

## The great outdoors

Pupils, teachers and parents from Stratford Primary School get up close and personal with some of the creatures they found in the Patea River at King Edward Park.

The river study was led by the Taranaki Regional Council's Education Officer, Kevin Archer, who runs a comprehensive programme for the region's schools that also includes rocky store studies and a variety of activities at the Pukeiti Rainforest School.

For more information see [www.trc.govt.nz/education](http://www.trc.govt.nz/education) or email [education@trc.govt.nz](mailto:education@trc.govt.nz).



# 100 issues of Recount



See more on Pages 4 and 5  
Read Recount No 1 at  
[bit.ly/Recount1](http://bit.ly/Recount1)

The status and future of Port Taranaki ... Waitara flood protection ... good highway connections and public transport ... the health of a key regional waterway ... regional biosecurity priorities ... the environmental performance of consent holders ... preparedness for a marine oil spill ...

These could easily be today's headlines but in fact they're some of the topics covered in the very first issue of Recount, published in October 1990 when the Taranaki Regional Council was barely a year old.

So this 100th issue of Recount looks back at some of the hot topics of 1990 and considers the progress that's been made in the ensuing quarter of a century.

"When you leaf through that first issue, it's striking to see just how many issues of the day then are still issues of the day now," says the current Council Chairman, David MacLeod.

"But when you start reading those early stories, it's reassuring and gratifying to realise just how much solid progress has been made by Councillors and Council staff over the years."

The front page of Recount No 1 was largely devoted to Port Taranaki entering a 'new era' under Council ownership as the old harbours board structure was done away with. The major concern was the port's debt burden. This was a hangover from 'Think Big' days, when the port had to fund major redevelopment to cope with the demands of major energy projects.

Fast forward 26 years and the port has been reporting record revenues in the face of trading conditions that are sometimes volatile. Its dividends are a significant contributor to the Council's very healthy financial position and a key reason for its status as one of the lowest-rating local authorities in New Zealand. "The port has thrived under Council ownership, to the benefit of all in the region," says Mr MacLeod.

## From the Chair

A 100th celebration is a big milestone in anyone's books, and Recount is no exception.

This 100th edition is a good opportunity to look back at that very first edition in 1990 to see what the Taranaki Regional Council was doing in its very early days, and to assess how we've done since then.



As I've noted elsewhere, it's interesting that many of the hot issues of 1990 are still hot issues today. But it's also good to realise and appreciate how much has been achieved over a quarter-century. So I hope you enjoy indulging in a bit of retrospection with us.

As always, though, our primary focus is on what lies ahead of us. And what great news that our road to the future is literally going to be smoother, now that the Government has agreed to invest in much-needed improvements to SH3 at Mt Messenger and Awakino Gorge.

The region has long spoken with one voice on the need for such a project. And as was the case with the New Plymouth northern outlet and Normanby overbridge project, there's a lot to be said for being consistent and persistent when presenting a strong argument.

I'm sure that like me, everyone in Taranaki looks forward to seeing details of the new SH3 project.

I'm also sure that everyone is looking forward to seeing the exciting new Ngāti Te Whiti urban marae taking shape on the New Plymouth foreshore at Ngāmotu. The Council was very pleased to be able to play a supporting role by leading a detailed investigation of the site, where oil had been drilled for in previous years. That investigation showed that the site is fit for its new purpose, and now Ngāti Te Whiti have begun realising their long-held dream.

The news about Ngāmotu Marae and SH3 came as a positive boost at the start of 2016 in Taranaki. It's good not to lose sight of such positive developments as we tackle the challenges of another busy year.

David MacLeod - CHAIRMAN



The Bayly Road site investigation included soil and groundwater sampling.

## Marae site fit for purpose, Council investigation shows

Work is beginning on an iconic new urban marae for New Plymouth after a site investigation found no significant contamination resulting from previous activities including oil exploration and production.

The Ngāti Te Whiti site in Bayly Road underwent a detailed investigation funded by the Taranaki Regional Council and the Government's Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund.

The site report reveals that the only items of interest encountered by investigators were an old beer bottle and an electrical insulator.

Ngāti Te Whiti Chief Executive Shaun Keenan says tenders will be called this month for the new marae.

He says it was "a little disappointing" that more interesting historic artefacts were not turned up but the hapū is very pleased that nothing stands in the way of its plans.

