

## A message from the Mayor

*Dear Wanganui resident*

Last year when I wrote to you – seeking your view on our Ten Year Plan for the city and district – I noted the difficulty that the economic recession presented.

A year later and that recession may be over, but economic growth is both slow and patchy. And for many Wanganui families and businesses, finances are both tight and tough.

For that reason, this draft Annual Plan for the 2010/11 year is about balance. We are seeking to meet the needs of our infrastructure and community, against the need for ongoing rates restraint. At the same time we are aware that Wanganui needs to grow and must attract new residents and families, businesses and visitors.

To that end, your council is still producing some of the lowest rates increases in the country, but engaging in projects and ventures that maximise the city's appeal.

Our average rates increase this coming year will be 4.5% – at a time when central government has significantly reduced roading funding; our investments in Wanganui Gas and forestry are producing negative returns; and new investment in water supply and combating anti-social activity is required.

On the brighter side, we will complete the new Visitor Information Centre in the spring; complete an attractive Southern Entranceway to the city; put 'soft' water on tap to most Wanganui homes and businesses; and engage in a nationwide promotional campaign.

We live in a great city offering a fantastic quality of life. I am very upbeat about our future – our finances, facilities, infrastructure and national image are on the improve. And we are more than coping with the crises thrown our way. Good on you, Wanganui!

Michael Laws  
Mayor

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# Rates for 2010/11

The draft Annual Plan 2010/11 proposes an average overall rates increase of 4.5%.

The table below shows the likely financial effects upon your household, farming or business property. The actual percentage and rates increase will vary from property to property.

Table 1

	Residential	Farming	Commercial
Percentage rate increase	4.3%	6.0%	4.9%
Dollar rate increase	\$73	\$115	\$323
Number of properties	17,249	1,861	1,247

## Average rates increase by Wanganui District Council by year

Table 2

Year	Rates	Inflation
2005/06	0%	2.80%
2006/07	3.00%	4.00%
2007/08	1.80%	2.00%
2008/09	4.70%	4.00%
2009/10	3.20%	1.90%
2010/11	4.50%	3.00% (Est)
<b>Total average increase over 5 years</b>	<b>2.90%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>

## What are my rates spent on?

The graph shows the allocation of rates for the average residential property with a rate of \$1784.

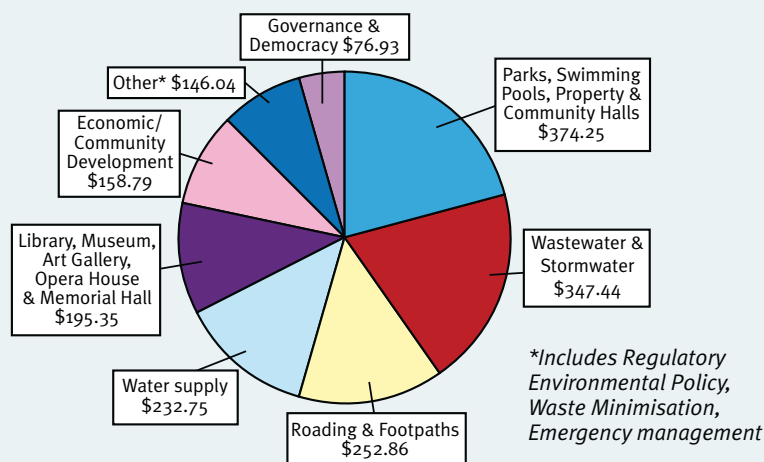


Table 3

Community facilities rate	\$640
General rate	\$299
Roads & footpaths rate	\$133
Stormwater disposal rate	\$229
Wastewater rate	\$188
Water firefighting capacity rate	\$49
Water supply rate	\$246
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,784</b>

## Rates rebate scheme – reduce your bill!

We estimate that 13% of Wanganui's residential ratepayers will be eligible for a rates rebate. The average rebate in 2009/10 was \$485 per property. Ratepayers on low to moderate incomes are eligible. This includes all superannuants where superannuation is their only source of income.

The rebate calculation is based on both the Horizons Manawatu/Wanganui Regional Council and Wanganui District Council rates, as well as income levels. The following table shows the rebate available for particular income levels for an average residential property.

