

PRESS RELEASE

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Taupō District Council and Te Whare Hono o Tūwharetoa Limited Partnership have agreed on key commercial terms for a proposed new building in Taupō town centre.

Taupō District Mayor David Trewavas said the partnership between council and Te Whare Hono o Tūwharetoa Limited Partnership (a body representing various Ngāti Tūwharetoa trusts and companies) is a positive step forward for the district and both entities; and the community will benefit from a closer working relationship.

“This project is significant not just in the Taupō District but nationally,” Mr Trewavas said. “We believe that this building can not only be a flagship for both organisations but also an example of how local government and iwi can work together to build a better future in their rohe.”

Te Whare Hono o Tūwharetoa Limited Partnership chairman Rakeipoho Taiaroa is also welcoming the news.

“We are pleased that despite the challenging construction environment we are still able to proceed with this development project. We are also encouraged by the potential this project has to build an enduring partnership between the Taupō District Council and our Ngāti Tūwharetoa entities.”

Under the agreement, Te Whare Hono o Tūwharetoa Limited Partnership will buy the former Taupō RSA site at 67 Horomatangi Street from the Taupō District Council. It will construct and own a three-storey building at that site and lease 3000sq.m of it to Taupō District Council for use as its council offices. Staff from Love Taupō, Towncentre Taupō, Amplify and the

customer service centre staff at Taupō i-Site will also be included, as well as a council chamber. The building will be constructed to Importance Level 4 standard, so that it is able to be used as an emergency operations centre in a civil defence emergency.

Ngāti Tūwharetoa entities Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Tūwharetoa Settlement Trust and Ngāti Tūwharetoa Fisheries Charitable Trust will be co-tenants in the building, with further opportunity to house other businesses or organisations.

Council chief executive Gareth Green said the new building will not only bring council and iwi closer together, but will also see staff back in one place.

“The option to lease this building has been a great opportunity to seek a closer partnership with Tūwharetoa and I am really pleased to see this coming to fruition.

“While the key for us here has been about the commitment to an enduring relationship with iwi, the lease arrangement was also the most competitive price received following requests for proposals from developers, so we view this a great step forward.

“Leasing over owning a building was the community’s preferred option so it’s great we have got to this place.

“The efficiencies we will gain in being back in one building cannot be understated and I know we are all looking forward to seeing it all come together,” Mr Green said.

The council lease is for an initial 25 years at a cost of \$1.27 million annually, with rights of renewal, with the building expected to be ready for occupation around late 2024.

The council’s previous building, at 72 Lake Terrace, was demolished in 2018 after asbestos was discovered and it was deemed too expensive to repair. Since then, its 210 office-based staff have been housed in a variety of temporary locations in the Taupō town centre.

