

## Council adopts 2024-2034 Long Term Plan

Marlborough District Councillors adopted the Long Term Plan 2024-2034 (LTP) at a special emergency meeting of Council last week.

The adoption of the LTP and the setting of rates for the 2024-25 year confirms an average rate increase for Marlborough ratepayers of 13.62 per cent.

Mayor Nadine Taylor thanked councillors and staff for their work in preparing this LTP which had been “the most complex” in recent times. “This Long Term Plan has been a long time coming,” she told councillors.

The complexity was due to the flow on effects of earthquakes and storm recovery on the region, the unwinding of Council’s Covid rates subsidy, fluctuating interest rates, an inflationary environment and last but by no means least, the Sounds roads recovery project which really was now a “community resilience project”, Mayor Taylor said. “This is about ensuring our Sounds communities stay connected now and into the future.”

Mayor Taylor outlined that almost all the money budgeted in the LTP was earmarked for core infrastructure. “Central Government has said councils should focus on core infrastructure and that is exactly what we are doing.”

Mayor Taylor acknowledged the 365 public submissions received on the LTP including more than 100 submitters who presented to Council during four days of public hearings in early June. “Submitters provided Council with some very useful information which has helped significantly in our decision making,” she said.

Invoices are being prepared and will be posted to ratepayers within the next week. Payments for the first quarter of rates will be due on 11 October with subsequent quarters due on dates consistent with previous years – 11 December 2024, 11 March 2025 and 11 June 2025.

Once invoices are issued and received rates rebates can be applied for those eligible.



Ongoing Sounds recovery works such as the Torea Wall (pictured) near Portage Bay form part of a very complex Long Term Plan, adopted by Council earlier this week

## Consultation opens on Marlborough CDEM Group Plan

It has never been more important to be prepared.

With public consultation now open on the draft Marlborough Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan 2025-2030, Mayor Nadine Taylor said Marlborough as a region and the nation was exposed to more hazards than ever before, particularly with the effects of climate change.

“Marlborough has seen the impact of the increased intensity of weather events first hand in 2021 and 2022 with many homes evacuated for safety. Today many still have red and yellow placards as a result. Marlborough also suffered landslips and farm damage as well as the millions of dollars’ worth of damage done to our roading network. Thankfully, there was no loss of life,” Mayor Taylor said. “Ever present in our minds is the likelihood of a rupture of the Alpine Fault, the much talked about AF8.”

Council is responsible for the delivery of civil defence and emergency management response throughout the Marlborough region. Marlborough Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM)

is based at the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) at Wither Road in Blenheim which also becomes the headquarters of any emergency response.

Mayor Taylor said it was important people have their say on the Marlborough CDEM Group Plan as this would shape Marlborough’s strategic emergency management direction for the next five years. Council’s strategic and operational partners - Fire and Emergency NZ, Police, Health NZ and Hato Hone St John - have helped develop the plan’s vision, objectives and activities.

“Our plan acknowledges that every agency and stakeholder involved makes up the CDEM response, something we already demonstrate particularly well here in Marlborough. In a civil defence emergency, if you see a firefighter, a member of Police, a Māori warden or a Red Cross volunteer, you are seeing part of the wider Marlborough CDEM response and there are many more superb volunteers working in the ECC during an event,” she said.

This plan, reviewed every five years, gives emergency management staff



and volunteers and response agencies clarity and certainty. “It also has a greater emphasis on building community resilience ahead of such an event including working with local community organisations across all parts of our region to develop readiness plans for when the next disaster strikes,” Mayor Taylor said.

Consultation on the plan closes 30 September. To have your say go to: [www.marlborough.govt.nz/your-council/have-your-say-consultations](http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/your-council/have-your-say-consultations)

## Council votes to retain Māori wards

Council has voted unanimously in favour of retaining Māori wards.

At an extraordinary meeting held last week, the unanimous vote supported keeping the ward which means the issue will now go to a binding public referendum at the 2025 local body elections.

The result from this would take effect from the 2028 local government term.

Council chambers was full for the meeting with Mayor Nadine Taylor commenting it was the largest public gallery ever hosted at Council and she acknowledged those who attended. “It is excellent to see the level of interest and support,” she said.

Mayor Taylor said the issue being voted on was not about the Māori Ward representative Councillor Allanah Burgess personally, but about the position.

“I want to be clear we are wrapping our support around you – you are part of our team and you hold your head high,” she said.

All councillors took the opportunity to speak before voting.

In moving the motion to retain the Māori ward seat, Mayor Taylor said it contributed to a valuable partnership between Council and iwi and offered a direct voice in decision-making.

Marlborough is one of 45 Councils around the country that introduced Māori wards in late 2020 – current Māori ward Councillor Allanah Burgess was voted in at the 2022 October election.

On April 4, 2024, local government minister Simeon Brown announced plans to bring back public polls to decide Māori wards.

That change forced Councils that had introduced Māori wards without a poll to either drop them or, should they retain them, then they must go to a binding referendum to let the public decide.

Marlborough residents will now get to make that decision in October next year – in line with Council elections. Māori wards would be removed from 2028 elections if rejected in the poll.

Marlborough is one of just three councils in the South Island to have a Māori ward – Nelson has one and Tasman’s ward starts at the next election.

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), said that Māori wards allowed Māori to be part of decision-making and have representation on local councils.

Having such wards was one way for councils to honour the partnership principle committed to in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Those who are enrolled on the Māori electoral roll vote for candidates standing for Māori wards to represent them, LGNZ said.

There are only four councils between the far north and Marlborough without Māori wards, and none exist south of Marlborough.

Of New Zealand’s 78 councils, 44 will have to drop their Māori wards ahead of the next elections or put them to a 2025 public vote. One more council has until 2028 to make this decision.

 Marlborough



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