



*Above: One of two new emergency resource containers is lifted into place on the South Wairarapa Coast this year.*

## Rural communities given resources and reassurance

Rugged, remote and rural, the South Wairarapa coast is now home to two new containers stocked with resources for the local communities in case an emergency event takes place, such as a cyclone, earthquake, severe storm or tsunami.

The containers were gifted to the Ngawi and Lake Ferry communities in June this year.

“Providing our remote communities with the emergency containers brings reassurance as well as important equipment and resources for emergency situations to people who could be isolated in extreme weather events or natural disasters,” says South Wairarapa District Councillor Aidan Ellims.

The containers are intended to be starter kits, which are stocked with items such as medical supplies and water containers, among other resources. Contents are scaled to the needs of the specific communities in which they are situated and the hope is that communities will add to them, over time.

“The better a community is prepared and resourced for an emergency, the better it will manage and the quicker it will recover,” says Wairarapa Recovery Office (WRO) Programme Manager, Simon Taylor.

Cape Palliser Residents and Ratepayers Association Chairperson Donna Fenwick says she and the community are extremely appreciative for the use of land to house one of the containers, as well as the resources supplied by WRO.

The two new containers are among seven in total that have been situated across the Wairarapa region by WRO using funding from central government. Ongoing emergency preparedness, resilience support and training will be provided by the Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office (WREMO) in conjunction with South Wairarapa District Council. The WRO was established after cyclones Gabrielle and Hale to coordinate recovery efforts across the three Wairarapa district councils.

## Council office temporary relocation

The council reception will be temporarily relocated to Martinborough Library between July and October while the council’s Martinborough office undergoes urgent works to address longstanding security and health and safety issues that have affected the viability of the site.

Council reception hours remain the same as before from Monday

to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm. Martinborough Library hours remain the same from Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm, and Saturdays from 9.30am to 12 noon.

Elections officers will be available at Martinborough Library from Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm. The officers will field questions and receive candidate nominations between 4 July and 1 August.

## Featherston celebrates Joy Cowley Park with refurbishment



Above: A render image showing one aspect of the refurbishment to Joy Cowley Park.

One of New Zealand's most prolific writers and famous authors has a park named after her in the South Wairarapa town in Featherston.

The author is Joy Cowley and the playground named after her is currently undergoing a refurbishment to futureproof the space for tamariki to enjoy for years to come. More modern structures will create a safer environment as well as address health and safety issues in the park. These include relocating the flying fox, pouring a soft surface on the ground and improving accessibility within the park.

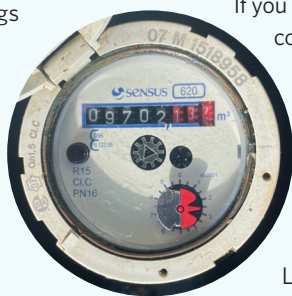
"This work will cover areas of the playground closest to Tait Crescent. The remainder of the playground will be worked on over the coming years," says James O'Connor, Group Manager Infrastructure and Community Operations for South Wairarapa District Council.

Joy Cowley lived in Featherston for 20 years and relocated to Dunedin in 2023, the same year that the park was named after her. She has been named a national taonga, remains a prolific children's author and her books have been translated into over two dozen languages with over 40 million copies sold worldwide.

## Water meter readings

Every June we take annual water meter readings in Featherston, Greytown, Martinborough and Pirinoa. Each household connected to the water supply has an annual allocation of 250m<sup>3</sup> and there are more than 4500 connections across the district to monitor.

Those who used excess water for the recent year's reading will soon receive an invoice. Excess water is charged at \$2.50 per cubic metre per property.



If you have any questions about water allocations or are concerned about an excess charge if you receive an invoice, please let us know. Excess charges can indicate a leak on your property, and there are waiver options available for these situations. If there is an excess charge that doesn't tally with the amount of water you are likely to have used, please get in touch with us.

