

In this issue:

- Check out the due dates for Rates and Metered Water for 2023/24.
- Read about the Rates Rebate Scheme for the 2023/24 rating year. Find out how to apply, you could be eligible for up to \$750.
- Our Rates Remission Policy allows for circumstances where rates may be remitted. Find out if you are eligible.
- The fees and charges for the 2023/24 year have been set. Read more about them in this issue.

Annual Plan 2023/2024

The Annual Plan (AP) is Council's budget for each financial year. It explains how the Council will fund projects, activities and services identified for that year. An AP is developed each year, except for the year where Council consults on and adopts a Long-Term Plan (LTP).



Your views

In April this year we asked our community for feedback on the draft AP through a public consultation process. We had eight submissions put forward that were each considered by Council to help finalise the AP.



What has Council done to reduce the impact for ratepayers?

Rates affordability is a real concern for the Council, and the impact of the rate increase has been discussed thoroughly during the development of the Annual Plan.

To balance rates affordability alongside the rising costs to deliver services and maintain assets, Council has prioritised needs and re-sequenced works where appropriate to keep the rate increase below the annual inflation rate.

Council has also elected to not fully fund depreciation on waters assets due to the uncertainties around the water reforms and affordability.

Council has also decided to reduce the Uniform Annual General Charge (UAGC) to help bring more properties closer to the average rate increase of 5.84% and maintain the percentage of rates it receives from residential properties at 36% and pastoral properties at 31%.

Setting the UAGC at \$340 (a drop from \$423) will make the rate increase more even across most ratepayers in the District and help maintain the same percentage contributed by ratepayers.

Individual property rates will vary due to how activity costs are rated. To find your property information you can access the Rating Information Database through our website.
www.waitomo.govt.nz/council/rating-information/rating-information-database

Rates Requirement

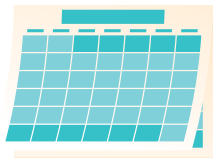
The total rates requirement is \$22.17 million for the 2023/24 year, an increase of \$1.2 million compared with the current year. The main contributors are:

- Finance costs are forecast to increase due to rising interest rates.
- Increased costs to deliver services and maintain assets across all council activities including increases in energy costs, staff costs, audit fees and cleaning costs.
- Reduced trade waste revenue for Te Kūiti wastewater as the major users improve their treatment processes before discharge in the network.
- Building valuation increases have increased replacement costs, which need to be covered by rates.
- Increases in costs to operate the landfill and transfer stations. Additional rates revenue required to repay overdrawn reserves due to reduced waste volumes in 2021/22.

Rates due dates

To assist ratepayers in the payment of their rates, the Council operates a system of payment by quarterly instalments. Rates for the financial year commencing 1 July 2023 are payable in four equal instalments.

Instalment 1	31 August 2023
Instalment 2	30 November 2023
Instalment 3	29 February 2024
Instalment 4	31 May 2024



Are you eligible for a RATES REBATE?



Rates Rebate Scheme

If you have a low income and pay the rates on your home, you could receive up to \$750 through the Rates Rebate Scheme. Applications are now open for rates rebates for the 2023/2024 rating year.

Your rebate is based on:

- Your income
- Your annual rates
- Number of dependants you have.



You must be living at the property at 1 July and be the legal ratepayer.

As a result of the Rating of Whenua Māori Amendment Act 2021, owners of Māori Freehold Land are now able to request that a separate rating area be established, to enable occupants of dwellings on the land to be rated individually and to access the rates rebate scheme.

Download an application form from our website or contact our Customer Service Team for further assistance.





Dog Registrations 2023/24

Registration Fees apply to dogs aged 3 months and over, and are for the year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 registration.

Urban owner (as per definition)	\$125.00
Urban spayed/neutered dogs	\$ 93.00
Selected owner	\$73.00
Rural owner	\$52.00
Dangerous dog	150% of applicable fee
50% penalty fee applies from 1 August 2023	

Pound, Seizure and Miscellaneous Fees

Seizure	\$65.00
Impound - First (registered)	\$70.00
Impound - First (unregistered)	\$105.00
Second	\$145.00
Third and subsequent	\$210.00
Sustenance (per day)	\$18.00
Replacement tags	\$5.00
Microchipping fee	\$25.00
Surrender fee	\$80.00
Application for permit to keep more than two dogs (urban)	\$40.00

Due dates for water rates

July to December 2023 **Due 20 January 2024**

January to June 2024 **Due 20 July 2024**



Water account invoices can now be received electronically by email. If you would like to receive your water account invoice by email please complete the form available on the website or contact Customer Service for a form to be sent to you.

