



Long Term Plan proposal agreed

Marlburians will soon have the opportunity to have their say on Council's planned expenditure in its ten year plan, which proposes an average rates increase of 12.65 per cent for the 2024/25 financial year.

Mayor Nadine Taylor said it costs about \$180 million a year to run Marlborough and consultation was critical. "We need everyone's input into shaping Marlborough's future and how we get there together," she said. Councils around the country were facing double digit increases but Marlborough's was at the lower end of the scale, she said. "We're not alone in facing increased costs due to factors outside our control, such as damaging storms, inflation, contract price increases and the lasting effects of the Covid pandemic," Mayor Taylor said. "However, we're not proposing to cut services and we're continuing to invest in core infrastructure because we don't want to see Marlborough going backwards." The Long Term Plan 2024/2034 budget sees new investment in the region's infrastructure, repairs to Marlborough Sounds roads, provides increases in some levels of service and removes the

Council's Covid rates subsidy. At the recent budget meeting councillors approved a number of recommendations to go out to public consultation. Key infrastructure projects include continuing work on the water supply in Awatere, Seddon, Blenheim, Havelock, Picton, Renwick, Riverlands and Wairau Valley, including upgrading pipelines, pump stations and wells to ensure they meet current needs. Drinking water improvements will continue with chlorination to be introduced in Blenheim and a new water treatment plant in Havelock, to ensure water meets national standards. A new reservoir is planned for Dashwood, new wells are proposed north of Blenheim to increase resilience and supply capacity, and work is ongoing with Picton's water supply, dams and reservoirs. There will also be investment in sewage treatment plants and pump stations in Blenheim, Riverlands, Picton and Renwick, plus a new sewage treatment plant for Havelock and a major upgrade for Seddon's plant.



Repairs and improvements to Marlborough Sounds roads and water treatment are key parts of Council's ten year plan says Mayor Nadine Taylor

Roading is the biggest item of Council expenditure at around 20 per cent, including maintenance, renewals and improvements to roads, footpaths, bridges and drainage. The plan proposes increasing this funding by \$27.5M over the next three years. For more details on all the key projects outlined in the Long Term Plan go to: <https://links.marlborough.govt.nz/LTP-Key-Projects> You can have your say and make a submission from 4 April to 6 May. There will be public meetings and hearings - further information will be made available.



Students try their hand at growing kūmara



Bohally Intermediate School students have planted a kūmara garden which they hope will feed their classmates and teachers at their annual hāngī.

The initiative was one of many undertaken by students as part of Council's Kids' Edible Gardens programme, led by Tracy Holdaway, programme facilitator for Bohally.

Toward the end of last year, Tracy and the students joined forces with Reuben Molnar from Te Whatu Ora, who had previously worked with Marlborough Boys' College students growing kūmara with great success, harvesting 90 kilograms from their plot. Kids' Edible Gardens Programme Coordinator Angela Wentworth said the Bohally students were interested to hear how the students had used Māori Mātauranga throughout the process.

With guidance from Reuben, the kids planted their tipu, or sprouts, when the maramataka, or lunar calendar, indicated it was a good time for growth. They planted the tipu in a 'J' shape, running shoots gently upward to sit above the soil. Once planting was complete, the students sung waiata to the tipu, encouraging them to grow strong. Last month, Angela and 15 Kids' Edible Gardens Facilitators visited students at the school, where they talked them through the process and how it turned out.

The facilitators were keen to learn about what the students had done, with the aim of replicating the process in their own school gardens. "While the summer has not produced the amount of growth they had hoped for, now they are back at school, watering will be stepped up," Angela said. "The students are hoping all the effort and care they put into the kūmara crop will pay off with an abundant harvest for their hāngī." For more information go to www.marlborough.govt.nz/environment/environmental-education/school-education-programmes/kids-edible-gardens

Newest citizens celebrated



Mayor Nadine Taylor with Marlborough's newest citizens

Twenty-four citizens from seven countries were welcomed to Marlborough on 1 March.

Countries represented were the Philippines, Wales, UK, India, Thailand, Brazil and China. A highlight of March's citizenship ceremony was the Welsh candidate wearing his Wales rugby jersey to honour his roots.

With 1 March being St David's Day, the patron saint of Wales, it was thoroughly appropriate. Mayor Taylor told the group they would all now enjoy the rights and freedoms of native-born New Zealanders.

"Your decision to apply for citizenship was no doubt made after very careful consideration and is a commitment to your future," she said. "It is not a rejection of your past but in future your first loyalty will be to New Zealand."