

# Summary Annual Report

For the year ended 30 June 2025



WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui



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## Our summary report

Welcome to this summary of the 2024/2025 Annual Report. It provides an overview of what we've achieved, how we're tracking against the plans we set in our Long-Term Plan (LTP), and how we've spent your rates.

You can find more detailed information in our full Annual Report which outlines our overall financial position and performance for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Council adopted the audited 2024/25 Annual Report on 9 October 2025. You can find it on our website:

<https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Research-Reports/Reports>

This Summary Annual Report was authorised for issue by the Mayor, Andrew Tripe, and Chief Executive, Barbara McKerrow, on 7 November 2025.



Andrew Tripe  
Mayor of Whanganui



Barbara McKerrow<sup>1</sup>  
Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup> David Langford resigned as Chief Executive effective from 17 October 2025.

# Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive

Tēnā koutou katoa

We are pleased to present the Whanganui District Council Annual Report for 2024/25.

This report summarises our financial performance and sets out the council's activities over the past year. It reflects the progress we have made, the challenges we have faced, and the decisions we have taken on behalf of our community to keep our district moving forward responsibly and sustainably.

Over the course of this year, we have continued to respond to significant financial pressures from inflation and rising compliance costs to the ongoing impact of national reform. These factors have added to the challenge of keeping rates affordable while still delivering the services and infrastructure our residents rely on. Through careful decision-making, tighter fiscal controls and a strong focus on our core services, we have continued to deliver while keeping our work programme aligned with our community's most pressing needs.

## Planning for growth

A key milestone for the year was the adoption of our new strategic direction, "Strategy for Whanganui," in July 2025. Developed in partnership with our community and local Hapū, this new strategy reaffirms our shared aspirations and guides the decisions we make as a Council. Built around five long-term goals: Grow, Build, Protect, Celebrate, and Activate, the strategy will shape our district's development and guide our next Long-Term Plan in 2027.

In the face of increasing pressure to do more with less, we also introduced a six-point plan through our Long-Term Plan 2024–2034 to help manage rising costs and deliver value for money. Over the past year, we have made real progress. This includes refocusing on essential services, reducing operational costs, growing our revenue streams, and exploring new funding options.

We did this by making the difficult decision to cancel the planned food scraps kerbside collection, adjust library opening hours, and reduce our fleet and insurance costs. At the same time, we saw stronger returns from several Council-owned facilities and services, including the Splash Centre, Sarjeant Gallery, and NZ Glassworks. We also began growing our property investment portfolio to increase non-rates revenue.

We also made progress on long-term planning for growth. In particular, we kicked off the Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue programme to enable future housing development and adopted a revised Development Contributions Policy to ensure that growth helps pay for itself.

## Collaboration is key

Council's decision in July 2025 to join forces with Ruapehu District Council to form a two-council water services Council Controlled Organisation (CCO) was another significant step. This new entity responds to the government's "Local Water Done Well" reforms, and aims to ensure that we provide quality water, wastewater and stormwater services that support our communities and protect the environment, while keeping services affordable and decision-making local. This model will be formalised in the coming year and is expected to be operational in July 2027.

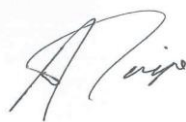
Throughout the year, we have kept strong relationships with Tangata Whenua and local Hapū at the centre of our work. This includes supporting Treaty settlement progress through the Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiation Trust, working in partnership on environmental and infrastructure matters, and upholding our obligations under Te Awa Tupua Act 2017. Te Awa Tupua remains central to our district's wellbeing and decision-making.

### Preparing for climate change

Another area of focus has been climate change. We continued to implement Te Rautaki Huringa Āhuarangi, our climate strategy, by funding community-led initiatives, completing our first climate risk assessment for Council-owned assets, and preparing an Emissions Reduction Plan to guide our climate action over the next 10–30 years. We were proud to be one of four councils nationwide whose climate change work programme was audited by the Office of the Auditor-General. This audit recognised the value of our community-led, place-based approach.

Looking ahead, we know challenges will continue, but so too will opportunities. With our new Strategy for Whanganui in place, and the foundations laid through our six-point plan, we are confident in our path forward as we look to the future.

We would like to thank our elected members, staff, and community partners for their ongoing support and commitment. Together, we are shaping a stronger, more sustainable Whanganui, for today and for generations to come.



Andrew Tripe  
Mayor of Whanganui

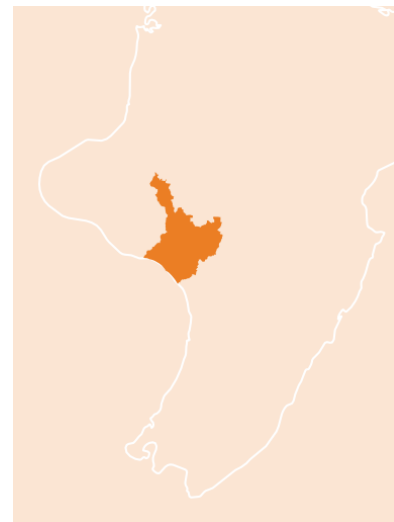

















David Langford  
Chief Executive

## District Profile

Whanganui district spans 2,373 km<sup>2</sup>, stretching from the Ruapehu district in the north to the Tasman Sea in the south, and bordered by Rangitikei, South Taranaki, and Stratford districts.

At the heart of our rohe is Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui — the Whanganui River. The Awa is a sacred taonga for Whanganui hapū and iwi, holding deep cultural and spiritual significance. It is legally recognised as a person under Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, and it has a central place in the life and wellbeing of our community.



	48,900 Whanganui district population <sup>2</sup>		\$99,968 Average household income <sup>3</sup>		2055 Average sunshine hours per year
	\$192M Total tourism expenditure <sup>2</sup>		70% own or partly own a home NZ percentage is 66%		80.4 Average life expectancy <sup>4</sup> NZ average is 82.3
	4.7 Housing affordability <sup>2</sup> Housing is more affordable than in NZ (6.5)		Our ethnicities  79.4% European 28.5% Māori 4.6% Pacific peoples 5.4% Asian <sup>1</sup>		1 Health care & social assistance 2 Manufacturing 3 Agriculture, forestry and fishing 4 Construction 5 Public administration and safety Our five largest contributing industries to the economy <sup>5</sup>
	22.5% residents aged 65 years or older <sup>1</sup> NZ percentage is 16.5%		18.6% residents aged under 15 years <sup>1</sup> NZ percentage is 18.5%		62.5% Whanganui population that live in high deprivation areas
	\$2,613M estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for our district <sup>4</sup>		62.5% Physically active <sup>6</sup>		5.9% Unemployment rate <sup>4</sup> NZ percentage is 4%

<sup>2</sup> Infometrics – Regional economic profile for Whanganui - demographics for year to 30 June 2024. Note: multiple ethnicities can be ticked.

<sup>3</sup> Infometrics – Regional economic profile for Whanganui – wellbeing and tourism results for year to March 2025

<sup>4</sup> Infometrics – between 2019-2021

<sup>5</sup> Infometrics – Regional economic profile for Whanganui – economy and labour results for year to March 2024

<sup>6</sup> New Zealand Health Survey 2017-2020

## Our role

Whanganui District Council is your local council. We're here to support the needs of our community — today and into the future. Local government exists to support local decision making by and for our community, and to deliver infrastructure and services to our community – now and for generations to come.

We operate under more than 100 different laws. The most important is the Local Government Act 2002, which sets out what councils can do, how we make decisions, and how we're held accountable.

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Our focus is on delivering good value core infrastructure – such as roads, water and rubbish. Our work also includes:

- Delivering essential services and managing public assets
- Regulating activities (like building, alcohol licensing, and animal control)
- Partnering with iwi, community groups, and government agencies
- Funding organisations and individuals who help achieve our shared goals
- Facilitating collaboration across sectors to solve local challenges
- Advocating to central government on behalf of Whanganui

## Strategic direction

In 2023, we began a full review of our **Leading Edge Strategy**. Working closely with Whanganui hapū and the wider community, we asked: *What does wellbeing mean to you? What kind of future do you want for Whanganui?*

This collaborative kōrero helped shape a new strategic direction for our district.

Our new strategy was still in development when our Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 was adopted, and we committed to promoting the four wellbeing's – environmental, social, cultural and economic – to underpin our organisational goal of improving our communities' quality of life.

In December 2024, central government signalled its intention to remove references to the four wellbeing's from the Local Government Act 2002<sup>7</sup>, restoring a purpose focused on fixing pipes, filling potholes and delivering core local services such as waste management, libraries, museums, reserves, and other recreational facilities and community amenities.

Based on the new direction provided by central government, we reframed the strategy to centre it around five enduring goals:

- **Grow** – a thriving local economy
- **Build** – well-designed infrastructure and places
- **Protect** – our environment, people and heritage
- **Celebrate** – our culture and identity
- **Activate** – participation, partnerships and local pride

Following engagement with key stakeholders and public feedback during the **Draft Annual Plan 2025/26**, the final strategy was adopted in **July 2025**. It now serves as Council's core guiding document and will be fully integrated into our **next Long-Term Plan (2027–2037)**.

An overview of the strategy is shown in the following diagram.

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<sup>7</sup> Section 4 of the Local Government (Community Wellbeing) Amendment Act 2019 provides that councils should play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach.



# Strategy for Whanganui

## Rautaki mō Whanganui



## Our six-point plan

When we developed the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034, we focused on two key goals:

- Keeping rates affordable
- Future-proofing Whanganui

To strike the right balance, we introduced a six-point plan to manage costs and invest wisely in our district's future:

- **Cutting council services and focusing on the basics**
- **Finding operational efficiency savings** – working smarter
- **Increasing non-rates revenue** – such as user pays products and services or increasing returns on our property portfolio
- **Growing our population base** – so there are more people to pitch in on rates
- **Exploring alternative funding for projects** – such as central government and grant funding
- **Selling assets** – to repay debt

This approach helps us stay financially responsible while still investing in what Whanganui needs to thrive.

## Our progress against the 6-point plan

After adopting the Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2024–2034 in July 2024, we got to work on delivering real results.

We developed initiatives under each part of our six-point plan and closely monitored progress throughout the year to make sure we stayed on track with the financial targets in the LTP.

The table below highlights some key decisions made during the year as part of this work.

Cuts to council services and focus on the basics	Operational efficiency savings	Increasing non-rates revenue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of the food scraps kerbside collection service that was planned to start on 1 July 2025</li> <li>• Reduction of library opening hours</li> <li>• Brought Whanganui &amp; Partners in-house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation and staffing restructure along with a vacancy management programme</li> <li>• Reduced our insurance costs by taking a risk-based approach</li> <li>• Rationalised our vehicle fleet</li> <li>• Information and Communications Technology (ICT) review of software and licensing costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarjeant Gallery (including café) revenue has exceeded expectations</li> <li>• Higher revenue at the Splash Centre, venue &amp; events facilities, NZ Glassworks, waste levy revenue, consent revenue, parking and dog registration</li> <li>• Commercial returns on property investments</li> </ul>
Growing our population	Alternative funding sources	Selling assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commenced the programme development for the Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue growth project to enable future housing development</li> <li>• Implementation of a revised Development Contributions Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs programme that places young people into employment</li> <li>• Lotteries funding was used towards the main pool upgrades at Splash Centre, and a Rotary Whanganui donation allowed us to install mobility hoists earlier than planned</li> <li>• Accurate 3D mapping of the district using LiDAR was boosted through funding sourced by Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui and contributions from Rānana Marae and Te Pou Tupua</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed asset sales targets were removed from the six-point plan following consultation on the LTP 2024-34</li> <li>• Asset sales are will still be considered on a case-by-case basis, but Council has instead focused on increasing revenue from its property portfolio</li> </ul>

## Working with Tangata Whenua

We work closely with Tangata Whenua, Hapū, and Iwi to reflect our shared commitment to partnership.

Under New Zealand law, councils must consider the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi). These include:

- Supporting Māori participation in decision-making
- Recognising Iwi and Hapū as key partners in local governance

We regularly engage with mana whenua and legislated Iwi organisations to ensure their voices and priorities are part of Council's work — now and into the future.

### Tangata Whenua Iwi Partnerships

Council maintains working relationships with a wide range of Māori entities — including collective Hapū, post-settlement governance entities, Treaty claimants (including those with overlapping interests), Marae, Rūnanga, and statutory Iwi organisations.

We acknowledge that Hapū hold their own Mana Motuhake (self-determination) within their rohe.

In the spirit of partnership and good faith, we aim to:

- Engage early — informing Hapū and Iwi at the *concept stage* of any major policy or infrastructure project
- Work at place — recognising that Hapū want to be involved in activities that affect their specific rohe, not just through broader Iwi engagement
- Uphold Māori voice — ensuring the views of Hapū are clearly heard and their values meaningfully considered in decision-making

This approach strengthens local partnerships and supports better outcomes for everyone in the Whanganui district.

### Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiation Trust

Across Aotearoa, many Hapū and Iwi have entered into Treaty settlements to address historical injustices — especially the loss of land through breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In 2015, the Waitangi Tribunal found that local Hapū and Iwi in the Whanganui district had many well-founded grievances, including the Crown's actions when it acquired 89,000 acres of land around Whanganui city.

A settlement is now being negotiated that acknowledges these wrongs and aims to set a positive, forward-looking path for the future.

The Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiation Trust (WLSNT) has been in negotiations with the Crown since 2017, and these discussions are now nearing conclusion.

In February 2025, Whanganui District Council agreed to support a programme of work with Takapau Whāriki to help prepare for the next steps.

## Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017

Te Awa Tupua o Whanganui is a tupuna and a vital taonga to Whanganui Hapū and Iwi, recognised and protected in Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017. This Act affirms the inextricable link between Whanganui Iwi and the Awa and recognises a set of values called ‘Tupua te Kawa’.

Te Awa Tupua is central to council's work. It shapes how we care for the environment and how we build and maintain relationships with the local Iwi, Hapū and communities connected to the Awa. The most important aspect for elected members is to put the health and well-being of the Awa and the mana of the communities within its catchment at the centre of its decisions, as well as to be guided by the four Kawa (values).”

The Te Awa Tupua Act also provides for the establishment of Te Kōpuka - a strategy group with the purpose of acting collaboratively for the health and well-being of Te Awa Tupua.



