

Social and Cultural



social and cultural group

Overview of Group

This group is made up of the following activities of Council:

- Aquatic Facilities
- Community Engagement and Support
- Emergency Management
- Events and Venues
- Public Gardens and Open Spaces
- District Library
- Rotorua Museum of Art & History

The Social and Cultural Group activities enhance the district as a place to live. Many of the services provided through these activities are recognised as very important to the community and would not be provided to the level expected without Council's contribution and involvement.

The uncertain economic background against which this Ten Year Plan has been prepared imposes more than the usual challenge in planning social and cultural investment and services for the next ten years. These proposals have been developed to reflect tightened circumstances of affordability whilst acknowledging increased pressures from withdrawal and/or reduction in the availability of grants to community groups, and to Council, from the philanthropic sector. Flexibility to respond to changing social and economic issues as the emerging economic crisis takes clearer shape is retained wherever possible.



Strategic Direction and Highlights

Rotorua Civic Theatre Stagehouse Redevelopment

Rotorua District Council is committed to the backstage redevelopment for the Civic Theatre. This is a significant project previously estimated to cost \$8.2 million, but subsequently revised down to \$6.2 million. Council has committed \$4 million to that project in the previous Ten Year Plan (\$500,000 of this project has already been funded in the 2008/09 year).

Council has established a fundraising working group that is charged with identifying private partnerships to raise a further \$1.9 million. The remaining \$300,000 will be met through proposed renewals already identified in the asset management plan. The work has been ongoing over the past 12 months and there are signs that suggest it will be very successful.

The main reasons for the upgrade related to deferred maintenance decisions taken by Council over many years. The project will increase the capability of the theatre to attract larger shows with more substantial set requirements. It will also significantly improve the efficiency of the backstage operation that currently requires scenes to be loaded on a dock on Haupapa Street. This is inconvenient for the theatre, event promoters and for users of parking facilities in that area. The new dock will load-in from the Arawa Street side of the building.

This project will provide a much needed boost to Rotorua's performing arts and will raise the level of available facilities to that of other comparable provincial communities in New Zealand.

Cemeteries

Council has been attempting to identify a suitable new cemetery site for the past seven years. A property has now been purchased at Horohoro with the potential to be used as a cemetery. Discussions are also ongoing with Ngati Whakaue, through Ngati Whakaue Tribal Lands, and Kauae Cemetery trustees, to acquire the lease or purchase of additional land adjacent to the current Kauae Cemetery on State Highway 5.

While this is the preferred site, unless agreement is reached on terms and conditions, Council will need to progress alternative plans. It is expected that a decision will be made during the 2010/2011 year. In the meantime, existing cemeteries have adequate space for cremations for the foreseeable future. There is also sufficient space for burials for approximately five years at Kauae Cemetery and significant capacity at rural cemeteries.

Community Safety

In 2004 Rotorua residents identified 'a safe and caring community' as their highest priority of the Bright Future Rotorua Community Outcomes. This has remained the case ever since. As part of building recognition of Rotorua as a safe place to visit, live, work and play, a collaborative programme with a range of government agencies and volunteer groups has been established to obtain World Health Organisation (WHO) accreditation for Rotorua, as a 'safe city'.

We are currently almost one year into this two year project. Seven other cities in New Zealand, including Tauranga, have achieved this accreditation. It is an important process for securing objective evidence about the safety of the city from both a crime and abuse perspective, and in terms of physical safety and a low accident environment.

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Accreditation will reassure residents about steps being taken to improve community safety. This has an important social benefit for the community. It will also give visitors assurance that Rotorua is a safe place to visit or invest in, an important economic benefit from accreditation.

Healthy Homes

'Healthy Homes' is likely to become an increasing issue in Rotorua, from a health and an economic development perspective, as the impact of air pollution begins to impact on the ability of businesses to secure resource consents. This Ten Year Plan does not propose any financial contribution by Council towards achieving the required improvements in air quality and health benefits to the community from warmer drier homes. It continues Council's role of advocacy and facilitation.

Maintaining current assets (renewals)

Some of the strategic assets in the group eg pensioner housing, Rotorua Aquatic Centre, Community House and the Civic Theatre, have reached a stage in their life where significant renewals are required. These have been critically reviewed and in most cases, pushed out as far as is prudent at this stage. These will be kept under review.