Ngāti Te Whiti oversaw the site investigation to ensure it was carried out in a culturally respectful manner.

The New Plymouth District Council also had a representative on the project board to ensure the quick resolution of any issues that might have affected the issuing of a building consent.

The investigation included geophysical analysis to confirm the exact location of the Waitapu Urupā and to locate two old wells on the site, as well as demolition material from old baches.

Soil and groundwater were then sampled at multiple depths, and vapour samples also taken for analysis. All samples met human health criteria.

Only one of the two previously unlocated wells was found but no hydrocarbon contamination was found in the area where the other was thought to have been drilled.

Some low-level asbestos contamination was encountered at depth where the marae building is planned. This material will be excavated and removed for appropriate disposal.

The Taranaki Regional Council Chairman, David MacLeod, says the Council is delighted to have played a supporting role for Ngāti Te Whiti.

"Not only is the planned marae essential for Ngāti Te Whiti, but it will also be a valuable community asset," he says.

"The design allows for a section of the New Plymouth Coastal Walkway to weave through the facility, so all will be able to experience it."

Council Science Manager Victoria McKay says the investigation project went well, with great communication and a strong collaborative work ethic among all who were involved.

"It was obvious how excited and proud everyone was to be working on such an important and iconic project," she says.

"To find nothing of concern was the icing on the cake. It means there is nothing to halt the marae development now."



# Best SH3 news in decades

The Government's announcement of multimillion-dollar bypass projects at Mt Messenger and Awakino Tunnel has been warmly welcomed by the Taranaki Regional Council.

"This is the best single decision in several decades for our road network and the economic activity that relies on it," says the Council Chairman, David MacLeod

"The region has been speaking with a united voice for years on the need for improvements to these sections of SH3 north. The Government has finally listened and we can all celebrate."

In January, Prime Minister John Key announced \$115 million worth of new regional roading projects, with Taranaki getting the lion's share.

The Mt Messenger bypass will cost an estimated \$80 to \$90 million and the Awakino Tunnel bypass \$9 to \$15 million.

The Chairman of the Regional Transport Committee, Taranaki Regional Councillor Roger Maxwell, says SH3 north is a strategically important route for a region that



Mt Messenger will be bypassed under the latest plans announced for Sh3 north of New Plymouth.

has been one of New Zealand's economic powerhouses.

"We had been pushing hard for improvements and our expectations have been high. But this

announcement has exceeded them. The Minister and local MPs deserve our thanks."

Mr MacLeod says he hopes the way is clear for an early start on design and construction.



## Wetlands encounter

Wetland ecologist Dr Bev Clarkson (at left) leads an up-close encounter during the World Wetlands Day field trip at Lake Rotokare in late January.

Sustainability was the central theme for this year's World Wetlands Day, highlighting the vital role of wetlands for the future of humanity.

The venue for the Taranaki field trip, Lake

Rotokare, is one of the region's best-known wetlands and the scene of a dedicated, long-term community-driven effort that has resulted in impressive and award-winning conservation and environmental gains.

Elsewhere in the region, the vital role of wetlands on pastoral land is a strong emphasis for the Taranaki Regional Council in its work with landowners.

## Join in the conversation

Join us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and stay updated on our programmes and events.

You can also let us know about the ways you're protecting and enhancing Taranaki's environment and economy.



Taranaki Regional Council  
Taranaki Regional Gardens  
Taranaki Civil Defence



Taranaki public transport  
Taranaki schools  
environment group



@TaranakiRC (Council)  
@TaranakiRG (Gardens)  
@TaranakiCD (Civil Defence)



TaranakiRC

# Then and now - a look back at

## New era for Port Taranaki

**The story then:** A new company, 100% owned by the Taranaki Regional Council, took over the running of Port Taranaki, and the Government agreed to meet half the port's \$29.6 million debt dating from Think Big days.

"As for the rest of the debt, this remains a major concern for the council and the entire regional community," Recount No 1 reported. "The council is currently investigating options for servicing the liability, with the aim of avoiding the use of rate income."

**The story now:** The inherited debt was largely paid off by 1997, when the Council received its first cash dividend from the port. Dividends have since offset rates requirements, and the Council also operates a dividend equalisation fund, in which any dividends surplus to budget are kept for when dividends are below budget.

Port Taranaki Ltd, meanwhile, reported its highest-ever revenue in 2014/2015 and its second highest revenue in 2015/2016, resulting in dividends to the Council totalling nearly \$8 million over the past two years.