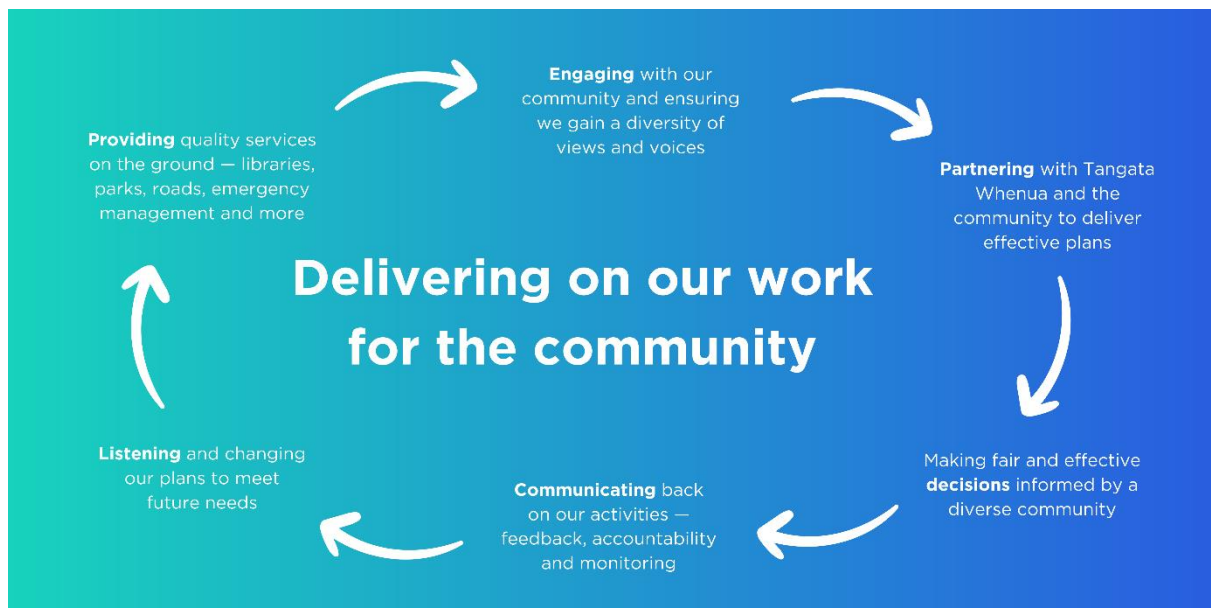
## Delivering on our work

Council does more than just provide services and run facilities — we play a number of important roles to help Whanganui thrive.

We:

- Partner and collaborate with iwi, community groups, and other agencies
- Support community-led initiatives that make a difference locally
- Provide funding and grants to organisations and individuals
- Advocate for Whanganui at a regional and national level
- Plan for the district's growth and development
- Protect our environment, heritage and people
- Maintain and upgrade infrastructure and community assets
- Regulate for safety and fairness
- Promote Whanganui as a great place to live, work and visit

The diagram below shows how all these roles come together to deliver for our community.






## Service performance overview

The Long-Term Plan 2024-34 identifies service levels, performance measures and targets across each of the 11 activity groups.

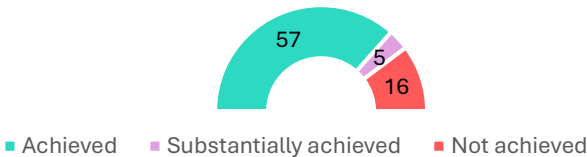
The ‘Summarising our performance’ section on pages 19-52 provides detailed financial and non-financial results for each activity, reporting on how effectively council has delivered on its services over the last financial year.

The following scale has been used to report results for all non-financial performance measures and in the service performance overview graphs.

-  **Achieved** – result for a measure that has met or exceeded the target
-  **Substantially Achieved** – result for a measure where the target has not been met but is within 5% of achieving the target
-  **Not Achieved** – result for a measure that is more than 5% below, and has not met, the target

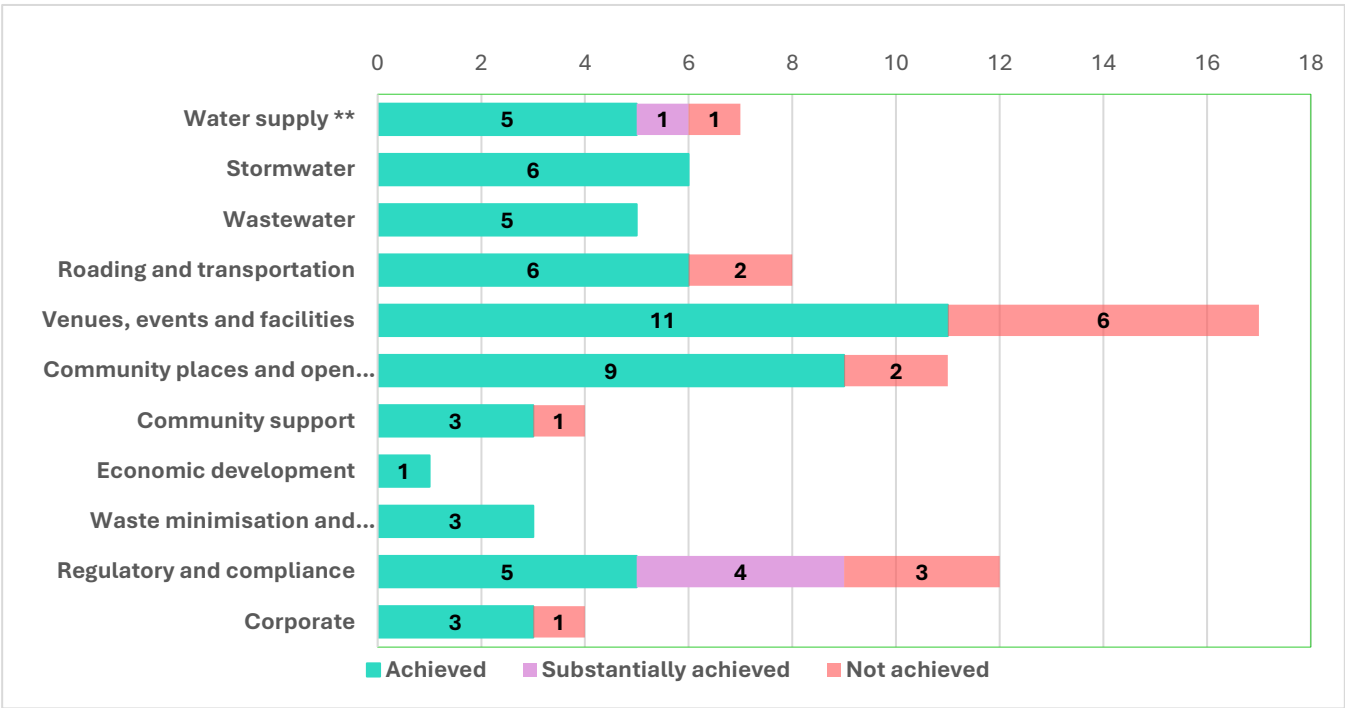
Due to the complexity of its reporting, results for drinking water compliance-related measures are excluded from the following summaries. Detailed results for these can be found in the full Annual Report.

### Performance measure targets for year ending 30 June 2025



Of the 78 performance measures, 57 (73%) were achieved in 2024/25, five were substantially achieved (within 5% of achieving target), and 16 were not achieved. A summary of our performance against Year One (2024/25) targets is shown in the table below:

### Non-financial performance measure results by activity group for year ending 30 June 2025



\*\* Excludes performance measures for drinking water compliance (bacterial and protozoal water quality)

## Key issues and challenges in 2024/25

**Rates affordability** continued to be a key focus for our community. Our challenge has been to consistently strike a balance between delivering our work programme and the services, keeping rates affordable and managing our debt levels.

As experienced throughout the New Zealand economy, we faced ongoing **inflationary pressures** and **cost escalations**, which increased the costs to deliver our standard suite of services. In response, we implemented **tighter fiscal controls** and reduced some service offerings to manage these rising costs.

**Increasing standards** and **legislative changes** have impacted on the level of service we provide and increased the costs of doing business. For example, compliance with the Water Services Act 2021 has resulted in additional operating costs, increased resourcing demands, and the need for new assets to operate a safe drinking water supply.

We have also been grappling with several challenges due to **central government reforms** such as the Local Water Done Well initiative and the Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms. Although often aimed at streamlining operations and improving efficiency, these reforms also introduce significant challenges. One major issue is the financial strain caused by new mandates without corresponding increases in funding. This can lead to budget shortfalls and difficult decisions about which services to prioritise. Balancing these changes while continuing to provide essential services to the community is a delicate and ongoing challenge.

Our credit rating was downgraded by Standard & Poors in early 2025 (along with 17 other councils) due to instability in the New Zealand local government sector as a whole. Standard and Poors noted that council revenues are not increasing enough to cover the additional operating expenditure, infrastructure budgets and responsibilities of local government, and the predictability of the policy framework for local government has also diminished.

## Local Water Done Well

Local Water Done Well is the Government's new plan for managing the delivery of New Zealand's drinking water, stormwater and wastewater services. It replaces the Labour Government's Affordable Water reforms and represents a significant shift in how our water services will be managed in the future. Local Water Done Well takes a more localised view – with central government oversight.

### Status of the water reforms

The Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 required all territorial authorities to submit a Water Services Delivery Plan (WSDP) to the Secretary for Local Government by 3 September 2025. The plan must include the proposed delivery model for our water services which, in turn, must:

- Provide financial resilience
- Be affordable for ratepayers
- Meet new compliance and regulatory standards.

The Act required councils to consult on at least two options for the future model of water delivery, decide on a preferred model and adopt a WSDP that met the requirements set out in legislation.

Council consultation on four viable options for the water services delivery model for our district was undertaken between 17 March – 14 April 2025.

The models included:

- Status-quo (in-house) – this option was legally required as a baseline
- A Whanganui District Council council-controlled organisation
- A multi council-controlled organisation with Rangitikei and Ruapehu district councils (our preferred model at consultation)
- A multi council-controlled organisation with as many councils in the Manawatū-Whanganui region as possible

Key feedback from consultation was concern about 'price harmonisation' across districts, and that Council's decision-making on a future water services delivery model should put the awa and its connected communities at the centre. Deliberations on the preferred water services delivery model were held at Council's 15 July meeting.

In response to these requirements the Council has decided to establish a two-council Water Services Council Controlled Organisation (WS-CCO) with Ruapehu District Council on the basis of a local pricing model. The intention is to transfer exclusively stormwater assets and the associated debt and operations to the WS-CCO. The Water Services Delivery Plan required under legislation has been prepared on the basis of these decisions and was submitted to the Department of Internal Affairs ahead of the 3 September 2025 deadline. The DIA has indicated that it intends to assess the Plans and for the Secretary for Local Government to determine if the Plan is acceptable or requires amendment by December. At the time of preparing this Annual Report in October 2025 the plan has not been accepted by the Secretary for Local Government, and there remains some uncertainty as to whether the Plan will be accepted, but it was prepared in line with the legislative requirements and is believed to meet the three tests of financial sustainability. Given the Plan has not yet been accepted by the Secretary for Local Government, there is some uncertainty over the Council's decision on its preferred method of delivery, and the financial effect.

The WSDP contains the required Implementation Plan. This sets out the intention to legally establish the WS-CCO, with a Board of Directors and CE appointed by approximately July 2026, dependent on the completion of the foundational documents of the WS-CCO. The CE and executive team will then finalise the plans to transfer assets and staff, prepare the Significance and Engagement Policy and Water Services Strategy ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2027. On that date the WS-CCO will become fully responsible for the delivery of Water Services within the district.



Three waters assets are approximately \$651 million (43% of councils assets) as 30 June 2025, and represent a transfer of approximately a third of the councils business. There will be an impact on the overhead services that council requires beyond the transfer – it was assumed that some of these could be scaled based on organisational headcount, some could be managed through natural attrition or changes in levels of service, and it would not be possible to scale others and these would have to be absorbed by other parts of the business. This was taken into consideration at a high level to inform decision-making, and the Implementation Plan assumes that some overhead services will be provided by the council (or Ruapehu Council) under Service Level Agreements for a period of 1-3 years to support the establishment of the WS-CCO and enable good planning by the council to manage these. The detail of each of these arrangements will be worked through during the Transition phase as transfer agreements are developed.

## Climate change

In 2020, we declared a climate change emergency. Following extensive engagement, and in collaboration with Te Rūnanga o Tamaupoko and Te Rūnanga o Tupoho and the community, we developed *Te Rautaki Huringa Āhuarangi*, the *Climate Change Strategy*, which was adopted in 2021.

The strategy plots a course of action for both mitigating and adapting to climate change. It lays out goals for the council in these areas and gives a Te Ao Māori perspective on climate change.

The council has an important role to play in reducing its own and the district's emissions, improving our resilience and supporting community climate action. Council's climate response is a factor for consideration across all activities and work programmes, and we have an influential role to play in collaborating with partners to reduce our district's emissions.

Progress is reported across the key areas of climate change adaptation, mitigation, and empowering community action.

In the 2024/25 financial year, key climate actions included:

- Continuation of the Community Climate Action Fund. Now in its third year, we invested \$50,000 into six new projects with action across active transport, ecological restoration and education, food growing and home energy efficiency.
- Completion of our first climate change risk assessment focused on council-owned assets. This will be used for long-term asset management and climate adaptation planning.
- Measurement of council's organisational emissions in the 2023/24 financial year through our second carbon footprint.
- The development of our formal Emissions Reduction Plan which is due for adoption by July 2025. This plan will show how council will reduce emissions over the next 10 years, and 30 years at a higher level.

We were one of four councils across the country to have our climate change work programme audited by the Office of the Auditor General during the reporting year. We were commended for our community-led approach to climate resilience, and our active response to climate change risks was noted. Work is being undertaken to integrate the five key recommendations regarding our collaboration, strategy, performance measures, governance, and reporting.

## Summarising our performance

The following section provides a summary of our performance against the measures. Detailed information on the performance targets, results and narrative can be found in the full Annual Report 2024/25.

# Water supply

## What we do

We operate five water supply schemes across our district that provide clean safe-to-drink water to almost 17,000 residential and non-residential properties. Our water supply network includes service lines, pipe networks, pump stations, treatment plants and reservoirs and are served through the following water supply systems:

- Whanganui urban water supply scheme
- Fordell rural water supply scheme
- Pākaraka rural water scheme
- Mowhanau rural water scheme
- Westmere rural water scheme.

In addition to maintaining our water supply assets and traditional water treatment, we perform regular and robust water quality monitoring, have an oversight role in relation to the environmental performance of the drinking water, wastewater and stormwater network, as well as ensuring there is an adequate water supply for firefighting purposes in the urban area.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Water upgrades

Water upgrades in the 2024/25 fiscal year included the installation of 400 metres of new 32mm polyethylene pipe (PE) watermain and 160 metres of 125mm PE watermain in Rapanui Road, ensuring continuous water supply for surrounding residents.

