



**Kōrero  
Mai**

**Have  
your  
Say**

# **Community Consultation**

## **Annual Plan 2023/24**

**Submissions  
closed 30 April**



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

# Message from the Mayor

## Kia ora koutou,

We're acutely aware many people in our community are doing it tough with cost of living increases. With this on our minds we've gone through the council books line by line to get rates as low as possible while still delivering on what makes Whanganui a great place to live.

The challenge for councils around New Zealand is we're grappling with unprecedented costs as well.

It's important to emphasise that 8.2% is the average - for some properties it may vary up or down by a lot more than this.

Whether it's insurance and interest rate hikes or the soaring cost of bitumen for roads, to name just a few examples. People who have seen what's happening in other centres will know councils have had to face up to significant rates rises in the last couple of years and Whanganui is at that point now, particularly after last year's very low 3.5% increase.

When an 11.3% average rates increase for 2023/24 was tabled at our January workshop I said that figure was unacceptably high.

Since then we've had a series of discussions and council staff managed to find savings to compress the average rates rise down to 7.9%, which was then increased to 8.2% due to a decision by councillors to add the aviary back into the budget. For an average residential property, the proposed increase will be about an extra \$5 per week.

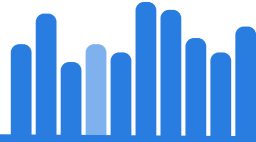
We feel this is a good figure in the current environment, especially with a number of centres around the country bringing in rates rises over 10%.

The big driver behind upward variation is dramatic increases in the value of land in our district.

With this jump in the value of land some households will see considerably higher rating valuations than last year, particularly those in lower-priced areas on larger sections. When Quotable Value (QV) sets property values they're required to look at the potential for a property and value it accordingly. So if your property is one of the residential properties in Whanganui big enough to be subdivided you may notice a significant increase from last year. Even so, if you're in a lower-priced property your rates will still be less than those in higher-priced properties.

Some people think the council gets more money from rates when property values increase but that's not actually correct. Rates are set by calculating the total cost of providing services and facilities for our community. The amount it costs to run our district doesn't change because property values change.

Instead, property valuations help us work out everyone's share of rates - so what QVs revaluation can change is the size of your 'piece of the pie' or what you pay compared to others.



There's also a perception out there that rates are much higher in Whanganui than other places. This may have been true years ago, but it's certainly not true now.

**Nationally, Whanganui's rates sit mid-range.**

And compared to similar-sized centres, Whanganui residents get a lot of bang for their buck. We have well-maintained infrastructure and a diverse array of services and facilities, not to mention the numerous unique and iconic assets available for our community to enjoy.

Before too long residents will have the convenience of a kerbside recycling collection to add to the list. Originally we expected this might start in mid-2023, but we're now working with contractors to confirm a new start date.

The Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment, like other major construction projects nationwide, has experienced cost increases over the past year due to the post-COVID economic environment. This project is well-advanced and the council is invested in seeing it through to completion by December 2023. It is expected that more than 78 percent of the total cost for the project will come from central government and the support of the Sarjeant's fundraisers and donors, with the council contributing the remainder. The redevelopment, which will open to the public in mid-2024, will benefit our community and economy for many years to come.

By now people will have received rating valuations from QV in the mail.

**If you've heard why valuations are higher this time around and still think your latest valuation doesn't make sense, please get in touch with QV by Friday, 14 April to put in an objection.**

By the time you receive your first 2023/24 rates notice in July, QV's deadline will have passed so make sure you contact them on time.

**Finally, if you're struggling to pay your rates please contact our rates team** by phoning 06 349 0001 or emailing [rates@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:rates@whanganui.govt.nz). Don't just sit at home worrying; there are options available.

This year's rates setting process has been an exercise in finding the fine balance between rate reduction and continuing to invest in our district. Despite the challenges we're currently facing, the economic outlook for Whanganui is bright. I'm proud of our district – it's wonderful to be part of this place that just keeps going from strength to strength.



*Andrew Tripe*  
Andrew Tripe  
Mayor of Whanganui

**Kōrero Mai,  
Have your Say**

**Tēnā, tukua mai ō whakaaro  
We'd like to hear what you think**

# Meet your council

Our Mayor and councillors are keen to chat and hear your views. Just be aware, if you want your feedback on the annual plan to be formally considered as a submission it is best to submit through one of the channels listed on page 22.