New capital

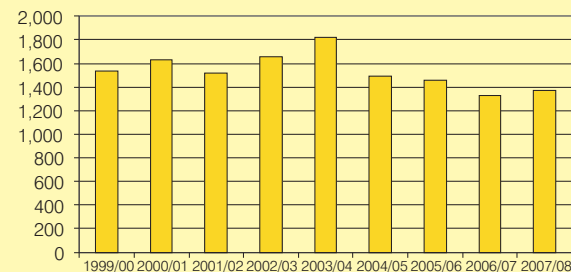
Similarly, many new capital projects (eg Aquatic Centre redevelopment), have been delayed from the timetable proposed in the last Ten Year Plan. In the 2006 Ten Year Plan this work was scheduled for the 2009/10 - 2010/11 years and is now scheduled for 2011/12 - 2012/13. This acknowledges the uncertainty and financial constraints that currently exist, although it is recognised that the changing demography of our community, an aging population, and changes in recreation patterns, will require an asset response in the medium term.

Did you know?

Since 2003, on a population basis, the level of reported crime has fallen in the Rotorua Police District and wider Bay of Plenty Region. According to survey results, most people feel safe in Rotorua. Nevertheless, crime rates remain above the national average. Council has partnerships with the Police and many other agencies to ensure Rotorua remains a safe and caring community. Examples include:

- Rotorua Safe Families Campaign to tackle family violence.
- Crime Prevention Action Plan and projects such as Project Papa Waka (car crime reduction).
- Application for World Health Organisation (WHO) Safe Community status.

Crime rate



Funding to investigate the costs and benefits of alternative options for the Aquatic Centre has been included, with development to take place only after detailed consideration in the next Ten Year Plan. The Aquatic Centre is also exploring joint public/private partnerships as a way of extending facilities and services. This has not been included in this plan as the premise is that it will be cost neutral from a rating perspective.

Skate Parks

Following on the success of suburban youth skate parks at Puketawhero Park and Ngongotaha, Council resolved to invest \$600,000 over four years to provide up to four similar facilities in the western suburbs. These will be constructed in years 2 and 4 of the Ten Year Plan, although community consultation will occur earlier.

Homeless People

Council is concerned about the plight of homeless people in our community. Although Council is aware that the reasons for homelessness are often quite different in their origin, the impact on the individual and on the community is often the same.

To assist the community establish a shelter for homeless people Council has agreed to offer its best endeavours to find a suitable site on which a building could be located or constructed and which meets the expressed need for short-term shelter close to the CBD.

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Grants

Council's policies for providing grants or contracts for services to community organisations have all been reviewed in the last three years and now provide more transparent and accountable processes for providing assistance. Overall levels of funding for grants have been reduced in the Ten Year Plan, primarily through a significant reduction in the Community Asset Development Fund (CADF) and the Community Safety Projects Fund. The CADF has served the Rotorua community well, with significant grants to Mid Island Gymnastics, Rotorua Hockey, St Chads and many others in the last three years. It is time to take stock and reassess the need for further new facilities in Rotorua, particularly in this time of economic pressure.

Events

That events can drive tourism and other economic activity is now well accepted. Rotorua, for a number of years, a leader in this activity, is now falling behind not only the established metropolitan cities of Auckland and Wellington, but also, increasingly, behind provincial centres such as Hamilton. However, with ongoing support from the Rotorua Trust, it is proposed to continue to build on Rotorua's natural advantages as an event location, (forests, lakes, tourism infrastructure, etc), to minimise the constraint of limited financial resources.

The major event in the foreseeable future will be Rugby World Cup 2011 for which Rotorua, in conjunction with other local authorities and the Bay of Plenty Rugby Union, has submitted a successful bid. Financial provision to re-lay the sand carpet playing surface at the International Stadium was brought forward to the 2008/09 year and therefore no longer appears in the Ten Year Plan. This early replacement is to allow the surface to be ready for the World Cup. No other capital investment in the International Stadium, beyond normal renewals, is necessary for Rugby World Cup 2011.

Fees and charges

Increases in fees and charges are proposed to at least keep pace with inflation over the term of the plan. In some areas eg Rotorua Aquatic Centre, fees have been constant for some time and are now well below industry norms. In these cases, there needs to be a catch-up to restore the real level of admission income. The Ten Year Plan also maintains the self funding nature of the Pensioner Housing account by way of rent increases, whilst maintaining Council's policies of affordability.

Where there is a significant increase in services provided by facilities eg Rotorua Museum and Rotorua Aquatic Centre, there will be increases in admission charges to reflect the increases in services. Further detail is provided in the activity plans for each service.



