

Recovery Office builds strength

Councils in New Zealand are the primary agencies responsible for Civil Defence Emergency Management, meaning they hold responsibility for keeping communities safe before, during, and after emergencies. This work involves close coordination with iwi, emergency services, government agencies, and community groups to plan for natural disasters, respond when they occur, and support communities through recovery.

Following the severe weather event in February 2026 which caused widespread disruption across the district, the Council established the South Wairarapa Recovery Office. Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act, the district entered a Local Transition Period on 23 February, enabling the use of specialised powers and help access to targeted recovery funding.

The Recovery Office oversaw immediate repairs while also building a clear picture of what different communities required in the weeks, months, and years ahead. Its purpose was to help communities rebuild with greater resilience.

To guide the work, the Council formally established a Recovery Governance Board and adopted its Terms of Reference. This governance group set the direction for the recovery programme, monitored risks, advocated for funding, and determined when recovery activities could return to business-as-usual.

Find out more about the work of the South Wairarapa Recovery Office at: swdc.govt.nz/south-wairarapa-recovery-office



International Dark Sky Week is coming

Imagine lowering your power bills and improving your sleep at the same time. It sounds almost too good to be true but this simple win-win is within reach of anyone willing to carry out a quick DIY Home Outdoor Lighting Assessment, from the link below.

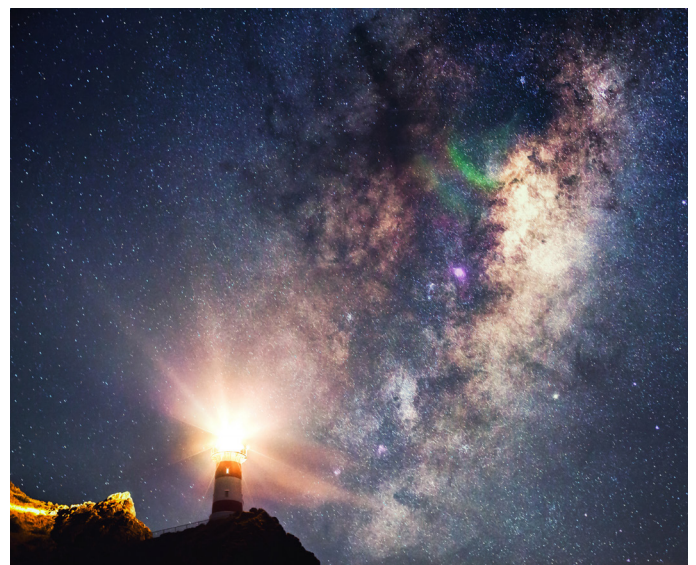
The DIY Assessment includes practical steps to do at home with ease, without cost and with positive flow on effects, including lower power bills, better sleep and less light spill that can impact neighbours, pets and plants.

Light pollution disrupts wildlife, affects human wellbeing, wastes money and energy, contributes to climate change and obscures our view of the night sky. International Dark Sky Week is an opportunity for South Wairarapa - and the wider region - to protect the night environment and support healthier conditions for plants, animals and people, says Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve Project Coordinator, Charlotte Harding.

DIY Home Outdoor Lighting Assessments, encourage the use of warmer lights, timers, downward facing light shades and less light overall. The flow-on benefits are widespread for us all."

South Wairarapa and Carterton districts were officially certified as Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve in January 2023 and cover 3,665 square kilometres.

Download your free DIY Home Outdoor Lighting Assessment at: swdc.govt.nz/wairarapa-international-dark-sky-reserve



International Dark Sky Week runs from Monday 13 April to Monday 20 April.

Council ranks high

First impressions count, as the Council's high rankings in a Local Government survey showed, placing South Wairarapa District Council fourth of all 78 councils across the motu and third among the 54 district councils.

The survey was conducted by the Association of Local Government Information Management (ALGIM) with results released in February this year, describing the Council's rankings as "a substantial uplift on previous years and demonstrates

consistently excellent service across all channels".