**Mayor**  
Andrew Tripe



**Deputy Mayor**  
Helen Craig

## Councillors



Charlie Anderson



Philippa  
Baker-Hogan



Glenda Brown



Josh  
Chandulal-Mackay



Jenny Duncan



Ross Fallen



Kate Joblin



Michael Law



Charlotte Melser



Peter Oskam



Rob Vinsen

If you'd like a conversation with an elected member, you can find their contact details here:

[www.whanganui.govt.nz/elected-members](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/elected-members)

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## A bit of background

### What is an annual plan?

An annual plan sets out how the council's work programme will be funded over the next financial year and outlines any key changes to the long-term plan.

Essentially it's the council's budget for the year – we calculate the cost to deliver services and facilities for our residents then work out how much we need to collect in rates.

An important part of the annual plan process is looking at where we need to adjust our work programme in response to changing circumstances.

### What this document will cover:

- ▶ Key project updates and achievements since our long-term plan;
- ▶ The big challenges and rising costs we have faced;
- ▶ Changes to rates for this year and where savings have been made;
- ▶ Information about the latest QV property revaluations;
- ▶ A consultation question on the future of the Rotokawau Virginia Lake aviary and a place for the community to provide feedback.

# Looking at the year ahead

## The challenges we're facing



### Inflation

Inflation is at record levels of over 7%, which has pushed up the costs to deliver services and facilities for the community.



### Covid

COVID has created staff and contractor shortages as well as global supply chain issues, driving up costs.



### The construction sector

The construction sector has seen significant cost increases for capital projects. Here in Whanganui, our nearly complete Sarjeant Gallery rebuild has required further investment from council than was expected in order to get it across the finish line.



### Interest rates

Interest rates are higher and paying more interest on debt increases our operating costs.



### Insurance premiums

Insurance premiums are going up, especially with more frequent and severe weather events.



### Central government reforms

Central government reforms are far-reaching and complex and will have big impacts on both the services we currently provide and how we will deliver them. The reforms include Three Waters, the Resource Management Act and the Future for Local Government. You can find more about central government reforms and our response here: [www.whanganui.govt.nz/central-govt-reforms](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/central-govt-reforms)



### Climate change

Climate change is creating more extreme and frequent weather events, increasing the cost of maintaining our roading network. In Whanganui, we have a history of emergency events requiring significant response and recovery efforts and a strong civil defence team.

**Kōrero Mai,  
Have your Say**

**Tēnā, tukua mai ō whakaaro  
We'd like to hear what you think**

# How we're tracking

## Key project updates:



**We are finishing the 103-year-old Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua and adding a new modern wing, Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa, to benefit our community and economy for years to come.**

Construction is forecast to be complete in December 2023 and it will open to the public in mid-2024.

The project cost for the Sarjeant Gallery has been budgeted at \$67.4M. More than 78% of the project cost is expected to come from central government and the Sarjeant's fundraisers and donors. A total of \$14.6M (22%) is expected to come from the council. This amount is higher than the original \$5M budgeted for the council's contribution, but work is ongoing to source further external funding for this project. The council's contribution of \$14.6M may be reduced if this is successful.

We have contractual obligations to see the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment through to completion and are working on cost efficiencies wherever possible. We are also continuing to seek external funding to reduce the ratepayer input. Due to our contractual obligations, there is no decision for the council to make about whether to proceed with the project at this point. The community can give feedback on the project and any other matter they wish to raise through this consultation process.



**We are working towards a confirmed start date for the kerbside recycling service.**

This service will no longer be able to start on 1 July 2023 as we had planned, but will start before July 2024 and will be funded by central government waste levies and loans for the rest of the 2023/2024 financial year. Rates will not be charged for the service until 1 July 2024.



**We have been working with housing partners to increase social housing in Whanganui.**

This includes working with Kainga Ora on the 135 new builds they have planned for the next 12-18 months. We are also working with partners on a short-term option at a Taupo Quay site for homeless people who are currently living in freedom camping areas; this will give them wrap-around support while we work on a long-term night shelter option.



**We will be starting community consultation for the Dublin Street Bridge, partnering with Iwi/Hapū to align with Te Awa Tupua legislation.**

Starting in mid-2023, this will look at community aspirations and best traffic solutions before a detailed business case is prepared. Consenting is planned for 2024-27, procurement for 2028/29 and construction for 2029/30.

## Since our long-term plan was adopted in 2021, we have also:

Commissioned a **fourth water bore** at Kai Iwi to add resilience to Whanganui's water supply.



Installed **800 metres of new piping** to complete the Cobham Bridge water supply upgrade.

This was the final stage of a three-part process to ensure adequate supply and improve resilience for the airport, the southern part of Whanganui East, and critical assets like the wastewater treatment plant.



Installed the **600-metre Fitzherbert Avenue extension** to Mosston Road in place to support residential expansion for our growing city and provide a direct transport link to the Mill Road industrial area.

As well as road sealing and footpaths, underground services for water, sewerage and stormwater have been installed.

