

We've just released our latest LTP for consultation. It's our key planning document - setting out what we propose to do and how we plan to pay for it.

The government is allowing our council to produce an LTP that covers the next three years instead of the usual 10-year plan. This recognises the challenges of recovering from severe weather events in 2022-23.

As well as unbudgeted infrastructure costs, we are grappling with spiralling inflation, increased contractor costs, and uncertainty over our three waters assets. As leaders for our communities, we are acutely aware of cost pressures faced by Far Northerners. We've debated long and hard how to keep council rates to a minimum.



The government is allowing eight councils, including Far North District Council, to produce LTPs that cover three years instead of the usual 10 years.

This LTP includes a total average rates increase of 16.5 per cent for 2024/25, then 7.9 per cent for 2025/26 and 4.6 per cent in the third year of the LTP. This is on par with many other councils.

This LTP focuses on repairing our roads. We must catch up on infrastructure deficits and storm-related damage to ensure we have well-maintained and safe roads.

But we cannot ignore other services that help make the Far North a place people want to visit and live in. Lindvart Park sports hub is one example. It will positively impact the lives of our people long after the current cost of living crisis is in the past.

Please visit our website and have your say before Sunday 28 April.

Kia kaha Far North, we need your voice in our Long Term Plan!



A short film about belonging was shot over five days at Whangaroa.

Whangaroa centre stage in film

Whangaroa is described as a central character in the short film *Molly Malone*, which was granted \$10,000 by the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board.

The film's producer and lead actor, Sophie Westenna, says the board's funding made all the difference to making the five-day shoot in Whangaroa happen.

Molly Malone is written and directed by Siobhan Marshall, well known for her roles in *Outrageous Fortune* and *The Almighty Johnsons*, but less well known for her Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa heritage. It's the story of searching for belonging when you look 'white' but your whakapapa is Māori.

Two of the four lead actors, Brooklyn Nathan and Lionel Wellington, also whakapapa to the area. Producer Sophie, who also plays Molly, says they scouted for extras locally and relied on the town's boaties for help behind the scenes. The local rūnanga was also consulted throughout filming.

It is hoped a screening can be held at Kāeo later this year. The film also received a \$2000 grant from Far North Creative Communities.



Only Community Services Card holders will get reduced fares from May.

Age-based ferry fares ending

Discounted passenger fares for those aged 24 and younger will end on all public transport, including the Hokianga Ferry, next month.

Changes to the Community Connect Concessions Scheme were announced by the government in December 2023 and will mean that from 1 May children aged 12 and under will no longer be able to travel for free, while ferry passengers aged 13 to 24 will no longer be eligible for half price tickets.

The government-funded scheme was introduced in April 2022 to counter the rising cost of living and provided half-price fares for all passengers. This ended in June 2023, but was followed by the introduction of age-based fares making public transport cheaper for young people.

Last year, the new Coalition Government announced a more targeted approach for the scheme. Only those with a Community Services Card will be eligible for discounted passenger fares on the Hokianga Ferry which operates between Rāwene and Kohukohu every day.



Cable Bay's new footpath includes kerbing and a wooden guard rail.

Footpath projects hit the road

A new 590m-long footpath linking pedestrians to State Highway 10 at Cable Bay was completed on Friday 29 March. It's one of several new paths planned for the district in the coming months.

The 1.8m-wide path runs along Cable Bay Block Road from the intersection with State Highway 10 to Pekama Drive.

Another footpath in Te Hiku is planned for Ahipara. The Takahe footpath will run from Kaka Street towards the Kaitiāia Golf Club. Two other footpaths are planned in Haruru and Russell. Both will include new kerbs, channels, and drainage as well as concrete footpaths.

Construction of the pedestrian path along State Highway 11 in Haruru begins this month. The footpath will be mostly concrete with a section of timber boardwalk. The 1.8m wide path will run from Nautical Drive to Haruru Falls Road and will clock in at 587m long.

A path planned for Queen Street in Russell will comprise several concrete sections and will total 95m in length. Work will start following the Haruru project.