



YOUR RATES FOR THE 2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

The year ahead – 2016/17

Nga mihi nui, greetings to our ratepayers and citizens

Another year, another Annual Plan and another challenge for your Council to balance the services, facilities and progress our community wants against our ability to pay for them.

The decisions we have made in developing the Annual Plan 2016/17 align closely with our Whanganui: Leading Edge Strategy, the vision which sets out our aspirations for our community, connectivity, creativity, environment and economy.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to make a submission on the proposed Annual Plan and amendments to the 10-Year Plan 2015-2025. We received a total of 62 submissions and these were carefully considered by the Council. A number of changes were made to the Annual Plan as a result of public submissions.

As well as adopting our Annual Plan 2016/17, we have approved three key amendments to the 10-Year Plan 2015-2025.

The first is to note that new information provided during recent discussions with major trade waste users may lead to changes to our current wastewater scheme. Should a more affordable solution arise, the Council has the flexibility to accommodate any changes within the 2016/17 Annual Plan. Those changes would be reported back to the Council before a decision to proceed with any wastewater scheme occurs.

The other two amendments relate to forces of nature.

The 2015 weather event caused heartache for many people but also significant damage to our infrastructure. We have introduced a storm damage rate to repay the costs of repairs over five years from 2016/17. Residential and commercial properties will pay an extra rate of \$44.70 per year, while

farming properties pay an extra \$49.70 – they will pay more because most of the damage was to our rural roading network.

In Westbourne/Gonville stormwater is causing issues so we will be working on a solution to improve stormwater drainage and reduce the effect of small to medium size rain events in the area.

For the year ahead we have included some initiatives and new funding in the Annual Plan that will see us partnering with community organisations to deliver social services and ensure our community is safe. The additional initiatives are outlined below. Despite this new funding being included, we have been able to keep the average rates increase to 4.5%. This is the same as was signalled in the proposed plan for consultation.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the process of democracy in our community through the Annual Plan process. It is heartening to know that there are so many people who care enough to make submissions and front up to Council meetings to have their say in what can be a daunting environment. It is by working together that we can ensure Whanganui's future as a vibrant and diverse community where great things happen.

Annette Main
Mayor



Key decisions for 2016/17

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT RATE

The cost of the Central Business District (CBD) maintenance activity is shared between the general ratepayer and the properties in the CBD. We have reviewed how the costs have been divided to better apportion the burden of costs. This will now be 42% from the CBD properties and 58% from the general rate. This amounts to around \$120,000 and results in a reduction to all CBD properties and an increase of around 0.2% to the general ratepayer.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATE

The Council supported a 1% change to the rates differential for economic development. This means it will be funded 69%

from commercial, 25% from residential and 6% from farming. The increased share by residential and farming ratepayers more fairly reflects where the benefit lies from our work in this area.

ONLINE VOTING

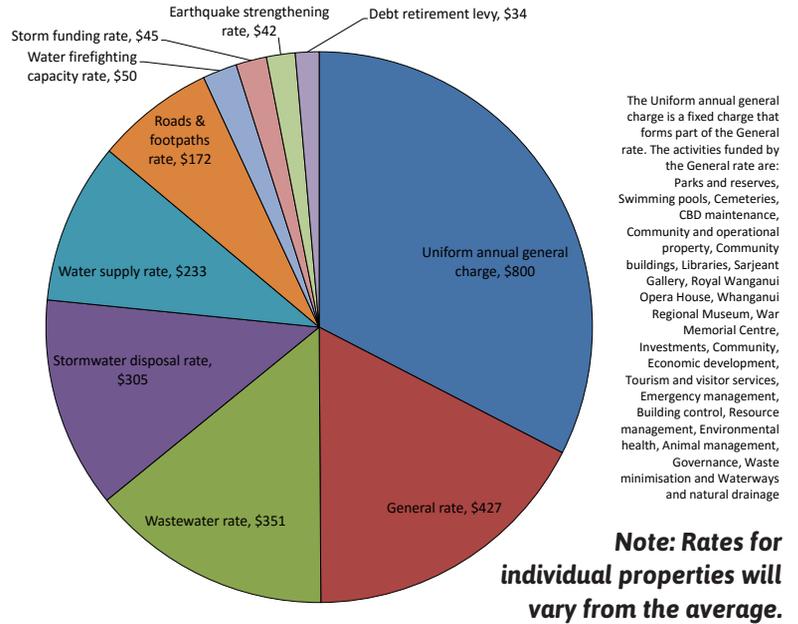
We had allocated \$75,000 in our proposed plan to participate in the 2016 local government election online voting trial. This is no longer required as the Government has decided not to proceed with it for this election. As a result, it has been removed from the budget.