Moved the port assets and operating responsibility, along with Te Pūwaha project delivery, to the **Whanganui Port Limited Partnership**, as planned.



Installed a new pathway across **Williams Domain** and improved safe crossings on Hakeke Street and Tinirau Street near Whanganui East School.

Launched the frequent **Te Ngāru The Tide bus** with Horizons Regional Council to give our residents more options for how they move around the city.



Launched our **Community Climate Action Fund**, which in its first year provided seed-funding for eight local climate action projects.

We also delivered 300 EcoBulb home energy assessments to help low-income households save on their power bills.







Started landscape design work for **Pukenamu Queen's Park** following an integrated approach to develop the architectural landscape plan with Roopū Kaitiake.



Opened the **outdoor fitness park** with the Rotary Club of Whanganui on the river bank



Scheduled the removal and replacement of the **velodrome cycle track** with a high-performance wooden accoya track warranted for 50 years to withstand the elements.



Installed a public toilet at **Upokongaro** to cater for the increased numbers of visitors using the Mountain to Sea cycle trail. We are also working with Ngā Paerangi and the community on the future of the Upokongaro War Memorial Hall.



Commissioned design work for a **550-square-metre extension** to the northern side of the Davis Library.

A local architectural firm has been appointed after an open tender process. We'll work with community groups during the design phase.



Rolled out the **Tākaro Play Trailer** with support from partners.

Widely used at school and community events, the free trailer has been booked around 200 times and reached more than 4,000 tamariki since its launch in November 2021.



Launched the **Learning Resources webpage** on the Whanganui District Libraries website, providing free access to more than 16,000 video-based training courses for library members.

# Where rates go

When people think of rates, they often think of facilities like libraries, museums and parks. But rates cover so much more. Here's how someone might interact with rates-funded services and facilities over the course of a day.



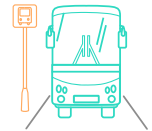
## Rise and shine

get physical in one of our beautiful parks, reserves or sportsgrounds



## Morning routine

your wastewater flushed away



## Off to work

on one of the 850km of roads, 340km of footpaths, 73 bridges, or via the airport or historic underground elevator we manage

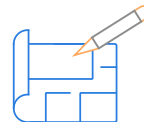


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## Enjoy a safe and healthy district

we look after public health by monitoring food premises, trades and funeral parlours as well as minimising general nuisances like noise and illegal rubbish dumping



## Get building advice

we advise, assess and monitor building and planning consents to make sure Whanganui develops in a way that meets the needs of current and future generations



## Walk the dog

as well as issuing dog licences, we focus on responsible dog ownership and animal control



### Hit the shops

our parking management gives you convenient access and actively supports business growth and tourism



### Re-hydrate

drink a glass of fresh water from the tap



### Enjoy life with the kids

at one of our fantastic facilities for water play or one of our many playgrounds



### Relax with a book or film

we're fostering lifelong literacy and providing free access to knowledge and ideas through our seven libraries (not including mobile libraries)



### Get cultured

we manage several iconic arts and cultural institutions and facilities for all age groups to enjoy



### Visit friends and family

we provide social housing for older people across 16 complexes



### Check out our Facebook page or the Antenno app in an emergency

our emergency management team monitors situations and provides education on emergency events

# How we've reduced costs

As shown on the previous page, rates are used to fund the essential services and infrastructure in our district which council delivers. Due to the challenges we outlined earlier, our costs to deliver some of these services have increased.

Councillors and staff are keenly aware that households are facing cost pressures too and have looked across the council to find savings, in order to keep rates as low as possible.

## Where we've found savings through deferrals

The approach has been to look for ways to operate as efficiently as possible, while ensuring we will still be able to deliver all our key services in the coming year. This has involved making some tough decisions.

In some areas we were able to lower this year's rates rise by deferring work. See the list below (note this is not an exhaustive list):

Deferral	Why it's being deferred
› \$1.75M capital funding for housing in 2023/24	Work programme still being established
› Town centre regeneration placemaking projects	To be considered through the long-term plan
› Oriental Toilets refresh	To be considered through the long-term plan
› City Bridge pedestrian/bike walkway project	Funding re-prioritised to complete the Aramoho Rail Bridge walkway renewal
› War Memorial Centre copper dome replacement	Work not considered urgent for this year
› Vehicle replacements	Replacements deferred to a later year where possible
› North Mole carpark and amenities › Morgan St to North Mole road extension	Detailed project plans not yet in place
› Youth Hub	More work is needed to establish next steps for this
› Accessible playgrounds	External grant funding yet to be sought. The work programme is not yet confirmed.

