



Go paperless – get your rates invoice, newsletter and dog registration all by email

From 1 July 2026, postage costs are rising. We spent \$25,168 on postage for rates invoices and dog registrations in the past 12 months and we want to use funds where it counts most.

Would you prefer to go paper-free? Give us a call on 06 306 9611 or send a quick email to rates@swdc.govt.nz

We will take care of the rest.

Keep tails wagging and registrations paid



Even the mildest mannered canine walking companions need to be registered, so please remember to pay your annual fee by Friday 31 July to avoid a late payment penalty.

As soon as your payment is processed, your dog tag/s will be on the way within 10 working days. Thank you for keeping your furry friends safe, happy and officially registered.

How to pay your dog registration:

- The Council office at 19 Kitchener Street Martinborough
- Featherston Library
- Greytown Library
- By post, using the form sent to you in early June
- Online at swdc.govt.nz/services/dogs

We send dog registration invoices by post and email in June each year and we know it can be easy to overlook paperwork.

If you haven't received your invoice, please email us:
enquiries@swdc.govt.nz

Simplifying Local Government

The Government announced a three-month process known as Head Start on 5 May this year. This is voluntary for councils that are ready to develop and put forward reorganisation proposals, with the aim of establishing unitary councils across a region. Councils have been asked to consider how a combined structure would work in their regions and improve efficiency, reduce duplication and deliver better value for communities. This is part of wider reform that includes changes to resource management, water services and response to climate adaptation, which are all expected to significantly change how councils operate in the future.

Under the Head Start approach:

- two or more councils can work together to develop and submit a proposed structure that reflects their communities;
- proposals must be submitted by Sunday 9 August 2026;
- proposals must then be approved by central government criteria before they can proceed.

These criteria include whether proposals are practical and achievable, whether they simplify systems and reduce duplication, whether they support improved services and infrastructure, and whether they provide effective representation for communities.

What is a Unitary Authority?

A unitary authority is a single council that does the work of local and regional councils. This means one organisation looks after

everything from local services like roading, rubbish collection, planning, regulation and community facilities, through to regional responsibilities like environmental management, public transport, and flood protection.

What this could mean for South Wairarapa

In Wairarapa, there are currently three district councils, and the region is also part of Greater Wellington Regional Council. South Wairarapa District Council is talking to the other Wairarapa councils along with those across the Wellington region to explore our options.

These include:

- A Wairarapa-based unitary council, or
- A wider Wellington model, with local arrangements to manage Wairarapa-specific issues.

These are complex issues and no decisions have been made at this stage. Councils using the Head Start pathway will continue to operate under current arrangements in the short term. At a later date, central government will determine new council structures and existing councils may be merged into unitary authorities.

Find out more about the amalgamation process, along with updates at: swdc.govt.nz

Safeguarding Cape Palliser Road - a fragile national asset

Cape Palliser Road is critical for tourism in South Wairarapa, supports access to nationally important cultural sites, and provides the corridor to local communities with key farming and fishing needs. It's a nationally significant route, but it is also extremely vulnerable and will lose its New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) designation as a Special Purpose Road in June 2027. This means its funding Financial Assistance Rate



(FAR) will reduce to 51% from its current 100%, shifting a substantial cost burden onto local ratepayers.

To support the long-term sustainability of this fragile, important and significant road, the Council has submitted a proposal to NZTA for a hybrid funding model with increased NZTA support for the most critical sections of the road.

Mayor Fran Wilde says local residents and iwi, along with recreational and commercial road users, have all been active in gathering information for the business case proposal.

The proposal covers core issues of resilience and prolonged closures, the road's cultural and economic significance, and the mismatch between national benefits and limited local rates to sustain the road in the long term.

As well as targeted investment to cover vulnerable portions of the road, the proposal requests support for an EcoReef extension, landslip mitigation and emergency response.

Read more at: swdc.govt.nz/news

Water services update

If you have any water-related issues, please note that water services will be managed for the council by Citycare Water instead of Wellington Water from 1 July.

This means all water related problems can be reported to the council's customer services team, phone 06 306 9611.

You can also log issues quickly and easily using the free Antenno app, which is easy to download and use.



The Antenno app is free to download on Google Play or the App Store.

Closer connections with country and coast

An impressive pool of local representatives from coastal and rural areas has shaped the Council's new Rural and Coastal Advisory Group.