We also installed 217 metres of 450mm PE main in the Whanganui Reservoir to provide better water supply and resilience.

Working in conjunction with GasNet, we started work on a 214-metre water main upgrade of Somme Parade (Brunswick Road to Field Street).

We completed a procurement plan for a central city mains upgrade in May 2025 with the project to go out for tender by the end of the fiscal year.

### Water supply

With a view to upgrading the Fordell booster pump, we started modelling the reticulation and collecting network information. This project addresses regulatory requirements of Taumata Arowai and will provide sufficient pressure and flow to support development growth between Fordell and the edge of the city.

### Water quality

Stringent new regulations set by Taumata Arowai, the established independent water services regulator for New Zealand, has meant that we need to meet rigorous daily or weekly drinking water sample collection.

To meet these requirements and to maintain our commitment to providing a safe and reliable water supply for the Whanganui community, we decided to keep the sampling process in-house rather than contracting it out due to our shared services arrangement with Rangitikei District Council.



This approach allows for more streamlined coordination and control over the process. Additionally, we identified potential high risks associated with outsourcing the contract, particularly in terms of meeting delivery expectations and ensuring consistent quality.

In June 2025, the Department of Internal Affairs released new guidance that aims to assist Council water suppliers in reporting on the Non-Financial Performance Measure Rules 2024 relating to drinking water. This guidance included the categorisation of rules into bacteriological and protozoal compliance groups, and the assignment of performance ratings (“All met”, “Almost met”, “Partially met”, “None met”) based on calculated compliance rates and has been described as the DWQAR Aggregate Compliance Rate Methodology. Compliance rates and performance ratings have been reported on separately for each of our water supplies in the district.

There has been overall progress made in the monitoring, treatment, and compliance of drinking water supplies. Planned plant upgrades, increased sampling locations, and backflow prevention programmes are expected to enhance future compliance.

Significant improvements in compliance at Fordell and Pākaraka during the reporting year can be attributed to the installation of monitoring equipment, although data loss remains an issue, primarily due to power/communication failures. These issues will be addressed as part of the UV project upgrade with on-site generators and backup communication systems.

We completed all monitoring that was required throughout the reporting year. The Pākaraka bore had E.coli and coliform contamination in February 2025 which triggered more intensive monitoring. Kai Iwi Bore 4 had a positive total coliform result in March 2025 and requires a protozoa (i.e. UV) barrier to mitigate any future risk of contamination. This will be addressed through the UV upgrade which we plan to complete by the end of the 2025/26 fiscal year.

We implemented a Hygiene Code of Practice and Demand Management Plan in late 2024. It is expected that this will improve future performance against the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Rules (DWQAR).

### **Ultraviolet (UV) Project**

In late 2023, we undertook to have ultraviolet (UV) treatment installed. Alongside the existing chlorination of the drinking water supply to protect against bacteria and viruses, UV protection will ensure the supply has multiple barriers of protection, including against protozoa.

Focus during the 2024/25 year has been on advancing the project to install UV treatment at the Pākaraka water bore. The land purchase was agreed-in-principle, along with as-built drawings, development of a functional description of the new plant’s operations, and creation of pipe and instrumentation diagrams for the upgrade and its integration with the existing plant. Completion of the project is planned for the end of the 2025/26 fiscal year in line with commitments to Taumata Arowai

### **3 Waters and Roding**

The Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue extension has driven a programme of works that encompasses all 3 (water supply, wastewater, and stormwater). All the detailed design for the programme is now well underway with procurement work ready to go to the market. Final consents are being lodged, and land purchase agreements are being finalised.

### **Our performance**

We received 1701 complaints related to the water supply which equated to 90.62 complaints per 1000 connections and is deemed to be substantially achieved with results falling within 5% of achieving the target of ≤90.

Although our target for attending urgent call-outs was met, we exceeded the five-day median for attending non-urgent call-outs. Work is being undertaken on improvements to data capture and the notification process. Median response times for the resolution of urgent and non-urgent call-outs met their targets.

Results for unexplained water loss from the network, and the average amount of water use per resident per day, achieved their respective targets.

All three water supplies met their microbiological monitoring measures for bacteriological compliance. The T3 bacteriological measure was almost met (99.37%) for the Fordell water supply and partially met for the Pākaraka and Whanganui water supplies. In applying the T3 protozoal measure, both the Fordell and Pākaraka water supplies were 100% compliant and the Whanganui water supply was partially met (66.67%).

It is noted that the safety of our water has not changed. The drinking water quality met all the standards and did not go over the acceptable limits at any time during the year. The lower results for the T3 bacterial and protozoal compliance are reflective of the higher standard of treatment and monitoring that is now required to meet drinking water compliance rules.

### Projects that were not completed in 2024/25

Renewals Programme: We have been in the process of implementing improved project management procedures to enhance and streamline approvals for the renewals programme. As a result, Hakeke Street, Surrey Road, Beach Road and Fox Road watermain renewals have been postponed until 2025/26 to allow for a more robust planning process under this new framework.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	3,261	2,275
Operating expenditure	6,364	6,824

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Wastewater

## What we do

We provide and manage two wastewater systems that are made up of service lines, pipe networks, pump stations, treatment plants and outfalls.

The urban service transfers domestic and trade wastewater through its network of wastewater pipes and pumping stations before being anaerobically treated to public health and environmental standards and then discharged to sea through the ocean outfall.

A separate scheme serves the Mowhanau community where wastewater is collected and treated using a sand filtration system before being discharged to land.

Industrial wastewater is collected and treated in accordance with individual industry agreements and under trade waste regulations.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Wastewater renewals

We re-lined two lengths of pipe this year as part of our renewal programme. These included 180 metres of wastewater main in Virginia Road and 160 metres of wastewater main on Durie Vale Road.

### Mowhanau to City connection

The project to connect Mowhanau to the city's wastewater reticulation system is currently in the design phase and supported by a completed report outlining consent alternative options and preliminary design.

This project includes the disestablishment of the current wastewater scheme at Mowhanau Village, including the filter beds and land disposal system. This system will be replaced with a pumped connection to the city's reticulation where the Mowhanau effluent will be treated at Whanganui's Wastewater Treatment Plant. The estimated \$6.1M project is expected to be completed by mid-2027.

### Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

Following the discovery of significant corrosion in the Contact Stabilisation Tank (CST) during a maintenance emptying last year, we commenced a two-part life extension project to mitigate further deterioration and extend the tank's 50-year design life. The first part of the repair works was completed in May 2025.

Despite our best efforts, we have experienced odour issues at the WWTP from time-to-time and have been systematically taking actions to identify and rectify the possible source/s. We identified 17 faults with the anaerobic pond cover and completed these repairs in November 2024.

The foul air extraction from the dryer building still requires some work and this is budgeted for the 2025/26 fiscal year. A thorough inspection, cleaning and maintenance of the dryer is scheduled in September 2025.

In May and June 2025, we also completed some substantial repairs to the biofilter which is where the foul air from within the dryer unit is discharged to.

Our forward works plan for WWTP odour issues was reported regularly throughout the year to the Operations and Performance Committee.

Discharge consent

Our discharge consent for the WWTP was initially due for renewal by 2026, however the new wastewater standards released in draft by Taumata Arowai in early 2025 have altered this deadline. Our consent application is now due in August 2027 provided the final version of the wastewater standards, due in August 2025, is unchanged.

Regular maintenance and upgrades of ocean outfall equipment were undertaken throughout the year to ensure the integrity of the steel structure and pipeline which is in contact with seawater.

Pump Stations

Preparatory work started on a \$1.3M project to upgrade the electrical systems and supply for the Beach Road pump station. The project is due to go out for tender in the second half of 2025, with the plan to have the work completed by June 2026. This pump station is a key asset for Whanganui as it delivers all the effluent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The main switchboard is over 40 years old and considered to be beyond its life expectancy, so the upgrade will ensure reliability and aims to reduce the frequency of emergency discharges to the river.

3 Waters and Roding

The Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue extension has driven a programme of works that encompasses all 3 Waters (water supply, wastewater, and stormwater). All the detailed design for the programme is now well underway with works already having been tendered and awarded. Final consents are being lodged, and land purchase agreements are being finalised.

Our performance

Our median response times for attending and resolving sewerage overflows resulting from blockages or other faults were within target, as was the number of dry weather sewerage overflows from the system.

We met and held compliance for all of our wastewater discharge resource consents.

We received 251 complaints related to the sewerage system which equated to 14.75 complaints per 1000 connections. (Target: ≤ 15).

Projects that were not completed in 2024/25

Discharge consent: The preparation of the application for the discharge consent from the wastewater treatment plant to the ocean has been extended by two years and is expected to be due in August 2027.

Beach Road Pumping Station: Replacement of the original electrical control cabinet and associated works was scheduled to start in the 2024/25 fiscal year but has been deferred to 2025/26.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	4,317	3,054
Operating expenditure	12,644	12,461

These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.



# Stormwater

## What we do

The stormwater activity applies to urban stormwater schemes and council maintained open drains and streams within the district. It does not include roading drainage which is covered in the roading and transportation activity page.

Stormwater is surface water run-off that flows from surfaces like roofs, gardens, footpaths and roads across the ground and does not get absorbed into the soil. Council manages and maintains an urban network of pipes, retention ponds, basins and other infrastructure to safely direct stormwater to the river. We also maintain a number of streams and open drains within the city to improve flood flow capacity when required, and to reduce the risk of property damage.

This activity includes the maintenance of two wetlands, Titoki and Kokohuia, certain aspects of Rotokawau Virginia Lake concerning water quality, and clearing slipways.

We work collaboratively with a number of community project partners on the Healthy Streams initiative to protect and maintain waterways within the Whanganui catchment.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Integrated catchment management

We are collaborating with agencies, Hapū and local community on climate change adaptation responses for Pūtiki.

Collaboration also continues to be undertaken with Hapū and the community at the Matipo Street watercourse, which forms part of the greater Mokoia Catchment programme. We are striving to ensure best outcomes from Roto Mokoia (Westmere Lake) to the Whanganui River under the Te Awa Tupua Act 2017.

We have partnered with Horizons Regional Council to work out the available options for responding to ongoing flooding issues at Turoa Road.

Minor upgrades have been undertaken to facilitate the port redevelopment project.

### Stormwater separation

We completed some more separation work at Pukenui Queens Park to achieve efficiencies arising from the Te Whare O Rehua Sarjeant Gallery project.

### Stormwater upgrades

Work continued on investigations and design work to inform the capital works programme investments for the next Annual Plan.

### 3 Waters and Roding

The Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue extension has driven a programme of works that encompasses all 3 Waters (drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater). All the detailed design for the programme is now well underway with procurement work ready to go to the market. Final consents to allow construction are being lodged and land purchase agreements are being finalised.

Stormwater drainage

As part of the Fox Road to Fitzherbert Avenue project, preparatory work started on the Upper Titoki Channel (known as the Springvale Swale). These two projects are part of the Springvale Plan Change (PC53) which allows for residential and commercial growth in the area.

The project requires active engagement with landowners, Hapū and Iwi, and includes construction of a sustainable urban drainage system, including a swale, piped mains, conveyancing corridor and wetland improvements that will provide attenuation and improve water quality of stormwater discharging to the river from the urban network.

Global consent

We continued to explore the practicality of a future global consent for Whanganui’s stormwater in the urban area, catering for catchments where smaller scale industrial activity may be present. We are in the process of reviewing our consenting requirements and have had constructive discussion with Horizons Regional Council.

We have been collaborating with Ngā Tangata Tiaki to set up an improved forum with Hapū and Iwi. This will allow for greater visibility over matters that relate to water consenting, honouring our ongoing commitment to Te Awa Tupua.

Our performance

There were no flooding events this year therefore all measures regarding flood events and response times were met.<sup>8</sup>

A total of 31 complaints were received about the performance of the stormwater system, equating to 2.6 complaints per 1000 connections and meeting the target of ≤5.5. We also met and held compliance for all of our stormwater activity resource consents.

The number of urban floor levels at risk during the flood design event remained below target. This measure provides a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of flooding in an unusually large rain event of urban buildings, enabling better planning and mitigation strategies.

Projects that were not completed in 2024/25

Fox to Fitzherbert Ave and Southern Stormwater Corridor: We have been in the process of implementing improved project management procedures to enhance and streamline approvals for the renewals programme. As a result, this project has been postponed until 2025/26 to allow for a more robust planning process under this new framework.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	4,762	2,443
Operating expenditure	4,003	4,314

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

<sup>8</sup> The Department of Internal Affairs defines a flooding event as an overflow of stormwater from a stormwater system that enters a habitable floor

# Roading and Transportation

## What we do

Roading is a core essential service for the council. It represents a significant share of our overall annual operating expenditure.

The roading and transportation group manages the activities and services that provide for the local transport network, enabling the safe, convenient, efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods. This specifically includes roading, footpaths and the Durie Hill elevator.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Roading

#### Maintenance and renewals

Unsealed road maintenance is an ongoing issue. With maintenance budgets fully allocated for the 2024/25 fiscal year, funds were drawn from other activities to cover the remaining costs. We also used funds from the Crown resilience programme to improve the resilience of unsealed roads and improve drainage.

Our road resealing programme was completed at the end of March 2025 with 4.13% of the network completed. We have been reviewing our road treatments so that we can increase the volume of sealing over the next two years to help maintain asset life. Strategies will include decreasing the widths sealed, and treatment selection e.g. not sealing the parking bays of a carriageway.

Ride quality on our urban and rural network averaged 79% for the reporting year and did not meet target. Rural roads achieved a 93% smooth travel exposure which was a significant improvement from the previous year's result of 85%. Urban road ride quality remained consistent at 76%. A combination of strategic improvements and securing additional funding to support targeted maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, will be needed to achieve the target in future years.

#### Audits

As part of its three to six-yearly cyclic programme, New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) Waka Kotahi conducted two significant audits this fiscal year. These included a procedural audit that reviewed our compliance with procurement and financial processes, and a technical audit which assessed the quality and standards of project work. The findings from these audits have been incorporated into the ongoing Whanganui Alliance integration work.

An Excellence Audit was also undertaken by the Road Efficiency Group (REG) and included Downer Alliance personnel. The audit demonstrated robust systems, an inclusive culture and readiness to evolve, positioning us well for long-term success and operational excellence.