## Where we've cut costs

Costs have been cut in the following areas to reduce the rates rise:

- › Three Waters asset replacements (assorted)  
Non-critical projects that we do not have capacity to deliver by 30 June 2024 have been removed

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- › Solar initiatives for 2023/24  
\$1M reduction  
There are higher impact climate change investments we are planning to make

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- › Coastal plan budget reduced by \$200,000  
The available funding is sufficient for the coming year - the whole budget will be reviewed through the long-term plan

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- › Climate change budget reduced by \$100,000  
The reduction will not compromise deliverables. Ongoing funding for climate change investments will be sought through the long-term plan

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- › Economic development budget (Whanganui & Partners) reduced by 5% (\$130,000)  
Will not compromise core economic development deliverables  
To be reviewed through the long-term plan

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- › Sports and recreation contract for Sport Whanganui reduced by \$60,000  
  
No set plan for this expenditure  
Reduction will not compromise current deliverables

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- › Sports and recreation contestable funding reduced by \$50,000  
Reduction will not compromise current commitments

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- › Heritage building preservation grants reduced by \$100,000  
Reduction will not compromise current commitments

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- › Reductions made in the salary budget  
\$2.1M reduction due to ongoing vacancies and capitalisation of project management costs

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- › Management restructure  
\$400,000 saved in salaries

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- › Minor reductions to a range of budgets  
Around \$100,000 saved through minor reductions to budgets for printing, stationery, travel/accommodation etc

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- › Savings on internal auditor function  
\$50,000 saved through contracting out the internal auditor function

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# Where costs have increased

These are some of the areas where costs have increased:

- › contracts for operating and maintaining core infrastructure like roads, water, wastewater, stormwater and our central business district maintenance cannot be reduced; in fact, the cost of all of these has increased
- › interest and insurance costs – these cannot be reduced and have increased substantially
- › funding of up to \$170,000 for a temporary location to support homeless people in Whanganui who are currently in freedom camping sites has been added to the budget for next year.

## Changes to rates this year

### Average rates rise for 2023/24

We know it is a tough time for many people in our community right now with the cost of living increases. We're aware many people are on fixed incomes and that others will be feeling the pressure of higher interest rates on their mortgages.

These cost pressures have been front and centre for our councillors over a series of workshops and after a lot of work we have been able to get the proposed average rates rise for 2023/24 down to 8.2%.

For an average residential household, this equates to an increase of about \$5 per week.

**In the national context Whanganui's rates rise is mid-range – a number of centres are proposing rates rises of over 10%.**

It's important to note that 8.2% is an average only; rates changes are likely to be different for everyone, based on a number of factors.

this is an  
increase of  
**8.2%**






or an extra  
**\$5** per  
week\*

\*for the average residential household.

If you're struggling to pay rates, please contact the council's rates team to talk about payment options

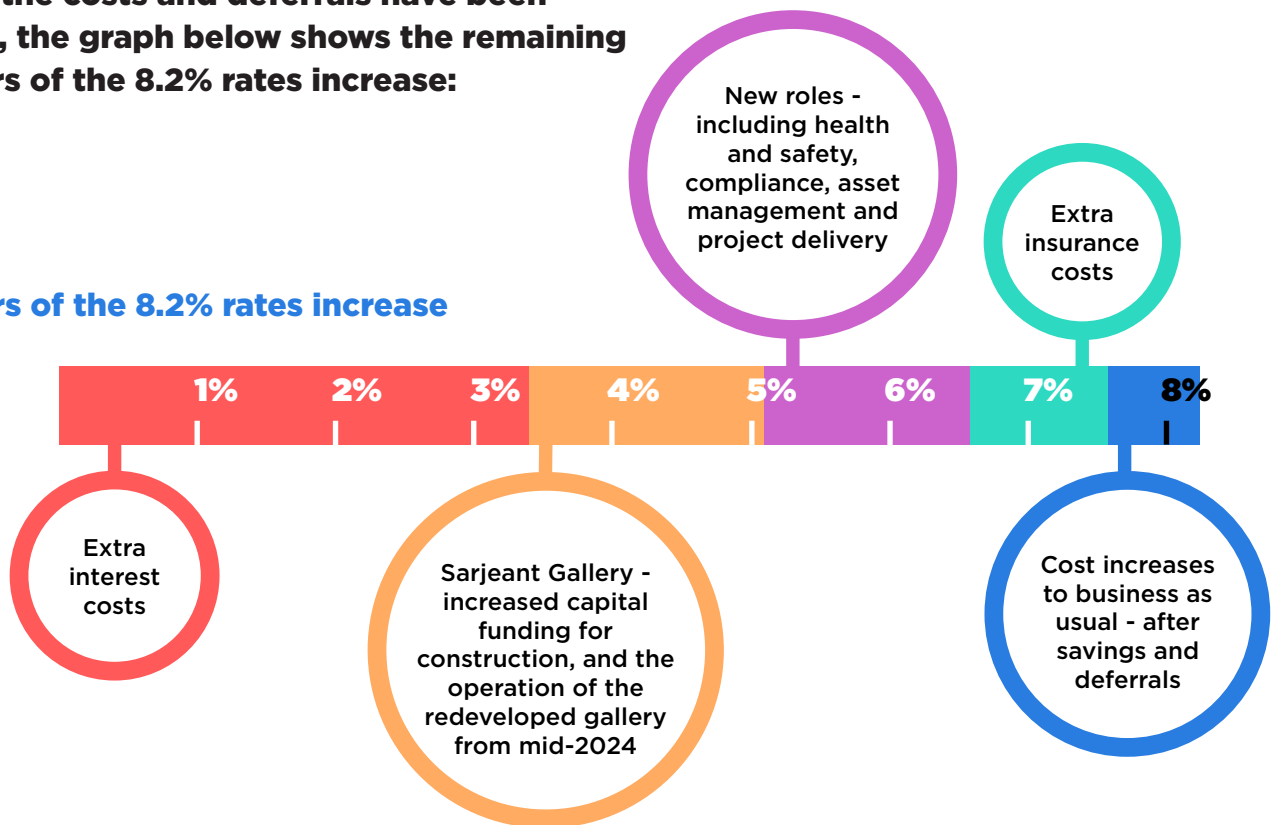
phone **06 349 0001** or email  
**rates@whanganui.govt.nz**

