



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

## **Statement of Proposal**

**Draft Rates Remission Policy**

**Draft Rates Postponement Policy**

**Draft Policy on the Remission and  
Postponement of Rates on Maori Freehold  
Land**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Whanganui District Council (“the Council”) is proposing some changes to its Policy on Remission of Rates, Policy for Postponement of Rates, Policy for Remission of Rates on Maori Freehold Land, and Policy for Postponement of Rates on Maori Freehold Land. Council is seeking the community’s views on the draft policies.

## **2. REASON FOR THE PROPOSAL**

The Council is required to have a policy on the remission and postponement of rates on Māori freehold land under section 102(2) of the Local Government Act 2002 (“the LGA”)<sup>1</sup>. The Council may also adopt a rates remission policy and rates postponement policy under section 102(3) of the LGA.

The purpose of the policies is to set out the objectives sought to be achieved by the remission or postponement of rates and the conditions and criteria to be met in order for rates to be remitted or postponed.

The Council is required to consult on the policies at least once every 6 years.

## **3. PROPOSED POLICIES AT A GLANCE**

The policies are concerned with establishing criteria whereby property owners’ may apply for rates remission (a reduction to the amount of rates to be paid) or rates postponement (a delay in the payment of rates). Objectives of these policies include:

- Assisting ratepayers who are experiencing financial circumstances that affect their ability to pay rates or are suffering hardship due to the effects of a natural disaster or calamity;
- To encourage the protection of properties for natural, historic or cultural purposes;
- To recognise situations where there is no occupier (often due to physical accessibility of the land) or person gaining an economic or financial benefit from the land
- To recognise the benefits of services provided to the community.

The full draft policies are attached and are also available online at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/haveyoursay](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/haveyoursay)

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, a policy adopted under [section 102\(1\)](#) is not required to provide for the remission of, or postponement of the requirement to pay, rates on Māori freehold land.

#### 4. KEY PROPOSED CHANGES

The key changes proposed in the draft policies are:

- Removal of delegations from the policies.
- Clarifying which rating units fall within the Rates Remission Policy that are protected for natural, historic or cultural conservation purposes, i.e. those rating units which are identified at Appendix A (Heritage Items) of the Whanganui District Plan.

Other changes to the policy that do not affect the objectives and conditions of the policies are as follows:

- A change in the layout and content of the Policy for Remission and Postponement of Rates on Maori Freehold Land which combines two separate policies (Policy on Remission of Rates on Maori Freehold Land and Policy on Postponement of Rates on Maori Freehold Land) into one policy document.
- Renaming the policies to align with the Local Government Act 2002.
- Minor editorial/formatting changes.

#### 5. OPTIONS

The Council has identified three options for addressing its objectives:

##### **Option 1: No changes to the current policies**

Council could retain its existing Policy on Remission of Rates, Policy for Postponement of Rates, Policy for Remission of Rates on Maori Freehold Land, and Policy for Postponement of Rates on Maori Freehold Land without amendment.

*Advantages:* Consistency.

*Disadvantages:* Any changes to delegated authorities would necessitate a change in the policies. Lack of clarity around which properties are eligible for remission of rates due to being considered protected for natural, historic or cultural conservation purposes.

##### **Option 2: Adopt the draft policies (*preferred option*)**

Council could adopt the draft policies. If Council adopts the draft policies following public consultation, the criteria outlining which properties qualify for rates remission will more clearly define those that are protected for natural, historic or cultural conservation purposes. The authority for deciding upon applications made under the policies will be managed outside of the policies themselves and may be delegated by Council.

*Advantages:* The draft policies address issues that have been identified during the review such as making it clearer for the public which properties are considered to be protected for natural, historic or cultural conservation purposes and therefore qualify for rates remission. Having

the delegations for the policies managed outside of the policies themselves is best practice and allows Council to better manage who has the authority to consider applications.

*Disadvantages:* There are no material disadvantages identified with the proposed changes to the draft policies.

### **Option 3: Adopt different policies**

Council may adopt different policies to those consulted upon. The community may propose changes that have not been identified previously.

*Advantages:* Reflective of community feedback.

*Disadvantages:* If the proposed changes are significant Council may need to undertake further consultation to explore them.

## **6. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSION**

Consultation will give the Council a chance to hear the community's views before making a final decision.

The draft policies are available on the Council's website [www.whanganui.govt.nz](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz).

You can make a submission online at [www.whanganui.govt.nz/haveyoursay](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz/haveyoursay) or alternatively submission forms are available from the Whanganui District Council Customer Service counter at the main municipal building located at 101 Guyton Street, the Davis Central City Library and Gonville Library. Please indicate whether you would like to speak to your submission and include contact details. People who wish to be heard by Council will be given the opportunity to do so. The time and venue for the hearing of submissions is yet to be confirmed.

For any queries please contact Noeline Moosman, Revenue & Information Management Lead, on (06) 349 0001.

The period for making submissions is from **9am Monday 19 March 2018 to 4.00pm Thursday 19 April 2018.**

## 7. PROPOSED CONSULTATION PLAN

TASK	DATE
Strategy and Finance Committee adoption of the Statement of Proposal for public consultation	Wednesday 7 March 2018
Submissions open	Monday 19 March 2018
Submissions close	Thursday 19 April 2018
Hearing of submissions	Wednesday 2 & Thursday 3 May 2018 (TBC)
Deliberations	Wednesday 16 & Thursday 17 May 2018 (TBC)
Final adoption by Council	Thursday 28 June 2018