#### Bridge structures

**Ernie's Bridge** on Kauarapaoa Road was replaced ahead of schedule and within budget. The bridge that was in place had been deteriorating rapidly and had reached the end of its economic life. Ernie's Bridge crosses a deep ravine and is a crucial piece of infrastructure providing a vital link for rural residents. With a HPMV 50 max rating, the new bridge will now be able to accommodate heavier loads benefiting the forestry industry in the area. The new bridge cost just under \$2M and was 60 per cent funded by NZTA Waka Kotahi.

The project to replace the **Wakefield Street Bridge** was unfunded in the new three-year National Land Transport Plan (NLTP). Design work for the bridge has been completed in the event that funding becomes available in the future.

The **Dublin Street Bridge** project is in its early initiation phase. A Point of Entry business case was submitted to NZTA Waka Kotahi and accepted, moving us towards the completion of a full Detailed Business Case. As a general timeline for a project of this scale, it is anticipated that the completion of the detailed business case will be at least two years entailing significant data collection and investigation, feasibility, and funding options, along with collaboration with Iwi and various stakeholders.

### Emergency works

The repair of a drop-out in Somme Parade that first occurred during the Cyclone Dovi weather event in 2022, and suffered further deterioration in subsequent weather events, has now been completed. Initial landscaping planting has been finished, and we have scheduled major plantings for the end of the 2025 winter.

Following design, culvert sizing and resource consent, site works for Culvert #49 Kauarapaoa Road commenced in November 2024 and are expected to be completed by the end of 2025/26. Hapū engagement has continued with work on the landscaping plan. This road also required remedial work due to heavy forestry demand during the closure of Erni's Bridge.

### Low-Cost Low-Risk (LCLR)

Funding for LCLR projects was significantly reduced through the setting of Government Policy Statement 2024-2027 priorities this year. We had to adjust some of our work programmes accordingly and explored alternative funding options for programme items and projects. We applied to NZTA Waka Kotahi for additional funding to replace two traffic lights, convert under-veranda lighting to LED, and make traffic modifications to the Wakefield Road bridge and Number 3 Line. We were successful in gaining funding for drainage resilience works on the unsealed roads and the two traffic lights for Wilson Street at the Ingestre and Guyton Street intersections.

### Road safety

We joined forces with our road safety partners, NZ Police, NZTA and ACC as part of the Better Together campaign. Through advertising and education, and backed up by Police enforcement, the campaign was aimed at collectively deterring people from driving while distracted by simply putting their mobile phone on 'Do Not Disturb' before taking the wheel.

The **Let's Go programme** is being tendered as a collaborative initiative focused on promoting walking, cycling, and scooting as safe and enjoyable transportation choices. This replaces the previous programme and will be in place before the end of 2025.

We experienced four fatalities and 15 serious injury crashes on the local road network during the year. While the road environment was not a contributing factor in the four fatalities, these figures highlight the ongoing challenges in achieving our road safety goals. Working collaboratively with NZTA Waka Kotahi, local police, and the community, we remain committed to improving road safety across the district.

### Footpaths

Our footpath renewal programme continued with completion of work in Young Street, Harper Street and Caffray Avenue. Progress was delayed in Victoria Avenue when we received an abatement notice regarding tree disturbance and we had to wait for arboricultural advice.

Through improved asset management and inspection tools, we are now able to measure footpath condition across the network more accurately and target our maintenance and renewal programmes to both improve condition rating as well as reduce the number of faults. 91% of the district’s urban footpaths met the standard of being in excellent to fair condition, an increase of 10% from the previous year.

931 footpath faults were identified as at the end of the reporting year. With reduced funding in footpaths the focus has been on the repair of smaller defects across the network. The programme consisted of 100% of year one and two funding and an additional \$300,000 of unsubsidised funding to enable repairs in year two.

Our 90% targets for roading and footpath-related customer service requests responded to within five working days were also exceeded.

Mountains to Sea

The Gilbert Street ramp has been completed, however with the reduction in funding for pathways, alternative funding streams are being sought for the completion of the pathway. We are awaiting the result of an application for funding via the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to complete two more sections in the 2025/26 year.

Durie Hill elevator

This year was the first full year when Durie Hill Elevator could benefit from Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage project improvements, completed in 2024. This project included enhancements to the physical spaces of the elevator, new signage and wayfinding, an underground plant wall, innovative projection-based displays and new, wirelessly controlled lighting throughout the length of the tunnel.

In the last year, the Whanganui Connection team has started using the lights and projection display technology to run guided tours. While the lighting is kept on subtle settings by default to suit public transport users - operators also have the ability to activate a short light display at their discretion, which has been a popular feature for visiting children and adults alike.

Through word-of-mouth, these improvements contributed to the Elevator’s trip numbers (with passengers) exceeding expectations, and there were 62,647 boardings (compared to 61,803 the previous year). The enhancements have also attracted more regular local users, with 790 concession tickets sold in 2024/25 (compared to 566 in 2023/24).

Throughout the year, further improvements have been made, with Whanganui Connection installing and maintaining new gardening at the Upper Landing and office improvements made for operators. Council also worked on a yearly touch up to paint in the tunnel, alongside some maintenance work such as full rope replacement.

Replacement of the main cabling system of the Durie Hill elevator occurred in 2025, with stage one including the installation of subsoil drains and polyurethane treatment of the shaft.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	9,695	9,191
Operating expenditure	11,261	15,881

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

## Venues, events and facilities

### What we do

The venues, events and facilities group of activities oversees the management of key cultural, recreational and leisure facilities available to the community and visitors to the district. The group includes:

- Aquatics
- Cooks Gardens and Velodrome
- New Zealand Glassworks Te Whare Tūhua o Te Ao
- Libraries
- Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery
- Royal Whanganui Opera House
- Whanganui War Memorial Centre
- Whanganui Regional Museum.

### What we did in 2024/25

#### Aquatics

With funding provided through the Rotary Centennial celebration, two new hoists were installed into new locations at the **Splash Centre** during the year. The range of attachments allow for more inclusive access to the pool for those with disabilities. The funding meant this project could be brought forward from its original 2025/2026 planned date and has been completed. The Splash Centre also ran several Sensory Friendly sessions during the year, with a plan to move these into an enclosed space and limiting numbers to ensure that the space is private and quiet. These improvements were aligned to the Open Space and Physical Strategy's goal of supporting the health and wellbeing of all people in the community.

We closed the Splash Centre facility's main pool side for nine weeks from the end of April – June 2025 for an upgrade. This project was partially funded through Lotteries Funding and has been completed as planned. This included main pool tile and leak repairs, moving to a membrane solution (more grip, less maintenance) and building a ramp entry with rail, this improvement means the pool is accessible for all users. By moving away from the traditional seal and paint solution, we hope to have fewer long closures for pool maintenance in the future. We also painted the hydrotherapy pool, as well as doing some other general maintenance including installation of bilingual signage for our changing facilities

A PoolSafe audit was undertaken in January 2025, with the Splash Centre receiving accreditation in March.

A fees increase was applied to the aquatics activity effective 1 July 2024. This incorporated a new fee for the fitness component at the Splash Centre. There has been no notable impact on visitation to date.

Despite the increase in admission fees and the nine-week closure, survey data indicates that 78% of Splash Centre users (8,948 total responses) were positively satisfied with their experience (Target: ≥85%)

The **Whanganui East pool** was open for the summer season using a five-day operating model and a singular team. A wet and windy start to summer saw lower numbers than the 2023/24 season. Feedback from Whanganui East pool users indicated a 94% satisfaction rate with their experience (35 responses).

Consultation for the 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan included a proposal to close Whanganui East Pool due to upcoming costs but community feedback showed how much Whanganui East Pool and outdoor swimming in general is valued. The pool was kept open for the 2024/25 summer season and we commissioned a



study on future options for outdoor swimming facilities. We decided to trial a new way of engaging with our community, convening a **Citizens' Assembly** of 40 randomly selected participants from a pool of interested people to review the study and other relevant information over a six-week period in May-June. The group's recommendation will feed into council's decision-making process on the best way forward for outdoor pools.

### **Cooks Gardens & Velodrome**

A project to resurface the athletic track was completed in December 2024 restoring its international certification as a World Athletics Class 2 track. The new rubber surface also allows national athletic events, such as the renowned Cooks Classic, to be held on the track and for records to be validated.

Cooks Gardens was temporarily closed to activities over a six-week period which did impact on venue bookings but was timed to avoid the high-use periods and major planned events. The event centre was booked on 76 days during the year (Target: ≥100 days) with consistent bookings since the start of 2025.

Cooks Gardens track and grounds have been well used throughout the year exceeding its target with bookings on 125 days.

Community satisfaction with the Cooks Gardens facility totalled 78%, an increase of 2% on the previous year. Satisfaction with this facility has been measured through the annual resident survey since 2021 but was included as a new measure in the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 to ensure visibility over the use of this premier park and recreation/event centre that is available for hire.

### **New Zealand Glassworks Te Whare Tūhura o Te Ao**

Exceeding our annual target for workshop bookings, New Zealand Glassworks (NZG) offered workshops on 65 days, primarily run on Saturdays. These included beginner glassblowing, 1-on-1 glassblowing, make a paperweight, make a tumbler, private workshops and a four-day masterclass. Despite a price increase in February 2025, these workshops have proved to be very popular with a total of 449 workshop participants during the year, including at least 71 return customers.

We saw a total of 31,712 visitors throughout the year, an increase on 2023/24 and meeting our target.

The New Zealand Glassworks (NZG) internship programme concluded in December 2024 with an exhibition from interns Nathan Moore and Bindi Nimmo. Both artists have used the programme to propel their careers in glass.

Established artist George Agius completed her four-week residency in December 2024. Working with local skilled artists to develop new work for a solo exhibition, the residency programme injected significant income into the local community through contractor wages and gained significant public interest.

NZG's application to Creative New Zealand to secure three-year grant funding to provide an Internship Programme plus professional artist residency was unsuccessful. The internship is designed for emerging artists, and the Artist-in-Residence programme is for mid-career and established artists. NZG continues to seek alternative funding sources for future programme offerings.

The New Zealand Society for Artists in Glass (NZSAG) partnered with NZG to host a conference in February 2025. This was followed with demonstrations from international artists and a 4-day masterclass. As well as increasing visitation from the public, NZG provided a space to unite, showcase and celebrate glass, its makers, collectors and enthusiasts from around Aotearoa.

A restructure of session availability and simultaneous use of workstations has led to an increase of facility hiring by practising glass artists during the year. Demand for hire of the studio is outrunning the availability of hot glass and the kiln capacity. This is the main impediment to the potential growth of programmes.

## Libraries

Library visitation at the Gonville Library and the mobile library recorded large increases over the year compared to the previous reporting year. Increased restrictions on access and parking in the first half of the year, together with ongoing limited parking, and visitors to the newly opened Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, severely affected visitation, and items issued, at the Davis Library.

Overall visitation for the year-ending 30 June 2025 was 15% down on the previous year, with 260,617 visitors across all branches (168,904 at the Davis Library). Internet sessions (51,678) were also down by 20%, and issues (526,995) were 9% down for the same period.

Of the library users surveyed (941 responses), 96.5% recorded satisfaction with the service provided, exceeding the 90% target.

Alongside the use of the libraries by regular groups for activities such as scrabble, writing, genealogy, and arts and crafts, the library team continued to run events, activities and holiday programmes – often working in collaboration with community groups and organisations. Some examples included:

*Winter Wonderfest (Aug 2024)* – 13 events including storytime sessions, writing and poetry groups, meditation, Dungeons and Dragons and a grief workshop.

*Festival of Adult Learning (Sep 2024)* – 11 events including cooking, ukelele workshop, digital drop-ins, chinese calligraphy, and arts and crafts for adults.

*La Fiesta* – 13 events including arts and craft activities, creative writing and discussion groups.

*DORA (Digital On-Road Access)* – assistance with the registration and use of the Manage My Health app.

*Author/panel talks* – Nick Pellegrino’s talk about international travel (83 attended) and the Riverside Wrongdoings panel talk (125 attended).

*Spy Holiday Programme* – an offer of seven engaging spy-themed activities designed especially for children was a great success with a total of 275 children and adults taking part.

*Digital Skills for Seniors* – this continued to attract strong demand and had a waiting list. Our Tech Week in May also helped to promote the library’s online services and digitally upskill members of the public.

*Justice of the Peace* – JP services were made available at the Alexander Library on a weekly basis.

The Alexander Library hosted the February 2025 Pākaitore exhibition using photographs and archives from its collection and celebrated 50 years of the library’s partnership with the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (Whanganui branch) in March. The War at Home exhibition for Anzac Day featured our first Collections Kōrero for the year discussing people’s experiences of the First and Second World Wars from a Whanganui perspective.

In a partnership with the Whanganui Museum, Alexander Turnbull Library (National Library, Wellington) and the Alexander Heritage Library, we successfully applied to have the William James Harding Collection of more than 6,500 photographs included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The Register recognises items of recorded heritage which have national significance.

The collection of photographs, which are distributed among the three institutions, were taken in Whanganui between 1856 and 1889 and show the growth and settlement in the area during a formative time.

A large team of volunteers, led by our council Archivist, completed the digitisation of the rates database records and valuation rolls for the period 1862-1928. The database comprises 155,000 rates records and had been visited 171,000 times since the first records were put online in May 2021.

## **Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery**

We reopened to the public in November 2024 after significant earthquake strengthening and restoration of the existing 100-year-old Sarjeant Gallery and construction of a new, modern wing – Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa. The gallery's redevelopment led to recognition on the national stage, winning and as finalists, for a number of architectural, engineering and industry awards.

Over 5,500 attended the opening weekend with a full programme of live performances, events, talks and experiences alongside the official pōwhiri and opening day formalities. More than 19,000 people visited the gallery over the Summer of Art opening month programme period (9 November – 8 December).

In the first eight months of operations, from November to June, we recorded 93,572 visits to the gallery, as well as more than 30,000 online visitors. Surveying indicates that 40% of visitors are from the Whanganui district, 48% are domestic travellers and 12% international.

Satisfaction of gallery visitors averaged 96% based on surveys undertaken during the last two quarters of the reporting year (Target: ≥90%).

We published two new books in late 2024: a history of the gallery by Martin Edmond, and a book about Whanganui artist, Edith Collier, edited by Jill Trevelyan and staff members, Jennifer Taylor and Greg Donson. Both books received excellent media attention and reviews, and the Edith Collier book was shortlisted for an Ockham NZ Book Award.