The table is included as a guideline only and is based on current central government

policies. Individual ratepayers' circumstances, including the number of dependent children, will mean that ratepayers may get a refund that differs from this table.

Table 4

Annual income	Rates rebate
\$24,300	\$550
\$24,700	\$550
\$25,100	\$550
\$25,500	\$550
\$26,000	\$550
\$26,750	\$519.67
\$27,500	\$426.67

The higher the rates you pay, the higher the level of income you can earn and still be eligible for a refund. If you think you may be eligible, please contact the council on 349 0001 between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## Affordability and deferred maintenance

In order to save money and keep rate increases low, ensuring local people are able to pay, we have deferred maintenance on some assets. This means putting off maintenance and repairs on areas including pipes and infrastructure.

Council's current deferred maintenance bill is estimated to be \$20M, of which at least \$10M is programmed into the 10-Year Plan 2009-2019. This is within acceptable risk limits.

## Roading subsidy reduction

Council has had a \$2.5M reduction in New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) subsidies for 2010/11 and a \$6M reduction over the next three financial years. This is the result of a Government decision to spend more money on 'Roads of National Significance'.

Without the subsidy, council cannot deliver on its work programme as defined in the 10-Year Plan. New priorities have had to be established, with some work deferred.

## Debt levels

The 10-Year Plan 2009-2019 predicted a debt balance of \$84.5M at 30 June 2011. This has now been revised and a closing debt balance for the end of the financial year at 30 June 2011 is \$91.0M.

The increase in the debt balance is as a result of:

- Advance of \$3M to Wanganui Gas Ltd

- Extra debt funding taken out to build the new Splash Centre, after failure to sell specified properties.
- Failure of the No 1 bore at Kai Iwi and the subsequent project to secure the future water supply, which successfully incorporated the soft water project.

## Managing debt

Throughout the period of the 10-Year Plan 2009-2019, overall debt is projected to rise to a high of \$96.8M in 2012/13 and decrease to \$66.5M in 2018/19.

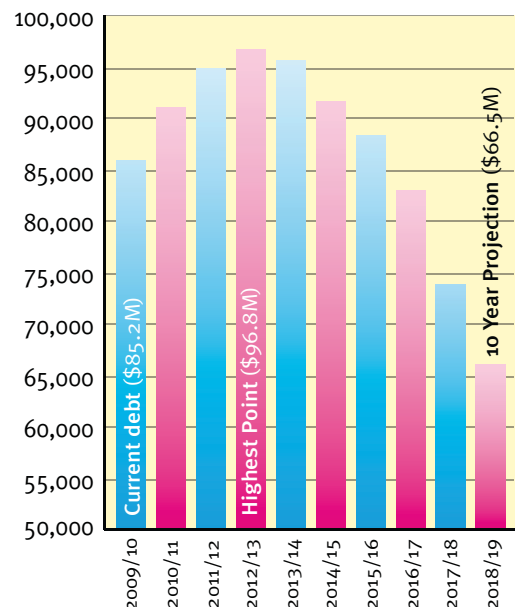
Of the 73 local authorities in New Zealand, Wanganui District Council is one of only 16 councils projecting a decrease in their debt over this period.

The table below compares the level of debt with rates income from various councils. The ratio shown is the debt to rates income. This could be used to compare the ability of the council to service its debt.

Table 5

Council	Debt 2010 \$M	Rates income 2010 – \$M	Ratio (debt to rates income)
Dunedin City	280.7	97.8	2.9
Hamilton City	340.2	108.9	3.1
Kapiti Coast	94.1	39.3	2.4
Manawatu	17.0	23.8	0.7
Nelson District	87.5	48.6	1.8
New Plymouth	130.2	57.6	2.3
Palmerston North	157.2	63	2.5
Rangitikei District	1.1	15.2	0.07
Ruapehu District	29.7	16.4	1.8
South Taranaki	111.5	28.1	4.1
Tauranga	327.7	81.0	4.0
<b>Wanganui</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>

### Projected debt over 10 years (as at March 2010)



## MAJOR PROJECTS

### Visitor Information Centre

In *Referendum '09* the Wanganui community voted for the Visitor Information Centre to be relocated to the Moutoa Quay/Riverfront area.

