

**TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TAUPŌ EAST RURAL REPRESENTATIVE GROUP MEETING  
HELD AT THE RIVER ROAD COMMUNITY HALL, RIVER ROAD, REPOROA  
ON THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025 AT 11.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Cr Kylie Leonard (in the Chair), Ms Evelyn Forrest, Mr Patrick Hart, Mr Mark Wynyard, Cr John Williamson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Infrastructure Manager (R Stokes), Community Engagement and Development Manager (T Russell), Governance Quality Manager (S James), Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō District (C Dredge), Committee Advisor (D Periam)

**MEDIA AND PUBLIC:** Nova Energy Group Manager Engagements and Partnerships Mr David Riley  
6 members of the public

Notes: (i) Chair Cr Kylie Leonard thanked the public for attending the meeting and opened the meeting with a karakia followed by the English translation.  
(ii) Items were considered in the following order: 1-3, 5.2, 5.1, 4, 5.3-5.5  
(iii) Chief Executive Julie Gardyne had submitted her apology for the meeting.  
(iv) Item 5.2 was corrected from Nova Energy to Todd Corporations

**1 KARAKIA**

**2 WHAKAPĀHA | APOLOGIES**

**TERR202506/01 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Mr Mark Wynyard

Seconded: Mr Patrick Hart

That the apologies received from Cr Danny Loughlin and Mayor David Trewavas be accepted.

**CARRIED**

Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/01 above.

**3 NGĀ WHAKAPĀNGA TUKITUKI | CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Nil

**4 WHAKAMANATANGA O NGĀ MENETI | CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**4.1 TAUPŌ EAST RURAL REPRESENTATIVE GROUP MEETING - 17 APRIL 2025**

**TERR202506/02 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Mr Mark Wynyard

Seconded: Mr Patrick Hart

That the minutes of the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting held on Thursday 17 April 2025 be approved and adopted as a true and correct record.

**CARRIED**

Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/02 above.

## 5 NGĀ RIPOATA | REPORTS

### 5.1 PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Graham Sperry requested that the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meetings be held in the evenings so more members of the public could attend. A member explained that some meetings were held at night during daylight savings due to safety and the venue for each meeting changes to somewhere around the Taupō East Rural ward.

He expressed that he had concerns about rates increases, Council debt and how Council was spending ratepayers money. He understood that Council debt was roughly \$200 million. When he and his wife came to Taupō 50 years ago, the rates were \$699 a year and now the rates were \$2,500 per year which was a 350% increase over 50 years. He explained the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was roughly 2% per year so the increase in rates should have only been a 100% increase. Members of the public could not afford their rates and were forced to sell their homes with retirees having to use savings and emergency funds to pay for their rates.

A member expressed that Council needed to come up with another source of income other than rates and suggested a tax on visitors that come into the district.

A member explained that a big reason rates had increased significantly was due to central government giving local government rules and tasks they must do which cost ratepayers. Tax was the source of income for central government and for local government, this was rates which was a smaller pool of funding. Local government did not get a choice regarding the water reform, this was pushed by central government and then the process had to restart when National took over meaning it cost ratepayers even more. Another big cost was insurance which had increased by 25% since Cyclone Gabrielle. Councillors had gone through every line in the budget to cut and trim costs where possible for the upcoming Annual Plan.

Mr Sperry understood that central government was a big cause for the rates increases and suggested that perhaps it was time for local government to do a nationwide pushback on central government.

A member of the public suggested that when Council increased the rates, they should put information out to the public about why this increased had occurred and the reasons behind it. The more knowledge available for the public, the more understanding they would have. The public did not realise that central government make councils do these things and blame council each time.

Members thanked the public for coming to the meeting and asked them to spread the information they heard at the meeting to their communities. Council did have a communications team who put this information out however the public would not always have time to read this information but when you are having a conversation with a neighbour, it was easier to spread this information.

### TERR202506/03 RESOLUTION

Moved: Mr Patrick Hart

Seconded: Ms Evelyn Forrest

That the Taupō East Rural Representative Group receives comments from members of the public.

**CARRIED**

*Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/03 above.*

### 5.2 PRESENTATION FROM TODD CORPORATIONS

Todd Corporation's Group Manager Engagement and Partnerships Mr David Riley introduced himself and presented a PowerPoint Presentation (A3784634) to the Taupō East Rural Representative Group.