Our exhibitions, since opening, have been well-attended. These have included *Edith Collier: Early New Zealand Modernist, Nō Konei | From Here*, and *Paul Maseyk: Jugs in New Zealand Painting* amongst others. We also hosted the return of the *Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review* – an important and long-standing showcase for local artists.

The project to transition the collection from offsite storage into the new purpose-built storage in Pukenuamu took place throughout the year and is expected to be completed by December 2025. The transition project allowed cataloguing of collection items to continue throughout the year and exceeded its set target.

Education bookings were at capacity during the year. We have successfully secured external funding from the Whanganui Community Foundation, which will allow us to grow our education team and expand our education offering.

## **Royal Whanganui Opera House**

We hosted a number of performances and events throughout the year including *The World of Musicals*, *Great Opera Moments*, *Supergroove*, *Rockquest*, AMDRAM production of *Oliver*, *Time to Change* (Sharyn Underwoods School of Dance), *DanceNZMade*, *Magic Men*, the *New Zealand Army Band*, *Cirque Africa*, *Comedy Gala*, comedian *Ed Byrne*, *The Matariki Glow Show*, as well as year-end school productions and prizegiving's.

The procurement process to engage a consultant to undertake the investigation work and writing of the business case for a new stagehouse and flying system commenced during the year. The upgrade work is considered necessary to attract and accommodate the events and shows that require this equipment, especially for international promoters. A final business case is due shortly at which point it will be reviewed and next steps considered in line with the Long-Term Plan budget timeframes currently in place.

In the interim, scaffolding to provide support to the fly floor and used to hang lighting, has been purchased. There has been hirer frustration with the scaffold, lack of amenities, the inability to use flying or rigging

systems, and the need for manual adjustment of lights and speakers. Despite these challenges, hirer satisfaction was 100% and responses were very complimentary of the service the team provided.

There were periods of substantial success for the Royal Whanganui Opera House regarding the number of days that the venue was booked during the year. Some of the bookings were for 6+ days but unfortunately the cancellation of a few shows (26 in total) during the first two quarters impacted on results. The facility was booked on 102 days and did not meet its target of 150 days.

Of the performances and events, we hosted 11 touring shows (Target: ≥12 shows) with a number of tours cancelled due to low ticket sales. Attracting professional events is a marketing focus to enable us to offer a variety of experiences for patrons however limitations posed by the temporary scaffolding has made this challenging.

**War Memorial Centre**

Event highlights included *Chamber Music Events, Operatunity performances, Chamber of Commerce Business Awards* and a *Kapa Haka Festival*. Other events included the *Faulty Towers Dining Experience, Ngā Tāngata Tiaki Conference, Brickanui, Diwali Festival, and Dancing for Hospice, UCOL Graduation, the Anzac Day* ceremony and the *New Zealand Institute of Architects Awards*.

The War Memorial Centre facility was booked for a total of 182 days during the year (Target: ≥200 days). Although slower than usual at the start of the reporting year, bookings picked up over the Christmas and January period when we generally see a reduction. At times, the venue was being used multiple times in one day and multiple events were happening in the venue at the same time. Hirer satisfaction for this facility was also 100%.

In February 2025, the *NZ Masters Games* used the War Memorial Centre as its main venue for more than 4,600 participants over 10-days. The Games Village was also sited here, becoming the central hub for nightly entertainment and various sports events.

**Whanganui Regional Museum**

As part of the Long-Term Plan 2024-2034, an exterior refresh of the Whanganui Regional Museum building started in February 2025 and is expected to continue until September. The refreshed façade will ensure that the building maintains its integrity and appearance in the cultural precinct of Pukenui Queen’s Park.

**Projects that were not completed in 2024/25**

Cooks Gardens Events Centre upgrade: This project has been deferred due to other commitments taking priority. This also provides more time to review upgrade priorities and do a more detailed project plan.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	2,167	11,040
Operating expenditure	17,191	19,570

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Community places and open spaces

## What we do

The community places and open spaces group of activities oversees the management of community amenities and facilities, a number of which are determined as core services of council, and others that contribute to the health and social fabric of the community. The group includes:

- Cemeteries
- Central business district
- Older persons' housing
- Property portfolio
- Parks and open spaces.

## What we did in 2024/25

### **Cemeteries**

Following an approach by the Hindu community, we agreed to a request for a ceremonial structure to be built within Aramoho Cemetery that would provide running water in a way that allows ceremonial rites to be performed but was also respectful of Māori tikanga. Working collaboratively with the groups, Council funded the design work, and the Hindu community has contributed to the cost of the final structure. Installation of the structure was completed in November 2024 and landscaping is to be completed.

There is adequate capacity to meet burial and cremation needs over the next five years with 479 burial spaces and 1099 cremation plots available as at the end of June 2025. An extension to the Aramoho Cemetery is well underway. Ground preparation occurred in late 2024 and more recently landscaping and burial plotting plans were completed.

Satisfaction with cemetery facilities was assessed through a new question in the annual community views survey this year with 83% of respondents indicating their satisfaction.

### **Central Business District (CBD)**

Irrigation replacement began in the fourth quarter of 2024/25 as part of a staged approach to upgrade the CBD irrigation corridor. Phase two of the project will occur in the next financial year.

71% of respondents in the community views survey thought the CBD was clean and attractive. There was one complaint regarding cleanliness or hygiene of public toilets during the reporting year.

### **Older persons' housing**

45 units were renovated in the 2024/25 period ready for new tenants. Asbestos removal and wall insulation was also completed throughout the year across a number of units. An annual survey (168 responses received) indicated that 90% of tenants were satisfied that their housing was well maintained.

### **Property portfolio**

With the lease of the Rotokawau Virginia Lake Café (Funky Duck Café) coming to term at the end of March 2025, we sought the community's views on what they wanted for this location. Survey feedback showed that the public were looking for a similar operation but with longer hours and a refreshed environment. A new leaseholder was subsequently identified and opened for business on 1 May 2025.

Community views and preferences were also sought on the future use of the property that Council owns at 125 Grey Street. The property and substantial complex borders Springvale Park with the main building having Class C heritage status, and the site has attracted several expressions of interest from developers. The engagement attracted around 820 responses with a decision on its future use to be made in mid-July 2025.

Work was undertaken on Council's second organisational carbon emissions audit and first formal Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) for its adoption by council in June 2025 however this project work was put on hold pending recruitment. It is expected that the project to complete the ERP will recommence early in the next financial year.

## **Parks and open spaces**

### **North Mole regeneration and dune restoration**

We have been working with community partners Progress Castlecliff on a project to regenerate the dune and develop a fit-for-purpose car park and visitor destination at the North Mole.

This project will create a key connection point for the Mountains to Sea Cycleway and includes toilets and a cold shower as well as an opportunity to install Te Kapehu Whetū (a star compass) to deepen cultural engagement with the site. The project will deliver community and Hapū aspirations in compliance with Tupua Te Kawa and builds on the significant work already undertaken by the Castlecliff community over the past decade to enhance the area and create a vibrant destination. It complements the redevelopment of the port at the river mouth, led by Te Pūwaha, and will help transform the area into a key visitor and community space.

This project is currently in its planning stages with funding allocated to Years 1-2 of the Long-Term Plan.

### **Aramoho riverbank enhancement**

Working in partnership with Aramoho riverbank users and stakeholders, we have been progressing the planning, engineering analysis and design concept work to enhance the riverbank and improve the flood resilience of the area. Our funding is a small contribution towards total project costs that are community funded and led. There are multiple projects that fall under the overall Aramoho riverbank enhancement project.

### **Coastal Action Plan**

We met with the Mowhanau Community to share the results of the Coastal Action Plan. In the short term, the council will continue maintaining the existing rock revetment, a structure made of large rocks placed along the shoreline to protect the beach from erosion. This revetment absorbs and deflects wave energy, helping to prevent further erosion. It has been effective in managing erosion so far. Any new or additional erosion management initiatives would require external funding or would need to go through the business case process for consideration in the council's Long-Term Plan.

### **Pukenamu Queen's Park landscaping**

We completed the landscaping around the entrance to Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery ahead of its opening in November 2024. This project was stage one of the planned landscaping design of Pukenamu Queen's Park that has been developed alongside key stakeholders and the broader community.

### **Parks and open spaces furniture**

A furniture replacement programme across the city this year saw the replacement and installation of benchseats, picnic tables, BBQ, new drinking fountains, dog litter and general litter bins.



Mowhanau flying fox

We completed the replacement of the flying fox at Kai Iwi Beach playground (Mowhanau). The previous flying fox was removed in October 2022 due to structural integrity problems and has been replaced by two flying foxes on separate lines that are compliant with playground standards.

Aviary

The terms of the sale purchase and lease agreement for the aviary were negotiated with the Friends of the Aviary Trust. We are awaiting the Trust to seek independent legal advice and agreement to the final terms.

Duncan Fence Restoration

We partnered with Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust, Rotary North, the Duncan Trust and Whanganui Connection’s Anthonie Tonnon, on a collaboration to restore and reinstate a stretch of the Duncan polio hospital fence on Durie Hill. Following a successful fundraising campaign, work on the fence will be completed by summer.

Tree planting

122 trees have been ordered and planting is underway across Whanganui’s streets and parks.

Community satisfaction

We measure satisfaction of our places and open spaces through the annual community views survey.

Results this year indicated that 75% of respondents were satisfied with the maintenance and presentation of our open spaces (an increase of 11% from last year) and 77% were satisfied with the district’s sportsgrounds.

User satisfaction with playgrounds was 73%, a decrease of 3% from last year. This result is surprising considering additions and new attractions such as those seen at Lorenzdale Park, a new flying fox at Mowhanau playground and the activation of Williams Domain’s field and basketball court.

In a new survey question this year, we found that 88% of the respondents (or anyone in their household) had used or visited an open space, playground or park in the last six months.

There was 49% satisfaction that public toilet facilities meet user needs. Public toilets have been subject to significant vandalism throughout the year, and we are exploring ways to avoid damage being made to these public assets.

Projects that were not completed in 2024/25

The capital programme for property and parks was fully delivered in 2024/25.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	2,925	2,857
Operating expenditure	16,098	16,390

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Community support

## What we do

Council has a role in building strong and resilient communities. This group of activities is focused on collaboration, partnerships and supporting community-led initiatives to improve wellbeing, foster a sense of belonging, and enable self-sufficiency and resilience in emergency events.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Community

#### Community grants

With our annual allocation of \$150,000 for community contracts, we distributed \$50,000 to two projects of significance that deliver or support long-term plan outcomes. The remaining \$100,000 funded 19 of the 34 applications with the successful projects benefitting the community and linked to Safer Whanganui's strategic direction. Safer Whanganui is a community-led coalition of agencies and groups working in partnership to provide leadership and direction for the promotion of community safety in Whanganui.

#### Stained-glass window

A new stained-glass window celebrating the diverse ethnic communities of Whanganui was installed in the council chambers. The window was funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and delivered through Whanganui's Welcoming Communities committee which represents local ethnic communities. The new window is the 25<sup>th</sup> addition to the stained-glass window series, known as *The Whanganui Story*. This is a long-standing project that highlights the people, events and places that have shaped Whanganui.

#### Funding opportunities

There was a greater uptake of arts funding opportunities this year. Application numbers to the **Creative Communities Scheme** (CSS) increased by around 25% compared to the previous fiscal year with 21 of the 42 applications receiving funding towards arts projects for the community. The number of artists that applied to the **Chorus Cabinet Initiative** also more than doubled.

Eighty per cent of respondents in the annual community views survey perceived Whanganui as a creative place. This outcome demonstrates strong growth in the creative industries, especially the gallery sector, with the opening of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery and six private galleries over the last 12 months.

Thirteen applications were made to the **Heritage Grant Fund** during the 2024-25 fiscal year with 12 successful in receiving funding. Through the Heritage Grant Fund's allocation of \$150,000, it has supported around \$350,000 of works across the 12 projects.

Three applicants to the **Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund** were successful in receiving funding during the reporting year. The long-term plan sets aside \$50,000 per annum for financial assistance towards projects that improve council-owned or partially owned sport and recreation facilities and benefit our community directly.

The **Community Climate Action Fund** completed its third round at the end of 2024, with six projects receiving a share of \$50,000. This initiative provides seed-funding for not-for-profit climate action projects in the district with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions or growing community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The **Welcoming Activities Fund** enabled an array of local ethnic communities to deliver six events which ensures Whanganui remains a culturally vibrant and welcoming place for newcomers.

## Housing

During our Annual Plan 2025/26 consultation, we received overwhelming support from the community to continue to explore opportunities to create a standalone housing entity to grow and improve Whanganui's housing stock. It is estimated that at least 1000 new houses are needed over the next 10 years to meet current and future demand. The next stage in this process is the development of the housing entity itself, involving thorough research of socially minded partners and investors that will support the delivery of affordable housing and wrap-around supports, setting up the required governance processes and ensuring financial sustainability.

The Safer Whanganui Housing Reference Group met regularly during the year with the forum adding value for participants. We also continued to work in collaboration with other agencies to address homelessness, housing stress issues and new housing developments within the city and district.

## Emergency management

### Pūtiki Emergency Response Group

A successful \$46,000 bid to the 10-year plan to provide support to the emergent Pūtiki Emergency Response Group (PERG) community group has allowed us to create and support the development of a community led emergency response capability in Pūtiki. This includes the sourcing of equipment and caching facilities equipped to support up to 20 trained and equipped volunteers from the local community able to respond to a variety of contingencies including overland flooding, main river flooding, evacuations, provision of local welfare support, and resilient communications and alternative power.

Training activities that have occurred to date include integrating community response activities into the wider district emergency response capability and providing a Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) linked community hub.

### Rural Communications

Support from the Rural Community Board has enabled CDEM to acquire four dedicated Starlink Mobile systems with small generators and other equipment as rapid deployment communication packages. These systems are designed to be delivered to remote or isolated communities before, during or after major events to guarantee easy-to-use communications and internet capabilities when other means of communications have been disabled. These systems allow the bi-lateral sharing of information between CDEM and the affected communities in real time as well as providing the ability for them to maintain personal communications using their own mobile devices when in range of the Starlink wireless fields.

### Frontline volunteer training

A number of volunteer community group members and individuals have been receiving training in the delivery of welfare needs in community Civil Defence Centres. This includes formal training in the use of Registration and Needs Assessment tools, the opening and running of community centres, and the provision of Civil Defence welfare. Groups engaged in training include Community Patrol, The Community Led Trust, Volunteer Whanganui and Age concern as well as individual volunteers.