Water account invoices are sent to properties with water meters every six months, regardless of whether there are user charges to pay or not. The invoice provides property owners with an understanding of their water usage onsite, which can help motivate water conservation efforts over time.

Fees and Charges 2023/24

At the Council meeting on 27 June 2023, Council adopted the fees and charges for 2023/24. These fees and charges apply from 1 July 2023.

Due to the impact of rising costs Council has increased most fees and charges between 5% and 7% in line with inflation. This ensures costs are recovered so that Council services are not subsidised further by rates.

These increases include fees relating to the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Food Act 2014.

Some of the fees and charges remain unchanged, while some have increased more significantly. Additional fees and charges have been put in place to better recover costs in some areas, these include:

- Travel costs for building compliance
- Alcohol Licensing
- Traffic Management

The schedule of Fees and Charges is available on our website.

You can request a hardcopy of the fees and charges by contacting our Customer Service Team on **0800 932 4357** or email **info@waitomo.govt.nz**

Cost increase for refuse bags

Due to the increasing costs to cover the operation of our waste and landfill services and the increasing charges imposed by Central Government, the cost of purchasing an official blue refuse bag has increased to \$4.80.

This may seem like a lot to pay but many factors determine this price including the cost of the bag, distribution, landfill operational costs, Central Government charges, Resource Consents and monitoring.

We encourage you to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible as this will help reduce the need to use and fill a blue bag as often.



Paying your rates

You can pay your rates in the following ways:

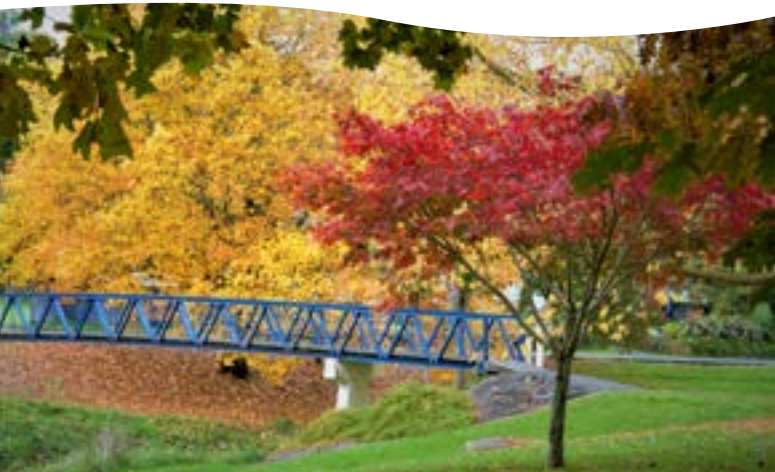
- Easy Pay Direct Debit
- Direct Credit / Automatic Payment
- Cash
- Eftpos or Credit Card
- On our website using your credit card

The easiest way to pay your rates is via direct debit. This ensures no penalties will be applied and allows you to spread your payments across the rating year with no due dates.

If you do not already have a direct debit in place, we encourage you to complete a form and return it to us for processing.

Property information online

Your rating and property information is available on Council's website as well as access to our online GIS mapping system. Here you will be able to see information such as your annual rates, the property valuation, aerial photography and much more. Look for the property information link under **Online Services** on our website and search for property information using your valuation number or address location.



Are you having difficulty paying your rates invoice?

There are a variety of payment options available for customers to help them pay their rates and pay off rates arrears if they are having difficulty meeting payments. Please contact our Customer Service Team to find out how we can help.

Rates invoices by email

You now have the option to receive your rates invoice by email. Please complete the form available on Council's website or contact Customer Services for a form to be sent to you.



Rates Remission Policy

Council has a Policy for the Remission of Rates which outlines the circumstances where it may remit rates. The following remission categories are available:

- Properties Used Jointly as a Single Unit
- Community Organisations and Clubs and Societies
- Organisations providing Care for the Elderly.
- Rates on Māori Freehold Land.
- Penalties
- New Residential Subdivisions
- Cases of Financial Hardship
- Cases of Land Affected by Natural Calamity
- New Businesses

For a copy of the Rates Remission Policy, application forms and due dates for applications visit www.waitomo.govt.nz or contact our Customer Service Team for a copy to be sent.

CONTACT US

Our office hours are Monday - Friday 9am to 4pm

- Customer Service - located at Railway Building, Rora Street, Te Kūiti
- Postal Address - PO Box 404, Te Kūiti 3941
- Email our Customer Service Team – info@waitomo.govt.nz
- Phone us - 0800 932 4357
- Visit our website – www.waitomo.govt.nz
- Or search for us on facebook @WaitomoDistrictCouncil

