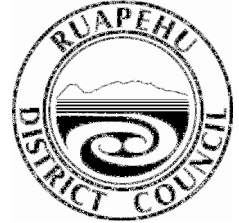


MEDIA RELEASE

Ruapehu District Council



Contact: Paul Wheatcroft, Communications Manager, 027 24 33 064

Date: Friday 20 May 2011.

DRAFT EAP 2011-12 MOST SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO DATE

The volume of public submissions received on Ruapehu District Council's (RDC) 2011-12 draft Exceptions Annual Plan (EAP) has been the most successful since the Long Term Plan (LTP) model was introduced.

RDC Team Leader Strategic Development, Pauline Welch, said that by the close off of the four week consultation period council had received submissions from 194 individual submitters covering around 150 different topics.

"Council is really pleased with both the quantity and quality of the submissions received," she said.

"The public submissions are a critically important part of council's annual planning process and provide one of the best opportunities for Ruapehu residents and ratepayers to influence the work that council plans to do."

Ms Welch said that the greatest numbers of submissions were received on; funding for district tourism and Visit Ruapehu (70), rating of visitor accommodation (48), fluoridation in Taumarunui's water supply (34), freedom camping (26), district tourism signage (26) and land transport (21).

"The overwhelming number of submissions on tourism supported council increasing funding for district tourism and Visit Ruapehu," she said.

"The importance of tourism to Ruapehu's economy continues to increase year-on-year and this has clearly been recognised."

"Submissions received on the rating of visitor accommodation issue highlighted that there was probably some confusion about what impact any change to the rating of rented holiday homes would have."

"This issue is part of the Revenue and Financing Review with council only seeking public comment at this stage as part of this draft EAP consultation and there are no current changes to the way holiday homes are rated planned."

Ms Welch noted that the Taumarunui fluoridation and Freedom Camping issues were very evenly split with approximately the same number of submitters for the issue as against it.

"The other two issues which attracted significant submissions was a call for increased signage (26) especially for visitors to the district and 21 submissions on various land transport issues," she said.

"In addition to these issues there was a range of other submissions received on individual topics which included; animal control, rates, cycle ways, stormwater and water, communications, libraries free internet access, smoke free parks and reserves and the call for a youth office in Raetihi."

Ms Welch commented that council was really pleased to have so many people engaging with the council's planning process.

"Council's new website which provides the ability to put in a submission quickly and easily on-line proved very popular with around half of all submissions received this way," she said.

"The next stage of the process is the Hearings which allows submitters to speak in support of their submission to the elected members if they chose to do so."

"Sixty submitters have chosen to support their submission with a presentation which will take place in Ohakune and Taumarunui over the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of June prior to council deliberations."

"Adoption of the Exceptions Annual Plan 2011-12 is scheduled for council's meeting on 28 June."

DAVID HAMMOND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CJH : PRW