



TARANAKI DAILY NEWS, 01 DEC 2010 Edition 1, Page 3.

New police station promised

By: KEITH Leighton

The wheels are in motion to build New Plymouth police a new \$12 million home.

Police Minister Judith Collins announced during a visit to New Plymouth yesterday that she understood a design team for the project had been selected.

"I have been assured by police national headquarters . . . that New Plymouth police will have a new building," Ms Collins said.

The Taranaki Daily News understands the new station will be built at the existing site on Powderham St and could be completed within two years.

The New Plymouth central police station was opened in 1962 but police have outgrown the building and now occupy two floors in the nearby Atkinson Building.

Ms Collins was not able to give an exact time frame for when the new station would be operational but said the current building was not up to scratch.

"It is a really rotten building, they need a new building.

"The way in which we expect our police officers to work, we expect them to have decent conditions.

"I have been assured by police national headquarters that it is a definite and it is going ahead."

The move was welcomed by acting area commander Senior Sergeant Terry van Dillen who said the new police station was well overdue.

"It has been promised for a number of years and has never been delivered," Mr van Dillen said.

"It is the biggest step towards getting a new police station that we've had in a long time."

Mr van Dillen said officers from New Plymouth had visited new stations in Kerikeri and Whangarei to identify the best fit for their purposes.

Ms Collins praised New Plymouth police for their outstanding efforts to reduce crime in the area.

"The last three months have shown a rather dramatic drop in crime and quite a lot of that is down to proactive policing - targeting offenders and areas where they know is going to be crime," she said.

Other police initiatives including the Mellow Yellow scheme, which was introduced after a Taranaki Daily News campaign to curb street violence, and using teenagers to monitor CBD cameras also impressed the minister.

"Other centres do have similar schemes but it is the first I've heard of involving teenager high school students working with the police in such a way.

"I think it is a great innovation and they should be really proud of it," Ms Collins said.

"Crime doesn't thrive if everyone else around says it is not OK and we are not going to put up with it."

CAPTION:

Major upgrade: Police Minister Judith Collins announced New Plymouth was getting a new police station when she visited New Plymouth yesterday. New Plymouth MP Jonathan Young, left, and police acting area commander Senior Sergeant Terry van

Dillen were on hand to hear the news.

Picture: ANDY JACKSON

Part: 0

Section: NEWS

Sub-Section: NATIONAL

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