



“There are decades when nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen” said Lenin of the October Revolution. He could well have been referring to the past six weeks. We have all been rocked by an unforeseen event that will change New Zealand and the Mackenzie District for many years to come.

Transmission numbers in the District have been amongst the lowest in New Zealand and those small numbers stand as a testament to the commitment of our communities who took the advice seriously and stepped up as part of ‘Team Five Million’. Undoubtedly the lives of some in our communities have been saved and of that you should be proud.

But that success has come at a cost – and we must now turn our focus to ensuring that those who have suffered for the greater good are supported to the best of our ability.

Our community organisations, mainly volunteers, who work year-round in the background to provide a range of support services to those in need have once again stepped up, and supported by local Civil Defence staff, have worked tirelessly and selflessly to ensure that those in need are able to access appropriate help. We take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the community and pay tribute to the vital work you continue to do.

We know the resilience of the people of the Mackenzie, and so have been encouraged – but not surprised – that after absorbing the initial shock, our small businesses have begun to get together, share experiences and adjust their products and offering in anticipation of a changed market. You can help them by supporting local businesses where possible – our new website www.buylocalsc.nz allows you to search for local businesses by type or location.

There is no silver bullet that will address the challenges we face. We are committed to working more closely than ever with our communities, local businesses and our partners – in particular ECAN, DOC and Iwi – to deliver a range of measures which will ensure the District recovers as fast as possible.

We continue to work in partnership with Christchurch NZ and the South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce – both of whom are funded by Mackenzie District Council to provide support to local businesses.

In this edition we’ve included our Economic & Community Recovery Action Plan recently approved by Councillors. It outlines a range of measures that Council will work on to assist recovery in the short, medium and longer term and signals the start of a process of engagement with the community, key stakeholders and partner agencies to ensure that recovery lies at the heart of our individual and collective plans for the future.

We are close to finalising our annual plan for activity in the

coming 2020/2021 financial year, and it is under review to ensure it aligns with our recovery goals. We will share this with you in June. Our Long Term Plan – which lays out activity for the next ten years – is due for revision next year, and as work gets underway later this year we will be asking for your thoughts and input.

Many of you have observed that the border closure gives us a unique opportunity to re-consider the future of tourism in the District – and ensure we have a development framework in place that has allows for an appropriate balance between our communities, the environment and economic prosperity. We are committed to making the most of that opportunity and the current District Plan is the tool to deliver this. Work on the current review is well under way and staff have made significant progress over the six weeks of lockdown. We will be asking for further input from our communities, businesses and partners in the coming weeks.

We are committed to full recovery as soon as possible. We value your input, welcome your views, and will keep you informed of the progress we’re making – and know we can count on your support and understanding as we embark together on the journey to recovery.

E ora ngātahi ana! Together we thrive!

Graham Smith , Mayor and Suzette van Aswegen, Chief Executive Officer, Mackenzie District Council.



Picture taken pre-COVID-19



From the Mayor's desktop...

Great news that we are moving to Alert level 2 which will allow many more of our businesses to open.

I have had so many Zoom meetings this last month that I am zoomed out. So many experts with hypothetical views and media often just looking for sensationalism. But we must not respond in a knee-jerk manner and we will make sure our response is considered and appropriate as we work on our Recovery Action Plan.

I am proud of the way our support networks in Twizel, Mt Cook, Tekapo, Fairlie and rurally, have responded to the needs of their communities. Those volunteers that help our communities stay strong and safe have been amazing. While we are under a State of Emergency the Emergency Operations Centre remains active and Phill with his team continue to ensure that welfare needs in our communities are met.

My thanks to both Councillors and Staff. Staff have been committed not only to maintaining all essential services but have all been working from home on the Annual Plan, District Plan and more. Our CEO Suzette has had the additional pressure of managing our response to COVID-19, ensuring processes are in place to manage essential services, and leading and managing the team remotely.

On 12th May we had our first virtual Council meeting. Staff have worked hard to develop an excellent program of actions to support and strengthen Mackenzie District Communities as we recover from the impact of COVID-19. One thing I am very clear on, is the need for a united front. It is good to see the formation of a Mackenzie Tourism Industry group who will bring a unified voice to represent the industry.

South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce under contract to MDC has provided excellent advice and assistance to local businesses. MDC also works in partnership with Christchurch NZ and we will shortly be rolling out an 'Legendary Mackenzie' advertising campaign to promote the District to domestic tourists while international borders are closed.

The need to understand and shape the future is important and work on the 'Destination Mackenzie' project funded by Provincial Growth Fund is underway. This is a joint study with local Rūnanga and our partners at DOC, LINZ, NZTA and MBIE. This study will help determine how we balance the needs of the environment and our communities, while allowing for economic growth over for the next 30 to 50 years.