Other agencies such as Fire and Emergency, Te Puna Kokiri, 4WD Club, Community Patrol, Red Cross and Downers Group have also received training in the use of situational awareness/Common Operating Picture tools designed to improve communications between organisations and CDEM in emergencies and to allow for strong integration into the functioning of the Emergency Operations Centre when needed.

Emergency Management has also provided formal training courses to local volunteers and community group members utilising the Regional (CDEM) Adult Continuing Education Fund. Courses run include Comprehensive First Aid and Psychological First Aid. Additionally, instructional support has been provided to a number of neighbouring district and regional emergency management courses including Pre-Hospital Emergency Care, Planning and Lifelines (Critical Infrastructure).

Recovery Management

The Council has employed a casual Recovery Manager to help develop the recovery function of emergency management. This has allowed us to further integrate post-emergency recovery planning into the other areas of readiness and response planning and allows us to focus on longer term solutions to the issues likely to be faced by our community as the result of disasters. As has been shown in a number of events around the country, having a dedicated Recovery Manager and plans ready in place facilitates a quicker ability to recover from the adverse consequences of these events.

Our performance

Measured through the annual community views survey, the percentage of the community indicating that they are prepared to be self-sufficient for at least 3 days during an emergency dropped to 80%. This was a decrease of 10% from the previous year, however the result is significantly higher than the national average of 23% as reported in the 2024 National Preparedness Survey and reflects less national large-scale emergency events that help to raise awareness.

On-call emergency personnel responded to 58 calls and seven text messages during the reporting year. These included tsunami updates, weather warnings and flood gauge alerts. A duty roster ensures that staff are able to respond 24/7 and within a 15-minute timeframe of receiving an emergency management call.

Council’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is maintained in a state of readiness at all times. It is fully equipped with operational tools and applications that remain live and accessible, ensuring rapid activation when required.

During the 2024/25 year, Council conducted six EOC exercises, each lasting approximately three hours. These exercises simulated realistic regional hazards such as solar weather events, avian flu outbreaks, three waters emergencies, and major river flood scenarios. All function desks were staffed and resourced within two hours of activation, and each exercise produced the full suite of Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) outputs within the designated timeframe.

In addition to exercises, the EOC was activated several times for weather and river monitoring events. These required minimal staffing but demonstrated Council’s ability to scale response appropriately based on the nature of the incident.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	101	47
Operating expenditure	2,525	2,168

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Economic development

## What we do

The economic development group includes activities and services that contribute toward the growth of the district's economy.

### **Economic development (Whanganui & Partners)**

Whanganui & Partners is the council's dedicated economic development unit, promoting Whanganui as a destination to live, visit, work, study and invest. Activities include supporting new and existing businesses, bringing events to Whanganui and providing the latest economic data, analysis and commentary on the district.

Whanganui & Partners also operated the Whanganui isite Visitor Information Centre until an organisational realignment came into effect on 1 January 2025.

### **Airport**

Whanganui Airport is a joint venture airport owned in equal parts by the Crown and Whanganui District Council. The airport provides sealed and grass runways and passenger terminal facilities for scheduled aircraft services and is an important direct transport link from the district to Auckland.

Aerodrome services are provided for locally based commercial, aeromedical, agricultural, fixed- and rotary-wing training and recreational aviation, as well as providing services to the wider New Zealand commercial and general aviation sector. Commercial leases are also provided for a limited number of non-aeronautical commercial activities.

### **Seaport**

We manage a commercial port and berthing facilities for shallow-draft coastal freight vessels, commercial vessels and pleasure boats. The port and associated river control structures offer a safe, navigable river bar harbour and confine the coastal portion of the Whanganui River to its existing alignment.

Whanganui Port is operated by the Whanganui Ports Operating Company with council having transferred its port-related assets to a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) called Whanganui Port Limited Partnership.

The Port Company manages day-to-day aspects of the port, along with the Whanganui Port infrastructure project under the Te Pūwaha revitalisation project.

## What we did in 2024/25

### **Economic development**

Whanganui & Partners delivered a dynamic programme of work in 2024/25, advancing the district's economic development priorities through targeted initiatives, strategic partnerships, and sector leadership.

Whanganui & Partners made progress in developing the renewable energy sector during 2024/25. Key activities included establishing and maintaining relationships with potential renewable energy partners and major industries, and initiating the development of a district-wide renewable energy prospectus. These efforts are designed to position Whanganui as a future-focused region, ready to attract investment and innovation in sustainable energy solutions. The work aligns with broader economic development goals by supporting infrastructure that enables long-term environmental and economic resilience.

Techweek 2024 saw Whanganui host the largest number of events nationwide, while the tertiary education review progressed with market analysis and submissions.

### **Creative Industries and Sector Development**

Support was provided to galleries, filmmakers, and creative organisations, including strategic planning and funding advice to Quartz Museum, NZ Glassworks, and Te Ao Hou marae. Two scholarships were awarded to emerging filmmakers, and six productions were supported through the Film Office. Whanganui's creative sector was showcased nationally via RNZ and HERE events.

### **Destination Marketing and Visitor Promotion**

Domestic and international campaigns promoted Whanganui as a destination of choice. The district was represented at TRENZ, Regional Tourism New Zealand Inbound Trade Event (RTNZ IBO), and Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) Connect, and influencer campaigns helped raise Whanganui's profile.

### **City of Design Programme**

Whanganui's UNESCO City of Design status was actively promoted, with 76 businesses and organisations adopting the tohu to mark locally designed products. The City of Design Focal Point was maintained through international network engagement, including hosting virtual subnetwork meetings and contributing to global conversations on design-led development.

### **Global Reach and International Engagement**

Whanganui hosted multiple Japanese delegations, secured international students into our high schools and UCOL, and completed a cultural exchange with Hokkaido. Our Sister City relationships with Nagaizumi and Toowoomba were strengthened through annual delegation coordination.

The Whanganui isite was awarded a 2024 Travellers' Choice award from Trip Advisor. This means that the isite has been listed within the top 10% of things to do worldwide.

**I**site staff served a total of 17,560 visitors in 2024/25 with numbers up by 2% on the previous reporting year. Local visitors accounted for 38% of the total count, domestic visitors 32% and international 30%. The focus for the upcoming year is on deepening local engagement with our products and services and continuing to be a source of manaakitanga and facilitation to the valued manuhiri of our region.

### **Airport**

A project to construct a sealed parallel taxiway at Whanganui Airport commenced in March 2025 and is expected to be completed in September 2025. The \$3.6M project aims to improve airport operations by providing a 24/7, all-weather taxiway that will make it safer, more efficient and increase the capacity of aircraft movements.

Whanganui Airport and Fulton Hogan were recognised with the Small Airport Infrastructure award at the annual NZ Airports Awards held in Hamilton in November 2024. This award recognises excellence in infrastructure development and upgrades for airports handling less than 200,000 passengers a year. The recognition highlighted the hard work and collaboration between Council's capital projects team, Whanganui Airport staff and Fulton Hogan during the significant project to resurface the airport runway in 2023.

A five-yearly review of the airport's Part 139 Aerodrome Operating Certificate (AOC) was conducted by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and successfully renewed until 30 July 2029. This review ensures that suitable management, operations, maintenance and safety systems are in place at the airport. A key consideration for the CAA when undertaking their Part 139 recertification process is the intensity of aircraft operations. While the airport has a comparatively small number of passengers (47,350 in 2024), the number of aircraft



movements is high with data showing that Whanganui Airport is the 6<sup>th</sup> busiest airport (by aircraft operations) in New Zealand.

**Seaport**

Construction work at the Whanganui Port continued during the year, with the budget remaining within the \$50M set in 2023. Stage One works for the hardstand to hold a 380-tonne capacity mobile boat hoist was completed on 31 March 2025 with Q-West Boat Builders lifting the first of its ferries onto the Port for finishing work on 1 April.

As part of the Stage Two remediation works, construction on the renewal of Wharf 3 was brought forward and began in June 2025. This project will see the complete rebuild of Wharf 3 to stabilise the eroding riverbank and protect the long-term health and wellbeing of the Whanganui River. The work is scheduled through to April 2026.

While construction costs have escalated across the country in recent years, we remain prudent in our approach, working on cost efficiencies wherever possible.

The purpose of Te Pūwaha: the Whanganui port revitalisation project, is to create a modern, purpose-built marine precinct that will be a community asset for the next 50 years and beyond. This collaborative project is in partnership with the Hapū, the Crown, Whanganui Port, Q-West Boat Builders, Horizons Regional Council and the Port Employment Precinct (WDETT).

**Projects that were not completed in 2024/25**

Airport master plan: Work on the development of the business case and initial project planning has been deferred to 2025/26.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	3,630	934
Operating expenditure	5,093	5,082

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

## Waste minimisation and collection

### What we do

We manage a kerbside recycling collection that is provided to all residential households in the Whanganui urban area, along with Fordell, Marybank and Mowhanau villages. The collection and recycling service is outsourced to a contractor and is funded through targeted rates.

We also operate the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre as a facility for recycling and green waste, and for other materials that can't be collected kerbside.

Waste minimisation and sustainability education and advice services are provided to the public, schools and institutions, and we administer the council's Waste Minimisation Fund that enables groups and organisations to develop and deliver their own initiatives that reduce waste to landfill.

### What we did in 2024/25

Our kerbside recycling service commenced on 1 July 2025 and has resulted in over 1400 tonnes of material collected in its first year of operation. This includes 257 tonnes of plastic, tin and aluminium, 378 tonnes of cardboard/paper and 767 tonnes of glass. Including the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre, we diverted 3039 tonnes (rounded) of waste from landfill.

There were 24 genuinely missed bin collections during the reporting year with a progressive drop in missed bin collections throughout the year due to improved efficiency of the collection service.

The Council decided in March 2025 to cancel the rates-funded kerbside food scraps service after reflecting on community feedback and central government's decision not to go ahead with a mandate of the service. The service was to have been implemented on 1 July 2025.

We took over the management and operation of the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre (WRRRC) at the end of June 2024. Since then, we have completed a thorough site investigation, tidied up the centre and ran a survey with our customers to gauge use and satisfaction with WRRRC, along with suggested improvements.

We commenced the very successful *tyrewise* product stewardship scheme on 1 September 2024. Members of the public can drop-off up to five tyres at a time, free of charge. In addition to the launch of this scheme, we improved the battery recycling service and widened the range of batteries for recycling; identified a new provider for e-waste recycling; offered food and beverage carton and polystyrene recycling; and arranged a regular car battery recycling service.

Our application to the Ministry for the Environment's Waste Minimisation Fund for funding to complete a full feasibility study/business plan to develop and build a new Resource Recovery Park for Whanganui was unsuccessful. We subsequently identified a suitable supplier to produce a detailed business case that will reflect our district and needs. This is expected to be completed by early August 2025.

Work is underway to prepare a Waste Assessment which is the first stage of the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP) 2021-2027 review. This project could take up to two years from the initial planning phase to adoption of a WMMP.

Two applications to the Waste Minimisation Fund were assessed and granted. Funded through the Waste Disposal Levy revenue received from the Ministry for the Environment, the fund is used for waste minimisation initiatives that align with our goals and focus on reuse, recovery, recycling and decreasing waste to landfill.

We have also sought to better understand the environmental impacts and overall condition of the Balgownie Landfill with a gap and risk analysis conducted in January 2025. Following this report, we will be undertaking a more detailed site investigation which will help us determine whether or not further action to remediate any part of the site is required.

A total of ten schools, involving 33 classes and 623 students, received Zero Waste Education during the year.

## Projects that were not completed in 2024/25

Kerbside food waste: A decision was made in March 2025 to cancel the rates-funded kerbside food scraps service after reflecting on community feedback and central government’s decision not to go ahead with a mandate of the service. Planning for the service had been undertaken during the 2024/25 year in anticipation of the 1 July 2025 implementation date.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	522	1,333
Operating expenditure	4,232	4,716

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Regulatory and compliance

## What we do

The regulatory and compliance group of activities has responsibilities under legislation to protect the community from a variety of risks, and to ensure that natural and built resources in the district are sustainably used, developed and protected. The group includes:

- Animal management
- Building control
- Environmental health
- Parking services
- Resource consenting
- District planning.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Animal management

We completed the project to provide a quarantine/isolation facility at the animal pound. Animals can now be isolated from others with each kennel having its own water supply, ventilation and drainage, restricting the transfer of disease from any known infected animals. The project was completed within scope, on time and within budget.

The known dog population (as opposed to those registered) reduced slightly during the year, with 8,507 known dogs compared to 8,603 in 2023/24. Of these known dogs, 95% were registered. This consistency reflects the ongoing proactive efforts of the animal management team to accurately monitor and manage the local dog population.

We continued our ongoing education programme to promote good dog ownership in the district. We ran 15 initiatives during the year that included responsible dog owner courses, school visits and dog control initiatives at off-lead dog parks.

We attended 922 animal-related Priority 1 jobs during the year. 920 of these (or 99.7%) were attended within one hour of being reported. Priority 1 callouts include dog attack (bite), dog rushing, policy/agency request, secured dog or wandering stock (if a state highway).

### Building control

During the 2024/25 year, we processed 800 (98.8%) of the 809 building consents within 20 working days, and 818 (98.7%) of the 829 Code Compliance Certificates (CCC's), substantially achieved our 100% targets.

Previous years of unprecedented consenting has seen high volumes of work for the building team throughout the various disciplines it manages. With a significant amount of building consents issued over the preceding years this continues to contribute to ongoing high numbers for inspections and the number of CCC's issued. This trend is expected to continue as projects are finalised.

Territorial Authority statutory auditing including pool barriers and Building Warrant of Fitness (BWof) continue as per the required schedules.

## **Environmental health**

We signed off on a shared service agreement with Rangitikei District Council that sees us providing environmental health officer services (Food Act, noise control etc.) to the Rangitikei District. This arrangement is mutually beneficial to both councils with the receiving council covering the costs of the service and some efficiency savings through the additional scale of combined operations.

A total of 136 Food Act registrations were processed prior to their expiry date during the year achieving a 96.3% result. There were also 55 new or renewal alcohol applications with all 55 inspected within the application period.

We also conducted 12 joint operations with NZ Policy and Te Whatu Ora during the year. In an effort to minimise the direct and indirect harm caused by excessive alcohol consumption, these operations targeted compliance with alcohol legislation and centred on licensed premises.

A total of 1202 noise complaints were received during the year. Of these, 1081 (90%) were attended within 30 minutes. This result was an improvement of 10% from the previous year. 95% target was substantially achieved.

## **Parking services**

We installed 'pay here' signs above all meters for the consumer to easily identify the location of the meters.

The gold card parking permit hours of operation were extended to include Saturdays, and six extra mobility bays were added to the CBD.