Areas of focus in the survey were first impressions, communicating and listening, ability to solve problems, knowledge, and overall experience. Assessment was weighted to 20% email, 60% telephone, and 20% online portal (website).

Learn more at: swdc.govt.nz/news/swdc-named-one-of-the-best-for-customer-service

Your perspective matters

The Council has established two new groups to give residents a voice to help shape how the district looks and functions. The groups are the Martinborough Access Reference Group (MARG) and the Rural and Coastal Advisory Group.

Martinborough Access Reference Group

Representatives for MARG will give advice on safety, accessibility and the impact of visitor and freight traffic across Martinborough, contributing ideas on areas such as urban design, roading and bridges, traffic, pedestrian and cyclist behaviour and safety and the Martinborough economy from retail, wine and tourism to events, among other areas.

Deputy Mayor and Martinborough Councillor Rob Taylor says that by working alongside the community, the Council can explore options and make informed decisions to balance safety, accessibility, economic vitality and the

character of Martinborough.

MARG will meet regularly from March to August 2026, contributing directly to the Council's Long-Term Plan and broader transport and access planning. If MARG proves successful, similar reference groups may be set up in other wards across the district.

Rural and Coastal Advisory Group

The establishment of the Rural and Coastal Advisory Group was approved by the Council in November 2025, following the Representation Review in 2024, where stronger representation for rural and coastal communities was desired.

The group will give the Council advice on issues that affect people living in rural and coastal areas. Its role is to make sure their views are included when the Council makes decisions, plans services, and develops policies.

Consent for wastewater to land

The Council has purchased land north of Pain Farm, which it intends to use for irrigating with treated wastewater from the Martinborough Wastewater Treatment Plant (MWWTP) to land. This follows an obligation of the existing resource consent for the MWWTP to discharge treated wastewater to land by

2030. It's also an important step in sustainable treated wastewater management to clean up Ruamāhanga River. The proposed new site is closer to the MWWTP and is suited to accommodate treated wastewater in an environmentally sensitive way.

Visit the Council website to find out more.

Make your water meter easy to find

If you're connected to the water supply in Featherston, Greytown, Martinborough or Pirinoa, it's time to clear any grass, debris or overgrown vegetation away from your water meter. This helps the Council's annual team of volunteer water meter readers who brave the cold dark month of June to read meters across the district each year.

How extra water charges work

Every household connected to a town water supply has an annual allocation of 250m³. Properties that use more than the limit are charged at \$2.56 per cubic metre per property. If you receive an invoice that doesn't tally, please get in touch with the Council as excess charges can indicate a leak on your property. Waiver options are available and can be explored.

Learn more at: swdc.govt.nz/water-meters



A market with a mission – community gains from funding

Greytown residents and visitors alike have been enjoying an informal summer living room where they can connect with the community, buy locally grown seasonal produce and grow their own small fledgling businesses every Saturday from December to April. It's called Crop Up and first opened in late 2023, growing further with support from the Council's Community Wellbeing Fund (CWBF). Crop Up qualified for funding because of its multi-pronged approach to community and environmental wellbeing. Crop Up ticked all of the wellbeing boxes of the CMBF.

The fund was a one-off pool of resources given to councils by Te Tari Taiwhenua (the Department of Internal Affairs) to help communities across the motu (country) grow their wellbeing in four tangible ways: cultural, economic, environmental and social.



Learn more about Council funding and grants at: swdc.govt.nz/community/grants



Council's HQ reopens

Council staff returned to head office on Kitchener Street in Martinborough in early March, following repair work on longstanding health and safety issues in the 1950s office block, which was deemed unfit for purpose in late 2024. The discovery of black mould, asbestos and leaks led Councillors to consider options to address the issues. They opted for the most affordable and practical one - a basic renovation. The successful result means council staff and public visitors to the building now have a healthy, safe and secure environment.

South Wairarapa District Council is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm at 19 Kitchener Street, Martinborough, phone 06 306 9611.

