

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE



This is the third Long Term Council and Community Plan that Council has produced. The past three years have highlighted the value of planning ten years out. With a number of major projects for the district now completed, we need to re-focus our attention on the potential needs of our community for the next ten years.

Long-term planning is always a struggle. It requires us to move our attention from immediate problems, projects and concerns and focus on potential needs and wants in the future. It is not an easy task anticipating what our communities will want, or can afford, particularly in the current changing economic environment.

Council spending can be divided into three categories:

- those things we are obliged to provide to our communities, on an on-going basis, by law;
- one-off projects that we must undertake by law; and
- discretionary spending - things that we do not legislatively have to provide but that we believe are important to the ongoing well-being of our district and communities, or that are specific to our needs or situation.

The first category makes up a large percentage of the rates spend. It includes services such as long-term planning, annual planning and reporting, animal control, building control, resource management, democracy, environmental health, playground inspections, provision of cemeteries, emergency management, supply of water, roading and waste services, etc. These are things that central government has tasked local government with providing, on an on-going basis, under legislation. Council does not have a choice about whether to fund these services, but you, as a community, can have input into what level of service you would like to pay for. There is a substantial commitment of rates in providing these 'must-have' services, and contribution to them. Over

the next ten years we are also looking at committing funds to purchase additional land for cemeteries and the demolition of service buildings now at the end of their useful economic life. Progressive renewal of footpaths (aligned with the proposed walking and cycling strategy) will also continue.

The second category is one-off projects that will require funding and resource, which we are obliged to commit to under legislation. We have identified a number of projects which will need to be funded over the next ten years. These include the local triennial elections next year (and again in 2013 and 2016), upgrades relating to the new Drinking Water Standards, review of the District Plan, development of a district landfill and earthquake assessments of buildings. Central Government legislation requires us to commit resource and funding to these projects and complete them within specific timeframes.

We are then faced with making decisions around the third category - our 'discretionary' spending relative to the level of service provided. While these services are classed as 'discretionary' they include many vital services, such as the provision of library services, support for development of district tourism, provision of community housing, access to theatres, sports facilities, swimming pools and other community facilities and provision of amenities such as parks and reserves and public toilets. We also provide (due to our specific needs and situation) an airport and dental service. These are all services that we believe are important to the ongoing success of our district and the enjoyment and quality of life of our communities. We have included several projects in the long-term plan, including completion of the Westport Performing Arts Centre development, completion of the Cultural Hub development, continuing funding for community facility projects in the rural wards, and construction/refurbishment of pensioner housing units in Karamea, Westport and Reefton.

The Council are aware that our extractive industries have a finite life and that we must continue to pursue other economic growth opportunities. Identifying new opportunities to ensure our economic sustainability is vitally important and we have included this planning as a





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project for the upcoming years.

In addition, over the past five years many agencies have committed considerable funds and efforts in developing our tourism capabilities. Buller is well placed to further develop our ability to utilise tourism as a key economic opportunity. The Council has identified that ongoing support of our tourism industry is important. While our entire community benefits from increased tourism and the associated spending within our community, we believe a shared funding model is appropriate and are recommending that we revisit a promotion and development rate to ensure tourism promotion funding over a sustained period.

Following consultation Council has decided to establish a new Council Controlled Organisation (CCO), Buller Arts and Leisure Limited and transfer the ownership of the assets of the Solid Energy Centre to the new CCO, effective 01 July 2009. Council has also decided to transfer the harbour assets to Westport Harbour Limited effective 01 July 2009.

The last five years have been very exciting ones for the district. We still have some great projects planned for the next ten years, but we've also tried to ensure there is some prudence around expected spending. We recognise the current global economic conditions may impact on our operating environment and we believe our plan reflects these uncertainties.

Pat McManus - Mayor



Gary Murphy - Chief Executive