In October 2009, the 'Tearaway' building at 31 Taupo Quay was chosen as the location for the new Visitor Information Centre. Work is under way on the new Visitor Centre which is scheduled to open in spring 2010.

- The building will house not only a Visitor Information Centre but a Wanganui Shop, café and audio-visual space for the 'Wanganui story'. There is the potential to establish a Museum of Glass.

The interior will reflect the importance of the river to Wanganui and include a contemporary park and an aquarium.

Architecturally, the remodelled building will transform the existing warehouse building, highlighting Wanganui's architectural

heritage and creating an authentic and specifically Wanganui Visitor Centre experience.



*Architect's drawing of the new Visitor Information Centre at 31 Taupo Quay*



*Artist's impression of the Southern Entranceway with the 'Encounter' sculpture by Mark Southcombe*

### Southern Entranceway

We want to have the best entrance to a city anywhere in New Zealand and draw travellers into the city.

In 2008 Council initiated a project with Transit New Zealand and other interested parties to provide an attractive and functional entranceway from Marybank to Liffiton Street on State Highway 3.

- The revamped entranceway is due to be completed by August 2010, providing a unique gateway to our city and enticing travellers off State Highway 3, through Putiki and into the CBD. Work includes roading improvements and installation of a roundabout at the dangerous Wikitoria Road/State Highway 3 corner, plus landscaping and beautification.

### Marketing and promotion – a great place to live and visit

The council's aim is to relaunch Wanganui on the national stage – we know it's a great place to live and visit and we want to tell the rest of the country.

In 2009 we investigated national perceptions of Wanganui and identified our strengths and weaknesses, which fed into our Visitor

Strategy. Late last year the council established a Visitor Committee to oversee the Visitor Strategy and work on a marketing plan for Wanganui.

- Council has allocated \$350,000 from the Economic development budget for image building and promotion of Wanganui. Highlighting Wanganui on the national stage will be the primary goal for 2010/11. \$1.7M has been allocated over the next 10 years to fund the strategy.

# Completion of long-term development projects

## Riverfront redevelopment

The council's aim is to redevelop the riverfront area to make it the living, beating heart of Wanganui.

The \$120M wastewater project has removed sewage from the river regaining it as a major recreational resource. The new boardwalk and re-siting of the UCOL campus has enhanced the area. A new Visitor Centre is being constructed on the riverfront, creating a new frontispiece for Wanganui. The Visitor Centre is due to open in spring 2010.

- Our focus is upon creating a Riverfront Precinct which will convert the area into an entertainment and tourism hub which embraces the Whanganui River. Our budget includes \$150,000 this year to develop initial designs and begin public consultation.



*Example of a pedestrian precinct*

## Creating a safe and family-friendly community

The council aims to decrease anti-social behaviour in Wanganui and develop a family-friendly city and a great place to live and visit.

We have taken a zero-tolerance approach taken to graffiti, litter and other anti-social behaviour resulting in great success by our graffiti and litter teams in reducing the impact of these actions. Liquor bans are in place in a number of areas of the city and the introduction of the Gang Insignia Act and Bylaw has given Police another tool in combating the menace of gangs in our communities.

- The Annual Plan includes \$30,000 to support the 'For Our Kids' project – the first major initiative of the Community Taskforce on Youth Wellbeing. Fostering the development of Wanganui's young people through greater community involvement, volunteers and families will be provided with the necessary skills to communicate, support and mentor young people, led by a council-based programme coordinator.

## Industrial Transport Strategy

Wanganui's industries are a key part of our economy and council is committed to working with them to retain them within the district. Concerns have been raised with council about planning for transportation and safety issues.

- Work will be undertaken in 2010/11 to develop an Industrial Transport Strategy to highlight the specific

needs and demands of the Heads Road area. Consultation will take place with all interested parties and the strategy will also consider the infrastructural needs of this zone.

## Flooding risks

Storm events have caused considerable flooding in parts of the city and there are still some areas of the city which are at risk of flooding during major storm events. This may impact on houses, industry and property.

- \$150,000 has been budgeted for a stormwater strategy to be completed in 2010/11. This will evaluate major catchments including Otamatea, Springvale, Mosston and Balgownie.



