

Kia ora from the Mayor

In late June the Annual Plan 2022-2023 was unanimously adopted by Council with the average general rates rise slashed from what was earlier forecast in the Long Term Plan as 7.13% to 4.86%. Few councils across New Zealand have been able to slash the rates from what had been forecast in the way Kaipara has done. Council has taken hard decisions to help Kaipara people along in these challenging times. The fact the decision was unanimous speaks volumes about this Council, and while the gains have been hard-won, every cent is worth it. We're still growing a better Kaipara, but tightening Council's belt to suit the times.

Trying to eliminate unnecessary costs and hold the reins tightly on rates has been a focus here. With the cost of living crisis and inflation running now at 6.9%, keeping costs contained is a real challenge for Council, especially for large projects. Key big-ticket projects for this upcoming year include the District Plan review and transportation-type projects such as construction progress on Poutō Wharf, Mangawhai shared path works and building the Kaihu Valley Trail. There is also the body of climate change work where Council addresses future sea-level rise by upgrading existing stopbanks between Te Kopuru and Dargaville, and installation of a floodgate at G Canal in Ruawai/Raupō to reduce by 30km the length of salt-water facing stopbanks there. Many of these projects are funded by Government not Kaipara ratepayers, through the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) from Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit, and the Government's Covid-19 response.

Also right on track, the majority of our significant roading spend remains in maintenance and upgrades across the district's large network. The final season of the PGF-funded unsealed roading network activities will be done during 2022/23, completing the 286km of Kaipara roads getting special treatment with this one-off funding package, part of the Kaipara KickStart programme.

New funding has been announced from the Government's Tourism Infrastructure Fund (TIF) for public toilets at Pahi, Rangiora Road boatramp carpark upgrade and Rangiora Road Reserve improvements, and for Poutō carpark upgrade. The TIF funding means ratepayers alone won't be paying for those developments and will help Council spread better its limited resources to other places.

In summary, as the new business year of the Council starts things are in good shape here. We're doing everything reasonable to keep rates affordable while maintaining services for Kaipara people in these challenging times. It's a balance we have right.

Dr Jason Smith
Kaipara Mayor



How have my rates changed?

On average general rates have gone up by 4.86% for the 2022-2023 year. That means around half of people will experience a change of more than that and half will experience a change of less than that.

Your rates are made up of two components.

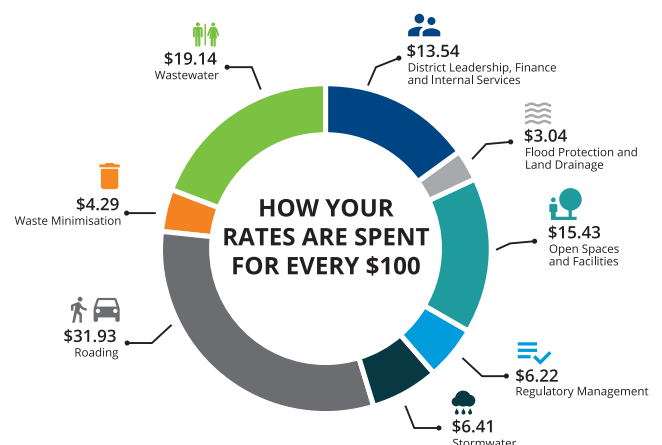
Targeted rates

These rates are paid by some people, depending on where you live or the specific services you receive. Targeted rates may be based on land value or they may be a fixed amount. Examples of targeted rates that are based on land value are land drainage areas, such as Raupō Drainage, or stormwater. These are listed on your rates invoice. When rates are fixed, everyone pays the same amount. An example is the Dargaville and surrounds CCTV rate, Mangawhai Harbour restoration rate and rates for wastewater services.

General rates

These rates are shared throughout the district, depending on the value of your land. A fixed amount of \$764 is also charged to all properties as the Uniform Annual General Charge. This pays for general services such as road maintenance, district leadership and reserves and open spaces.

For the second year of the LTP, this is our plan for spending general rates per \$100.



What affects the rates that I pay?

Council work programme

Many services we provide are paid for by rates. The volume of work, and the cost of it, affects the total amount the Council needs to collect. Most of the work we do is necessary to keep services, such as roads, water and wastewater systems, working. Generally, this work cannot be deferred. A small part of our budget, such as the grants we provide or the parks we manage, are important to help our communities thrive. When setting rates, Elected Members carefully balance the benefit of the service against the cost to ratepayers.

External funding

To minimise the cost to ratepayers, the Council looks for alternative funding sources, such as government grants, wherever it can. Projects such as the Mangawhai Shared Path, the Kaihu Valley Trail, the new toilets at Maungaturoto, and the new pontoon at Pahi are all supported by government.

Property value

Some rates are based on the value of your land, when compared with other land values in the district. If you think of the Council's rates as a pie, your slice of the pie will be larger than your neighbours if your property is valued higher.

Equalising water and wastewater rates

The Council sought feedback on its proposal to charge the same fee for all properties connected to town water supply or those connected (or capable of connecting) to the wastewater network as part of its Long Term Plan 2021-2031 consultation. The proposal was supported. The costs of providing and maintaining drinking water and wastewater services will be shared across all those connected within the district. This reduces fluctuations in costs when major works are needed. It particularly benefits those on small systems, where few people currently share the costs, or older systems, which are likely to need more maintenance. Over time, we expect the costs of managing all systems will even out. The change for those connected to the Te Kopuru wastewater scheme will be phased in over three years.




Northland Regional Council rates

Your invoice includes rates for Northland Regional Council (NRC). These are collected by KDC on behalf of NRC.

How to pay your rates

The easiest way to make regular rates payments is by direct debit. You can make your payments weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or annually. We can help you set the direct debit up and do all the administration for you. You won't have to remember to pay your bill and there's no need for you to contact the bank or adjust your payments when rates change. We'll give you plenty of notice and adjust your payments annually.

You can also pay using:

-  Bill payment
-  Credit card online or
-  Eftpos at our office.

We cannot accept cheques as our bank will no longer process them.

You'll find more information at kaipara.govt.nz/rates
You can contact our friendly team by phone 0800 727 059 or email revenue@kaipara.govt.nz if you need a hand.




Rates rebates

The Rates Rebates Scheme provides a rebate for low-income earners who were paying rates for the home they were living in on 1 July 2022.

From 1 July 2022, the maximum rebate and income abatement threshold of the scheme will be adjusted by increasing:

- the maximum annual rebate from \$665 to \$700; and
- the income abatement threshold from \$26,510 to \$28,080.

Find out more

-  Online at govt.nz, search 'rates rebate'
-  By visiting Council offices in Mangawhai or Dargaville
-  By phoning 0800 727 059