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

Shining a light on our local superstars

Have you downloaded the free Antenno App yet? It's a handy way to stay up to date and connect with Council. Learn more: **Stratford.govt.nz/Antenno**

Congratulations to our 2026 Citizen Award recipients

Stratford District Council is proud to announce the recipients of the 2026 Stratford District Citizen Awards, five people whose energy, care and sheer commitment to this place are exactly what makes Stratford, Stratford.

Lily Single and Hunta Ngatai-Northcott will receive Youth Citizen Awards, Vanessa Kennedy and Darleena Christie will receive Citizen Awards, and Miranda Wells will receive the Outstanding Citizen Award.

District Mayor Neil Volzke says this year's recipients are a reminder of what already makes the district strong.

"What stands out to me about this year's group is how many of them are actively supporting the next generation, from coaching and organising events for connection, to ensuring our environment is being looked after for the future. That's not a one-off contribution; that's people making sure Stratford keeps producing people like them."

"These are people who help make Stratford a great place to live, work and play," says Neil.

The Stratford District Council Citizen Awards formally recognise individuals who give their time and energy to the Stratford community, showing leadership, inspiration or devotion to a cause, and in doing so contributing positively to the wellbeing of our district and the people who live here.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony on Tuesday 4 August, 5.30pm.

To learn more about our Citizen Award recipients, visit Stratford.govt.nz/CitizenAwards

Find your people!

Are you looking for community organisations, or local clubs or groups to join?

Our online community directory brings them all together in one handy place for you to search.

Head to our online Community Directory to find your new crew and learn more about the organisations doing awesome mahi in our community.

If your club, group, or community organisation isn't listed, please email Anna Crane on ACrane@stratford.govt.nz so we can see our Community Directory grow!

Start your search at: Stratford.govt.nz/CommunityDirectory

Ngā mihi nui, thank you to everyone who celebrated Puanga mā Matariki with us this year.

Puanga

We want to acknowledge Ngāruahine Iwi Health Services as co-delivery partner for Puanganui-o-te-Rangi, Whakaahurangi Marae and the Māori Women's Welfare League as partners in delivering workshops and activations across the Puanga programme, and thank Toi Foundation and Taranaki Electricity Trust for funding support that enables this year's celebrations.

633 people complete our Simplifying Local Government community survey - thank you!

Over the last month we've asked our community to share their views on the future of Local Government in Taranaki. We wanted to know what matters most to our community, what the opportunities and concerns for reform are, and whether there was interest in Taranaki having one unitary council or two unitary councils.

We're grateful to everyone who took the time to complete this survey, and to the people who came to our Public Forum to speak directly with Elected Members on the topic.

We're working under a very short timeframe set by central Government and your feedback is helping shape Stratford's voice in one of the most significant local government reform programmes we have seen in decades.

Please know that there will be more in-depth consultation as part of the next phase of this reform programme as we work through the detail of a proposal.

The next key milestone in the journey is the submission of an outline proposal to Government by 9 August 2026.

We will continue to keep you informed as this work progresses. Please keep an eye on future opportunities to engage at YourSay.Stratford.govt.nz

Survey responses

The responses on our survey showed a clear preference for retaining strong local representation and protecting Stratford's identity, regardless of the final local government structure.

While respondents acknowledged potential benefits from reform, particularly shared services, reduced duplication and simpler governance, these benefits were outweighed by concerns about:

- Loss of local voice and decision-making.
- Stratford's needs being overshadowed by a larger urban centre.
- Rural communities being subject to urban-focused policies.
- Stratford ratepayers subsidising larger councils.
- Loss of Stratford's distinct identity, services and community assets.

The strongest message across the comments sections was that Stratford and South Taranaki have more in common with each other than with New Plymouth, due to their rural economies, smaller populations and similar community needs.

A recurring theme was that people are not opposed to collaboration or shared services, but they want safeguards that protect Stratford's voice, funding, identity and local decision-making.

One or two councils?

- 83.3% was in favour of two unitary authorities for Taranaki (a Stratford and South Taranaki model)
- 16.7% was in favour of one unitary authority for Taranaki

Biggest opportunities?

- 62.5% selected shared services
- 51.4% selected simplified governance
- 28.9% selected supports improves planning systems for the region

Biggest concerns?

- 76.8% selected loss of local voice and representation
- 67.5% selected one-size-fits-all policies
- 29.5% selected doubt that cost efficiencies will be achieved with greater scale

What matters most to people when thinking about the future of Local Government?

- 63.8% selected fair representation
- 49.8% selected keeping a strong local voice and local decision-making
- 47.9% selected affordability and cost efficiencies; and a close 47.8% selected local services remain accessible and easy to use

What council services and facilities matter most to people?

- 67.1% selected roads, footpaths and transport connections
- 54% selected Parks, reserves and outdoor sports grounds
- 51% selected Rubbish, recycling and waste minimisation
- 46.2% selected Libraries and community facilities
- 32% selected Emergency management and resilience

Stay up to date with the Simplifying Local Government reform process at YourSay.Stratford.govt.nz

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Visit YourSay.Stratford.govt.nz to subscribe to this and other community engagement opportunities.

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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

22 July 2026