

HAUMI Ē, HUI Ē, TĀIKI Ē

Joining together to plan for the coming year



HAVE YOUR SAY

BY 21 APRIL 2023

nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2023

MAHERE-Ā-TAU

Annual Plan 2023/24 consultation document

Northland
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau

TŌ MĀTOU RAUTAKI Ā TAU

About our Annual Plan

It's been two years since we adopted Te Mahere Roa | Long Term Plan 2021-2031, our ten-year roadmap for supporting Te Taitokerau Northland's growth and wellbeing.

Each year we check in on that plan to make sure we're on track and review the budget for the next financial year. That becomes our Annual Plan, which sets out any changes from what we'd originally decided in the Long Term Plan.

Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle has severely impacted Te Taitokerau, and now more than ever we need to keep building resilience and supporting our communities through regional emergency management and recovery, flood risk reduction and climate change adaption.



Meanwhile, our other critical work continues on freshwater health, protecting our native habitats, developing enduring relationships with hapū and iwi, delivering on our commitments to our communities, and leveraging central government funding for the benefit of our region.

Keeping up momentum in our work is critical to improving Northland's environment, meeting our statutory obligations as a council, and supporting mana whenua and communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.

But the world is always changing and we're acutely aware of the need to strike the right balance – continuing to move forward, while recognising the pressures the region is facing.

WE NEED TO MAKE CHANGES, SO WE'D LIKE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THEM BEFORE WE LOCK IN OUR FINAL PLAN FOR THE 2023/24 YEAR.



NGĀ PANONITANGA

Proposed changes under our preferred option

NAVIGATING A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

We face a highly competitive market for staff, our most valuable asset without whom the important mahi can't be done. Our staff salaries, which have always been lower than comparative councils, will fall even further behind with the effects of inflation.

To do the work we have committed to, help our environment thrive and continue supporting resilient and adaptable communities, we need to attract and retain skilled and committed people across our team. That's why we are proposing to lift the remuneration and recruitment budget by around \$830,000 a year.

We also need \$270,000 to cover cost increases in audit fees and IT support, improved technology for meeting rooms to efficiently deliver remote meeting access, and extra non-salary costs of new staff.

BOOSTING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

We're gearing up for an increase in consenting and compliance requirements, as a result of freshwater management legislation and in response to community demand.

We need a further \$113,000 a year for two new positions to deal with increasing consent numbers, help implement government freshwater policy, and support agreements with iwi and hapū. These two positions would be partially funded by user fees, keeping the cost to ratepayers lower.

TĀIKI Ē: COMING TOGETHER TO GET THE MAHI DONE

Tāiki ē is our Te Tiriti strategy and implementation plan, which outlines our commitment to a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based partnership with hapū and iwi.

The kaupapa (principle) of the strategy is about iwi, hapū and council working together to get the mahi done in partnership for the well-being of the taiao (environment).

HE IWI TAHI TĀTOU KIA ORA AI TE TAIAO

Kawanatanga and Rangatiratanga working together for the well-being of the environment

The plan was developed in partnership with iwi and hapū representatives on our Te Taitokerau Māori and Council working party, with a commitment to further refinement in partnership with iwi represented by Te Kahu o Taonui.

Some of the plan's actions are already budgeted, though many will require additional resourcing. An extra \$500,300 a year is needed to increase our capacity, and support hapū and iwi technical and cultural expertise on resource management, to advance mahi that benefits all of Te Taitokerau.

WANT MORE DETAIL ABOUT THE CHANGES?

Visit www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2023

HEADS UP - OTIRIA, MOERewa FLOODWORKS FUNDING

Construction of a spillway to reduce flood risk to Otiria and Moerewa is well underway. However, project costs have increased by \$1.5M (to \$6.6M) since budgeted in 2020. Working with our partners, we've successfully secured more funding; however, a shortfall of \$217,000 remains. This flood work is too important to stop so we've decided to continue while exploring more options for other funding. If a shortfall remains, we'll consult on funding options as part of our next Long Term Plan.

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**WORKING TOGETHER FOR
A THRIVING TE TAITOKERAU."**

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NGĀ HUA Ā REITI - What it means for rates

Two years ago, we forecast an average rates increase of \$45 (9.2%) for the 2023/24 year to keep work going and meet our Long Term Plan commitments.

