



# Your Rates **EXPLAINED** 2020-2021

The Horizons Region extends over 22,200km<sup>2</sup> - from Ruapehu in the north and Horowhenua in the south, to Whanganui in the west and Tararua in the east. It has a population of approximately 240,200 residents. As one of the region's 109,000 ratepayers, your contribution plays a vital role in making our region a great place to live, work and play.

As your regional council, our role differs from that of the city and district councils. We are responsible for managing the region's land, air and water resources on behalf of the communities we serve. This is achieved through following rules and policies outlined in our regulatory document, the One Plan, and through a number of non-regulatory programmes such as our Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI). We also undertake biosecurity control and biodiversity enhancement, contract passenger transport services, plan regional transport, play an important role in road safety education, work to mitigate the risk and impact of flooding, undertake science and monitoring, and lead the planning for and response to

natural disasters to help keep people and property safe.

It was initially intended for this year's average rate to increase by 5.95 per cent. However, due to COVID-19, Council revised our 2020-21 Annual Plan to take into consideration potential post-pandemic social and economic impacts to the Manawatū-Whanganui Region. By removing some proposed additional activities and resources and making some changes to the way some activities are funded, an average rate increase of one per cent was adopted. This one per cent equates to approximately \$460,000 across the region and is made up from rating \$200,000 towards increased insurance costs, lowering the expected income from interest by \$60,000, and rating for \$200,000 towards increased inflation cost on bus contracts and greater costs and usage of our Total Mobility Scheme.

This year Council's focus remains on biodiversity, improving water quality, responding to a changing climate, river management, and facilitating employment opportunities that enhance social and economic

wellbeing. This newsletter provides some information about how your rates contribute to some of these activities.

On the back you will find ways in which you can pay your rates, as well as how you can stay informed on our activities throughout the year. If you'd like to provide feedback on how we're doing and where you'd like your rates to be spent in the future, please get in touch. It is the last year of the current Long-term Plan, and we are already undertaking workshops in preparation for the 2021-2031 Long-term Plan which will be released for you to provide feedback early next year.

Unfortunately we don't have space to highlight all of our work, so if you would like further information please visit our website [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz), free phone 0508 700 800, call into one of our offices, or check out our social media pages.

Thank you for being a part of this vast and varied region that we call home.



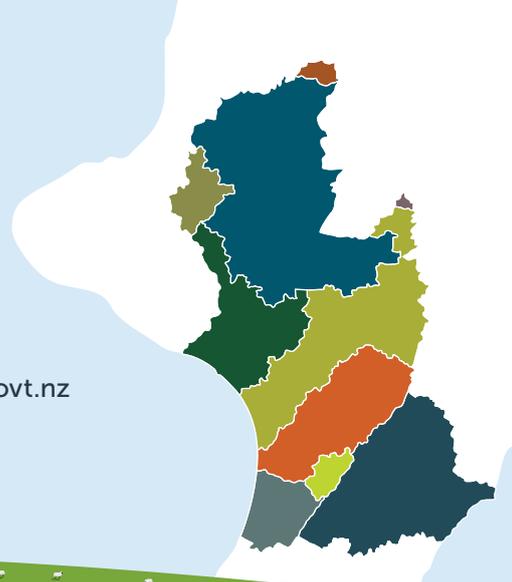
RACHEL KEEDWELL  
Chair Horizons Regional Council



# Horizons in your NEIGHBOURHOOD

WE'RE WORKING ACROSS DISTRICTS TO MAKE THIS REGION A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

To find out more about what we do in your area please visit [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz)



## RIVER MANAGEMENT

Managing rivers through engineering works allows us to reduce the risk and impact of flooding and provide land drainage to an agreed level of service. This activity is especially important when considering the potential impact of climate change in the region.

In response to COVID-19, operating expenditure across many of our 34 river management schemes has been held at current levels. An extension of the Reid Line Floodway upgrade project has created a small reduction in the total rate spend for river management this year, while delays in completing construction of new stop banking alongside the Ōroua River near Feilding have necessitated some of the budget provision made in the 2019-20 financial year being transferred to this financial year. This work is one of the last sections to be completed as part of

the Lower Manawatū River Scheme's Rural Upgrade Programme that began following the 2004 floods. This Scheme provides flood protection to large parts of the Manawatū, Horowhenua, Palmerston North and Feilding, which could otherwise be flooded by the Manawatū River and its tributaries.