Featherston Watermain moving ahead

Phase two of the Featherston Watermain Renewals project is under way and anticipated to be completed this April. The project began in November 2025 and topped the list for the Council in bringing the delivery of the capital water programme back in-house from Wellington Water Ltd. The Featherston Watermain Renewals scope is to replace

2.6km of aging water pipes, which are thought to be one of the sources of ongoing leaks and water loss. This project is essential to improve water supply resilience to the community.

Learn more at: swdc.govt.nz/featherston-watermain-renewals-2025-26

Bridging the gap

Two lanes will become one on Martinborough's Huangarua Bridge, which carries about 1,570 vehicles to Carterton and further north each day and has a crash history which led to the decision to convert it to one lane.

This was decided on by the Council's Infrastructure Committee in February this year as part of ongoing work to improve road safety across the district.

A budget of \$20,000 has been approved by the Council with a subsidy of 51 percent by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency through the Financial Assistance Rate. This will fund road line painting, signs, traffic management and trimming willows on the riverbank. An approved speed reduction to 60 km/hr for this section of road will also help to improve safety, reduce risk of crashes, increase driver confidence and better accommodate wide vehicles using the bridge.

Community feedback was sought in November 2025, which included suggestions to widen the bridge, which were estimated to be prohibitive from a cost perspective. Timelines will be published on the Council website when dates are confirmed.



Rebates 2025-26

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$805.00 for low income earners. Ratepayers must have been living in the home they own on 1 July 2025.

1. Your rebate will be calculated based on your gross income from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, your rates, and the number of dependants you have. The income eligibility for a Non-SuperGold cardholder is \$32,210, or \$45,000 for a SuperGold Cardholder. You will need to provide a copy of your signed SuperGold card with your application. .
2. You must provide details of income from your income provider for ALL forms of income, including interest and dividends. If requested by the Department of Internal Affairs you must provide proof of this income. Application forms will be sent to those who have previously received a rebate in 2024-25. Copies of the form can be obtained from the Council office in Martinborough, Greytown and Featherston libraries, or online www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms and by email: rates@swdc.govt.nz.

Having trouble paying your rates?

Please contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you on a payment plan. Council will make every effort to work with you on this process. As a last resort, Council policy is to approach banks and legal representatives to recover arrears.

For any queries regarding your rates, please contact our rates team at the following email address: rates@swdc.govt.nz

Automatic payment

At the start of each new rating year, if you are paying your rates by automatic payment, you may need to recalculate your payments for the new year's rates.

Please check your payments and adjust these if required. Your payments still need to clear the quarterly instalment by the due date to avoid penalties.

We are unable to recalculate automatic payments for you. To avoid any issues, you can switch to a direct debit where we calculate the payments right up to 30 June, not each quarter. No penalties are charged if paying by direct debit.

Rates 2025-26 Instalment Four of Four

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Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026.

The last day for payment is 20 May 2026. Please pay by this date to avoid the 10% penalty.

Please help us to process payments by ensuring you include the property valuation number for all properties you are paying for. If paying online please make a separate payment for each property.

Post vs mail

If you want to receive council notices and communications, including your rates notices via email rather than post, please email your details to rates@swdc.govt.nz

Payment by direct debit

We encourage ratepayers to pay rates by direct debit as this ensures the correct amount is paid and you avoid late payment penalties.

We offer **weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly direct debit options to pay rates**. Direct debit is the easiest way to pay your rates as we withdraw the funds directly from your bank account at the last minute. That way you will get the benefit of your funds for the longest time and avoid penalties. If you would like to pay using this method, forms are available from Featherston and Greytown libraries, the Council office in Martinborough and online at www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms.

All you need to do is complete the form and send it to SWDC, PO Box 6, Martinborough 5741 or scan and email it to rates@swdc.govt.nz or drop it off at either the Council office in Martinborough or at Featherston or Greytown libraries.



GET IT SORTED

Something needs fixing?
Let us know...

To South Wairarapa District Council,
P.O. Box 6, Martinborough 5741

From:

First name

Surname

What's the problem?

Where exactly?

Street or Road name and number

Your phone number (Should we need to contact you to clarify the details)