NEW FUNDING

- Waimarie Operating Trust - \$25,000 additional grant for 2016/17 (total now \$65,000) to assist with operational costs.

- Surf Lifesaving - \$26,000 to support administration costs.
- Airport Control Tower Restoration Group – underwriting \$72,000 to allow completion of Stage 2 of the restoration project.
- Community Education Whanganui – \$15,000 from the existing Community Development budget to assist with continuity of service.
- Hazardous waste depot – an additional \$20,000 to provide an upgraded domestic hazardous waste depot at the Whanganui Resource Recovery Centre.
- Whanganui East Pool - an additional \$29,000 to ensure that the complex remains a safe environment for the community and is professionally managed. This takes the total funding to \$60,000.
- Emergency Management – \$65,000 to expand the current Emergency Management staff capability. This will provide improved Emergency Operations Centre response in emergencies and engagement with the community to increase their preparedness.
- Council Chamber sound system – an additional \$18,000 for the upgrade of the sound system in the Council Chambers. Further investigations have shown the need to provide a system that will handle the complex environment as well as allowing for an increase in digital and online activities in the future.

How the average Whanganui Residential rate of \$2,459 is spent



Key issues, projects and highlights for 2016/17

Our Annual Plan signals a range of work for the year ahead which will help us deliver on our Leading Edge aspirations.

Caring for the Whanganui River: We will be a partner in the development of a Whole of River Strategy, working with Atihaunui-a-Paparangi, Whanganui River Maori Trust Board, Nga Tangata Tiaki, Horizons Regional Council, Ruapehu District Council, Stratford District Council and Crown agencies. The partnership will help provide a strong foundation for the future health and wellbeing of the Whanganui River following settlement of the Whanganui River claim and the passing of the Te Awa Tupua Bill which recognises the river as a legal entity.

Enhancing our Town Centre: The Town Centre Regeneration project aims to revitalise and beautify our central city area. It's about developing new ideas for the best ways of using this space and embracing new uses so it's not just a retail area but includes arts, entertainment, education and residential uses.

Exciting ideas for Castlecliff: The Castlecliff community is leading an exciting project to rejuvenate their suburb and we will continue to work closely with them as they develop their plans.

Making Whanganui safer: In late June 2016 we achieved reaccreditation as a Safe Community. We were first accredited as a World Health Organisation Safe Community in 2010. This ongoing work involves partnerships with a range of community organisations and other agencies to make our place safe and healthy for everyone.

Telling our stories: Our focus on enhancing our reputation will see us telling our unique stories to the rest of New Zealand and working with those who can influence our reputation in a positive way.

Becoming a Creative City: We intend to develop a Creative City Strategy to help us celebrate successes and find improvements. This process includes assessment of where we currently sit on the Creative City Index which measures against a broad range of indicators – for example, from being an open and tolerant community to enhancing our talent and learning capacity.

We are business friendly: Our aim is to make doing business and investing as seamless and easy as possible so we are adopting a business-friendly policy across the whole of Council. This will ensure we are as enabling as we can be at all stages of our interactions and have processes in place that send a clear message that we are open for business and investment.

Rates by email

You can opt to receive your rates notice via email rather than having it posted to you.

Register on our website www.whanganui.govt.nz/ratesbyemail to get your rates notice emailed to you.

Rates rebate scheme

Information about the rates rebate scheme is enclosed with your rate account. Please contact our rates department, phone 349 0001, or call in to the Council building at 101 Guyton Street if you need further information or assistance.