The following points were explained:

- Todd Corporation was founded in 1884 and started down in the South Island with sheep farming before pioneering the oil and gas industry.
- Gas production was decreasing faster than what had been predicted with no new gas fields since 2000. There were five main gas fields that were mature and they were now producing less gas than

previous years.

- Todd Energy generates energy and provides that to Nova which made up roughly 5% of the energy retail industry, and was the fifth biggest power provider in New Zealand.
- Over the next 30 years, it was expected that electricity generation would increase through wind, solar and geothermal while gas would decrease and potentially become non-existent.
- An example of a solar power plant was shown and it was explained that the energy from the sun goes into the solar panels, then to the inverter to the transformer to the switchgear and then becomes electricity which goes to the grid.
- The first phase would be 200 megawatts and once the second phase (which was not confirmed) was built, it would be 400 megawatts.
- The farm meets the solar radiance that was required with 220kilovolt transmission lines through the site.
- Meridian Energy was a partner in the project.
- The enabling works had been completed, substation work had kicked off and primary contract was progressing.
- Over the past few years, planting along the waterways had been completed.
- Iwi engagement had been significant and was ongoing, contracting and financing was progressing. An onsite karakia had been conducted and the main works contract was near being awarded for the main project. It was anticipated that phase one would be completed towards the end of 2026.
- The workforce would be roughly 250 a day with 200 of these being unskilled, the remaining 50 would be skilled roles such as electricians or engineers. The primary contractor was working on the logistics of this workforce and getting people to and from site. There would be a site work camp.
- The contractor would be holding open sessions for individuals and businesses.
- A biodiversity programme was being completed.

In answer to questions, the following was clarified:

- The recent announcement from central government relating to fossil fuels would be unlikely to have an impact on Todd's direction or the industry.
- A permit had been issued off the west coast by Raglan for a new gas field, it was a good field but not overly large and well off shore which increased costs.
- The solar power project was delayed due to High Court and Environment Court processes.
- The panels would continue to work well even under cloud cover and it was estimated that it would continue to work at 80% capacity under heavy cloud cover.
- The land was two farms, the first had been retired and would form phase 1. After phase 1 was completed the land would be grazed by sheep. If phase 2 progressed, the farm would also be retired and developed with panels, again grazed by sheep once complete.
- It was difficult to estimate the projected return on capital as it would be dependent on the energy market and how many other solar projects are in the market when they start supplying energy.
- There will be roughly 800,000 solar panels with ~400,000 per stage.
- The power produced would go anywhere across the North Island.
- Due to gas production decreasing, there would be a deficit of electricity for roughly five to ten years.
- Solar panel degradation rate was about 0.5% per year, the panels would likely be replaced in stages rather than waiting 30 years and replacing them all at once.
- There would likely be a secondary market for panels and they would likely be supplied to housing or farms, or supplied to the islands.
- It was unclear what the solar energy market would look like in 30 years but there was hopes that panels would be able to be replaced and then recycled.
- This project was currently the biggest consented project which would produce about ~4% of New Zealand's demand during the day.

Chair Cr Kylie Leonard thanked Mr David Riley for his presentation to the representative group and Todd Energy for having an interest in the Taupō East area. It was nice to see there would be involvement from the local people in the district. It was also nice to see that there was considerations for recycling of the solar panels in the future.

**TERR202506/04 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Ms Evelyn Forrest

Seconded: Cr John Williamson

That the Taupō East Rural Representative Group receives the presentation from Todd Corporation's Group Manager Engagement and Partnerships Mr David Riley.

**CARRIED**

*Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/04 above.*

**5.3 UPDATE ON THE 2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND DISCUSSION ON COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DELEGATIONS**

The Governance Quality Manager explained that as this was the last Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting for the term she was there to provide information about the elections and also seek feedback from the committee.

She summarised the report and the following points were explained:

- Taupō District Council Electoral Officer Mr Warwick Lampp would be holding a candidate briefing session next Tuesday, 1 July at 6.00pm at Waiora House. This would be livestreamed and recorded.
- This year would be a postal election. Ballot bins would be located around the district where people could drop their voting papers in or people could also post their voting papers.
- The government was requiring local councils which had established Māori wards and constituencies without polling the community on the matter to complete a Māori Ward/Constituency poll alongside the 2025 elections.

She explained that officers were gathering information to bring to the incoming Mayor and Councillors to see what they would like the committees to be. She had heard the request of the members of the public to hold meetings in the evenings and she asked the committee if they had any more feedback.