## Completion of long-term development projects (cont)



### Cooks Gardens athletics track

Cooks Gardens has a national reputation as a quality sporting and entertainment venue, attracting events and visitors to Wanganui. It is the home of Sir Peter Snell's mile record. The athletics track is now deteriorating which brings the risk that the venue may no longer be part of the national athletics circuit.

- \$340,000 has been allocated to replace the athletics track and maintain Wanganui's ability to attract first class athletes to compete at Cooks Gardens.

### Soft water project / Security of water supply

The council's aim is to reduce household and business expenses, and ensure the long-term security of Wanganui's water supply, by providing softer water and additional water sources.

We have constructed two new bores Abelard and Heloise at Westmere, which has boosted the water supply and softened the water. Soft

water provides cost savings for users – estimated at \$230 per household per year.

- We are working to get the best possible performance from the city water supply. The Annual Plan includes funding to complete a small existing bore and install a small softening plant, both at the Westmere reservoir.

### Virginia Lake restoration project

Virginia Lake is one of Wanganui's premier parks, attracting local, national and international visitors, and must be maintained as one of the jewels in Wanganui's crown.



Along with many other New Zealand lakes and waterways, Virginia Lake has been badly affected with algal blooms during recent summers. To help improve the water quality, a Solar Bee was placed in the lake to continually circulate water and add oxygen to it, floating islands introduced and weeds and vegetation cleared.

- \$100,000 has been allocated for restoration of the water quality at Virginia Lake, with tests being carried out to determine the best approach. Options include natural aeration and increased lake circulation.

### Variations to the 10-Year Plan 2009-2019

Variations have been made to the 2010/11 work programmes that are set out in the 10-Year Plan 2009-2019.

These variations reflect changing circumstances, in particular the challenging economic climate as well as a changing priority for some items.

Details of the major variations to the 10-Year Plan are included in the draft Annual Plan 2010/11.

The variations include work programmes in the following activities:

Cemeteries, Community buildings, Parks and reserves, Community development, Library,

Sarjeant Gallery, Economic development, War Memorial Hall, Roading, Water supply, Stormwater, Wastewater and Corporate management.

The draft Annual Plan also includes projects to be considered in the future. These projects have been deferred or excluded from the plan at this stage for affordability reasons.

The list includes some major roading projects, stormwater upgrades, kerbside recycling, various parks and reserves projects, earthquake strengthening work, redevelopment of the Davis Library, off-site storage for the Sarjeant Gallery and other projects within the CBD maintenance, Sea port, Policy, Corporate management and Economic development activities.

Refer to the draft Annual Plan 2010/11 for the full list of projects.

## What we are consulting on

Council's intention is to deliver quality services to the community, while keeping rates as low as possible. Due to the current financial situation, the draft Annual Plan shows some projects and services have been reduced, delayed or cancelled in order to keep rates down.

Council would like to hear whether you agree or disagree with the decisions it has made. If you think a project that has been reduced, delayed or cancelled should be a priority for council in 2010/11, then you will need to consider whether you would be prepared to pay higher rates, or whether you think another project is less important and should be exchanged for the one you think is a priority.

In addition, council is also specifically consulting on:

### Proposed amendment to 10-Year Plan 2009-2019

The draft Annual Plan includes a proposed amendment to the 10-Year Plan 2009-2019 relating to council's Investment policy.

The amendment will allow council to regularly evaluate the appropriateness of its individual investments and portfolio of investments after considering the risk and return ratio. Council will also consider the impact the investments have on the social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeings of the district.

The amendment will allow council to acquire, divest and/or make loan advances, such as the \$3M loan funding to Wanganui Gas.

Copies of the Statement of Proposal containing the proposed Investment policy are available from the Customer Services Desk at the Wanganui District Council Municipal Building, 101 Guyton Street, and at the District Library, Queens Park, during normal opening hours. It is also available on our website [www.wanganui.govt.nz](http://www.wanganui.govt.nz).

Submissions may be made on the proposal. These should be addressed to:

10-Year Plan 2009-2019 Amendment  
Wanganui District Council  
PO Box 637  
Wanganui 4540

**Submissions close at 5.00pm on Friday, 14 May 2010.**

### Debt

Council would like to hear the community's view on paying a set amount each year to reduce the debt balance, which would result in less money being paid in interest (the cost of borrowing money) and more money available to spend on services.