New era for Port Taranaki

Waitara review

Highways battle

Land Transport Discussion paper first step

Noxious plants plan ready next month

Report targets Waiwakaiho recovery

Ministry asked to fund spill equipment

Headlines from the first issue of Recount in 1990.

## Highways battle and public transport discussion

**The story then:** "The Taranaki Regional Council is preparing to fight for the retention of three important State Highways in the province," Recount No 1 reported. At the time, the Government was proposing to revoke the

highway status of SH3A, SH40 and SH43 in Taranaki.

Elsewhere, Recount No 1 also noted new legislation giving the Council jurisdiction over public transport services. "New challenges exist for the Regional Council in facilitating the establishment of a cost-effective service which meets the passenger transport needs of the region," said the then Chairman of the Council's Land Transport Committee, Ralph Latta.

**The story now:** While SH40 (Ahititi to Ohura) has lost its State Highway status, SH3A remains a vital link in the network, and SH43's importance for tourism is underscored by its 'Forgotten World Highway' designation.

On a broader front, the Council has consistently and strongly advocated for improvements to the region's highway links. This advocacy has notably borne fruit in the current Vickers to City and Normanby Overbridge projects, and the newly announced project to construct bypasses on SH3 at Mt Messenger and Awakino Tunnel.

The Council has also introduced major public transport improvements including the Citylink network in New Plymouth, the successful Hawera-New Plymouth Connector service, and once-a-week SouthLink services for scattered rural communities in south and central Taranaki.



## Floods spark Waitara River hydrology review

**The story then:** "A review of the Waitara River following major floods during Taranaki Anniversary Weekend is progressing well," Recount No 1 reported.

"The Taranaki Regional Council decided to carry out the review of the river's hydrology following severe stopbank damage during the floods."

**The story now:** A major realignment of the river channel between the SH3 bridge and the Town Bridge followed the 1990 review, protecting the stopbanks behind Brookes Terrace and Parris Street. Waitara's flood defences have been further significantly upgraded in the past three years in a \$3 million project that gives the township one-in-

100-year flood protection and takes into account the effects of climate change. The aim has been to make the scheme as resilient as possible.

A one-in-100-year flow at Waitara is estimated at around 3,800 cubic metres per second, which is more than twice the highest flow measured at 1,640 cubic metres during the heavy rain event on 20 June 2015 (picture). A one-in-100-year flood would be about three metres higher, with a substantially higher flow velocity.

The Council has made big investments in flood protection at Waitara, which now enjoys a standard of protection fitting for a town of its size.



# the first Recount in 1990

## Waiwhakaiho recovery

**The story then:** A draft management plan for the Waiwhakaiho (then known as ‘Waiwakaiho’) River sought to balance conflicting demands on this important waterway, Recount No 1 reported. Virtually the entire flow was diverted into Lake Mangamahoe for domestic water supply and hydro generation, leaving a 6km stretch with little or no water for most of the year. This was having a marked effect on water quality and the biological and recreational value of the river downstream.

Submissions on the draft management plan closed in October 1990 and they were to be considered by the Council before the plan was finalised and adopted.

**The story now:** Amid strong public interest, the Council adopted a management plan requiring a ‘residual flow’ of an initial 600 litres a second in summer and 400 litres a second in winter down the 6km stretch below the Lake Mangamahoe intake.

This and construction of a fish pass were among requirements of a resource consent issued to the hydro scheme operators in 1991.

The Waiwhakaiho reaped the benefits, with monitoring showing that native and introduced fish species again started moving up and down the river.

The passing of the Resource Management Act in 1991 provided a new legislative framework for the Council’s further work to manage and improve waterways in the region, most notably through the adoption in 2001 of a Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki.

Today’s trends in ecological health and a wide range of physical and chemical measures of water quality are the best that have ever been measured.



Taranaki now has a trained team of oil spill responders who exercise regularly.

## Ministry asked to fund spill equipment

**The story then:** The Taranaki Regional Council would ask the Ministry of Transport to fund the purchase of new equipment to deal with any oil spills at Port Taranaki, Recount No 1 reported. The Ministry had funded \$3 million worth of equipment for Auckland and Wellington but nothing for Taranaki despite its unique status as an oil export port.

**The story now:** The Council and Maritime NZ work in close partnership to ensure that the

region is well prepared for any marine oil spill.

