Frequently asked questions – 2025/26 Annual Plan

Here are some answers to some of the queries we frequently get asked.

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| Annual Plan Process | |
| What is an Annual Plan? | In the years in between Long Term Plans, we produce Annual Plans. Annual Plans keep our communities up to date with what we are doing over the next financial year and if it is different to what the Long Term Plan said we would do, how much it will cost, and how it will be funded. |
| Why do we have Annual Plans as well as a Long Term Plan? | Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2002 requires all Councils to prepare and adopt a Long Term Plan every three years and an Annual Plan for each financial year.  Note: The first year of a Long Term Plan is regarded as the Annual Plan for that year. For the second and third years of a Long Term Plan a separate Annual Plan is prepared |
| Is Greater Wellington consulting on any changes this year?  Why have we not been consulted this year? | Greater Wellington is not consulting on anything related to the Annual Plan this year as we aren’t proposing anything significantly different[[1]](#footnote-1) to what we said we would do in the Long Term Plan for 2025/26 (Year 2).  **Although we are not running a formal consultation on our Annual Plan this year, we wanted to make you aware of some of the proposed changes for Year Two that may be of interest to you, and we are still interested in your feedback. Please visit** [**https://www.gw.govt.nz/2025-26-annual-plan**](https://www.gw.govt.nz/2025-26-annual-plan) **to learn more and share your thoughts.**  **This year Greater Wellington is consulting on the Regional Public Transport Plan and Local Water Done Well. Please visit the following links to find out more and share your thoughts.**  **Regional Public Transport Plan:**  [**https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/regional-public-transport-plan-2025-2035-consultation**](https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/regional-public-transport-plan-2025-2035-consultation)  **Local Water Done Well (opens mid-March):** [**https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/%20local-water-done-well/**](https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/%20local-water-done-well/) |