If council collected \$30 per ratepayer per year, debt could be reduced by \$600,000 per year saving \$45,000 in interest costs. However, this would contradict the principle of 'inter-generational equity', where costs are spread over many years.

For more information on the council's current and projected debt, refer to page 3.

### Anti-social behaviour

The draft Annual Plan allocates a total of \$704,000 to combating anti-social behaviour, of which \$562,000 is a direct cost to council.

The funding supports the Safer Wanganui initiative including graffiti and litter teams, CCTV, Community Patrols and Maori Wardens and the 'For our Kids' initiative.



*The graffiti team cleaning up the Kowhai Park skate park mural*

Council would like to know if you think we have allocated enough funding to combat the various aspects of anti-social behaviour.

### Communications Strategy review

The Council is reviewing its communications strategy to ensure its messages are reaching as many citizens as possible and that the methods used are cost-effective.

Council currently communicates through a range of media including the weekly Community Link page in the local media, Council Report newsletter, radio and the council website.

The purpose of the review is to confirm council's communication direction for 2010/11 and the methods to be used. The aim is to increase council communication with every Wanganui household in the most cost effective way.

Are we using the right mix of media? Are there ways we can better communicate with you?

We'd like to know what you think about council communications.

**For more information on all of these issues please see the Statement of Proposal in the draft Annual Plan. The draft Annual Plan 2010/11 is available from Customer Services at the council building in Guyton Street and on our website [www.wanganui.govt.nz](http://www.wanganui.govt.nz)**

# Have your say – how to make a submission

We want to ensure that you have the best opportunity possible to tell the council your views about the Draft Annual Plan 2010/11.

There are a number of ways you can make a submission – these are outlined below.

The following tips are intended to help you in preparing your submission and getting your message across. It will also assist the council in considering your submission.

## Remember to:

- Include your name, name of your organisation (if applicable), contact details including address and daytime telephone number and whether you wish to speak about your submission at the council hearing.
- State clearly the subject of your submission. If you are making a submission about several subjects, it is helpful to use a separate heading for each.
- State your concerns or your support for the subject. If you are responding to a particular page or section of the Draft Annual Plan, include the page number in your submission.

- State what you want the council to do e.g. you may want the council to change something or you may want the council to keep things the same.

## Making a verbal submission

This section applies if you indicate you wish to speak to the council about your submission at the hearing of submissions. Submissions will be heard on 31 May 2010.

You will be contacted with a date and time for your submission to be heard. The hearing will be in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building in Guyton Street.

The Mayor and councillors will receive, and have read, a copy of all submissions before the hearing.

Therefore, there is no need to read out your submission at the hearing. It is an opportunity for you to summarise and expand on the key points of your submission and for the council to ask questions.

Remember to state what you want the council to do.

You will be allowed 5–10 minutes to speak about your submission and answer questions of clarification from the council.

The council will not debate the matter during the hearing or make any decisions. This will occur at the council's deliberation meeting to be held on 8 June 2010.

## We welcome your comments on our Draft Annual Plan 2010/11.

You can make a submission by completing a submission form available from Customer Services; completing the submission form on the council's website [www.wanganui.govt.nz](http://www.wanganui.govt.nz); or writing us a letter to the address below. If you have any queries, please phone us on (06) 349 0001 (8.00am – 5.00pm, Monday - Friday).

Your submission can be as formal or informal as you like.

Please post completed submission forms to:

Annual Plan Submissions  
Wanganui District Council  
PO Box 637  
Wanganui 4540

Or deliver to:

Customer Service Desk  
Wanganui District Council  
101 Guyton Street  
Wanganui

Or fax to: (06) 349 0000

Or e-mail to:  
[wdc@wanganui.govt.nz](mailto:wdc@wanganui.govt.nz)

## The consultation period is 13 April to 14 May 2010

Full copies of the draft Annual Plan 2010/11 are available the Customer Services Counter, Municipal Office Building, 101 Guyton Street, Wanganui or on-line at [www.wanganui.govt.nz](http://www.wanganui.govt.nz).