The final instalment for rates for this financial year are due soon. They are vital because they pay for all our local services—water, roading and much more.

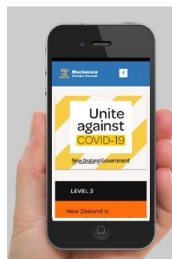
We appreciate that some have experienced hardship and we have policies in place to allow us to help. If you will have difficulty paying your rates please reach out to us - you can discuss the options in confidence by calling us on (03) 685 9010 during office hours.

We are all fortunate to live in Mackenzie. Our mountains, lakes, scenery and dark sky remain in all their glory. We are all in this together and I am confident that as a District we will adapt and continue to prosper, just as generations before us have done.

Be patient, mind the rules, stay safe, and enjoy and support your local businesses.

I wish you and your families all the best as our lives begin to return to some kind of new-normal.

Mayor Graham.



New MDC Apps: All the information you need from Council and Government in one place – right on your mobile device.

We've created two apps to help you keep abreast of all the COVID-19 information from both Council and the Government. They're designed to work on mobile devices but you can also view on a computer.

Once we settle into Level 2 we'll be moving the focus away from COVID-19 and using the apps to share information and the recovery effort and Council activity in general.

The business app has information more relevant to business owners. We plan to expand the functionality over time so you can access more Council services directly from your phone.

There are links to both apps on our website, or you can enter the address below into your browser:

www.mobile.mackenzie.govt.nz

www.business.mackenzie.govt.nz

Android users will be prompted to save the link to their home screen. IOS users click 'share' then 'add to home screen'.

Local Welfare Helpline: 0800 24 24 11

This number is available 9am to 5pm, seven days a week for people who feel vulnerable and have no alternative means of accessing essential services such as food and medicine. Please pass this number on to anyone you think needs it.



Mackenzie District Council COVID19 Economic & Community Recovery Action Plan



A summary of the actions Mackenzie District Council will undertake as we work with our communities, key stakeholders and partner agencies to recover from the impact of COVID-19 whilst ensuring we balance the needs of the environment, the needs of our communities, and the need for appropriate economic growth and development.

NOW—Our Immediate Response

Leading Civil Defence in the Mackenzie District to ensure comprehensive local welfare support

Council is leading a local Civil Defence response from our activated Emergency Operations Centre and is coordinating with Canterbury Civil Defence and Emergency Management, and other agencies to ensure our community is empowered to access the support they need.

Refunding consent fees

Full refunds will be offered to anyone who wants to cancel a building consent or resource consent application in progress that was lodged after March 1st 2020.

Create local jobs with local projects

Council are investigating bringing forward or increasing parts of the District's capital investment programme to stimulate local business and create jobs. This includes applying for additional funding through government economic stimulus packages.

Establish a community-led business development forum

Council would facilitate establishing a Mackenzie Economic Recovery Advisory Group inviting key business and community stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of a plan to rebuild and grow the local Mackenzie District economy.

Rates Remission and Rates Postponement Policies

Council continue to manage requests for rates postponement and remission guided by the Rates Remission and Rates Postponement Policies. These allow both business and residential ratepayers experiencing financial hardship to apply for remission of rates penalties or postponement of rates payment.

Fast-track (10-working-day target) Resource Consent Process

For non-notified resource consent applications that would generate employment.

Financial contributions deferral

To allow developers to defer contribution payments until

works reach a certain stage or, for example sub-divided properties are available to the market. Working flexibly with developers on payment plans and delivery of underlying infrastructure.

Deliver building inspections remotely

Using video technology to speed consent process, keep staff, builders and the public safe - and reduce costs.

Improving Procurement Policy

Reinforce support for local businesses with a specific mandate to allow consideration of bids from local businesses to provide Council services with up to a 15% higher price than proposals from suppliers outside the district.

Urgent revision of tourism marketing

Working with our Regional Tourism Organisation, Christchurch NZ, to finalise an immediate tourism marketing response plan.

Helping businesses

Ramp up business and financial support services for Mackenzie businesses via South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce.

Engage Department of Conservation

Working with one of our biggest visitor services providers to stay aligned with impact responses. DoC is reviewing options to help businesses that operate from public conservation land.

Using the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to lobby for support

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum has been meeting weekly since mid-March and will continue to advocate for Mackenzie District interests and lobby for increased support and recognition from central agencies.

Launch Mackenzie Open For Business website

In partnership with Aoraki Development, Council to develop and launch a self-service website for Mackenzie businesses to let the community know who's open, what services and available and how to interact with them.

NEXT THREE MONTHS — Short/Medium Term Recovery

Waiving of late rates payment penalties

The option to waive or reduce late payment fees help for residents and business suffering extreme hardship will be included in the revised annual plan.

