



REGISTERED CHARITY CC11386

Mail Address: PDC Mourea, Rotorua, 3074

Email: lrca@rotoiti.co.nz

15 March 2021

Chief Executive
Bay of Plenty Regional Council
PO Box 364
WHAKATANE 3158

Tēnā Koe

SUBMISSION TO BoPRC LTP 2021-31 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The *Lake Rotoiti Community Association Incorporated (LRCA)* welcomes the opportunity to make these submissions to Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Long Term Plan 2021-31 Consultation Document. The Association continues as a long standing charitable organisation which takes a leading role in representing a large community of interest. We wish to acknowledge the ongoing assistance provided by Council and Council staff towards the various associated activities undertaken by LRCA in support of our local communities and the environment.

Climate Change Projects

1. We endorsed Council's 2019-20 proposal in developing its action plan to address this topic and commended the four focus areas of collaborating with communities, incorporating climate change in decision-making, provision of services and reducing Council's own footprint. Most within our communities would rate concerns over the impacts generally attributed to climate change as a priority issue. In supporting Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in 2019, we would urge sufficient funding allocation to provide for an appropriate level of response towards relevant challenges within the region.

Sustainability Funding

2. It is noted that governmental and industry grants and loan vehicles currently exist for the provision of household energy related products. Whilst opinions may differ as to whether this should also become an increasing function of local authorities, there would seem to be merit in Council's proposals to include alternative options for this purpose subject to appropriate criteria and minimal imposition on general ratepayers. Given the potential advantage to a

proportion of our residents, and stated increase of 0.35 cents to each regional rating unit, we recommend the adoption of Option 4 from the Consultation Document.

Public Transport Fares

3. We have previously supported the general concept of assisting students towards accessing study venues in the region by way of subsidised/free fares on public transport. There may be merit in similar considerations towards CSC holders. However, there continues to be no available commuter services within our lakes area so our potential users would be unable to avail themselves of any new/altered service.
4. Presently targeted rates are rightly directed solely to Rotorua urban properties to reflect current access to transport services in the District. Unless such additional services were extended to our rohe, we would expect this policy to continue. Whilst there remains a desire for extended services to rural areas such as ours, we acknowledge the existing restraints hampering the establishment of a viable service.

Regional Safety and Rescue Services

5. We reiterate our previous acknowledgement of the significant contributions made by all safety and rescue service providers. However we continue to have some reservations over increasing the funding of these services at regional level and, if adopted, how allocations would be equitably shared. We therefore support the status quo of utilising existing funding mechanisms. We repeat the suggestion that further dialogue regarding the merits of providing additional regional funding for this purpose be undertaken.

Bio-Security

6. Whilst acknowledging the proposed control and output parameters in the Regional Pest Management Plan 2020-30, in seeking reference within the LTP of proposed expenditure towards specific pest programmes we can find little relative information to gauge levels of funding allocation. The Documents seem to contain only a brief outline of goals in the Draft Groups of Activities Management Plans Page 12, and total expenditure for Catchment Management in the Consultation Document Vol 2 Pg 30.
7. Following strong submissions from our community in recent years, we wish to emphasise our expectation towards the provision of appropriate resourcing to maintain current containment and eradication programmes relating to catfish and wallabies. We reiterate the strong will of our communities to not only contain but attempt to eradicate these pests. It is imperative that forward budget considerations continue to reflect ongoing concerns over their impact on regional biodiversity and potential impact on important areas of our economy.

Rates

8. The LTP provides for General rates to increase by 5.8% in the first year and 3% thereafter. It is accepted that a nil increase prevailed last year due to Covid-19. Targeted rates are to increase on average by 8.9%. We recognise the likely cost implications of ever increasing compliance and (particularly infrastructure) renewals and maintenance. We are also fortunate to have the ability to significantly offset general rates via dividends derived from the ratepayer-owned Port of Tauranga shareholding.

9. Nevertheless, the overall burden of regular increases (both general and targeted rates) well above the CPI has become a significant encumbrance upon a large group of our general ratepayers. We would continue to urge Council to be ever diligent towards trimming budgets and rationalising projects and resources where appropriate and necessary to minimise future increases.
10. We continue to express our concern that Integrated Catchment Management funding for Rotorua Lakes attracts a 25-50% targeted rate whilst Coastal catchment programmes within the region are funded 100% from general rates after available grants and subsidies. We note that all of these programmes have similar elements of local and wider community (regional, national and international) benefit and should surely be rated on the same basis, i.e. some element of targeting to the local district beneficiaries.

General

11. As an objective observation, apart from the base Consultation Document which is commented on later, the voluminous accompanying documents contain a vast amount of detail, much of it seen as high level reporting but with no clear links between proposed activities and expenditure. This current method of delivery adds to an already difficult and time-consuming task for (most) individuals and community groups like ours to readily evaluate or determine budgeted expenditure in relation to specific projects and subsets of activities.
12. The 22 page Consultation Document includes a reasonable outline of Council's policy and intentions along with a summary of financial and rating strategy, and management of assets. However it provides no real focus on specific cost centres or projects. We would have otherwise expected such information to be contained in the accompanying documents but as noted, the financial summaries are difficult to clearly associate with the Key Programmes and Projects. We would certainly appreciate the ability to more easily scrutinise these proposals from a layperson's viewpoint, perhaps for example a similar format and layout to that used in the Regional 10-year Plan Summary for 2012-22.

We look forward to your comments and response to all of these issues.

Nāku noa, nā

Reina

Reina Engelen
Chairperson