The following feedback was received:

- A member noted that they saw the importance of the Māori Ward as it allowed them to meet with their constituents and understand them while also having an understanding of how Te Ao Māori works. Members supported this and agreed it fostered better communications.
- Maraes in the ward be used as venues for the meetings.
- Continue to hold the meetings in the Taupō East Rural ward and do not hold them in town again.

**TERR202506/05 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Mr Mark Wynyard

Seconded: Ms Evelyn Forrest

That the Taupō East Rural Representative Group receives the update on the 2025 elections.

**CARRIED**

*Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/05 above.*

**5.4 ITEMS OF INTEREST****Community Engagement and Development**

The Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō District thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting.

She explained she had been working with two community groups for over a year and a half, the River Road Community Group and Wairakei Community Group. It was continuing to go well and both groups had almost spent the small initiative funding they had received from Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), they had received \$10,000 each. River Road had held a couple community events and Wairakei held a matariki event which had sponsorship and a great turn out. Each group was having a positive impact on their communities and she was looking forward to seeing how they evolved. Chair Cr Kylie Leonard explained that DIA had funding for community groups and they needed to tell their story to DIA in order to receive funding, she explained that the Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō District had worked with the community groups to be able to tell their story which meant both had received funding of \$10,000 which was a win. She was working with the community groups to give them a hand up rather than a hand out so the groups could continue. The Community Engagement Advisor Northern District explained that the main aim of her team was to help community groups build their capacity and capability. At the COMAVOL – Community and Volunteer Expo, there was a funding area where people could speak to funders and tell their story.

Capacity and capability building workshops were coming up. Taupō District Council had teamed up with Community Waikato to run these free workshops. The upcoming workshops focused on understanding the changes to the Incorporated Society Act 2022. There were two in person workshops in Taupō scheduled for Wednesday 30 July 2025, the first being 10.00am – 12.00pm and the second being 5.30pm – 7.30pm. An online workshop was scheduled for Thursday 31 July 6.00pm – 7.00pm. Chair Cr Kylie Leonard ask members of the public to push back on central government as the minister had no idea the impact they were doing to incorporated societies as their changes were more focused on commercial businesses set up as incorporated societies.

Community-led planning was an exciting initiative coming up. It was when people who live in a place come together to help shape and decide what happens in their community. Local people work together to identify what they want to change, and what was coming up. They might discuss health, sport or how to support each other better. It was planning for a community by a community. Wairakei and River Road would be two of the communities asked if they would like to be a part of this.

The next community grants funding round was opening the next day and she encouraged anyone to apply that has projects that would benefit the community or come speak to her. There was information on Council's website and applications were open from 27 June 2025 to 4.30pm 25 July 2025. Applicants could apply for up to \$5,000 and this was the final round for the year which had been pulled forward due to elections.

Officers had a focus on supporting the disability sector which included support Taupō Disability Focus group which was newly created with the purpose to advocate and raise awareness for the disability sector. Some initiatives being looked at included the globally recognised Sunflower hidden disability lanyard campaign, access to Lake Taupō via a beach mat.

Halberg's all ability day was being held on Wednesday 30 July 10.00am – 2.00pm at the Taupō Event Centre, she encouraged people to come along and see what disability and accessibility activities existed in Taupō.

The President of the River Road Community Group was present at the meeting and wished to formally thank the Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō for all her help and she was a pleasure to work with.

### **Local Water Done Well**

The Community Engagement Advisor Northern Taupō District thanked the Taupō East Rural communities for engaging with the team regarding Local Water Done Well. There were eight community engagement pop ups around the district and they were successful. 220 submissions were received with 74% supportive of Council's preferred option to keep water services inhouse for now. For the second decision, Do you support joining Waikato Water as a limited shareholder only, for the purposes of procuding share services, and only if the benefits of this shareholding outweigh any costs, the responses were 45% support, 25% against, 30% unsure. Council's decision was to keep water services inhouse and would stay as a shareholder for Waikato Water Done Well. The next step was to develop a water services plan. Members thanked the community for providing their feedback and explained Councillors make decisions for the community but this was hard to do if they did not hear from the community.

### **Transportation**

The Infrastructure Manager introduced himself and explained that the team looked after land development, solid waste and transport. The work on Broadlands Road was being analysed against the budget. The road was rutted in the seals so the road would be completely rebuilt and widened as well. The work was 51% subsidised by New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). He explained that he was appreciative that they had a supportive group of Councillors who matched the funding NZTA provided, last year council did not receive anything from NZTA for Capex and Councillors chose to retain the local share.

