



**Submission to**

**Bay of Plenty Regional Council**

**on**

**Bay of Plenty Regional Council**

**Draft Annual Plan**

**2013-14**





## About the Chamber

The role of the Chamber is to promote business vitality in the greater Western Bay of Plenty region. Our mission is to build better business by providing leadership and services to the business community that drive business growth and prosperity, and to make our community and region the best place to live, work, play and visit through effective and relevant advocacy, networking, and education.

The Chamber of Commerce is a membership based organisation with 700 members. We have a wide reach into the business community crossing the full range of demographics in both business size and activity. Our reach extends beyond business owners to the thousands of employees who work in these businesses. We also have a growing number of member organisations providing community services, and whose interests we strive to represent.

We have a significant interest in regional economic development and a direct role in administering central government programmes for fostering business development and growth. The Chamber supports and encourages new business establishment, provides information and services to the business community, offers training and networking opportunities to both Chamber of Commerce members and to the greater business community. We are a strategic partner to SmartGrowth, a lead agency in Smart Economy and are represented on the Smart Economy Action Group. We are a member of City Centre Action Group, and are represented on many of the key strategies in the City.

In partnership with agencies like New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Priority One, Bay of Connections, Export New Zealand BOP and the Sustainable Business Network, we actively seek to work cooperatively to benefit businesses in the Bay of Plenty and through them the wider economy.

**We would like to be heard in support of our submissions.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Mason".

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The Chamber welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Draft Annual Plan 2013/14.

### **Local Government Reform**

The Chamber supports The Regional Council's prudent approach to Local Government Reform and acknowledges the support the Chamber received to deliver a very informative conference. We recognize that it is a very difficult time with a lot of uncertainty on how reforms will impact on communities and we welcome the opportunity to work with the Regional Council on engaging with the community on this very important issue.

### **Passenger Transport**

Public transport in Tauranga is a critical element of the transport solutions for Tauranga. A lot has been invested over the last 15 years and the bus service is now recognized as a viable alternative across the city. Having a transport network that works efficiently and effectively is important for the business sector, congestion consumes a rapidly diminishing commodity – time and adds to the cost of doing business. Auckland's transport issues are an excellent example of this. The **Chamber strongly supports** continued investment into public transport in Tauranga City and acknowledges the Regional Council for its contribution so far.

### **Regional Infrastructure Fund**

**The Chamber strongly supports** the development of a Tertiary Campus in Tauranga City. The Chamber sees the establishment of a Tertiary Campus as a way of increasing the educational and research capacity within the city, and will add to the CBD development. It has a strong part to play in the economic development of wider Bay of Plenty and will impact across the region.

The Chamber supports the review of the Infrastructure Funding Policy and Procedures which covers the contestable Regional Infrastructure Fund and the direct funding policy. We encourage the Regional Council to take a flexible approach to funding projects that have a region wide benefit.

### **MV Rena**

**The Chamber acknowledges** the work The Regional Council has done towards the recovery and restoration resulting from the grounding of the Rena.

### **Major Projects**

The **Chamber supports** the Regional Councils approach of maintaining Tauranga Harbour management and the continued research partnerships. We also support the proposed commitment of \$4.1 million in total that will be spent across the Harbour and catchments.

### **Efficiency and effectiveness**

The **Chamber supports** any moves to be efficient and effective particularly around the expanding of shared/sharing services opportunities. We acknowledge the work that is being done through BOPLASS.

### **Bay of Connections**

**The Chamber supports** the Regional Councils work in the economic development area for the region through the Bay of Connections. Identifying the key sectors has meant that there is a wider perspective of the economic benefit that can accrue for the region and also provides for integration through the economic strategies for specific areas. Bay of Connections has allowed those linkages and opportunities across sub-regions within the Bay of Plenty.

### **SmartGrowth**

**The Chamber supports** Regional Council's ongoing support and implementation of SmartGrowth as a 50 year land and growth management plan. SmartGrowth has given confidence to many stakeholders from Central Government to small business in the sub region that we are developing in a sustainable and focused manner. Like all plans SmartGrowth is a dynamic ever evolving plan and as such moves with changes in its environment. We welcome the review that SmartGrowth has recently undergone and the upcoming benchmark against the census.