



Chief Executive's message



As you may know, I have been in the Interim Chief Executive role for some 6 months. I accepted the appointment to help support the community, our organisation and council staff to continue delivering on our commitments. Councillors are working hard on appointing a new Chief Executive that will lead the organisation into the future with the range of demands and reforms that we face. I can say with the utmost pride that I thoroughly enjoy leading a team that is so very committed to doing the best that it can for its community.

One of our commitments to ratepayers at the start of this financial year was to conduct a 'first principles' rating review. Workshops undertaken with Councillors have taken us forward and by the time you read this, the detailed consultation process with the public would have just completed. We are grateful to all who have taken the time to understand and provide feedback through submissions. Often, when people look at their council rates, they naturally question why they pay a certain proportion of the overall costs. That is why this process is so important and what the rating review will define for the next few years. It is how the entire pie (total costs of delivering council services) is divided amongst our different ratepayers.

In parallel to this project and many other areas of our business that you observe each day, are the preparations for our 2024-34 Long-term Plan (LTP). This critical piece of work sets the scene for the next 10 years and is revised in detail every three years. An annual plan is developed in years two and three that aligns to the LTP, which in turn informs our annual budget and the rates payable for that year. Councillors and Council Officers are working hard to bring together all the influencing factors that impact upon this process. Front of mind is the direction that our national elections will take us, the implications of the Affordable Water Reform, and as we look further along the road, we must consider the effects of Resource Management and Local Government reforms.

Suffice to say that there is never a dull day in local government. Your Council is actively engaging and influencing at a local, regional, and national level to get the best outcomes for our community as possible.

I hope that this newsletter will help in a small way to assure you that the work we do is future focussed and essential in terms of how we live our lives. If anyone has concerns about their ability to pay their rates, please contact our rates officer at their earliest convenience 06 306 9611.

Paul Gardner
Interim Chief Executive

Stay up to date with SWDC

South Wairarapa District Council has been piloting a new way to keep our community informed.

Antenno is a location-based mobile app that sends council-related notifications about the places you care about, including major water outages, roadworks, severe weather updates, Council events, rates and registration reminders, consultations and more. It can also be used to directly report issues or provide suggestions and ideas.

You choose the places you want to be alerted about. This might include your neighbourhood, workplace or where your kids go to school. It's up to you! You can also opt out of topics that don't interest you.

It's free, easy, and secure - there's no need to share personal information. Just download the app, enter locations you're interested in monitoring, and keep an eye out for our posts!



What will South Wairarapa look like in 10 years?

South Wairarapa District Council is well into its preparation for our 2024-34 Long-term Plan (LTP). The LTP sets the strategic direction for the district over the next 10 years with a strong focus on the initial three years. It outlines priorities, how much it all costs, and where the money might come from.

You can keep up to date with our progress at swdc.govt.nz/long-term-plan, including opportunities over the coming months to voice what you consider Council could prioritise to improve the wellbeing of the district. Planning in uncertain times is a challenge and now, more than ever, it is essential we hear from the community.

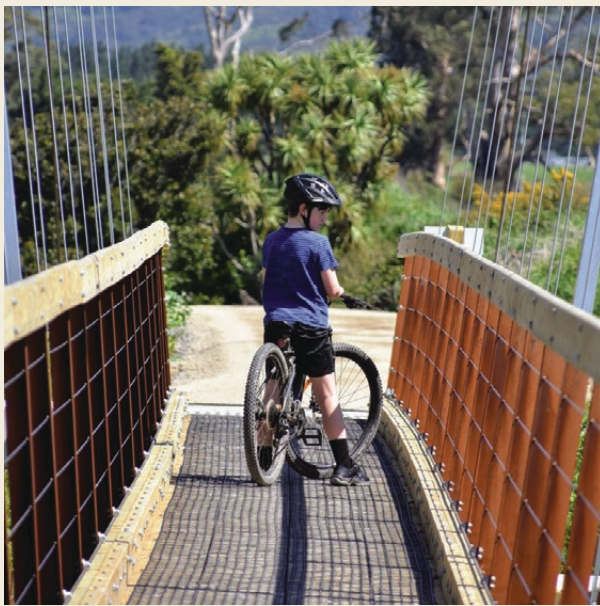
Water conservation with Wellington Water

The warm spring weather has been a timely reminder that the South Wairarapa has water restrictions on all year with alternate day watering. We are always at Level 1 because of our need to conserve water (even when it rains!).

