

# Building scaled down by two storeys

By John Cousins

TWO floors have been axed from Tauranga downtown's planned new parking building after Councillor Terry Molloy "flip-flopped" on a decision made three weeks ago.

His change of heart reversed the earlier 6-5 vote in favour of going higher. Instead of a building that soared nine storeys above ground level, it will be seven storeys with 135 fewer parking spaces.

The building, planned to go on the current off-street car park between Hamilton and Harrington Sts, could have become the highest standalone car park building in New Zealand.

Cr Molloy used a notice of motion, seconded by Councillor Larry Baldock, to force the coun-

cil to reconsider the height of the building, saving \$4.5 million in project costs. He apologised to the council yesterday for vote-hopping, saying he did not give the financial issues enough weight when he made his original decision. He had also imagined the potential impact of the building when he looked across from his apartment in Devonport Rd.

Cr Molloy said it would be higher than Harrington House. "It would not look right in the city."

He said he had not given enough consideration to the bulk and scale of a nine-storey building, its impact on neighbours and the uncertainty of parking supply and demand as the city moved towards alternative modes of transport.

## Advantages of seven-storey parking building

- Lower profile
  - Reduced impact on neighbouring properties
  - A more attractive asset if council decided to sell
- Tauranga City Council staff report

Councillor Rick Curach, who supported the higher building, said: "Congratulations for taking your wife's advice."

This was a reference to Robyn Molloy's successful submission to the council in May to reconsider building the harbourside walkway from Memorial Park to The Strand.

Councillor Steve Morris had warned the council last month when it voted for a nine-storey parking building that the additional \$4.5m could be at the expense of projects like the walkway.

Mayor Greg Brownless jumped in straight after Cr Curach's remark, saying: "This is turning into an urban legend."

Councillor Max Mason referred to a confidential report to councillors in May about downtown car parking. Without disclosing the contents, he rattled off a list of projects that would further reduce car parks, concluding there would be 950 lost parking spaces with a gain of 550 from the new building.

He said the 135 car parks from two extra storeys was "really needed", with the height of the

building being "neither here nor there" when put in the context of other major developments planned.

Councillor Kelvin Clout said the extra two floors would be needed because the CBD would be experiencing massive growth. "I am relentlessly positive about the CBD."

Councillor Catherine Stewart also backed the higher building, saying the council needed to do it once and do it right, and not flip-flop. Mr Brownless said seven levels was enough for people to drive up.

Supporting Cr Molloy were Mr Brownless and Councillors Leanne Brown, Larry Baldock, Rich Curach and Steve Morris. Opposing were Kelvin Clout, Bill Grainger, Max Mason, Gail McIntosh and Catherine Stewart.

# Arts festival to dawn with special song of the fairies

By Sandra Conchie

Harmonies will echo across Tauranga Harbour at dawn to usher in the beginning of the 10th Tauranga Arts Festival.

On Tuesday morning, Bay singer Ria Hall spent time with 35 students at ACG Tauranga School at their first rehearsal learning a special waiata, *Takiri Ko Te Ata*.

The song was a "specifically" Tauranga waiata, centred around Mauao and something

which was "uniquely our own", Hall said.

She and her cousin, Teraania Ormsby-Teki, composed the specially commissioned waiata at the launch of the 2015 Tauranga Arts Festival.

"It's an ode to the Fairies of Hautere (the bush area behind Pyes Pa), who often returned to their Mauao every night to drag him into the sea, and depart again as dawn breaks.

"This waiata depicts the magical nostalgia that is the



IN SONG: Singer Ria Hall leads students from ACG Tauranga at their first rehearsal of a special waiata for the Tauranga Arts Festival. PHOTO/JOHN BORREN

fairies' dawning dance," Hall said.

It was a rewarding experience to lead a large choir in such a "beautiful, eerie and

magical celebration" of Tauranga and its unique origins.

About 200 singers would perform the waiata on October 18, she said.

## Tauranga Arts Festival

- Runs from October 19-29
- Seven venues, including Baycourt
- Book tickets online at [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz) or at Baycourt's box office in Durham St
- More information at [taurangafestival.co.nz](http://taurangafestival.co.nz)

ACG Tauranga's principal Shawn Hutchinson said being involved in these events helped bring music more alive for his students.

ACG is sponsoring the *Takiri Ko Te Ata* dawn chorus event.



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