The average daily activated on-street parking occupancy rate within the central business district (CBD) during the hours of 8am to 5pm was 41.7% (target not met). This is a new measure to inform user experience with higher occupancy resulting in more circulating traffic and impacts on safety and efficiency. Our target range of 70-90% parking occupancy ensures a balance of needs for retailers, shoppers and visitors.

During the peak parking hours of 10am to 2pm, the average daily activated parking occupancy rate in Victoria Avenue was 77.9%, and 50.9% for Zone 2 (i.e. all other metered areas in the CBD).

## **Resource consenting**

Our planning team played a crucial role in evaluating and approving activities that could impact the environment, ensuring they adhered to local regulations and promoted sustainable practices. Throughout the reporting year, we maintained a high volume of resource consent applications, with no significant drop-off in numbers. The complexity of these applications increased due to the diverse nature of the projects and the land being utilised. A total of 240 non-notified resource consent applications were issued, with 130 of them approved within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days.

In addition to processing applications, we were responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Resource Management Act (RMA). In the past five years, 214 consents were visited and monitored, and we are steadily working through a backlog of historic resource consents. This monitoring ensures that all activities continue to meet the required standards, safeguarding our community and environment.

We also managed the processing of development contributions, ensuring that new developments contributed fairly to the infrastructure and services they would benefit from.

Furthermore, our team provided a large number of district plan advice sessions as duty planners and conducted numerous formal pre-application meetings. These efforts helped guide applicants through the planning process, ensuring clarity and compliance from the outset.

**District planning**

The spatial and district plans shape how and where Whanganui develops, taking community aspirations and wellbeing into consideration.

A large proportion of the planned District Plan Review was put on hold pending the outcome of the reforms to the Resource Management Act currently being driven by central government. We did, however, continue to review the spatial planning aspects of the district plan as it was determined that there was less risk associated with this. Work also progressed on Plan Change 63 – Heritage, which reviews the District Plans protections for historic heritage, with hearings being held in June 2025.

**Our performance**

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	137	144
Operating expenditure	9,016	8,622

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*



# Corporate

## What we do

This group of activities provides a range of professional skills and services to support elected members and the organisation to enable democratic decision-making and the efficient delivery of services.

### Governance

The democracy services team provides guidance and support to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, the community. Our team manages the council, committee and community board meeting schedules, ensures meetings are run in accordance with legislative requirements under the Local Government Act 2002 and enables the community to participate in decision-making processes.

The governance activity also co-ordinates civic functions such as citizenship ceremonies and mayoral events and oversees election processes and representation reviews.

### Corporate services

The corporate services activity includes a number of functions that support staff and other activities and assist in the day-to-day running of council. A breakdown of key functions and responsibilities includes:

- **Strategy and policy** – long-term and annual plans, strategy, policy and bylaw development and review, research, analysis, engagement and consultation and monitoring
- **Communications** – delivery of communications, media and marketing services to the community
- **Finance and Assurance** – financial planning, monitoring and reporting, rating administration, accounts receivable and payable functions, strategic procurement, risk management and internal audits, in-house legal advice, and processing of official information requests
- **People and Transformation** – employee recruitment, training, performance and remuneration, health, safety and wellbeing, provision of secure and cost-effective information technology, and business improvement solutions
- **Customer services** – initial point of contact with the community to assist with general inquiries, payments and documentation.

### Investments

Council manages a portfolio of investments that provides income to support the work of council.

The investment portfolio also includes the Waitahinga Quarry which is currently inactive, but our Long-Term Plan proposes future use.

## What we did in 2024/25

### Governance

#### Representation review

We sought community views on the future make-up of Whanganui District Council and received 190 submissions. Whanganui's final representation arrangements for the 2025-2028 triennium were determined by the Local Government Commission with Whanganui to be represented by 12 councillors: 10 in a general ward and 2 in a Māori ward, both covering the entire district. The Whanganui Rural Community Board will also continue to advocate for our large rural population.

Legislation requires local councils to review representation arrangements at least once every six years to ensure fair and effective community representation.

### Māori wards

The Council affirmed its decision to establish a Māori ward in September 2024.

Under legislation introduced by the coalition government in May 2024, the Council had the option of either reversing their October 2023 decision to bring in a Māori ward or affirming their decision to establish a Māori ward with the requirement to hold a referendum.

Council elections will be held in October 2025 and will include a binding referendum on whether to retain the Māori ward or reverse the decision. The result of the referendum will take effect at the 2028 and 2031 local body elections.

### Post-settlement relationship with Iwi

Prior to the finalisation of treaty settlement negotiations between the Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiations Trust (WLSNT) and the Crown, the Council was asked to make decisions on a platform for joint work with Takapau Whariki, the post-settlement governance entity for the Whanganui Land Settlement.

Over 1200 people provided feedback during a two-month programme of community engagement with around 36% identifying that they either lived in, or came from, Whanganui. In February 2025, a majority of councillors resolved to:

- Support the draft relationship agreement – Te Tomokanga ki Te Matapihi (subject to final ratification)
- Agree to participate in the statutory reserves board – Ngā Tūtei a Maru
- Agree to the joint establishment of a charitable trust – Toitū te Whānau (subject to final approval of the Trust Deed).

Once the deed of settlement between the Whanganui Land Settlement Negotiations Trust and the Crown is ratified by Hapū/Iwi, signed, and legislation is introduced into Parliament, the joint platform of work between Council and Takapau Whariki will move forward.

### Citizens' Assembly

We received a high level of interest from members of the community wanting to participate in our inaugural citizens' assembly. The initiative saw 40 residents - randomly selected from those that registered – brought together to consider the future of outdoor swimming facilities, including Whanganui East Pool. The group met over a series of sessions facilitated by an independent expert and heard specialist advice before developing a recommendation for elected members to consider at a meeting set for July 2025.

### Meeting management

There were 21 council and committee meetings, and four community board meetings, during the reporting year. All agenda were made available to the public within two working days before the meeting as legislatively required.

With a view to delivering cost savings and efficiencies, we upgraded our meeting management system with new software. Council and committee meeting agendas, minutes and livestreams can now be viewed all in one spot.

### Performance and leadership

Although the mayor and councillors are independent of council operations, there is a high level of community interest in how the district is governed. We sought community views on the mayor and councillors' performance and leadership over the past year. Although not meeting the target, 43% of

respondents considered that the elected members had responded well to community needs and issues. This was a significant improvement on the previous year's result of 30%. Public forum opportunities were actively promoted, there was an increased number of petitions and deputations to council and councillor portfolios were introduced and implemented.

## **Corporate services**

### **Customer service**

Our Call Centre team received 42,906 calls in the 2024/25 reporting period, with our afterhours service receiving 3729 calls. In total, 2414 of the calls were related to animal management and 1353 for noise complaints.

Establishing a baseline in the annual community views survey, we found that 76% of the community rated the knowledge and service of council staff as good or very good. Survey results also showed that 58% of respondents who had engaged with the council during the year were either satisfied or very satisfied that the communication and engagement activities were helpful or relevant.

Communication and engagement with our community is key to council's activities. A communications and engagement strategy has recently been developed to drive improvement in this area. A refreshed brand and the growth and diversification of communication channels are priorities.

### **Policies, strategies and bylaws**

In addition to consultation on the Annual Plan 2025/26 and the Fees and Charges, we reviewed a number of policies and bylaws throughout the year. Community feedback from stakeholder engagement helped to shape the Trade Waste Bylaw, Local Alcohol Policy and the Freedom Camping Bylaw.

We also engaged with the community and stakeholder groups on other topics. You can read more about our engagement and consultation in our full Annual Report.

### **Credit rating**

In June 2025, global credit rating agency Standard and Poor's (S&P) affirmed our AA- long-term and A-1+ short-term issuer credit rating. Their report acknowledged our prudent financial management, particularly with regard to debt and liquidity. S&P had, however, revised our long-term rating outlook from 'stable' to 'negative' reflecting its view that Whanganui's financial management or liquidity could weaken during the next two years.

### **Insurance costs**

To reduce the cost of insurance, we removed a number of medium-to-low criticality property assets from the council's insurance schedule. We also increased the excess for assets that the council continues to insure, achieving further savings.

### **Rates remissions**

We extended rates relief for those adversely affected by the October 2022 district valuation, albeit at a reduced level of rates relief. We received 70 applications for rates remissions during the reporting year. The total value of the remissions applied for was \$18,207.

## **Investments**

### **Council-Controlled Organisations**

A decision was made in March 2024 to close Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited (WDCHL) and transition the management, oversight and performance monitoring of council's commercial organisations to council's Council Controlled Organisations (CCO) & Economic Development Committee.

The work to disestablish WDCHL in its current form continued during the year with legal work to transfer the three properties (25 Airport Road, 122 Liverpool Street and 14A Hillside Terrace) effective 1 April 2025.

	Budgeted for 2024/25 (\$000)	Actual spend 2024/25 (\$000)
Capital expenditure	1,418	13,075
Operating expenditure	16,492	19,882

*These are summary figures from the group Funding Impact Statement. See the full Annual Report 24/25 for details.*

# Financial summary

The following pages provide a summary of Council’s financial performance for 2025.

## Whanganui District Council

## Summary statement of comprehensive revenue and expense

For the year ended 30 June 2025

**Summary Statement of comprehensive revenue and expense**

	<b>Council</b>		<b>Group</b>		
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>\$000</b>	<b>\$000</b>	<b>\$000</b>	<b>\$000</b>	<b>\$000</b>
Rates	85,495	85,985	76,562	85,985	76,562
Other revenue	31,162	44,522	48,048	58,201	63,065
Total revenue	116,657	130,507	124,611	144,186	139,628
Finance costs	(10,108)	(10,216)	(8,760)	(10,217)	(9,636)
Other operating expenses	(113,037)	(122,945)	(120,588)	(141,977)	(137,568)
Total operating expenses	123,145	133,161	129,348	152,193	147,204
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before tax</b>	<b>(6,488)</b>	<b>(2,654)</b>	<b>(4,737)</b>	<b>(8,008)</b>	<b>(7,576)</b>
Share of associate surplus/(deficit)	-	17	(2)	17	(2)
Income tax (expense)/benefit	-	-	5	(218)	32
<b>Surplus/(deficit) after tax</b>	<b>(6,488)</b>	<b>(2,637)</b>	<b>(4,735)</b>	<b>(8,209)</b>	<b>(7,547)</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit attributable to:</b>					
Whanganui District Council	(6,488)	(2,637)	(4,735)	(8,209)	(7,547)
<b>Other comprehensive revenue and expense</b>					
Gain on property plant & equipment revaluations*	88,904	101,255	76,903	101,255	80,007
Gain on carbon credits revaluation	-	302	323	302	323
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive revenue and expense	-	20	35	(11)	66
Adjustments from CCO through retained earnings	-	(355)	(292)	(355)	(292)
<b>Total other comprehensive revenue and expense</b>	<b>88,904</b>	<b>101,222</b>	<b>76,970</b>	<b>101,192</b>	<b>80,103</b>
<b>Total comprehensive revenue and expense attributable to:</b>					
Whanganui District Council	82,416	98,586	72,236	92,982	72,558
	<b>82,416</b>	<b>98,586</b>	<b>72,236</b>	<b>92,982</b>	<b>72,558</b>

\*Gains on property plant & equipment revaluations are presented net of taxation.

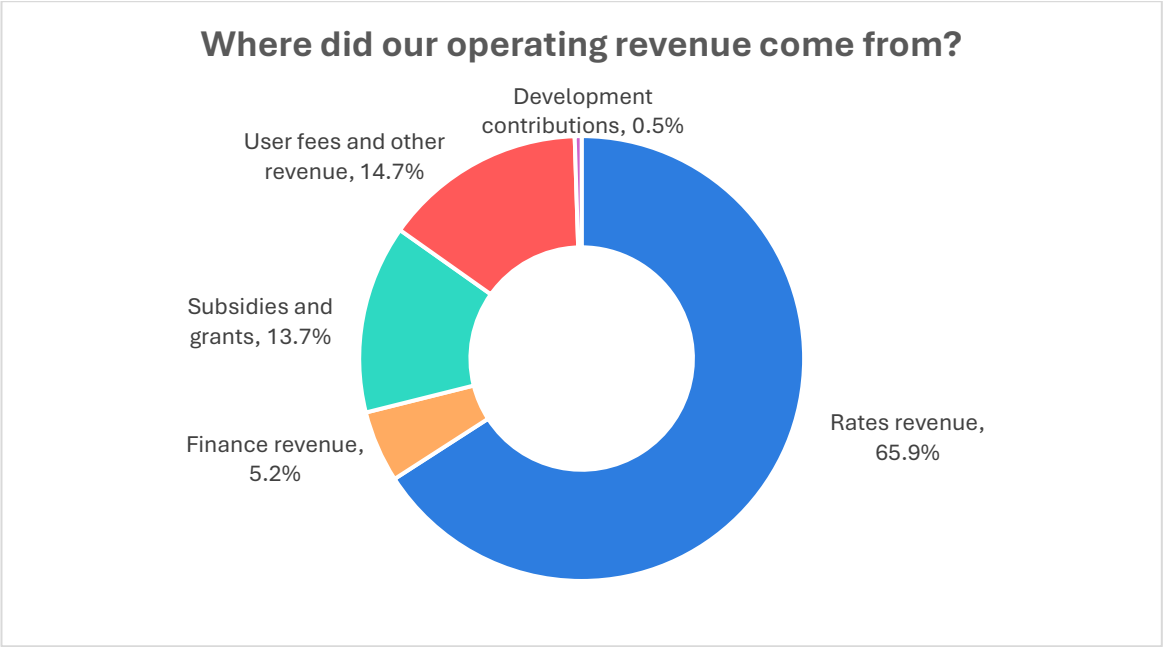
## Explanation of major variances:

**Other revenue**

Finance revenue is \$4.65M higher than budget (217%), mainly driven by significant and unplanned deemed dividend following an asset transfer from WDC Holdings Limited to the Council. There is also greater cash held on term deposit and at higher than planned interest rates.

Subsidies and grants are \$6.25M higher than planned (54%). The main drivers are the timing of Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment grants and additional Roding emergency works subsidy from NZ Transport Agency.