As we head into the summer months, it's important to remember that sprinklers are to be used every second day between 6-8am and 7-9pm. This helps limit water evaporating in the heat of the day. If you live in an even numbered house, you can use sprinklers or irrigation systems only on even numbered days. If you live in an odd numbered house, the same rules apply for odd numbered days. Having an even/odd schedule like this helps us spread the load of daily water demand, and carefully manage our daily supply levels.

You can keep up to date with what restriction we're in by visiting: wellingtonwater.co.nz/water-restrictions

Five Towns Trail & Tauwharenikau bridge



Work on the construction of the Tauwharenikau bridge was completed in June 2023. More than 23,000 people have used the bridge to date, accommodating a wide range of activities like walking, biking, and running.

Trails are a successful feature of many regions in New Zealand, and we're excited about the positive impact that trails have for the South Wairarapa. Getting people out of their cars, further developing our tourism brand, increasing the fitness of all ages, providing a channel to showcase our history, tell the stories of Mana Whenua, and support our local economy.

This project is a great example of building successful partnerships to support regional economic development with initial funding from IRG via MBIE, project management by the Greytown Trails Trust, and various contractors involved to deliver the construction and associated work. Trails that will connect the Featherston and Greytown sides to the bridge are ongoing.

Local placename initiative

As part of Te Wiki o te Reo Māori in September, we ran a series on social media encouraging pronunciation of local place names across South Wairarapa. This was so positively received we are now continuing with it as a fortnightly post.

You can catch up with the series on South Wairarapa District Council's Facebook page, or visit: swdc.govt.nz/spaces-and-places/placename-pronunciation



Community forums

Have a burning issue? All three community boards – Featherston, Greytown and Martinborough – and the Māori Standing Committee are holding regular Community Forums to widen communication with the community and guide the development of their community plans.

Forums will be held at dates and locations to be confirmed – follow Council's social media and subscribe to our website for the latest updates.

Welcoming Communities

Do you have ideas or activities that could bring people together or celebrate culture in South Wairarapa?

Welcoming Communities, a nationally funded programme run in South Wairarapa, is creating its Welcoming Plan and we'd love to hear what you think should be included. The purpose of the Welcoming Plan is to support new people and people from different cultures be a part of, and thrive in, our local communities.

A summary report captures the research and feedback we've received so far, which will help inform the Plan. This can be found on the Welcoming Communities page on our website.

You can share your ideas, thoughts or lived experience with Michaela at welcomingcommunities@swdc.govt.nz or text/call 027 444 3258.



Featherston Masterplan – Consultation on its way soon

After a successful workshop with elected members in August, we're putting the final touches on the draft Featherston Masterplan before going out for consultation later this year.

Work on the Featherston Masterplan began in January 2022 and has continued without pause. The Masterplan anticipates solid population growth in Featherston within the next three decades, and has considered integrated planning for land use patterns, future housing, infrastructure, transport, and reserve areas. Two priorities include an enhanced main street and connected town centre heart, and a pedestrian link to the train station.

Final revisions are currently being made to the draft Masterplan following elected members' feedback. This will accompany a draft implementation to be presented back to Council in November to approve for consultation. All things going well, public consultation will launch before the end of the year.

Keep an eye on the 'Featherston Masterplan' project page on our website for more updates, where you can also sign up to be notified as soon as consultation goes live.



Rebates 2023/24

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$750.00 for low income earners. Ratepayers must have been living in the home they own on 1 July 2023.

1. Your rebate will be calculated based on your gross income from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, your rates, and the number of dependants you have. The income eligibility for a rebate is \$30,000 - \$42,000.
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 2022/23. 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 can be obtained by calling 06 306 9611.

Get your rates invoice by email

If you wish to receive your rates notice by email contact rates@swdc.govt.nz

We encourage you to take up this option to allow Council to use the postage savings on projects that benefit the district.

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



Payment by direct debit

Council encourages ratepayers to pay rates via direct debit as this ensures the correct amount is paid and you avoid paying penalties for late payment.

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 very 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 the Featherston and Greytown libraries, as well as the Council office in Martinborough and on our website 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 the 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)

Rates 2023/24 Instalment Two

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Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period **1 October 2023 - 31 December 2023.**

The last day for payment is **20 November 2023.** 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.