Incorporate a community recovery lens in our grant funding policy

Council will look to prioritise grant applications which contribute to community recovery from the effects of COVID-

Bringing forward 3 Waters and Roading projects

Completing a review of capital works and scheduled maintenance to bring work forward and to investigate alternative funding options. Currently focus is on township footpath improvements and water infrastructure maintenance.

Examine policies and processes to ensure Council can assist ratepayers who are experiencing financial hardship

Council will examine ways in which it can soften the financial impact felt by our community through a proactive and more lenient approach in the application of our existing rates payment policies and development of new policies identified.

Review regulatory and compliance framework to develop fast-track processes

To help alleviate hardship and provide opportunities to provide economic stimulus. Options under consideration are to reduce or defer Liquor/Health licensing fees for impacted businesses and to review changes to other fees for the potential to reduce hardship.

Mackenzie Recovery Forum underway

Working in conjunction with Council and the recovery programme the forum will sponsor, assess and assist business initiatives to get under way. Recruiting an Economic Development Manager within Council to develop and drive a strategy in co-ordination with district stakeholders.

Commercial rent relief

Businesses leasing Council-owned properties will, on a case-by-case basis, be able to apply for commercial rent relief if trading is COVID19-related impacted.

Community Development

Potentially employing a Community Development Manager and investigating ways to supplement the income of the community organisations in the district to further support community development initiatives.

SIX MONTHS PLUS— Long Term Recovery

Incorporate Social Development into Council's operations and capital programme

Additional emphasis will be given to the full range of social development, including local and iwi employment, contracting and business opportunities in our current and future capital works programme.

Long Term Plan Review 2021-2031

Informed by new economic and social assumptions as council and community evolve in the post-COVID world.

Destination Mackenzie

A study to determine a sustainable pathway for the district, including a tourism strategy, financial modelling, input-output analysis & identification of large infrastructure projects with the aim of applying for further funding & considering joint ventures to enable its delivery and operation.

Economic Development Strategy

Recruitment of an Economic Development Manager and the establishment of the Mackenzie Business Recovery Forum and long-term strategy will be developed in consultation with the community and business stakeholders to diversify our local economy and strengthen sustainable communities.

Tourism Management Strategy

We will establish clear principles to guide the future for Mackenzie tourism, aligning with a New Zealand Tourism Strategy & with guidance from the Destination Mackenzie project, local tourism businesses and our visitor marketing partners.

District Plan Review

Review Council's existing District Plan with a focus on long term sustainable resource management, including analysis of housing diversity, population projections & spatial planning.

Sustainable Infrastructure Strategy

Via the Long Term Plan ensure that the infrastructure strategy is aligned with positive environmental practice & focuses on delivering strong local economies & building vibrant communities .

Mackenzie Basin Alignment

Supporting projects identified through this partnership with LINZ, DOC, Waitaki District Council and ECAN.

Investigate expanding forestry portfolio

Investigate the purchasing of land within the District to convert into forestry to create work within the district, foster supporting industries and allow MDC to become carbon neutral as a council and possibly as a District.



May 2020

Dear Ratepayer,

Enclosed with the latest edition of the Mackenzie Messenger is instalment 4 of your rates for the 2019/2020 year, due for payment by Wednesday 20 June 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world dramatically and Council business is no exception. Councils provide key services essential to keeping people healthy and safe and allowing our communities and economy to function.

Your rates ensure essential roading maintenance and repairs are made and emergency services (Civil Defence) are operational. Urban households have safe drinking water, the wastewater treatment system keeps operating, rubbish is collected, burials can take place, and our reserves and recreation facilities are available for people to exercise safely.

We appreciate many in our community are experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19, but it is important you do not stop paying your rates or cancel your direct debit. If rates are not paid our recovery will be slower, more painful, and more expensive in future years.

You can pay rates via online banking or on our website using a credit or debit card. Cheques can be posted to Mackenzie District Council, PO Box 52, Main Street, Fairlie, 7949. At the time of writing we are unsure when our offices will reopen to the public so if you need help with making a payment please contact us on (03) 685 9010.

Direct debit rate payments will continue to be processed as scheduled. If this is an issue, please contact our rates department at least two days before the scheduled payment date. If you are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay in full by 20 June 2020, please contact us before that date.

Council can consider postponing your rates due to financial hardship, but you must contact us to discuss this, and late payment penalties will not apply if a payment arrangement has been agreed. You can contact us in confidence by email at rates@mackenzie.govt.nz, or by calling us on (03) 685 9010.

The Government has provided a number of additional resources to help individuals and businesses whose income has been impacted by the COVID19 crisis. You can find links to the various support schemes on our website: www.mackenzie.govt.nz.

Thank you for all you have done over the last six weeks to keep our communities safe.

Kind regards,

Suzette van Aswegen.

Chief Executive, Mackenzie District Council