In July we received \$7.5 million from central government towards river management improvements for the Whanganui River. This funding will go towards the \$15 million needed to undertake repairs to the north and south moles at the river mouth, and other river training structures along the lower reach that protect adjoining industrial and residential development and some critical components of the city's infrastructure, as well as providing marine access from the sea to the port.

## BIOSECURITY AND BIODIVERSITY

Our biodiversity and pest control work helps protect the recreational areas we all enjoy, as well as protecting precious habitats that are further afield. This year, Council's biosecurity and biodiversity programmes levels of service will be maintained, with a small overall increase to the budget. This includes the use of \$100,000 from Council's Biosecurity Animal Reserves to enable the continued expansion of the possum control programme in areas where OSPRI has exited,

as well as some rabbit monitoring. Within the biosecurity and biodiversity programmes an increase of expenditure will be directed to the biodiversity programme, which will provide a focus on pest animal control within priority biodiversity sites. Council has also prioritised additional resourcing for our biodiversity programmes, which include additional biosecurity programmes in Te Āpiti - Manawatū Gorge, and the creation of new Community Biodiversity Coordinator role to work alongside communities.





## TRANSPORT

Horizons remains closely involved with all key transport initiatives across the region, particularly with projects related to the Manawatū-Whanganui Economic Action Plan programme – Accessing Central New Zealand. This includes Te Ahu a Tūranga Manawatū Tararua Highway, Ōtaki to north of Levin, Palmerston North Integrated Transport Improvements, and KiwiRail's Central Freight Hub project.

Following public consultation on the Feilding to Palmerston North passenger transport service a new around-town Feilding bus route service will be added in the second half of 2020-21, as well as enhancements to the commuter service. Council has agreed to use part of the Manawatū transport rates reserve to fund the service improvements. Passengers

contribute a portion of the cost to the service through fares, with the remainder split between targeted rates for Manawatū and Palmerston North alongside contributions from both UCOL and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

In 2020, central government funded \$211 million for improvements to the rail connections between Wellington, Wairarapa and Palmerston North. A further \$5 million has been secured by Horizons and Greater Wellington Regional Council from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency to pursue a detailed business case and procurement process for passenger trains, part of which includes the replacement of the existing Capital Connection rolling stock.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Horizons' Emergency Management team manage the Manawatū-Whanganui Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MWCDEM) Group Office. When Civil Defence 'comes to the rescue' this is a coordinated multi-agency response through the MWCDEM Group which includes emergency services, Defence Force, local city and district councils, Horizons Regional Council, health boards, and lifeline agencies such as power, gas and telecommunications companies.

Civil Defence respond to all types of emergencies, more commonly flood events in our region, however we are also susceptible to a range of other natural hazards such as earthquake, volcanic activity and tsunamis. Most recently our MWCDEM Group played their part in the response to COVID-19 via the activation of the Emergency Coordination Centre and continue to be involved in the region's ongoing social and economic recovery.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

Existing Council activities are already contributing to our climate change response. This includes climate change research, planting trees, and freshwater planning and flood protection designs taking the likely effects of climate change into account. However, we know more needs to be done. In 2020 Horizons, working with our partner councils, will complete a vulnerability assessment. This work will identify climate-related impacts across the region and make recommendations on how to address them. Council has agreed to fund \$175,000 to carry out this work, which will have no rating impact due to the use of investment dividends to cover the cost.



# FRESHWATER

Horizons' freshwater implementation programmes will continue to be progressed through the additional \$4.39 million central government funding we received in 2018-19 for three water quality projects in the Manawatū and Whangaehu catchments, as well as for Lake Waipu.