In 1995 the Council was the first in New Zealand to adopt an oil spill contingency plan, under which equipment is maintained and updated, and staff trained and exercised (picture), with funding from the industry via a levy imposed by the Government.

The contingency plan has undergone a number of reviews and updates, the most recent taking place this year.

## Noxious plants plan ready next month

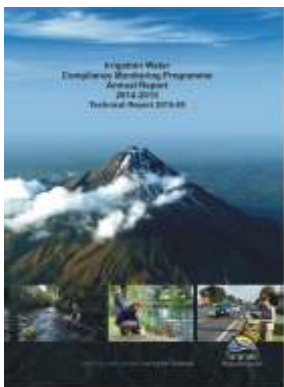
**The story then:** The reorganisation of local government in 1989 had resulted in the Council becoming the noxious plants (now pest plants) authority for the region and Recount No 1 reported that a regional programme was being prepared, combining the programmes of the former district authorities. Ragwort, gorse and old man’s beard were the subject of many of the public submissions on the draft programme.

**The story now:** Since the mid-1990s, successive Council pest plant strategies have identified pest plants (currently 27), control

measures and landowner obligations. This approach has seen infestations of gorse and ragwort diminishing throughout the region, though they are still widespread.

Old man’s beard infestations have decreased in many areas. In recent years the Council has been achieving success with a targeted control programme in the Kaupokonui catchment, where it had been so rife that landowners were previously exempt from having to control it.

The Council has always regarded the control of pest plants as an important function.



## Monitoring progress over the decades

**The story then:** Recount No 1 noted that 11 water right monitoring reports had been presented to a recent Council meeting. “The purpose of the reports is to monitor water right compliance and water resource management,” it explained.

**The story now:** The Council continues to play a leading role in benchmarking compliance monitoring and reporting, a legacy of the arrival of major petrochemical industries in the 1970s, when the importance of proper, careful and professional monitoring became rapidly

apparent. Today’s Councillors are presented with 200-plus compliance reports each year, including annual, biennial and triennial reports covering large individual consent holders in most cases, or a number of smaller consent-holders – within a particular catchment, for example. There are also reports covering one-off activities such as exploration drilling.

About 1000 of these reports, dating back to 2005, are currently available on the Council website at [www.trc.govt.nz/technical-reports/](http://www.trc.govt.nz/technical-reports/).

# Something for everyone



Hollard Gardens was magically transformed into a kingdom for little people on 28 February when International Children's Day was marked with a fun-filled gala. Painting was one of the popular activities.

Upcoming events at Pukeiti, Tupare and Hollard Gardens:

**Sunday 3 April, 10.30am-2pm: Pukeiti Puffer fun runs.** Join us for a range of easy to very challenging fun runs through the Pukeiti rainforest, raising funds for the Cameron Clow Trust. In association with Athletics Taranaki and sponsored by the Shoe Clinic.

**Sunday 10 April, 2pm-4pm: Tupare workshop – urban garden planting.** Great tips and information on selecting and planting small trees to suit an urban garden.

**Sunday 17 April, 10am-3pm: Hollard Gardens Country Fair.** Celebrate the season's harvest with music and entertainment, delicious food and produce, and arts and crafts demonstrations. Something for all the family.

**Sunday 8 May, 2pm-4pm: Tupare workshop – bees, birds and butterflies.** Learn about plants that will attract bees, birds and butterflies to your garden.

**Sunday 22 May, 29 May and 5 June, 2pm to 4pm: Beginners' guide to permaculture in the home garden.** Three consecutive workshops covering permaculture design, soil and composting, and companion planting.

**Sunday 5 June, 10am-3pm: Pukeiti Explorer Day – annual bird survey.** Learn about the sounds of the forest and food that birds love to eat. Take part in our annual survey, gathering data to help us monitor and protect our birdlife.

See [www.pukeiti.nz](http://www.pukeiti.nz), [www.tupare.nz](http://www.tupare.nz) and [www.hollardgardens.nz](http://www.hollardgardens.nz).

# \$1.2m ensures work continues

## Timing perfect for renewed funding of hillcountry sustainability efforts

Taranaki will receive \$1.2 million over four years from the Ministry of Primary Industries to accelerate sustainable land management in the eastern hillcountry.

The funds will be administered by the Taranaki Regional Council and will focus on activities that reduce erosion in the hill country.

