

Annual Plan

April 2008

The Kapiti Chamber of Commerce has reviewed your Annual Plan for 2008/9 and would like to make the following comments.

1 While we applaud Council's effort to keep increases in rates to a minimum, we do have concerns that any reduction in infrastructure expenditure now will only aggravate future costs. An example of this is the reduction in total stormwater expenditure of one million dollars from planned expenditure.

2 We would like to recommend that provision be made for extra funds now. This could inevitably result in an increase in rates now but it will soften the increase in future years; particularly in the area of stormwater management where major expenditure will be required. This can be done by increasing this budget and ending up with a carry-over of funds at the end of the year.

There is little point in increasing rates at an artificially low level, if the ultimate impact of this is that essential infrastructural work cannot be started and that future rate increases are unacceptably high. We believe an averaged increase approach is a better way to progress.

3 The other area of concern is within economic development. To help spread the rates' burden, our district is in urgent need of a larger commercial and business base and we believe Council should take a lead role in supporting this. Whilst the Airport Plan approval is applauded, there are many other areas where we need to attract more commercial activity to ensure additional employment opportunities and greater business outputs. While there is much talk about growth in the aged sector of the Kapiti population, there are also a growing number of work age residents. These residents will have no choice but to travel out of Kapiti to work (or leave the area) if new and existing businesses do not grow.

4 The above again prompts our request for the establishment of an Events Manager for this district. We know that successful events result in a revenue stream which ripples right through the community. Council has an events' fund but as other districts can demonstrate, events must be promoted and organised effectively if they are to be successful.

5 The Chamber endorses the reduction of spending in several areas of administration but has major concerns about local bodies placidly accepting the impact of additional costs arising out of central government legislation. We applaud comments made by the Mayor in recent newspapers on this subject but there appears to be no subsequent action. We would like to know just how much this legislation has cost this Council over the last three years, using, for example, the impact of changes imposed by the Building Act? We hope Council takes positive, proactive action here, in conjunction with Local Government NZ who seem somewhat silent on this issue.

6 This Chamber is supportive of Council and wishes to continue to be available to assist in making the Kapiti Coast a better place to live and work.