

FAQ's

Frequently asked questions

Fees and Charges 2026/2027

Why are we reviewing fees and charges for 2026/27?

We review fees and charges each year to ensure they fairly reflect the cost of delivering services, remain affordable for users, and keep up with inflation and rising operating costs.

What are fees and charges?

Fees and charges are paid by people who use specific Council services or facilities. They help cover the cost of running and maintaining those services.

For example:

- People using the Whakatāne Aquatics Centre pay an entry fee
- A developer pays a fee for a building consent
- A noise complaint attendance fee is charged when someone's actions create the need for council services

Fees and charges are paid by both commercial and non-commercial users. They help reduce the amount that needs to be funded through rates and can also help manage demand by placing a price on using a service or facility.

What are rates?

Rates are paid by property owners and are used to fund services that benefit the wider community, or where it's not practical to charge individual users.

General rates have two parts:

- One part is based on a property's capital value (land plus buildings).
- The other part is a fixed amount that every rating unit pays (called the Uniform Annual General Charge, or UAGC).

How do we decide what should be funded by rates vs fees and charges?

Fees and charges are usually used when it's clear who is using a service and when the benefit is mostly to the individual user (rather than the whole community).

Rates are used when a service provides a broader public benefit, or when it wouldn't be practical or fair to charge individual users.

These decisions are guided by our Revenue and Financing Policy, which sets out how different activities should be funded.



How do we set fees and charges?

We regularly compare fees and charges against inflation, market rates, and the actual cost of providing services. This helps ensure we can:

- Maintain community facilities and services
- Process applications
- Meet our legal obligations

The last detailed review took place in 2023/24, and costs have changed since then.

All fees and charges must align with our Revenue and Financing Policy, which focuses on managing finances responsibly and in the best interests of both current and future generations.

Some fees, such as liquor licence fees, are set by central government, so we have no ability to change them.

What are the proposed changes?

Most fees and charges are proposed to increase in line with inflation.

Through the Long Term Plan 2024-34, we committed to applying annual inflation adjustments to fees and charges. We use inflation rates from BERL (Business and Economic Research Ltd), which publishes a Local Government Cost Index used by councils across New Zealand. This year, the rates range between 2.0% and 3.1%.

We have also identified:

- Some fees that need adjustment beyond inflation
- Some fees that can be reduced
- Changes to how certain services are charged (for example, moving from session-based pricing to hourly rates)
- Some new fees where appropriate

Does proposed rates-capping affect fees and charges for 2026/27?

No. Proposed rates-capping will not affect fees and charges for 2026/27.

The Government has proposed a cap that would limit annual rates increases to a 2-4% per-capita range. A transition period is proposed to begin on 1 January 2027, with full implementation by 2029.

The cap would apply to general and targeted rates but would not apply to non-rates revenue such as fees and charges.

In the future, rates-capping may increase the importance of fees and charges, as limits on rates could mean more service costs need to be recovered directly from users.

Why do my rates subsidise services and facilities that I don't use?

Rates help subsidise services that provide a wider public benefit, in line with our Revenue and Financing Policy.

For example, as a coastal district, it benefits the whole community to have accessible swimming pools so people, especially tamariki, can build water skills and confidence. Making pools completely free would significantly increase costs and rates, so a mix of user fees and rates is used instead.

This approach helps keep services accessible while managing overall costs for the community.

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