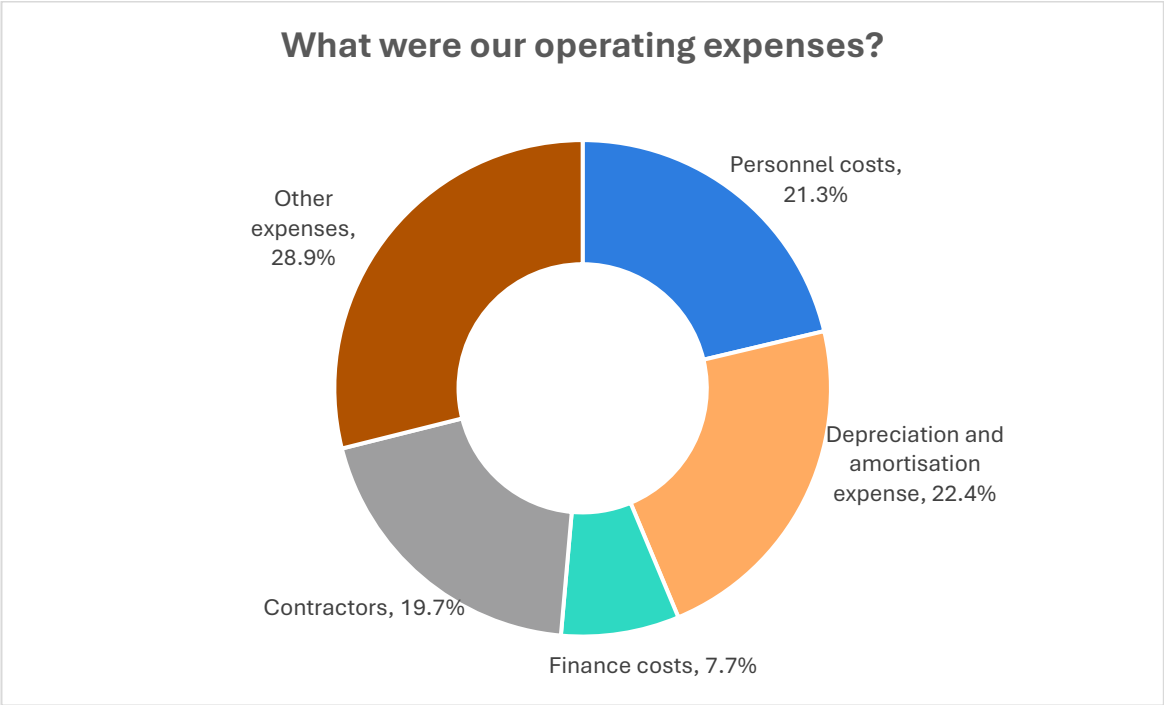




**Other operating expenses**

Other operating expenses are \$9.95M higher than budget. This is driven by:

- Personal costs are \$1.89M higher than budget as a result of Whanganui & Partners, and the Resource Recovery Centre being functions now being deleivered in-house.
- Higher maintenance and response costs (4.14M) on roading assets
- Maintenance in the Regional Mesuem (\$676k) originally budgeted in 2023/24



## Whanganui District Council

## Summary statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Council		Group		
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	2025	2025	2024	2025	2024
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
<b>Balance at 1 July</b>	1,287,933	1,348,185	1,275,949	1,386,727	1,314,169
Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year	82,416	98,586	72,236	92,982	72,559
<b>Balance at 30 June</b>	<b>1,370,349</b>	<b>1,446,771</b>	<b>1,348,185</b>	<b>1,479,710</b>	<b>1,386,727</b>
<b>Components of equity</b>					
Retained earnings	611,825	609,170	612,246	633,456	642,135
Restricted reserves	66,670	68,804	68,719	68,804	68,719
Revaluation reserves	690,257	766,520	665,265	775,173	673,918
Other reserves	1,597	2,277	1,955	2,277	1,955
Non-controlling interest	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June</b>	<b>1,370,349</b>	<b>1,446,771</b>	<b>1,348,185</b>	<b>1,479,710</b>	<b>1,386,727</b>

## Whanganui District Council

## Summary statement of financial position

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Council		Group		
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	2025	2025	2024	2025	2024
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Total current assets	15,808	48,690	56,093	45,573	54,993
Total non-current assets	1,576,349	1,621,611	1,497,511	1,680,566	1,562,477
Total current liabilities	(37,107)	(47,209)	(41,433)	(51,570)	(48,146)
Total non-current liabilities	(184,701)	(176,322)	(163,986)	(194,859)	(182,597)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,370,349</b>	<b>1,446,771</b>	<b>1,348,185</b>	<b>1,479,710</b>	<b>1,386,727</b>
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>1,370,349</b>	<b>1,446,771</b>	<b>1,348,185</b>	<b>1,479,710</b>	<b>1,386,727</b>

## Explanation of major variances:

**Assets**

Receivables is \$2.85M higher than planned, which fluctuates regularly due to timing of payments.

Other financial assets are in total \$3.3M higher than budget due to higher than budgeted LGFA borrower notes, and loans to subsidiaries.

Total non-current assets (excluding other financial assets is \$78.3M higher than budget (5.28%), mainly due to a valuation increase for Council's 3 Water infrastructure assets, investment property and fine art.

**Liabilities**

Payables is \$1.7M higher than planned which fluctuates regularly due to the timing of invoicing.

Total borrowings are \$1.5M lower than budget. This is driven by higher capital expenditure, offset by significant external funding and decrease in pre-funding at year end.

Derivative financial instruments have an unfavourable balance of \$1.22M as a result of changing market conditions and lower interest rates affecting the revaluation of these instruments.

## Whanganui District Council

## Summary statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Council		Group		
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
	2025	2025	2024	2025	2024
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	6,811	1,334	14,834	15,142	21,872
Net cash from operating activities	24,364	25,143	20,162	24,947	19,433
Net cash from investing activities	(50,415)	(38,905)	(99,662)	(31,302)	(99,531)
Net cash financing activities	25,818	19,250	66,000	10,614	73,368
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	<b>6,578</b>	<b>6,821</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>19,401</b>	<b>15,141</b>

## Explanation of major variances:

**Operating activities**

Cash flows from operating activities is an indication of whether an entity is able to finance its normal operations from short-term funds. Council generated a \$25M cash surplus from operating activities. This is a favourable variance to budget of \$779k, mainly due to higher interest and subsidies.

**Investing activities**

Cash flows from investing activities show net asset purchases to be \$11.5M less than budget following lower loans to subsidiaries and higher receipts from investments.

**Financing activities**

Cash flows from financing activities shows a net debt increase of \$19.2M, with greater borrowings than repayments. This is \$6.6M lower than budget, driven by a combination of higher subsidies and lower on lending to subsidiaries.

Whanganui District Council  
Summary funding impact statement  
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Annual Plan 2025 \$000	Annual Report 2025 \$000	Annual Plan 2024 \$000	Annual Report 2024 \$000
<b>Sources of operating funding</b>				
Rates	85,495	85,985	76,669	76,563
Other income	23,583	33,101	21,719	31,190
<b>Total operating funding (A)</b>	<b>109,078</b>	<b>119,086</b>	<b>98,388</b>	<b>107,753</b>
<b>Application of operating funding</b>				
Payments to staff and suppliers	81,230	90,850	75,254	91,797
Finance costs	10,108	10,216	7,063	8,760
<b>Total application of operating funding (B)</b>	<b>91,338</b>	<b>101,066</b>	<b>82,317</b>	<b>100,557</b>
<b>Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A - B)</b>	<b>17,740</b>	<b>18,020</b>	<b>16,071</b>	<b>7,196</b>
<b>Sources of capital funding</b>				
Subsidies, grants and development contributions	6,624	9,959	8,620	12,654
Increase (decrease) in debt	25,818	19,250	16,456	66,000
Gross proceeds from asset sales	-	49	-	107
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-
Other dedicated capital funding	-	18	28	2,646
<b>Total sources of capital funding (C)</b>	<b>32,442</b>	<b>29,276</b>	<b>25,104</b>	<b>81,407</b>
<b>Application of capital funding</b>				
Capital expenditure				
-to meet additional demand	3,972	1,057	4,172	1,122
-to improve the level of service	12,598	29,873	23,502	37,791
-to replace existing assets	16,345	15,437	13,835	17,631
Increase (decrease) in reserves	(233)	(4,071)	(334)	20,646
Increase (decrease) in investments	17,500	5,000	-	11,412
<b>Total application of capital funding (D)</b>	<b>50,182</b>	<b>47,296</b>	<b>41,175</b>	<b>88,603</b>
<b>Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C - D)</b>	<b>(17,740)</b>	<b>(18,020)</b>	<b>(16,071)</b>	<b>(7,196)</b>
<b>Funding balance ((A - B) + (C - D))</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## Events after balance date

At its meeting on 26 March 2024 the Whanganui District Council resolved to disestablish Whanganui District Council Holdings Limited. The disestablishment process will include the transitioning of the Company's operations into Council. As a result, the WDCHL financial statements have been prepared on a disestablishment basis. Prior to 30 June 2026 we expect all rights, assets and liabilities will have been transferred to Whanganui District Council. The subsidiaries of WDCHL will continue to operate but will consolidate directly into Whanganui District Council group accounts.

Refer to page 16 for information on the status of Local Water Done Well.



## **Additional information about this Summary**

This Summary Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with PBE FRS 43: Summary Financial Statements. It has been extracted from the full Annual Report and is designed to give an overview of the Council and Group operations. This summary does not include all the disclosures provided in the full financial statements and cannot be expected to provide as complete an understanding as the full financial report of the Council. The full Annual Report contains detailed information on the finances and service performance and was adopted by the Council on 9 October 2025.

The Council has designated itself a Public Benefit Entity (PBE) for financial reporting purposes. The full financial statements were prepared in accordance with New Zealand Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (NZ GAAP) and comply with Tier 1 Public Benefit Entity (PBE) accounting standards. The financial statements are for the year ended 30 June 2025 and all figures are in New Zealand dollars and are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

Audit New Zealand has audited the full financial statements and has issued a modified opinion. This summary has been examined by Audit New Zealand for consistency with the full Annual Report. The Summary Annual Report was authorised for issue on 7 November 2025 by the Mayor, Andrew Tripe, and Chief Executive, Barbara Mckerrow.

## **Independent Auditor's Report**

### **To the readers of Whanganui District Council and group's summary of the annual report for the year ended 30 June 2025**

The summary of the annual report was derived from the annual report of the Whanganui District Council and its subsidiaries and controlled entities (together referred to as the group) for the year ended 30 June 2025.

The summary of the annual report comprises the following information on pages 14, 16 and 19 to 61:

- the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025;
- the summaries of the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2025;
- the notes to the summary financial statements that include other explanatory information; and
- the summary statement of service provision, included in the "Service Performance Overview" and "Summarising our performance" sections.

## **Opinion**

In our opinion:

- the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the annual report; and
- the summary statements comply with PBE FRS-43: Summary Financial Statements.

However, the summary statement of service performance includes a limitation of scope to the equivalent extent as the full audited statement of service performance. This limitation is explained below in *The full annual report and audit report thereon* section.

## **Summary of the annual report**

The summary of the annual report does not contain all the disclosures required by generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand. Reading the summary of the annual report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the full annual report and the auditor's report thereon.

The summary of the annual report does not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our auditor's report on the full annual report.

## The full annual report and our audit report thereon

We expressed a qualified opinion on the statement of service performance and an unmodified audit opinion on the other audited information in the full annual report for the year ended 30 June 2025 in our auditor's report dated 9 October 2025. The basis for our qualified opinion on the statement of service performance is explained below.

### **Statement of service performance: Our work was limited with respect of several performance measures as described below**

The Council is required to report against the performance measures set out in the Non-Financial Performance Measure Rules 2024 (the Rules) made by the Secretary for Local Government. These include mandatory performance measures relating to:

- The time taken to attend to and resolve water supply and wastewater faults, as reported on pages 30, 31 and 41 of the full annual report.
- The percentage of customer service requests relating to roads and footpaths to which the Council responds within the time frame specified in the long-term plan. The Council has selected to report response times separately for roads and for footpaths, as reported on pages 56 and 57 of the full annual report.
- The average quality of ride on the sealed local road network, measured by smooth travel exposure, as reported on pages 55 and 56 of the full annual report.

These performance measures are important as they are indicative of the quality of service provided to the community.

We identified significant issues with these performance measures as described below. As a result of these issues, our work was limited and there were no practicable audit procedures we could apply to obtain assurance over the reported results for these performance measures.

Our opinion on the time taken to attend and resolve water supply and wastewater faults and on the average quality of ride on the sealed local road network was also qualified in the 2024 performance year.

#### ***The time taken to attend to and resolve water supply and wastewater faults, and to respond to customer service requests for roads and footpaths.***

Our audit testing of these performance measures identified significant issues with the Council's systems and processes for completely and accurately recording the time taken to attend to and resolve water and waste faults, and to respond to customer service requests for roads and for footpaths.

#### ***The average quality of ride on the sealed local road network, measured by smooth travel exposure***

Reported performance of this performance measure is based on surveys of road roughness and estimated traffic volumes.

We were unable to obtain assurance over the reliability of estimated traffic volumes used in the calculation of this performance measure. This is because the majority of these estimates are not sufficiently up to date, as

described on page 55 of the full annual report. The actual average quality of ride on the sealed local road network may therefore differ materially from the result reported.

### **Emphasis of matter – Future of water delivery**

Our auditors report on the full annual report also includes an emphasis of matter paragraph drawing attention to pages 194 to 195, which outlines that in response to the Government's Local Water Done Well reforms, the Council has decided to establish a multi-owned water organisation with Ruapehu District Council to deliver water, wastewater and stormwater services from 1 July 2025.

The financial impact of this decision is unknown because details of the exact arrangements are still being considered. In addition, there is some uncertainty as the proposal is yet to be accepted by the Secretary for Local Government.

Information about this matter is also disclosed on pages 16 to 17 of the group's summary annual report.

### **Council's responsibility for the summary of the annual report**

The Council is responsible for preparing the summary of the annual report which includes preparing summary statements, in accordance with PBE FRS-43: Summary Financial Statements.

### **Auditor's responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary of the annual report represents, fairly and consistently, the information regarding the major matters dealt with in the full annual report and whether the summary statements comply with PBE FRS 43: Summary Financial Statements.

Our opinion on the summary of the annual report is based on our procedures, which were carried out in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Professional and Ethical Standards and the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

In addition to reporting on the summary and full annual reports, we have performed a limited assurance engagement related to the Council's debenture trust deed, which is compatible with these independence requirements. Other than the audit, our report on the disclosure requirements, and this engagement, we have no relationship with, or interests in, the group.



Debbie Perera  
Audit New Zealand  
On behalf of the Auditor-General  
Palmerston North, New Zealand  
7 November 2025