Mayor Fran Wilde said the Council is delighted to welcome this group of committed and knowledgeable community members, which is made up of Chair Jenny Boyne from Tora, along with members Aaron Woodcock, Bec Nicholson, Belinda Milnes, Brian Jephson, Chris Sparks, Geoff Vause, Kim Hayes and Lee Flutey. They will be joined by Councillors Collier Isaacs and Aidan Ellims.

An Expressions of Interest process saw 19 applications received, which were overseen by a selection panel appointed at the Council's March meetings. Appointments to the new group were confirmed in April and the first meeting was held in early May.

The Rural and Coastal Advisory Group was identified during the Council's 2024 Representation Review, which highlighted the need for closer connections with rural and coastal communities.

Funding boost brightens Matariki's future

South Wairarapa's Māori Partnership Committee is supporting Matariki this year with funding to highlight its significance to the community.

Aotearoa New Zealand marks the fifth consecutive year of Matariki as a public holiday this year and the Māori Partnership Committee is proud to support Matariki's profile within South Wairarapa's community.

"Matariki celebrations could develop into a multi-day place-based festival led by Rangitāne and Kahungunu who shape the kaupapa with place-based kōrero, connected to hapū and iwi pūrākau," says Gillies Baker, of Papawai Marae and Chair of the Māori Partnership Committee.

Find out more: swdc.govt.nz/news/maori-partnership-committee-gives-matariki



Strengthening Featherston's future

An early morning gathering on the banks of Tauwharenikau River marked the completion of the Tauwharenikau pipeline project in May this year.

Mayor Fran Wilde was joined by councillors, Featherston Community Board members and the Fulton Hogan project team to give thanks for the successful completion of the new pipeline, four metres beneath the riverbed.

The work included trenching and laying a new water pipe alongside the existing one while diverting the river during construction. Work began on 1 December 2025 and was finished in late April.

The pipeline is part of the council's investment in water infrastructure, which has been done in-house since 1 July 2025. The completion of this project is part of a range of water infrastructure investment for communities in South Wairarapa and brings long-term resilience to Featherston's drinking water supply.



Find out more on the Council website:
swdc.govt.nz/notices-and-updates/safe-and-secured-featherstons-reliable-drinking-water



Funding breathes life to projects

From foodbanks to microchipping animals, rural young people's sports travel and social connection services, funds have been distributed far and wide by the council this year. Funds are available and distributed year round by the Council from money it receives and has available. External funding comes from Creative NZ and the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund.

The Council also has funding from Community Boards in Featherston, Greytown and Martinborough; the Maori Partnership Committee and, earlier this year, the Economic Development Fund - a one-off pool of resources distributed mainly to key anchor events. The NZ Festival of Christmas in Greytown, Pour and Explore in Martinborough and the Featherston Booktown Karukatea Festival all boost the district's economy.

The Council's funding advisor is available to help members of the community bring projects to life, give advice on how to apply for funds and how to find them - both locally and from sources that are further afield.

Find out how to apply for funds online: swdc.govt.nz/community/grants

Observatory coming back into orbit

South Wairarapa's first observatory now has a new protective structure in place to preserve its historically important remains, south of Featherston.

The council worked with iwi, community groups and descendants of Stephen Carkeek, who constructed the observatory in 1867, using local tōtara. His work gained international recognition, particularly ahead of the 1874 transit of Venus. Although the site has been damaged over more than a century of strong winds, the original framework has architectural merit as a rare example of 'Romsey-style' construction globally. It is also valued as New Zealand's only surviving 19th-century stand-alone astronomical observatory.

Stephen Carkeek (1815-1878) was a Welsh-born astronomer who arrived in New Zealand in 1841 and built the observatory when he retired.

Council Community Operations Manager Melissa Stockley says the council will be working with local festivals,

Destination Wairarapa and other tourism groups to determine a path forward for making this incredible piece of history accessible to view.

South Wairarapa is part of the Wairarapa International Dark Sky Reserve.



Rebates 2026-27

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$830.00 for low income earners. Ratepayers must have been living in the home they own on 1 July 2026.

1. Your rebate will be calculated based on your gross income from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, your rates, and the number of dependants you have. The income eligibility for a non SuperGold cardholder \$33,210 or SuperGold cardholder \$46,400. 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 2025-26. 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 2026-27 Instalment One of Four

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Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period of 1 July 2026 to 30 September 2026.

The last day for payment is 20 August 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)