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| Are there any proposed changes planned to the work programme in the Annual Plan for 2025/26? | There are no significant or material changes planned for our work programme for 2025/26 from what we set out in our 2024-34 Long Term Plan that required a formal consultation. This was determined using our current significance and engagement policy [Greater Wellington Regional Council — Supporting strategies and policies](https://ltp.gw.govt.nz/supporting-strategies-and-policies/#:~:text=The%20Significance%20and%20Engagement%20Policy%20records%20how%20we,specifically%20consulted%20on%2C%20proposals%2C%20assets%2C%20decisions%20and%20activities.).  However, we recognize that the current cost of living is impacting communities across our region. In response, we have undertaken a significant amount of work to assess our work programmes and are proposing to either delay or scale back activities in certain areas to lower the rates increase to reduce financial pressures. You can read about these changes and share your thoughts with us at <https://www.gw.govt.nz/2025-26-annual-plan>  **The main changes include:**  ***Ngā Waka Tūmatanui – Metlink Public Transport***   * Reducing the number of buses we order to simply meet expected patronage demand across the Region. * A general fares increase to reflect inflation levels and change in the off-peak fare discount reduction from 50% to 30% (subject to confirmation by Council). * Deferring a project to develop bus interchange and driver facilities in Porirua. * Our bus network design and service levels will be considered as part of the review of the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan, which is being consulted on during March 2025 with hearings scheduled for 5 to 7 May 2025. Visit <https://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/regional-public-transport-plan-2025-2035-consultation>   ***Te Taiao - Environment***   * Rephasing funding to undertake future plan changes until the new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management is operative or 31 December 2025 (whichever is sooner), as a result of central government direction. We know the health of our wai is important to our mana whenua partners and communities so we will focus on working together on the non-regulatory activities in the meantime to continue momentum in this space. * Pushing back the timeframes for non-critical erosion protection projects in Pinehaven and Waiohine by 12 months.   ***Staffing***   * Delaying recruitment of a number of vacant or new positions.   **Theres some extra things we need to do as well**  There are a few things that we had to add to our work programme for 2025/26 that are either new, or we did not have enough information about during the development of our Long Term Plan to include them at the time.   * Māori Constituency Referendum: During 2024, Council affirmed its resolution to establish a Māori Constituency for the 2025 and 2028 triennial local elections. As a result of central government legislation2 Greater Wellington must conduct a poll about this during the 2025 triennial local elections. The outcome of the poll will be effective for the 2028 and 2031 triennial local elections. * Local Water Done Well: Greater Wellington has obligations because of new central government water legislation3 to submit a plan to the Department of Internal Affairs regarding the future of bulk water services provision for the region by 3 September 2025. We will be working hard to meet this deadline and ensure that the community has an opportunity to have their say on what water services look like in the future. For more information and to have your say visit <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/%20freshwater/local-water-done-well/> |
| Rates | |
| What will my rates increase be for 2025/26?  What is the 9.72% increase in dollar value? | Rates help fund essential services and projects agreed in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. While inflation and borrowing costs appear to be easing for 2025/26, we continue to face new challenges including reduced government funding and ongoing cost-of-living pressures. To balance essential services within a tight budget, we have reviewed our work programmes and propose to either delay or scale back activities in certain areas.  This would lower the average regional rates increase for 2025/26 from 14.5% to 9.72%. This works out to an average increase of $1.27 per household per week.  Despite these constraints, we remain committed to delivering the services and infrastructure that matter most to our community. We continue our important work addressing the impacts of climate change and controlling the pests that damage our rohe. We are developing a frequent and reliable public transport system and are protecting the region’s communities from the impacts of flooding.  Our proposed reduced rate increase reflects a careful balance – addressing current financial challenges while continuing to invest in the services and projects you identified as important during the development of the Long Term Plan 2024-34.  The breakdown of the draft average rates increase across the region can be seen below. Your individual rates may vary based on local factors which means that your rates bill is likely to differ from that of the regional average and/or your neighbours’. For a more personalised estimate of your draft 2025/26 rates, please check out our rates calculator on our website: [www.rates.gw.govt.nz/](http://www.rates.gw.govt.nz/)   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Draft Region Wide average** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | | Residential (incl. GST) | $66.22 | $1.27 | | Business (excl. GST) | $568.76 | $10.94 | | Rural (excl. GST) | $80.25 | $1.54 | |
| What do I get for my rates? | **In General:** we deliver services across our four activity groups (refer to the following pages in our 2024-34 Long Term Plan for more detail):   * Te Taiao Environment activities, page 37 * Metlink Public Transport activities, page 63 * Regional Strategy and Partnerships, page 79 * Water Supply, page 107   **Specific to 2025/26:** Please refer to our regional fact sheets for examples of projects in your area <https://www.gw.govt.nz/2025-26-annual-plan> |
| Why do I pay rates for things I don’t care about? | What we deliver is agreed on through our Long Term Plan process, that sets the strategic direction and priorities for Greater Wellington over the next 10 years. This gets refreshed every three years, and we ask the public what their priorities are. We encourage you to keep your eye out during 2026/27 for opportunities to share your thoughts on what you would like to see Greater Wellington prioritise its spending on during the next Long Term Plan for 2027-37.  If you are interested in the breakdown of what your rates specifically go towards, please see our Revenue and Financing Policy: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/document/22736/2024-revenue-and-financing-policy/> |
| Why are different areas paying different rates increases? | Rates increases vary between regions due to:   * The percentages of the property types (residential, rural and business) and how the different types of rates effect each property type. * The changes in the capital valuations of properties in each region. * The changes in the targeted rates that apply to a specific region i.e. River Management Rate * Changes in the number of properties in a region   Your individual rates may vary based on local factors which means that your rates bill is likely to differ from that of the regional average and/or your neighbours’. For a more personalised estimate of your draft 2025/26 rates, please check out our rates calculator on our website: <https://rates.gw.govt.nz/> |
| Why do the rates keep increasing? | The last few years have been challenging for the whole country and our Region. Like all councils in Aotearoa New Zealand, we’re working under some difficult circumstances. We have experienced increased costs, reduced central government funding, higher insurance and borrowing costs. We try to strike a balance between responding to the current financial challenges and enabling us to continue to deliver the services and infrastructure that you told us were important to you during the development of the Long Term Plan. |
| Why can’t Greater Wellington make the rates increase lower / cut back on spending?  What has Greater Wellington considered to lower the rates increase? | Greater Wellington’s intended overall rates increase for 2025/26 was 14.5% (as outlined in the 2024-34 Long Term Plan).  Rates help fund essential services and projects under the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. While inflation and borrowing costs appear to be easing for 2025-26, we continue to face new challenges including reduced government funding and ongoing cost-of-living pressures. To balance essential services within a tight budget, we have reviewed our work programmes and propose to either delay or scale back activities in certain areas to lower the rates increase to reduce financial pressures. This would lower the average regional rates increase for 2025/26 from 14.5% to 9.72%.  Despite these constraints, we remain committed to delivering the services and infrastructure that matter most to our community. We continue our important work addressing the impacts of climate change and controlling the pests that damage our rohe. We are developing a frequent and reliable public transport system and protecting the region’s communities from the impacts of flooding.  Our proposed reduced rate increase reflects a careful balance—addressing current financial challenges while continuing to invest in the services and projects you identified as important during the development of the Long Term Plan. |
| General questions about Rates | Please visit our website for general information about how your rates are determined, how you pay for them, and what they go towards: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/your-rates/> |
| I can’t afford my rates / Is there any assistance in paying my rates? | If you need assistance with paying your rates and fit the criteria, rates Remission and postponement can be applied for on our website: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/your-rates/remission-and-postponement-policies/>  Rates rebates can also be applied for via your local council. |
| Other | |
| How are Greater Wellington responding to the government’s direction around Water? | Greater Wellington has obligations as a result of new water legislation[[2]](#footnote-2) to submit a plan to the Department of Internal Affairs regarding the future of water services provision for the region by 3 September 2025. We will be working hard to meet this deadline and ensure that the community has an opportunity to have their say on what water services look like in the future. For more information and to have your say visit <https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/freshwater/%20local-water-done-well/> |
| What is Greater Wellington doing to address climate change in the Annual Plan | Greater Wellington declared a climate emergency in 2019, and Council set an ambitious target to be carbon positive by 2035 (absorbing more carbon dioxide than the equivalent greenhouse gases we emit). We are focused on being a low-emissions economy, supporting sustainable urban and rural development and driving critical behaviour changes.  Together with mana whenua, territorial authorities in our region, central government and a range of other organisations we will prepare for, and adapt to, the effects of climate change and natural hazards. This includes ongoing work to reduce organisational greenhouse gas emissions and build on our climate risk preparedness.  We now have a clear emissions reduction pathway, focused on reducing carbon emissions from high emitting activities such as public transport, and also removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere though planting trees in our Regional Parks. |