A further \$18.4 million was received from central government in July 2020, which will build on work already underway and accelerate additional projects. This includes further riparian planting and stream fencing across the region to improve

freshwater, remediation to fish passages to enhance indigenous fish populations, and a Lake Horowhenua wetland project to improve the lake's water quality.

Our Sustainable Land Use Initiative, that helps to manage hill country erosion, will continue to be accelerated through the \$6.49 million of funding received as a part of the central government's Hill Country Erosion Fund in 2019-20. Similarly, our water quality and quantity science and monitoring programmes will continue at the current levels of service.

# POLICY, REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE

To continue the strengthening of our policy and planning capability ahead of significant central government changes to freshwater policy and regulations, climate change legislation, reform of the Resource Management Act, and other National Policy Statement and National Environment Standards adjustments, Council has increased capacity in policy and iwi engagement.

Our consents and consents monitoring teams have also been kept busy recently with significant

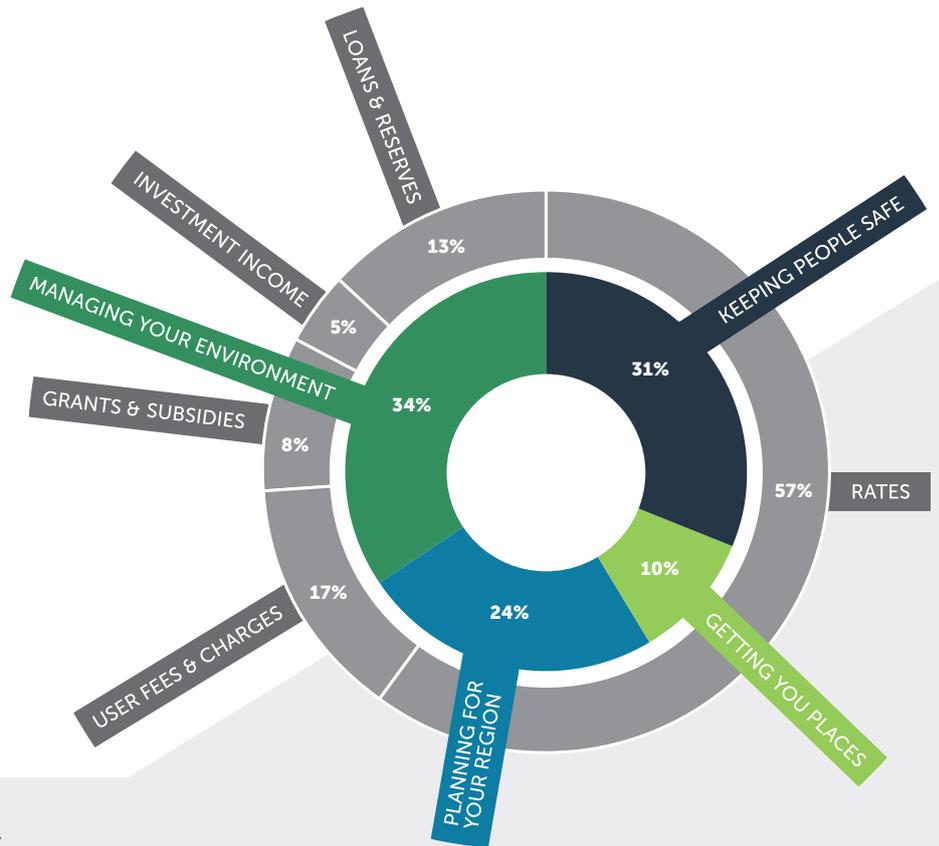
large-scale development and infrastructure projects within our region. These include the new Te Ahu a Turanga - Manawatū Tararua highway, Meridian's new windfarm in the Tararua, and new national regulation around forestry and water quality. We are similarly expecting an influx of consent applications as a result of central government funding throughout the region towards shovel ready projects, recently granted to help reignite the region's economy.



# UNDERSTANDING THE RATE INCREASE

Horizons proposed an average rate increase of 5.95 per cent for 2020-21. However, due to the COVID-19 response, Council revised their 2020-21 Annual Plan to take into consideration potential post-pandemic social and economic impact to our region and instead adopted an average of 1 per cent increase. Your individual rate demand may differ to this percentage. This is because the rate increase percentage is an average for the whole region. It is important to note that each district has a different set of valuations on which your rates are calculated. For example your property may have had an increase or reduction in value and/or specific district rating inputs, such as an urban passenger transport rate, or special river protection rates may be applicable.