This was to fund:

- » Growing our climate change adaptation and community resilience work, and upgrades to the tsunami siren network

- » More biodiversity and biosecurity work, including predator and pest-free work, and kauri dieback
- » More environmental data and monitoring
- » Support for on-ground catchment remediation work across the region through our environmental fund
- » System upgrades to support our mahi
- » An increase in CityLink bus services.

With the recent rapid rise in inflation, everyone is feeling the effects, and as a council we're not immune. Inflation is now nearly double what we'd originally budgeted.

To offset inflation impacts and minimise further rates impacts, we've combed the budget for savings and reprioritised work where we can. We're also no longer rating for the Oruku Landing convention centre (we'll continue to

support it through other avenues), so our original forecasted increase of 9.2% for this year has been reduced to 8.89% and all options below include this.

To keep the mahi going we need to adjust the budget. Here are some options to consider - we want to know what you think.



OPTION 01 MAKE THE PROPOSED CHANGES

This would mean we could keep up the momentum of our work, and maintain the relationship and trust with our Te Tiriti partners. We could do what we'd originally planned, plus:

- » Lift our recruitment and remuneration budget to attract and retain the right skills and people in a changing employment market (about \$830,000 a year)
- » Cover cost increases in audit fees and IT support, and improve our remote meeting technology so we can work more efficiently (about \$270,000 a year)
- » Support actions in our Tāiki ē strategy, which is about iwi, hapū and council working together in partnership for the benefit of the environment (about \$500,300 a year)
- » Boost environmental management capacity with two new positions (about \$113,000 a year).

This option is an average annual rates increase of \$47.30 – that's \$2.30 a year more than what was already approved under our last Long Term Plan. Our funding from rates would grow by 10.2%, another 1% on top of the 9.2% already approved. The average annual regional council rates bill would be \$560.



WE TALK ABOUT AVERAGE RATES BUT RATES ACTUALLY VARY A LOT DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU LIVE AND YOUR PROPERTY VALUE.

You'll find rates examples in our Supporting information document to help give you a better steer on how our proposals affect your rates.

www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2023



OUR PREFERRED
OPTION

OPTION 02 STICK TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN

Doing only what we planned for two years ago would keep the average rates increase at \$40.65 (8.89%) a year.

With some re-prioritisation and applying savings where possible, we could also fund:

- » Some lift in staff remuneration
- » Tāiki ē – Council, hapū and iwi capacity and capability building.

However, without also making the proposed changes we would struggle to meet our regulatory role of environmental management, risk losing people to get the mahi done, and be less able to honour commitments and support for our Te Tiriti partners.

This option is an average annual rates increase of \$40.65 – that's \$4.65 a year less than what was already approved under our last Long Term Plan. Our funding from rates would grow by 8.9%, that's 0.3% less than the 9.2% already approved. The average annual regional council rates bill would be \$554.

OPTION 03 DO EVEN MORE

There's always more we can do. This would include doing all work set out in options 1 and 2 above, but with even more investment in these core areas, including:

- » Improvements to our IT service desk, increased support for our Enviroschools facilitators by making them staff (not contractors), and increasing the service budget for our lakes surveying (about \$160,000 a year more)
- » Even more internal resource to support Tāiki ē (about \$100,000 a year more)
- » Doubling our environmental monitoring and consent compliance officers – two each instead of one, getting a river engineer (asset management) on board, and getting better high-level data to support compliance work (about \$260,000 more)
- » An extra \$65,000 of capital expenditure on navigation safety information and equipment, and air quality monitoring equipment.

This option is an average annual rates increase of \$53.50 – that's \$8.50 a year more than what was already approved under our last Long Term Plan. Our funding from rates would grow by 11.4%, another 2.2% on top of the 9.2% already approved. The average annual regional council rates bill would be \$569.

TUKUA MAI Ō WHAKAARO I TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Your feedback is important to us, so make sure you have it to us by Friday 21 April 2023
Visit our website and tell us what you think www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2023

Want to talk to a councillor about these proposals, or provide feedback in person?
Give us a call by Thursday 30 March 2023, and we'll tee up a time.



User fees and charges

Some of our work is funded by user fees. Our charging policy and schedule of these fees has been updated. There are minor changes proposed to ensure we're accurately recovering costs, charging people fairly (in line with Resource Management Act changes) and streamlining administration costs. Find out more in our Statement of proposal – www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2023

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