

# Central Link

## He karere tā te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Whakaahurangi News from the Stratford District Council

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TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE O  
**WHAKAAHURANGI**  
**STRATFORD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## Margaret at Wai o Rua takes out national swim school title!

Wai o Rua - Stratford Aquatic Centre is proud to announce that Margaret Higgison, has received an AUSTSWIM 2025 Award of Excellence for her outstanding mahi teaching adults to swim.

Margaret's dedication, passion, and commitment to empowering adults as they take the plunge into swimming is inspirational.

Our congratulations to Stratford's very own New Zealand Adults Teacher of the Year!



## Elected Members thanked for their service

Last week was the final meeting of Council before the new term begins, and we farewelled four Elected Members who chose not to re-stand for Council.

Councillor John Sandford (30 years), Councillor Vaughan Jones (6 years), Councillor Clive Tongaawhikau (3 years) and Deputy Mayor Min McKay (6 years on Council and 3 as Deputy Mayor).

Our thanks to these Elected Members for their huge commitment to the district. Being on Council takes up a lot of time and energy and this can often come with sacrifices to lifestyles, work and family.

We wish them all the best for the future and we know that their passion for a thriving Stratford district won't stop here.

## Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund closes soon

Apply for funding to help your youth sports teams get to local competitions! Find out more and apply at [Stratford.govt.nz/RTF](http://Stratford.govt.nz/RTF)

Applications close on Friday 17 October.

## Special votes to be the decider in close election race

Preliminary Results are in for Stratford district's local elections, with only special votes yet to be counted and verified.

With just 219 votes separating incumbent mayor Neil Volzke from challenger Jono Erwood, we'll wait for special votes to be counted and final results to be released before the mayoralty is confirmed.

It's a similar story in both the Māori Ward and Urban Ward, where final results could still shift candidate rankings.

## Preliminary Results

### Mayor - 1 seat

- **VOLZKE, Neil, 1892 votes, Rank 1**
- ERWOOD, Jono, 1673 votes

### Rural Ward - 4 seats - elected unopposed

- **BECK, Steve**
- **BOYDE, Grant**
- **HARRIS, Amanda Kay**
- **SEXTUS, Katherine**

### Māori Ward - 1 seat

- **CHADWICK, David Kimball Kinane, 47 votes, Rank 1**
- HEMOPO, Karley, 42 votes
- HADDON, Hemi, 34 votes

### Māori Ward Referendum

- **I vote to REMOVE Māori wards, 2136 votes, Rank 1**
- I vote to KEEP Māori wards, 1279 votes

However, the Māori Ward referendum result is conclusive: 2136 votes to remove the ward, and 1279 to keep it.

Final Results are expected on Friday 17 October, and will be available online at [Stratford.govt.nz/ElectionResults](http://Stratford.govt.nz/ElectionResults)

### Be amongst the first to know

Download the free Antenno app to get election result updates straight to your device!

### Urban Ward - 6 seats

- **ERWOOD, Jono, 1438 votes, Rank 1**
- **DUDLEY, Annette, 1360 votes, Rank 2**
- **BEST, Josh, 1214 votes, Rank 3**
- **WATT, Mathew, 1013 votes, Rank 4**
- **HALL, Ellen Elizabeth, 1003 votes, Rank 5**
- **BERTIE, Jaimie, 999 votes, Rank 6**
- GERNHOEFER, Brendon Christopher, 970 votes
- PROCTER, Mike, 577 votes
- GOOCH, Laurie, 498 votes
- TOLLAND, Alan Ross, 477 votes
- JONES, Brad Colin, 447 votes
- MCNAMARA, Peter, 302 votes



## Thank you to all our candidates and voters!

Stratford district had 52.6% of eligible voters participate in our local elections. While we're yet to see the total voter turnout statistics across all councils, we already know this is an excellent result. Mahi tika ana koutou! Well done everyone.

It takes real courage and commitment to run for council, and that act alone shows how much our candidates care about this community.

SDC Chief Executive Sven Hanne says, "We know our candidates will continue to support their communities and help make Stratford a great place to live, regardless of whether they're elected to Council or not. That's just the kind of people they are, and we're incredibly grateful to each of them for stepping up and being part of the democratic process."

## King Edward Park once again features in Taranaki Garden Festival

Stratford's King Edward Park is a hidden gem in Taranaki, and we're always thrilled to showcase it to visitors while highlighting everything our district has to offer. That's why we're excited to announce that the park will once again be featured in the Taranaki Garden Festival, running from 31 October to 9 November 2025.

This year, King Edward Park will also be the venue for two outdoor festival experiences. Find out more about the following events at [GardenFestNZ.co.nz](http://GardenFestNZ.co.nz)

**La Mer in the Gardens, 1pm Saturday 1 November, FREE:** Bring a picnic and enjoy French café-style music alongside the Tūi.

**Yoga in the Garden with Stacie Suter, 10.30am Saturday 8 November, \$25pp:** Join dedicated wellness teacher Stacie for 60 minutes of slow yoga flow, meditation, and sound healing. Book via the festival's website.



**Library & Visitor Information Centre**  
Phone 06 765 5403

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5pm  
Saturday: 9am – 1pm  
Sunday & Public Holidays: Closed

**Stratford Transfer Station**  
Phone 06 765 8500

Monday: 12pm – 5pm  
Thursday: 10am – 1pm  
Friday – Sunday: 12pm – 5pm

**Wai o Rua - Stratford Aquatic Centre**  
Phone 06 765 6275

Monday – Friday: 6am – 6.30pm  
Saturday: 7am – 5pm  
Sunday & Public Holidays:  
10am – 5pm

**Glockenspiel**  
Performs daily at 10am, 1pm, 3pm, and 7pm

15 October 2025