The Council's Director-Operations, Stephen Hall, says the timing of these funds is perfect and will enable the good work previously done by farmers as part of the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Scheme (STRESS) to be continued and accelerated.

The \$1.2 million in grants will be delivered over four years and is available to farmers for forestry establishment, soil conservation planting, fencing off retired land and land-use change.

In the past five years under STRESS, the Council has been working closely with landowners in the hillcountry on



implementing farm plans, which have long been provided under the Council's sustainable land management programme.

"Soil is the basis for farming and soil conservation is at the heart of good land management – without it, farming of any kind would be impossible," Mr Hall says.

The extreme storm and flood event in June 2015 had a widespread impact on the region's hillcountry farms and their soil resource, with much slipping and erosion.

"We are keen to work with farmers to carry out works that minimise the impacts of erosion

and help safeguard their farms from future events such as this," Mr Hall says.

Farmers can apply for STRESS funding by contacting the Council's Land Management staff. Call 0800 736 222 or email [info@trc.govt.nz](mailto:info@trc.govt.nz).

Meanwhile, the Council has learned that no further targeted Government assistance will be available for farmers dealing with the aftermath of the June 2015 weather event.

In December, the New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki Mayors and the Taranaki Regional Council Chairman, David MacLeod, wrote to Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy requesting additional assistance for cases of extreme hardship arising from the storm.

The Taranaki Regional Council and the central Government had already delivered relief packages worth more than \$1 million to farmers in the region.

Council Chairman David MacLeod says the June event was severe and caused millions of dollars worth of damage.



# 'Business as planned' in new financial year



## Quarterly scorecard

The Council has published the first two of what will be a regular series of Quarterly Operational Reports detailing progress against work plans and budgets. The first reports cover the July-September and October-December quarters and showed good progress is being made, with no particular areas of concern.

The new reports supersede the Council's previous Significant Activity Annual Reports and offer more regular and up-to-date snapshots of progress. See [www.trc.govt.nz/quarterly-operational-reports/](http://www.trc.govt.nz/quarterly-operational-reports/)

## All-clear on cadmium levels in Taranaki

A new scientific study shows there is no basis for concern over cadmium concentrations in groundwater in Taranaki, or any potential environmental or public health consequences.

Council scientists analysed samples from 30 wells across the ring plain and lower eastern hillcountry, using highly sensitive equipment able to detect 0.1 parts per billion.

The Taranaki Regional Council's yet-to-be-finalised Annual Plan 2016/2017 is not expected to contain any significant or material differences from the Long-Term Plan 2015/2025, which was the subject of extensive public consultation last year.

So under new Local Government Act provisions, the Council can streamline the adoption process by not calling for submissions again.

"The Council is pleased the Government has given local authorities this opportunity to reduce costs and save time by not having to repeat something we've already done," says the Chief Executive, Basil Chamberlain. "We have a responsibility to ratepayers to take the most efficient approach we can, and that's what we're doing with the upcoming Annual Plan.

While there may be some ups and downs in targeted rates and budgets for some Council activities, the sums are not large and do not affect the bottom line. The Long-Term Plan outlined a 1% general rates increase for 2016/2017, and Mr Chamberlain says this will not change. "The Annual Plan 2016/2017 can be described as 'business as planned'. Effectively, it's already been consulted on."

The Council intends to adopt the Annual Plan 2016/2017 and set rates for the new financial year at its May meeting.

The plan will take effect on 1 July.

No cadmium was detected in 90% of the samples and the highest sample contained 0.0006 milligrams per litre, well within drinking water and surface water guidelines.

Cadmium occurs naturally in superphosphate fertiliser and can be toxic if ingested at levels above the guidelines. Read the report here: [bit.ly/TRCcadmium](http://bit.ly/TRCcadmium)

## Taranaki Regional Council Facts File

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<b>Civil Defence freephone:</b>	0800 900 049
<b>NP bus information:</b>	0800 827 287
<b>Total Mobility:</b>	0800 868 662

## REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

### New Plymouth Constituency:

Tom Cloke	06 753 5586
Peter Horton	06 758 8011
Moira Irving	021 944 809
David Lean	06 753 3325
Craig Williamson	027 687 4122

### North Taranaki Constituency:

Mike Davey	06 756 7126
Roger Maxwell	06 752 3622

### South Taranaki Constituency:

Michael Joyce	06 274 5800
David MacLeod (Chair)	06 278 5577
Neil Walker	06 278 7541

### Stratford Constituency:

Brian Jeffares	06 765 7773
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## MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings are held at the Council chamber, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, unless otherwise stated.

