



At the time of writing this column for the last edition of the Messenger, we were poised to exit lockdown. Three months on we are back at Level 2—and we expect that change will be the new normal for some time to come.

New Zealand is now focused on recovery, but the virus continues to spread rapidly elsewhere. COVID-19 is changing our world—and we must plan to ensure that the change is for the better.

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” said Einstein.

To deliver change we must plan for change, and to plan effectively we must have clear objectives informed by well thought out and defined strategies. To develop strategies we need to think: about who we are and who we want to be; about what is important to our communities; about where we are and where we want to be.

In this edition we’ve outlined the major strategic projects we’re currently working on. The aim is to explain what each project is designed to deliver. We will use future editions of this newsletter to update you on our progress.

Since lockdown ended, the District has benefitted from high levels of domestic tourism, with spending significantly up when compared to June and July last year. Welfare needs are manageable and our communities are active and rebounding with activities and events planned for the remainder of the year and into 2021.

We must, however, avoid complacency. Government wage subsidies and other business support initiatives will come to an end. Domestic tourism may slow and international travel increasingly looks to be some way off. A second wave of community transmission is now a reality. We hope for the best, but should prepare for the worst.

Council therefore continues to plan for longer term recovery. This includes stimulating economic diversity and resilience; fostering enabled, supported and empowered communities; and ensuring that recovery outcomes are built into our strategic planning processes across all Council functions.

A number of strategic programs and initiatives are currently underway. While the majority were instigated pre-COVID, we need to ensure that they are aligned with the changes the District faces as we work to ensure our long term recovery and resilience.

We will ensure that all of these initiatives are aligned with our vision and values, and we are committed to ensuring that opportunities for community and stakeholder input are, whenever possible, built into these processes by design. Our ‘Let’s Talk | Kōrero Mai’ website is designed to facilitate this (more details on page 4).

To deliver a framework for future growth and resilience in a post-COVID environment we must think, plan and act differently. Change is challenging—but it presents an exciting opportunity for us to work together to understand what really matters to us as a community—and to ensure future spending and activity is aligned with that objective.

We thank you for the contribution you’ve already made to those discussions—and look forward to working with you as we work to make our collective vision a reality.

E ora ngātahi ana! Together we thrive!

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



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## From the Mayor's desktop...

The cows are calving and spring is on the way. Winter has been kind to farming with good feed utilization but we need some mild rain, especially on the eastern side.

It was great to see good snow and activity on our ski slopes during the holidays. Data shows a 42.5% increase in visitors over the same period last year. Thanks to the support of New Zealand, Mackenzie tourism has fared better than anticipated since lockdown. Businesses (who previously relied on 70% overseas visitors) have been innovative and pivoted to the new market. Wage subsidies, loans and Government funding for strategic assets have softened the blow.

Government announced reform of the 3 waters infrastructure (drinking, waste and storm water) which

will have an impact on all Councils. Government sees a benefit to aggregation of services to improve standards and compliance. Bigger is not always better or more efficient, and I have concerns around rural water schemes. We will look hard at Government proposals.

We've received funding to help establish employment in the District from the Mayoral Taskforce for Jobs fund, and we have received \$400k from Govt. to assist with marketing to the domestic tourism market.

Thanks to staff who have helped with Provincial Growth Fund applications. I am excited Destination Mackenzie project is underway and especially note the strong partnership with local Rūnanga.

We live in a time of uncertainty—and it is important that we continue to do what Mackenzie does so well in supporting our communities. We are so lucky to be able to breathe the fresh air, view our mountains and enjoy the ever changing vista!

*Mayor Graham*

## Council's Strategic Objectives

Councillors have identified a number of strategic priorities for the District and our strategic planning incorporates these themes to ensure we deliver outcomes that support these objectives.

Key Outcomes:

- Treasured Environment
- Sustainable Communities
- Thriving Economy
- Diverse District

- Environmental sustainability
- Managing tourism
- Strengthening communities
- Affordable housing
- Iwi and partner relationships
- Funding constraints

Staff will ensure that plans and activities both reflect these desired outcomes, and seek to address the main issues facing the district.

## COVID-19 Recovery

Mackenzie District Council is committed to working with our communities, key stakeholders and partner agencies to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

We are in the process of establishing a working party alongside our Iwi partners, with representatives from business, the community, and other relevant stakeholder groups. This group will help us understand and define the issues and challenges that require action; identify solutions and opportunities; and assist with delivery of our recovery vision: the Mackenzie Community will be the most engaged, resilient and flourishing community in New Zealand.

Projections suggest that recovery from the impact of COVID will take years and this is therefore a long term initiative.

The initial objectives are to:

- facilitate, coordinate, empower and enable the timely implementation of the actions of the MDC COVID-19 Economic and Community Recovery Action Plan .
- facilitate the establishment of a community-led Community Recovery Advisory Group.
- facilitate, monitor and report to the Executive Leadership Team and Council on the progress of the implementation of the Recovery Action Plan.
- ensure the four well beings (Social, Economic, Environment and Cultural) are considered.

We'll provide an update in the next edition on the progress made to date.