Learn more about water meter readings at [swdc.govt.nz/water-meters](https://swdc.govt.nz/water-meters)

## Interested in standing for Council or Community Board?

Local government empowers communities to make democratic decisions about how their towns, cities, and regions function and grow. By serving as an elected member of a Council or Community Board, you'll play a vital role in shaping the future—making a positive difference for people and communities. This year, our community will be able to vote for one Mayor, nine Councillors, one Māori Ward Councillor and 12 Community Board Members across the Featherston, Greytown and Martinborough wards.

If you've considered standing for South Wairarapa in this year's election but don't know where to start, there are tailored resources available on our website to candidates about what goes on in the day-to-day life of an elected member, along with the rules, ethics and legal essentials that all members need to know.

The nominations process closes at midday on Friday 1 August.

Learn more about the Local Body Elections 2025 online at [swdc.govt.nz/local-body-elections-2025](https://swdc.govt.nz/local-body-elections-2025)





## Resilience for older residents

Older members of the South Wairarapa community were empowered for potential emergencies this year with gifts of new emergency Grab & Go Bags.

The Grab & Go Bags were a collective initiative of South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton district councils and organisations that work with older people. They are filled with first aid kits, hand sanitiser, masks, torches and radios, which can collectively be expensive to purchase but are essential in emergency events.

“We want to empower and prepare older members of our community from South Wairarapa through to Masterton with Grab & Go bags for emergency situations,” says Lisa Matthews, Wairarapa Regional Positive Ageing Strategy Coordinator for the three councils.

There were 50 older people who received bags. They were 65+ years of age and have limited means or family support to create emergency preparedness provisions.

Contents were generously donated by the Wairarapa Area Committee for Hato Hone St Johns (first aid kits); WREMO (second hand Grab and Go bags); South Wairarapa Rotary (funding torches); Carterton Neighbourhood Support

(Carterton District Council) for donating notebooks and pens and Life Pharmacy and Unichem Southend in Masterton (50 hand sanitisers). The first 50 bags are a pilot project. It is hoped that more will be possible.



Above: The Grab & Go Bags for older residents.

## Local Water Done Well

Following recent community consultation, the Council voted on 8 May 2025 to continue working with Carterton, Masterton and Tararua District Councils to establish a regional water services entity to deliver water, wastewater and stormwater services. The other Councils took their decisions following us and have all agreed to keep working together, with support for the regional model.

The next step in the process is to collectively prepare a Water Services Delivery Plan and submit it to the Department of Internal Affairs by 3 September. This plan will set out information about the governance, operations

and financial position of the new organisation and how the four Councils will work together to formally establish it and transfer all water services to the new entity. The Department of Internal Affairs needs to approve the plan before work can officially begin to establish the organisation, we expect to have this approval by the end of 2025.

Subject to approval being received, we hope to legally establish the organisation by July 2026 and have it up and running to deliver services to the community by July 2027. Until the new entity is up and running, SWDC will continue to be responsible for water services.

## Long-Term Plan adoption

South Wairarapa's 2025-34 Long-Term Plan was adopted on 25 June. This important document outlines our services, how we maintain our district's infrastructure, our budgets and projects to make our district an even better place to live.

Part of this includes setting rates for the coming 2025/26 year, with a total rates increase of \$1.3m, or 4.3%.

Consultation for the Long-Term Plan took place between 7 March and 6 April 2025. The consultation document set out the proposed direction and priorities for Council over the next nine years, covering areas like infrastructure investment, new fees and charges, and updated policies.

Consultation allows the community to understand the big decisions we need to make, how we approach them, and what the financial impacts could be.

The impact the overall rates increase has on your own rates will depend on a number of factors, including your property's Capital Value, whether you're connected to the water network, or pay the Refuse & Recycling charge. A breakdown of your rates can be found on your rates notice.

The Long-Term Plan will be published and available to view on our website before the end of July by visiting [swdc.govt.nz/governance/plans](https://swdc.govt.nz/governance/plans)

# 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](http://www.swdc.govt.nz/services/forms) and by email: [rates@swdc.govt.nz](mailto: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](mailto: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 One

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Enclosed with this newsletter is the rates invoice covering the period 1 July 2025 - 30 September 2025.

The last day for payment is 20 August 2025. 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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 <small>(Should we need to contact you to clarify the details)</small>