School speed limits were changing next week and the speed limit would be in place only for school pick up times. The signs were being replaced with static signs at the moment with some areas potentially getting upgraded to digital signs. The southern end of Lake Terrace would be back up to 80km. Two new roundabouts were coming, the first being at Taharepa Road with AC Baths Avenue and the second on Crown Road. Both intersections were very busy. Lake Terrace would be renewed between Mere Road and Napier Road. The reseal programme being done this year has been provided to NZTA so they can work around Council's works programme.

There was a new resource consent coming up for Broadlands Landfill with officers working through the consent process currently. The footprint would be expanded but a lot of this was going to be on top of the existing landfill.

A Council workshop was held to discuss a second bridge connecting the Northern side of Taupō to the town centre. This bridge would likely join at the existing lights on Wairakei Drive and go through to Waikato Street. Key stakeholders and iwi were being spoken to. More information for this project would be included in the upcoming Long-term Plan and this project would be planned for 2030 but could be pushed out further if required.

In answer to questions, the following was clarified:

- Broadlands Road repairs were going to open tender and it would have extra costs in the contract. Liquidated damages are harder to apply due to different issues. Link Road works went well beyond their time and it cost that business a lot of time and money. Link Road was a painful process for the company and the community, and officers wanted to ensure that situation did not happen again.
- Due to expected increased housing on the Northern side over the next 30 years, the time to travel into town would increase significantly.
- Council did not own Control Gates Bridge.
- Including the second bridge into the Long-term Plan did not mean it would go ahead as this would be a consultation with the public.
- The work on the Eastern Taupō Arterial (ETA) was being completed by NZTA who were installing weigh bridges for trucks. They had rebuilt the roads underneath and had left the asphalt to harden and set perfectly flat. They had some setbacks due to bad weather which caused the work to take longer than expected.

Members strongly suggested adding a liquidated damage clause into the contract for Broadlands Road repairs.

A member suggested safety improvements on Broadlands Road, including 2 metre verges so cars and trucks did not have to cross the centre line when passing cyclists or tractors. There was also no way to see past logging trucks or passing them without going across the centre line until the last 50 metres before Whites Road.

### **Annual Plan**

The Infrastructure Manager explained that on Monday 30 June, the Annual Plan 2025/26 was due to be adopted. No public consultation was required due to there being no substantial changes and there would be no changes to the levels of service.

### **TERR202506/06 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Cr Kylie Leonard

Seconded: Mr Mark Wynyard

That the Taupō East Rural Representative Group receives the Items of Interest information provided.

**CARRIED**

*Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/06 above.*

## **5.5 MEMBERS' REPORTS**

The following members' reports were received:

Ms Evelyn Forrest

- The opening of papakāinga at Waimahana Marae with 7 houses. This would be a big event for the local iwi the upcoming weekend.
- A meeting was held with the Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety Hon Andrew Hoggard to discuss the golden clams issue. They expressed that they wanted Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to do a lot more to address this issue. The communication had been non-existent. Minister Hoggard explained that there was a management plan drawn up for boats coming into the district which had not been shared yet. The clams clustered together and were so sharp that they would stop people from entering the water. They also get into filtration systems. MPI need a plan to manage this issue as it was not one that would disappear. MPI would be completing some eDNA monitoring two times a year.

Mr Mark Wynyard

- Paid tribute to Cr John Williamson who was not standing for Council again. He worked with Cr Williamson's mum when she was mayor and enjoyed it. He thanked Cr Williamson for all the work he had done for the community over the past 12 years.
- Paid tribute to Chair Cr Kylie Leonard for all the hard work she does behind the scenes.

Cr John Williamson

- Thanked Mr Mark Wynyard for his words and expressed he had enjoyed the past 12 years and he would still be very active in the community.

#### **TERR202506/07 RESOLUTION**

Moved: Mr Patrick Hart

Seconded: Mr Mark Wynyard

That the Taupō East Rural Representative Group receives the reports from members.

**CARRIED**

*Note: All members present at the Taupō East Rural Representative Group meeting voted in favour of resolution TERR202506/07 above.*

#### **6 NGĀ KŌRERO TŪMATAITI | CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

Nil

The meeting closed with a karakia led by Cr Kylie Leonard at 12.48pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed as a true and correct record by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive in accordance with Standing Order 28.4.

.....  
**CHAIRPERSON**

.....  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

.....  
**DATE**