

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Firstly, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support for me as Mayor of Upper Hutt City. We will continue to work together to make Upper Hutt City a place we all are very proud of. While we work through the Annual Plan I can assure you I am very aware that we will continue to be financially prudent and continue to deliver benefits to all citizens.

Since becoming Mayor, one of the key documents that we have produced is our Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). The LTCCP is designed to plan out our new and ongoing projects and keep the community informed of all the proposed expenses over the next ten years. This sustainable progression planning means there are no surprises. It means that we prioritise spending so that we can upgrade assets at the most economically efficient moment in time and it means we have to make some hard decisions on which assets and projects are the most important, affordable and beneficial to the wider community.

In saying that, it is with pleasure that I can say again this year that the rates increase in the Annual Plan is lower than originally forecast in the LTCCP. This is through making some hard calls and being conscious of the implications financially in the form of rates to people.

You will see that we have placed a strong focus on continuing to do the 'Basics' well – i.e. keeping the city's roads, water and wastewater services working well and upgrading items such as footpaths, streetlights and signage.

In this Annual Plan there are some variations from the LTCCP. Most significantly, as part of our normal rates review cycle, we have reviewed the rating system. The main amendment is a result of the revaluation of the city's properties in late 2007. The revaluation created distortions amongst the different rate paying groups (residential, business, utility and rural). Hence, we have adjusted the differential rating factors so that these groups generally continue to pay a similar share of the rates as allocated in 2007/08. Please turn overleaf for further details.

Another variation from the LTCCP relates to keeping one of our regionally significant assets, H<sup>2</sup>O Xstream, of a high quality. H<sup>2</sup>O Xstream will be closed for approximately three months to undergo a major renovation during the 2008/09 year. Upgrades such as retiling, painting, plant work, and cleaning will take place. Unfortunately, we must replace the tiles sooner than expected. We must do this work and there is no easy option but to close for three months to do it. When the facility is reopened I hope you will all return with eagerness.

Implementation of the Urban Growth Strategy is now underway. The key projects for the 2008/09 year include: a review of our valuable green ridgeline from Silverstream Spur to Mt Marua, feasibility planning for the Maymorn and AgResearch sites and a review of Council's tree protection measures.

On a separate matter, following public consultation, Upper Hutt's Community Outcomes have been revised.

In closing, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this summary of the Annual Plan and for your contributions to how we can better shape Upper Hutt. Your input is always greatly appreciated – to develop Upper Hutt the way we all want it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne Guppy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Wayne Guppy**  
MAYOR