# Proposed average rates and rate increases for 2023/24

	 RESIDENTIAL	 LIFESTYLE	 FARMING	 COMMERCIAL	 OVERALL
Average land value	\$256,000	\$515,000	\$1,540,000	\$605,000	\$360,000
Average capital value	\$534,000	\$923,000	\$2,230,000	\$1,869,000	\$715,000
Proposed average 2023/24 rates	\$3,412	\$3,010	\$5,556	\$12,539	\$4,027
Proposed rates \$ increase	\$271	\$345	\$400	\$761	\$310
Proposed rates % increase	8.5%	12.9%	7.8%	6.5%	8.2%
Past 5 years average rates increase	5.1%	7.1%	4.6%	2.3%	

After the costs and deferrals have been made, the graph below shows the remaining drivers of the 8.2% rates increase:

## Drivers of the 8.2% rates increase



Note: the proposed average rates rise of 7.9% was on the basis of the aviary being closed, but it will increase to 8.2% if the aviary is retained or improved.

# Property valuations and rates

## The valuation process

Councils are required by law to get properties in their district revalued every three years. Our independent valuers, Quotable Value (QV), completed this for Whanganui as at 1 October 2022, following national valuation rules. Part of the process is an independent audit of valuations to make sure they are as accurate as possible.

When making their assessments QV are required to look at the **'highest and best use'** for a property, which may not be its existing use.

To learn more about QV's rating valuation process, please visit: [www.qv.co.nz/about/about-rating-valuations/](http://www.qv.co.nz/about/about-rating-valuations/)

QV's most recent valuations will be used to determine your share of rates from 1 July 2023. If you didn't receive your valuation in the mail you can look it up here: [www.qv.co.nz](http://www.qv.co.nz)

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT QV'S RATING VALUATION PROCESS, PLEASE VISIT:**

[www.qv.co.nz/about/about-rating-valuations/](http://www.qv.co.nz/about/about-rating-valuations/)



## Objecting to a rating valuation

As property valuation experts, QV deal with objections to valuations. If you think your valuation is too high or too low, we encourage you to contact QV to lodge an objection before **Friday, 14 April**.

You can contact QV's call centre on **0800 787 284**, email [ratingsupport@qv.co.nz](mailto:ratingsupport@qv.co.nz) or lodge an objection here: **Object to Rating Valuation (qv.co.nz)**.

Please note that the downturn in the property market since 1 October 2022 will not be considered grounds for objection. QV's most recent valuations reflect the growth in your property value over three years, from September 2019 to October 2022.

## How property valuations affect rates

When we work out how much we need to collect in rates, we calculate the total cost of providing services and facilities for the community for the year. The council doesn't receive more in rates just because property values go up.

What your property valuation can change is the amount you pay compared to others. If you think of the council's overall rates income as a pie, the size of the pie does not get any bigger as a result of property values changing. However, a ratepayer's slice of the pie (their portion) might get bigger or smaller depending on how their property value has changed relative to other properties.

This means an increase in the value of your property does not necessarily mean you will pay more rates since many other properties in the district will likely have increased in value too. However, if your property's value has increased or decreased a lot more than most other properties in the district, your new rates might either be above or below the average increase of 8.2%.