**Tuesday 29 March, 10am:** Executive Committee.

**Tuesday 5 April, 10.30am:** Ordinary Council meeting.

**Tuesday 3 May, 10.30am:** Consents and Regulatory Committee.

**Thursday 5 May, 10.30am:** Policy and Planning Committee.

**Monday 9 May, 10am:** Executive Committee.

For agendas and minutes:  
[www.trc.govt.nz/agendas-and-minutes/](http://www.trc.govt.nz/agendas-and-minutes/)

## PUKEITI Puffer

A beautiful off-road running event through Pukeiti  
2290 Carrington Road, New Plymouth

**Sunday 3 April 2016**  
**10.30am-2pm** Registration from 9.30am  
**REGISTER NOW at Shoe Clinic**  
87 Devon Street East, New Plymouth  
or email: [kelvin@athleticstaranaki.org.nz](mailto:kelvin@athleticstaranaki.org.nz)  
Entries available on the day (cash only)

# In the eye of the storms

**David Lean has retired as Taranaki Civil Defence Controller after more than three decades leading the response to major storms, floods and tornadoes in the region.**

As Taranaki's 'Mr Civil Defence' since the 1980s, David Lean has vivid memories of some of the region's most dire moments.

"Standing by Paritutu Rock during Cyclone Bola in 1988, watching winds so powerful that they were pushing the sea back out to sea – that was frightening," he says. "I was doubly concerned as the father of three young children and knowing that the roof was peeling off my own house. But Civil Defence duties had to take precedence."

Similarly, there was tension in the early stages of the emergency that was declared after a swarm of tornadoes swept through Oakura in July 2007. "That was a nasty, life-threatening situation," says David. "As it turned out, one young woman was injured when a window shattered but thankfully, there were no other casualties. The property damage was horrendous, though, and lives were seriously disrupted."

David reels off other big Civil Defence moments – Cyclone Hilda and the Waitara floods of 1990, the Waitotara floods in 2004 and, most recently, the widespread flooding and slips that occurred in June 2015, resulting in a week-long state of emergency.

Through all the displays of nature's destructive power, however, there was always a positive constant. "What's always been impressive is the rapport between all the players involved – medical people, councils, emergency services," he says. "It's important to have a team where everyone is on a first-name basis, there's a high degree of mutual respect, and everybody works together to achieve the best possible outcome in the shortest possible time."

## At the centre of the action ...

David Lean, right, in the aftermath of the Waitara floods in 1990. With him are, from left, Harry Duynhoven (then New Plymouth MP), Margaret Austin (then Minister for Civil Defence), Ross Allen (then TRC Chairman) and Roger Maxwell (then MP for Taranaki and now a TRC Councillor).



David Lean, right, and Brian Jeffares, Chairman of the Taranaki Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, at a presentation marking David's retirement. Both men are also Taranaki Regional Councillors.

See a video profile at [bit.ly/DavidRetires](http://bit.ly/DavidRetires)

In the early days of David's involvement with Civil Defence – when he was Controller by virtue of being New Plymouth Mayor – he remembers something of a "Dad's Army" attitude to it.

"That's far from the case these days," he says. "What you see now is all the forward planning that's put in place and continually updated and upgraded. Civil Defence professionals are very busy people.

"Nowadays the community has come to understand and expect that someone will pick it up and be ready to respond when something horrible happens – someone who has done enough preparation and can accept the

responsibility and leadership to take action to lessen the impact and get the community back to normality as quickly as possible.

"Getting the community back on its feet, back to some semblance of normal, everyday living, is to my mind one of the most important aspects of Civil Defence."

He also believes that the Christchurch earthquakes were a wake-up call, making people more aware of the need to be prepared.

"We saw what happened in Christchurch – disaster striking where many people thought it would never happen. We don't want that attitude here. It will happen here in some form or other – it's a matter of when, not if."

The Chairman of the Taranaki Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, Brian Jeffares, says David made a big contribution.

"For over 30 years now we have been well served by a group of outstanding individuals led by David. It is he who set the momentum and culture of Civil Defence in Taranaki. His no-nonsense, unflappable approach has been to the forefront in his time as Controller and I know he will be sorely missed."