## Te Manahuna Ki Uta / Destination Mackenzie Project

The Te Manahuna Ki Uta/Destination Mackenzie project will develop a Destination Management Plan for the Te Manahuna/Mackenzie District as part of a wider tourism journey that includes Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, the upper Waitaki Valley and the Lindis Pass.

The Plan will explore options to unlock and enable sustainable growth and resilience for the District with a 100 year vision and a planning horizon of 30-50 years.

Destination Management involves planning a coordinated management approach across aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, including visitors, residents, business, industry and Iwi.

The intention is to create sustainable growth and resilience for the benefit of the local economy including:

- Environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes.
- Coordination of "the system" across government, Mana Whenua, partners, visitors.

- A Plan that has vision and strategy that reflects Mana Whenua and stakeholders' aspirations,
- Alignment between national, regional and local tourism frameworks,
- A commitment to Kaitiakitanga and environmental stewardship as part of a sustainable approach to tourism development.

The project, led by Mackenzie District Council and funded by the Ministry for Business, Innovation & Employment, is a collaboration between MDC, Waitaki District Council, DOC, LINZ, Iwi, NZTA, MBIE and the Mackenzie Development Group.

Terms of reference for the working party and scope of work have been agreed. Tenders for an appropriate consultant to manage the process have recently closed and more details on the process will be provided later in the year.

We fully intend to undertake appropriate levels of engagement with our communities and stakeholders throughout the project.

## District Plan Review

The Mackenzie District Council is in the process of reviewing the District Plan. The review will help shape how future growth in the District can occur. There are a range of complex zoning issues and other unintended effects of zoning happening across the District, and the review will aim to rationalise and simplify these. The Spatial Planning project is a key piece of this work, running alongside the review and informing decisions made on how growth will occur in the District.

The Mackenzie Spatial Plans will create a 30-year vision of what the future could look like in Fairlie, Tekapo (Takapō) and Twizel. The project will ensure our main townships are maintained as places for people, ensuring growth can occur in a way that benefits the local community and improves where we live. They will also offer a concept plan for the smaller settlements of Burkes Pass, Kimbell and Albury.

Over the past month, two rounds of community workshops have been held with community members

and council officers to help outline and understand the problems and opportunities facing each township, as well as plan for what the future might look like given current growth projections and capacity constraints.

An initial round of workshops were held in early July to develop Investment Logic Maps (ILMs) for the main townships of Fairlie, Tekapo (Takapō) and Twizel. An ILM is a NZ Treasury supported investment tool that aims to communicate the complete investment story on a single page using language and concepts that are understandable to anyone.

Following these workshops, a second round of workshops were held with the smaller townships of Burkes Pass, Kimbell and Albury, as well as more detailed optioneering and planning workshops in the main townships.

Please visit [letstalk.mackenzie.govt](http://letstalk.mackenzie.govt) to view the latest information, ask questions, and share your feedback on the project.

## Long Term Plan

The long-term plan (LTP) is the key planning tool for councils.

Its purpose is to:

- Describe the council's activities and the community outcomes it aims to achieve.
- Provide integrated decision-making and coordination of the resources, as set out in section 93 (6)(c) of the Act.
- Provide a long-term focus.
- Show accountability to the community.
- Provide an opportunity for participation by the public in council decision-making processes.

The Long Term Plan must include information on activities, goods or services provided by a council, and specific funding and financial management policies and information.

LTPs outline all things a council does and how they fit together. They show what will be done over the plan's 10 year period, why the council is doing things and their costs.

People can express their views on the LTPs when they are reviewed every three years. In addition as part of their LTP development process, councils may talk with other parties about how they can help promote identified local outcomes in which those parties have an interest.

We'll be undertaking extensive consultation with our communities as part of the process, and will provide further details of how to get involved.

Information will be posted on our engagement website [letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz](http://letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz) and you'll be able to have your input there once the consultation process is underway.

## Agency Alignment Program

This internal program aims to ensure that all agencies working within the Mackenzie Basin work together effectively to undertake their statutory functions.

The regulatory framework must be aligned to shared values and a shared vision, and be easier for stakeholders to understand and navigate.

We believe this will lead to improved environmental and social outcomes through the delivery of core work.

Program values:

- Transparency - We communicate openly and share information.
- Respect - We respect agency statutory independence, existing agreements and partnerships.
- People - We work alongside the community, farmers, partners and stakeholder groups to achieve shared objectives that benefit Mackenzie

## Let's Talk | Kōrero Mai

Our new engagement website has been designed to help Mackenzie District Council facilitate both the sharing of information with our communities, and to enable increased community involvement in the project planning process.

One of our key objectives over the coming months is to build

stronger working relationships with the communities we serve. We believe this will lead to more informed decision-making and better outcomes for our communities.

You can visit the website at [letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz](http://letstalk.mackenzie.govt.nz) or via the link on the Council website.

## Assistance for ratepayers

We understand that some ratepayers are suffering financial hardship due to the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. A reminder that we have policies in place to

assist. If you need help or advice, please call us in confidence on 0800 685 9010 to discuss the options available. We're here to help.