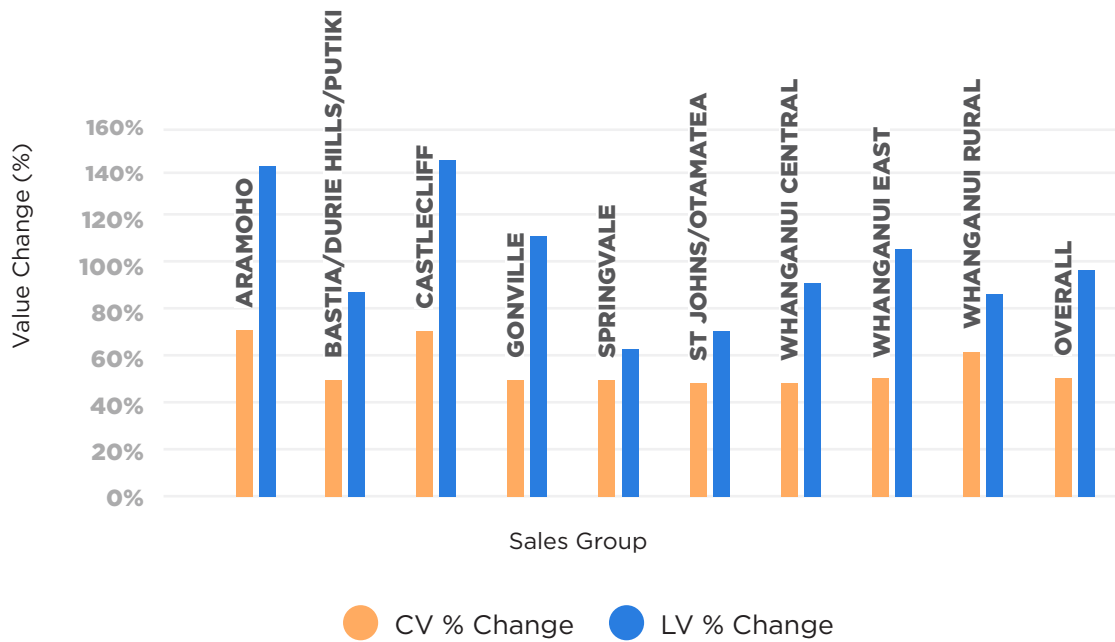
Property values are one of the ways we determine how to share the cost of providing our services throughout the district, but it's important to note that the amount of rates paid by each property is affected by a number of other factors too.

For example, rates are also affected by the services a property receives, the type of the property (residential, commercial or farming) and the number of separately used or inhabitable units on that property (for example, some properties have 'granny flats').



**Changes in residential properties by suburb between the last revaluation in 2019 and the new 2022 valuation are shown below:**

### Residential Valuation Change



The largest land valuation increases have occurred in Aramoho, Castlecliff and Gonville, bringing land values in these suburbs closer to those in Springvale and St Johns/Otamatea.

### Trends this year

There are particular trends in the latest valuations that will lead to some properties having an above average rates rise.

**At this most recent valuation we are seeing significant increases in land values in Whanganui – particularly in areas such as Aramoho, Castlecliff and Gonville.** Because the demand for land is so high at the moment, the value of land across different suburbs is starting to even out. For example, over the last three years land values in Aramoho have increased +141%, while land values in Springvale have increased +62%.

Note that while some lower-priced properties will see a larger increase in their rates this year **- they will still pay less than higher-priced properties overall.**

**Due to the high demand for land, we are also seeing properties with larger sections and the potential to be subdivided rising in value significantly.**

Another trend we are seeing is that traditionally lower-valued hill country farmland is increasing in value significantly, due to its potential to be used for carbon farming.

If you're struggling to pay rates, please contact the council's rates team to talk about payment options  
**phone 06 349 0001** or email  
**rates@whanganui.govt.nz**

# Looking at the effect on different residential property types

The examples below show how the proposed 2023/24 rates rise would affect a range of residential properties. We have not included commercial or farming properties due to the wide variation in these property types. You can see more example properties in our Funding Impact Statement in our supporting information to this plan.