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Potential Significant Negative Effects

Events and Venues

This activity impacts on parking availability and roading infrastructure during significant events. Ongoing traffic management plans and infrastructure design will be required to allow Rotorua to deal safely with these heavy use events. These effects will be managed through infrastructure design and traffic management plans.

Aquatic Facilities

There is potential for activities and services to fail to meet the changing needs of the community.

Public Gardens and open spaces

This activity impacts on traffic management with associated noise pollution during peak activity periods. Cemeteries tend to have a negative effect on neighbouring property values.

Emergency Management

There is potential for a reduction in levels of community self reliance if this activity is viewed as purely the responsibility of local or central government.

Community Engagement and Support

By providing community assistance opportunities it is possible for organisations to become reliant on council rates funding instead of seeking other possible funding options.

These and a number of other negative effects identified, and associated mitigation options, are provided in the respective activity plan sections.

Asset Management Plans Information

The key assets used in this Activity Group are:

- Buildings
- Land
- Parks & Reserves
- Nursery
- Bridges
- Footpaths
- Minor Wastewater Treatment
- Library Collection
- Art & History Collection

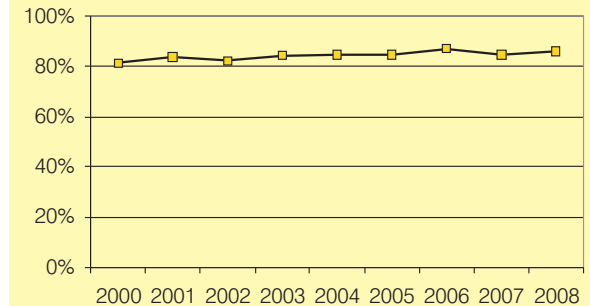
Further details are provided in each Activity section.

Did you know?

Satisfaction with Council services is generally higher in Rotorua than other parts of the country, particularly for beautification and landscaping, the Aquatic Centre and Museum. Rotorua's facilities are also highly regarded by visitors to the district. Council continually seeks opportunities to improve its service levels and to provide value for the ratepayer dollar. Examples include:

- Recent upgrade and ongoing review of District Library services and facilities.
- Completion of the Museum building to its original specifications, in partnership with funding agencies, businesses and the community.
- Redevelopment of Kuirau Park and the Lakefront Reserve.

Satisfaction with community services



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Net Cost of Service

Net Cost of Service by Activity (\$000s)	Actual 2007/08	Annual Plan 2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Aquatic Facilities	1,733	1,518	1,580	1,676	1,588	1,807	1,700	1,381	1,407	1,487	1,490	1,610
Community Engagement & Support	2,710	3,328	3,230	2,860	2,532	2,507	2,555	2,591	2,581	2,659	2,691	2,668
Emergency Management	490	480	511	553	546	560	579	588	599	611	624	640
Event & Venues	1,757	3,739	2,099	2,339	3,006	3,453	3,502	3,603	3,880	3,771	3,744	4,101
Public Gardens & Open Spaces	7,660	8,398	8,246	8,289	8,426	8,625	8,674	8,833	8,836	9,018	9,132	9,430
Public Library	3,079	3,383	3,227	3,298	3,392	3,489	3,580	3,679	3,821	3,803	3,884	3,926
Rotorua Museum of Arts and History	(67)	543	(3,621)	(1,833)	2,512	1,048	1,897	2,630	2,547	2,591	2,674	2,677
Total Net Cost of Service	17,362	21,389	15,272	17,182	22,002	21,489	22,487	23,305	23,671	23,940	24,239	25,052

Social and Cultural Assets

Asset Type	Cost/Valuation (\$000s)	Accumulated Depreciation (\$000s)	Book Value 1 July 2008 (\$000s)
Art & History Collection	5,739	21	5,719
Bridges	20	1	19
Buildings	88,488	5337	83,151
Computer Hardware	440	278	162
Computer Software	221	206	14
Database	16	10	6
Footpaths	21	1	21
Furniture	3,597	2,601	996
Land	105,236	-	105,236
Library Collection	3,920	1,276	2,644
Office Equipment	767	684	83
Parks and Reserves	19,987	2,651	17,335
Plant and Machinery	4,736	2,956	1,780
Roading	1,349	56	1,294
Stormwater drainage	346	6	340
Street Signal. Sign & Light	544	29	515
Vehicle	271	171	100
Wastewater Reticulation	25	-	25
	235,723	16,285	219,438