



JOHN ROBSON on Tauranga City Council...

As promised some more facts.

Over the term of this Council, debt has increased from \$365 million at the end of the 2013-14 financial year, to a budgeted \$391 million for the end of this financial year.

This is despite selling assets valued at over \$70 million.

Any claim that Council has got debt down (as, for instance, made by the Deputy Mayor in his re-election material) is, at best, misleading.

The desire by politicians to spin a positive message for the purpose of re-election should never 'trump' truth.

Even if, as asserted by one Councillor, "everyone spins".

In the three budgets delivered by this Council, the real rates take (adjusted for inflation and growth) has increased on average by around 3.0% per year.

The equivalent figure for the three budgets of the previous Council is 4.1%.

Again, any claim that this Council has

halved rates rises is clearly using a different number system to you and me.

On a different topic.

At a recent Civic Heart Project Steering Group meeting, a paper was circulated showing the budget position for the project to June 30, 2016.

It showed total actual spend for the project was \$1,050,000 compared with a budget of \$1,000,000 – effectively a negative variance of \$50,000 or 5%.

More interesting however was a line item that showed actual spend for 'staff' at \$58,000 compared with a budget of \$65,000 – a positive variance of \$7,000.

Having taken a very close interest in the project, despite not being a member of the steering group, I challenged this figure.

A few weeks later, a revised figure was circulated showing estimated staff cost at over \$500,000.

Food for thought.

John Robson