We encourage you to look up the proposed 2023/24 rates for your own property on our website at:  
[www.whanganui.govt.nz/rating-information-database](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/rating-information-database)

## Suburban home



Weekly change  
**-\$0.67**

Land Value **\$260,000 (+58%)**  
 Capital Value **\$520,000 (+51%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$3,584**  
 (-\$35 / -1.0%)

## Small inner city unit



Weekly change  
**+\$1.94**

Land Value **\$155,000 (+67%)**  
 Capital Value **\$425,000 (+47%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$2,933**  
 (+\$101 / +3.6%)

## Suburban home



Weekly change  
**+\$3.17**

Land Value **\$335,000 (+81%)**  
 Capital Value **\$670,000 (+49%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$4,148**  
 (+\$165 / +4.1%)

## Near average suburban home



Weekly change  
**+\$5.10**

Land Value **\$260,000 (+98%)**  
 Capital Value **\$460,000 (+46%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$3,436**  
 (+\$265 / +8.4%)

## Suburban home



Weekly change  
**+\$11.13**

Land Value **\$200,000 (+167%)**  
 Capital Value **\$405,000 (+76%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$3,139**  
 (+\$579 / +22.2%)

## Suburban home with 1900m<sup>2</sup> section



Weekly change  
**+\$31.96**

Land Value **\$450,000 (+288%)**  
 Capital Value **\$675,000 (+145%)**  
 Proposed 2023/24 Rates **\$4,632**  
 (+\$1,662 / +56.0%)

# Fees and charges

With costs increasing substantially we have reviewed our fees and charges to make sure users of specific services and facilities are paying their fair share and the increased costs are not all falling back to ratepayers. Many of our fees and charges have not been increased for several years.

**We are proposing changes to these fees and charges from 1 July 2023:**



**Building consent fees**



**Resource consent fees and policy/planning fees**



**Cemetery fees**



**Health registration fees**

We're consulting on the proposed new fees and charges separately from this annual plan. You can find more information on the proposed fee changes and provide feedback via our website at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Have-Your-Say](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Have-Your-Say)

**Kōrero Mai, Have your Say**

[www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Have-Your-Say](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Have-Your-Say)

## Breach of rates cap

The council has a financial strategy which sets a limit on rates increases. This limit states that the rates cannot increase by more than Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) plus 2% (after accounting for growth) – for this year, that limit would be 7.9%. Our proposed rates increase of 8.2% now exceeds this cap. We are permitted to breach this rates limit, as long as we provide an explanation as to why this has happened. For this annual plan the main contributor to the breach of our rates limit has been the significant increase in interest and insurance costs, which we have highlighted in this document.

## Forecasted financial statements

The council is forecasting an unbalanced budget for this annual plan. Details of this, including reasons for the unbalanced budget can be found in the financial information in our supporting documents.

# Tell us what you think

## The future of the aviary

An independent review of the Rotokawau Virginia Lake aviary was completed in February 2023 by a qualified zoologist. The review found the aviary does not meet best practice standards for animal health and welfare. The zoologist's report says significant updates to the aviary structure and layout, as well as increased staffing, are required to meet best practice standards of care for the birds.

### Some key issues highlighted in the zoologist's report:

- › the aviary is not big enough for the types and numbers of birds present
- › in some areas the aviary lacks adequate natural light, ventilation, and a sufficient number of clean drinking sources
- › the birds demonstrate behavioural issues which may indicate a lack of stimulation from their environment
- › many of the birds are aging – for example, one of the cockatoos is estimated to be nearly 70 years old
- › the birds require a higher standard of care than what is available in the current enclosure
- › the aviary is not providing educational outcomes for the public
- › the purpose of the aviary is limited to simply viewing birds. The aviary's design could be improved to offer a better visitor experience of the facility, including improved accessibility, safety, comfort and educational opportunities.

### Key actions needed to meet best practice standards of care:

- › increase the size of the aviary to allow for adequate enrichment and provide space for different social groupings and isolations of birds
- › build a structure to allow adequate space for preparation of food, storage and recordkeeping
- › increase staffing levels so the birds are adequately monitored throughout the day and after hours.

### Consultation options

The aviary is a special place for residents and visitors alike, but the welfare of the birds is our paramount consideration. Keeping the aviary open in its current format is not a viable option because it doesn't meet animal welfare standards. It's also important that we act as soon as possible on this issue, to minimise further distress to the birds.

With this in mind, councillors have proposed three options for the future of the Rotokawau Virginia Lake aviary and they want to hear which option you think is best.

**Which option do you think is best?**

## Option 1: Investment in the aviary to both improve animal welfare standards and the visitor/educational experience

Investment in the aviary to improve animal welfare standards would involve increasing staffing levels from two part-time aviary employees to at least two suitably qualified full-time employees. There would also be ongoing costs associated with staff training, facility maintenance, veterinary bills, and food and enrichment costs for the birds.

Improving animal welfare standards would also involve construction work to enlarge the aviary and improve its configuration. For example, changes to the structure to allow adequate space, light, water sources and enrichment for the birds would be necessary.

