

Costly end to walkway completion

By GORDON BROWN

COMPLETING the final 1km link in New Plymouth's coastal walkway will cost at least \$800,000 more than originally budgeted.

The New Plymouth District Council's policy committee on Tuesday night approved the extra money and work on the lower Woolcombe Tce stretch is to start in early February — if confirmed by the full council meeting next Tuesday.

The cost of finishing the walkway has now ballooned to \$4.155 million. Transfund New Zealand is to subsidise the cost by \$939,600, leaving the council needing to find an extra \$800,000.

The project will take nine months to complete.

NPDC community assets general manager Anthony Wilson said there were three main reasons for the blowout:

- Raising the walkway by 2m to protect users from waves.
- Extending the retaining wall, particularly in front of Placemakers.
- Ensuring design consistency all along the walkway.

The committee recommended that Fletcher Construction's tender of \$3,303,240, plus GST, be accepted.

Mr Wilson said there were several other items, totalling \$1.2 million, considered as options, but because of the cost over-run, had not been included.

Among them were:

- An access culvert (including pedestrian overpass) from the Molesworth St carpark to the Coastal Walkway.
- Three timber piers (leaving seven piers along the new section of walkway).
- A footpath from the Coastal Walkway to the RSA Bowling Club carpark.
- A new footpath through Mt Bryan reserve.

Mr Wilson said he also hoped a bridge or culvert could be built across the end of Liardet St. Whether any of those options becomes reality would be up to councillors to decide next year.