**Proposed average regional rates**

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| **Average Regional Rates** | Average increase per annum | Average increase per week |
| **Residential (incl. GST)** | $66.22 | $1.27 |
| **Business (excl. GST)** | $568.76 | $10.94 |
| **Rural (excl. GST)** | $80.25 | $1.54 |

**Breakdown by region**

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| **Wellington City Average Rates** | | **Average Rates 2025/26** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | **Increase %** |
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| **Residential (incl. GST)** | Wellington City | $1,198.88 | $21.16 | $0.41 | 1.8% |  |
| **Business** | Wellington City | $2,815.05 | $253.58 | $4.88 | 9.9% |  |
| **(excl. GST)** | Wellington City – CBD | $16,720.06 | $1,455.46 | $27.99 | 9.5% |  |
| **Rural (excl. GST)** | Wellington City | $903.94 | $138.26 | $2.66 | 18.1% |  |
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| **Wairarapa Average Rates** | | **Average Rates 2025/26** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | **Increase %** |  |
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| **Residential** | Masterton District | $466.64 | $15.03 | $0.29 | 3.3% |  |
| **(incl. GST)** | Carterton District | $544.92 | $59.08 | $1.14 | 12.2% |  |
|  | South Wairarapa District | $641.74 | $43.70 | $0.84 | 7.3% |  |
| **Business** | Masterton District | $1,625.48 | -$28.91 | -$0.56 | -1.7% |  |
| **(excl. GST)** | Carterton District | $950.48 | $101.95 | $1.96 | 12.0% |  |
|  | South Wairarapa District | $1,408.41 | $187.47 | $3.61 | 15.4% |  |
| **Rural** | Masterton District | $712.87 | $10.88 | $0.21 | 1.5% |  |
| **(excl. GST)** | Carterton District | $797.07 | $79.72 | $1.53 | 11.1% |  |
|  | South Wairarapa District | $919.10 | $115.23 | $2.22 | 14.3% |  |
|  | Tararua District | $879.52 | $23.79 | $0.46 | 2.8% |  |
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| **Porirua Average Rates** | | **Average Rates 2025/26** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | **Increase %** |  |
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| **Residential (incl. GST)** | Porirua City | $1,055.51 | $110.13 | $2.12 | 11.6% |  |
| **Business (excl. GST)** | Porirua City | $2,622.54 | $200.98 | $3.87 | 8.3% |  |
| **Rural (excl. GST)** | Porirua City | $1,207.18 | $120.61 | $2.32 | 11.1% |  |
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| **Kāpiti Coast Average Rates** | | **Average Rates 2025/26** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | **Increase %** |  |
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| **Residential** | Kāpiti Coast district excl. Ōtaki | $1,149.01 | $157.44 | $3.03 | 15.9% |  |
| **(incl. GST)** | Ōtaki rating area | $619.28 | $79.75 | $1.53 | 14.8% |  |
| **Business (excl. GST)** | Kāpiti Coast District | $2,475.34 | $303.92 | $5.84 | 14.0% |  |
| **Rural  (excl. GST)** | Kāpiti Coast District | $891.68 | $117.67 | $2.26 | 15.2% |  |
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| **Hutt Valley Average Rates** | | **Average Rates 2025/26** | **Average increase per annum** | **Average increase per week** | **Increase %** |  |
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| **Residential** | Hutt City | $1,190.30 | $96.36 | $1.85 | 8.8% |  |
| **(incl. GST)** | Upper Hutt City | $993.65 | $89.78 | $1.73 | 9.9% |  |
| **Business** | Hutt City | $4,047.57 | $322.48 | $6.20 | 8.7% |  |
| **(excl. GST)** | Upper Hutt City | $3,294.31 | $266.52 | $5.13 | 8.8% |  |
| **Rural** | Hutt City | $1,052.30 | $82.27 | $1.58 | 8.5% |  |
| **(excl. GST)** | Upper Hutt City | $911.96 | $73.97 | $1.42 | 8.8% |  |

**For the factsheets**

1. As defined by our Significance and Engagement Policy 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Local Government (Water Services) Bill 2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)