So what does this all mean? Your rates bill is likely to differ to that of your neighbour's and to that of your neighbouring districts.



## FUNDING & COSTS

The inside ring shows where we spend our rates income. The outside ring explains where all income comes from.

### KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

- Emergency management
- River and drainage scheme rates
- General rate

### GETTING YOU PLACES

- Transport safety and planning
- Transport services

### PLANNING FOR YOUR REGION

- Strategic management
- Data and information
- General rate
- Uniform annual general change

### MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- Water quality and quantity
- Biosecurity and Biodiversity
- Consent management
- Environmental initiative
- Sustainable land use initiative
- Science and monitoring
- General rate



## BEE CARD

Bee Card is our new bus card, replacing the GoCard. Whanganui started using the Bee Card in December 2019, while Palmerston North, Manawatū, Rangitikei and Horowhenua began most recently in July this year. The Bee Card introduces a new easy way of travelling for our passengers by just tagging on and tagging off the bus. It also provides users with online management of their cards by topping up, loading concessions, managing multiple cards (for caregivers), and the ability to transfer balances from lost or stolen cards.

Horizons is one of nine New Zealand regions implementing the Bee Card. By all joining together we were able to pool costs

and benefits, to get the best deal for our ratepayers. This also means that passengers will be able to use their Bee Card across other regions as well as Manawatū-Whanganui.

The Bee Card is a welcomed change as the tag on tag off functionality provides us with rich data, some of which we weren't able to collect previously. This data includes information on passenger use, hot spots along the routes and fare collection, which will be highly beneficial in informing our future network planning. For more information, or to get your Bee Card, head to [www.beecard.co.nz](http://www.beecard.co.nz).

# EASY WAYS TO PAY

There are several ways to pay, allowing you to select the option that best suits. These options are also listed on the back of your rates invoice.



## PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT:

You can choose to pay in annual, quarterly, monthly or fortnightly installments by arrangement with no penalties. You can download a direct debit form from the Ways to Pay page on Horizons' website [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz) or contact us on **freephone 0508 700 800** to request one. Please return your completed form to **Horizons Regional Council, Private Bag 11025 Manawatū Mail Centre, Palmerston North 4442**.



## PAY ONLINE:

Simply visit the Ways to Pay page on Horizons' website [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz) select the 'Pay Online' payment option at the top, input your details ensuring you include the correct valuation number and property address, and submit your payment. Please note, this service is provided by BNZ and transaction fees may apply.



## PAY BY AUTOMATIC PAYMENT:

This allows for a set amount on a regular basis to be paid to your rates account. Please contact the customer services team on **0508 700 800** for further details or to obtain an automatic payment form.



## PAY AT THE COUNTER:

Make a payment at one of our offices using cash, cheque, Eftpos or credit card. Participating NZ Post Shops also accept payments, excluding Credit Cards. Our offices are located at: 11 Victoria Avenue in Palmerston North, 181 Guyton Street in Whanganui, Cnr Vogel and Tay Street in Woodville, and Hammond Street in Marton. Please check the back of your rates invoice for opening hours.



## BILL PAY:

Log in to your Internet Banking. Using the payments section, search for 'Horizons Regional Council- Rates' as the Payee. Use your valuation number as the reference following the instruction prompts.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR RATES INVOICE BY EMAIL?

Please follow the instructions on your rates notice and enclosed flyer to receive your invoice via email in the future.

## RATES REBATES

A rates rebate is a partial refund. For ratepayers who earn under \$26,150 you may be eligible for a rebate on the property you live in. To find out more, or apply for a rebate please contact your city or district council.

## COVID-19

If you are having difficulty paying your rates due to financial implications of COVID-19, please get in touch with us on **freephone 0508 700 800**.



For more information visit [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz) or freephone Horizons on **0508 800 800**