Under this option, council would also act on the zoologist recommendations for the aviary to **provide educational outcomes for the public, as well as creating an improved visitor experience**. This would require significant changes to the facility, such as improving accessibility and signage, providing safe and comfortable viewing spaces for the public and allowing for educational opportunities within the aviary itself.

This option is estimated to cost \$750,000, with approximately \$500,000 as a one off cost going towards the improvements to the aviary structure. The remaining \$250,000 would be an annual cost to operate the new aviary. If this option is chosen by council a business case review would take place, which would include confirmation of the full costs for this option.

**Note: If this option is selected by the council it would increase the average rates rise beyond 8.2%.**

## Option 3: Closure of the aviary

If we closed the aviary there would be a one-off cost to rehome the birds to aviaries or zoos that meet animal welfare standards, close and remove the Rotokawau Virginia Lake aviary structure, remediate the site and provide redundancy pay to existing staff.

This option would involve an estimated one-off cost of \$75,000, which is significantly lower than the costs associated with options 1 and 2. There would be no ongoing maintenance or operating costs associated with closure of the aviary.

**This is not our preferred option, as we recognise the aviary is a special place for many people in our community.**

**Note: if this option is selected by council it would decrease the average rates rise for the year from 8.2% to 7.9%.**

## Option 2: Investment in the aviary to address animal welfare standards only – our preferred option

This option would involve making only the changes needed to address animal welfare standards, but would not include any upgrades to the aviary to enhance visitor and educational experiences.

The ongoing annual costs for this option would be similar to option 1, as meeting animal welfare standards would require increasing staffing to two full-time employees, as well as ongoing costs for facility maintenance, veterinary bills, food and enrichment for the birds. However, there would be no ongoing cost for providing educational or visitor opportunities associated with this option.

This option would still involve some construction work to enlarge the aviary and improve its ability to provide natural light, water sources and enrichment for the birds.

The option is estimated to cost \$400,000. This would include a one-off cost of \$200,000 to improve the aviary structure and an ongoing annual operating cost of \$200,000 to cover staffing and the costs to care for the birds. If this option is chosen by the council a business case review would take place, which would include confirmation of the full costs for this option.

**This is councillors' preferred option, because it addresses animal welfare concerns, while coming in at a lower cost to ratepayers than option 1.**

**Note: If this option is selected by the council the average rates increase would be 8.2%.**



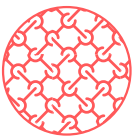
# The Leading Edge Strategy



In 2014 we worked with the community to develop a strategy for the district. The result was our 'Leading Edge Strategy'  
[www.whanganui.govt.nz/leading-edge](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/leading-edge)



A lot has changed since 2014, and this year we will be working with the Community/ Iwi/Hapū to shape up our next long-term plan.



- › We want to hear what is important to you and what you think will be important for future generations of Whanganui residents?
- › What do you think are the big challenges Whanganui is facing and where should council focus its efforts?



Your feedback will help us to review our Leading Edge Strategy and shape our next long-term-plan (2024 - 2034).

## How to have your say

### Tēnā, tukua mai ō whakaaro / We'd like to hear from you

There are many ways you can share your views with us:

- › make a submission online: [www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2023](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2023)
- › email your thoughts to: [policysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:policysubmissions@whanganui.govt.nz)
- › pick up a hard copy from the council customer services at **101 Guyton Street**, or the **Davis or Gonville libraries**
- › give us a call on **(06) 349 0001** to talk with a staff member
- › **Or come and chat to us in person on the following dates:**

<p><b>TUESDAY</b> <b>4 APRIL</b></p> <p>10.00-12.00pm Davis Library</p>	<p><b>FRIDAY</b> <b>14 APRIL</b></p> <p>4.00-6.00pm Duncan Pavilion</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY</b> <b>15 APRIL</b></p> <p>Extravaganza Fair Kowhai Park</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>19 APRIL</b></p> <p>11.00-1.00pm Hakeke Street community Centre</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>26 APRIL</b></p> <p>10.00-12.00pm Gonville Library</p>
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## Submissions close 30th April 2023.

## Supporting documents

This document has been prepared with a number of supporting documents. The supporting information for our proposed Annual Plan is available on our website: [www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2023](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/annual-plan-2023) or call (06) 349 0001 to request a copy

- › Full financial statements
- › Funding Impact Statement - rates information
- › Capital expenditure projects by area
- › Aviary zoologist report

## What happens next

- 1** Public hearings will take place on **10 and 11 May** – you're welcome to come and speak to your submission in person
- 2** Your elected representatives will consider all of the submissions and make a final decision on **30 May**
- 3** Rates for the 2023/24 year will apply from **1 July 2023.**

# Community Consultation

**Annual Plan  
2023/24**



WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui