



# Kia ora koutou

Enclosed is your rates assessment for the 2020/21 year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought immense uncertainty to our community. Whanganui District Council has responded by reducing the original proposed average rates increase from 3.9 percent to 1.4 percent.

We were able to achieve this by reducing our loan repayments for 2020/21, and by taking a detailed look at the coming year's budget and making savings where we could. In addition we have implemented a rates relief package and reduced rates penalties for late payments from 10 percent to 5 percent.

The rates for each individual property will vary, as this is a revaluation year where some larger variations will occur due to relative valuation changes.

The latest Quotable Value New Zealand valuations for our district reflect significant increases in Whanganui's property market since the last valuation three years ago. Land values have increased 61 percent and capital values 41 percent. Our growing population and lifestyle appeal means that Whanganui properties are in high demand.

Two exciting projects have come to fruition in the past 12 months. Work has begun onsite for the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua redevelopment. Once this project is complete, it's estimated the Sarjeant will attract about 22,000 additional visitors to our district per year, generating roughly \$11.4 million in additional regional spending.

Revitalisation of Whanganui Port was given a boost recently with the announcement of \$26.75 million in funding from the Provincial Growth Fund for four projects encompassing infrastructure improvements and economic development opportunities at the port. These projects will create hundreds of jobs for local people and ensure that Tupua te Kawa, the values associated with Te Awa Tupua, are upheld.

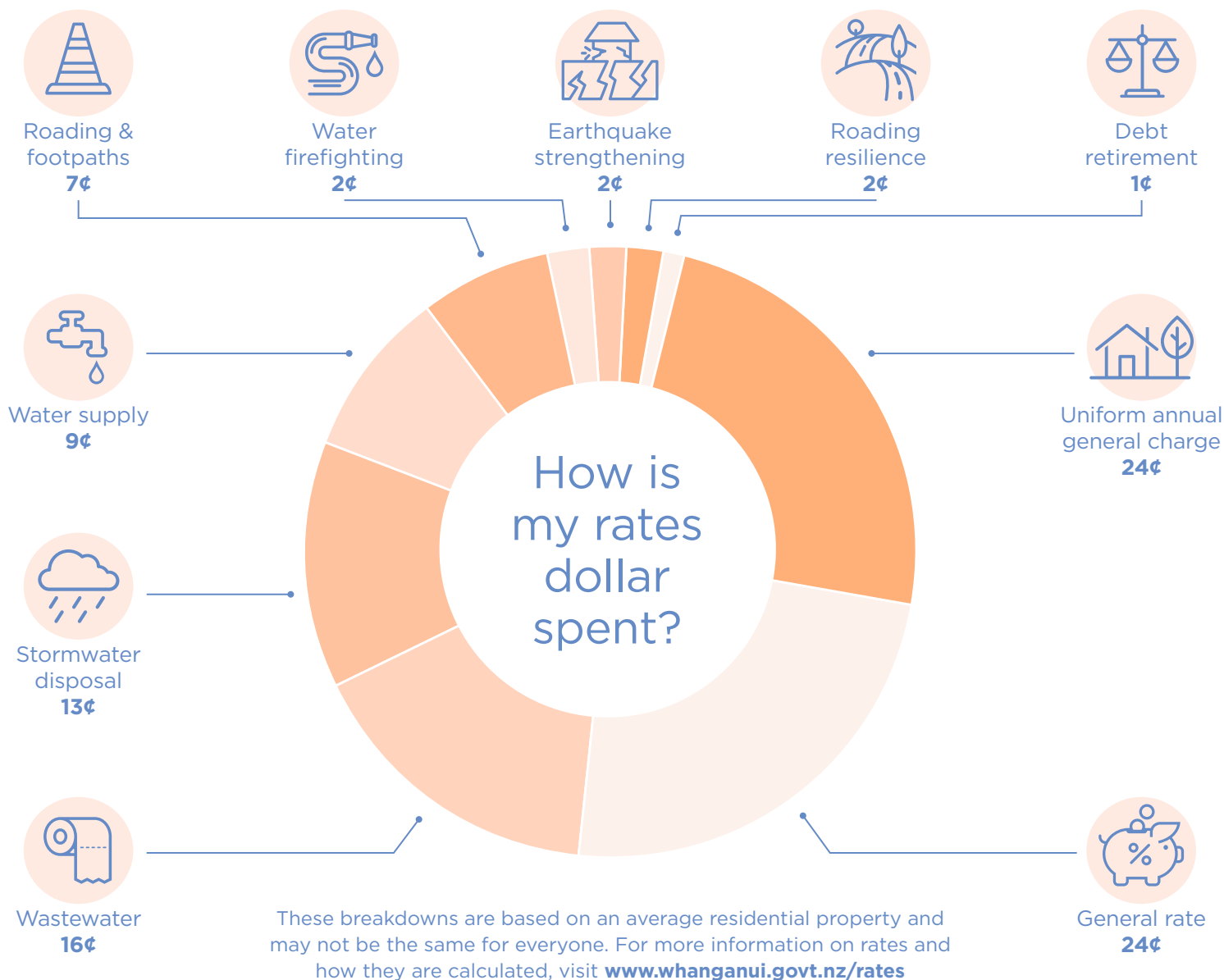
Even with the uncertainty around the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the district's economic and social wellbeing, we still need to plan for the future. In this year's Annual Plan we allocated additional funding for climate change, housing and digital connectivity – the importance of these issues has become even more apparent in the past few months.

We recently also started the planning process for our 2021-31 Long Term Plan. This plan will outline all the tasks the Council plans to do over the next 10 years, why we are doing these things and their associated costs.

It is important too for us to understand the community's aspirations and concerns as we develop the Long Term Plan and I encourage you all to have your say when the opportunity arises over the coming months.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Hamish McDouall', written in a cursive style.

Mayor Hamish McDouall



## Rates Rebate Scheme 2020/21

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$655 for ratepayers\* on a low-income who were paying rates for the home in which they were living on 1 July 2020.

### How is my rebate worked out?

Your rebate will be calculated based on your income, rates and the number of dependants living with you.

The income eligibility for a rebate is \$26,150. However, if your income exceeds this amount you could still be entitled to a rebate depending on the total costs of your rates and the number of dependants.

### How do I apply?

Application forms are available from the Council or can be downloaded from [www.govt.nz/rates-rebate-scheme](http://www.govt.nz/rates-rebate-scheme)

You can apply in person to Whanganui District Council, 101 Guyton Street during normal office hours (8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday).

### Check your eligibility

Visit [www.whanganui.govt.nz/rates-rebate-scheme](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/rates-rebate-scheme) for a handy calculator to see if you are eligible.



### What information do I need to provide?

1. Accurate information about your income (and that of any spouse/partner and/or joint home owner who lives with you) for the tax year ended 31 March 2020.
2. Your Horizons Regional Council rates bill.

**Applications close on Wednesday, 30 June 2021.**

\*ratepayer means any person whose name is recorded in Whanganui District Council's rating information database (RID).