

Proposed Fees and Charges

Ports and Wharves

Frequently asked questions



What fees are changing?

Whakatāne Boat Wash

The current Whakatāne Boat Wash charge has been adjusted to align with inflation. As the system charges in whole-dollar increments, the one-minute fee has been rounded from \$2.50 to \$3.

Unauthorised access

A new unauthorised access fee of \$220 is proposed. The fee may be imposed on vessels that berth without authorisation, as a deterrent and to encourage authorised use. This approach follows advice received during the review of the Ports and Wharves Bylaw.

Whakatāne, Ōhiwa and Thornton Boat Ramps

New boat ramp fees are proposed. For residents, this includes a one-off \$20 administration fee (not charged annually) for access to all boat ramps. For non-residents, the proposed fees are \$20 per day for Whakatāne Boat Ramp and \$10 per day for Ōhiwa and Thornton Boat Ramps.

Why are we introducing boat ramp fees?

Boat ramp fees for Whakatāne, Ōhiwa and Thornton Boat Ramps are being proposed following a Council-wide review of the Fees and Charges Schedule, undertaken as part of the Annual Plan process.

The fees will help support the ongoing costs associated with maintaining boat ramp infrastructure, and will align Whakatāne District with common practices used by other New Zealand councils.

If residents already pay rates, why is there still a fee?

Whakatāne residents already contribute to boat ramp facilities through rates. The proposed one-off \$20 administrative fee is intended to cover the cost of the permit system, ensuring residents can continue to access all boat ramps without paying per use charges.

Introducing a user-pays approach helps share the cost of maintaining boat ramps fairly, rather than relying solely on rates.



What exactly does the administration fee cover?

The one-off \$20 administration fee covers the basic cost of setting up the resident permit system, including processing, customer support, record-keeping, and compliance checks. Once a user is registered, administration is minimal and an annual charge is not necessary.

How does the system work?

The system uses number plate recognition to identify vehicles using the boat ramp.

Whakatāne residents can apply for a permanent pass and register up to two vehicles through an online self-service portal. Once registered, those vehicles can use the ramp without being charged. Registered vehicles can be updated at any time, free of charge.

Non-pass holders can purchase a day pass by scanning the QR code at the ramp, entering their vehicle registration, and completing payment online.

What do other Councils charge?

We sit on the lower end of the scale for resident charges. Comparable councils charge between \$5-\$34 per day and \$50-\$120 annually for similar boat ramp access (including Thames-Coromandel, Queenstown Lakes and Taupō)

Why aren't all boat ramp fees the same?

To help manage congestion. At peak times vehicle and boat traffic at Whakatāne Boat Ramp can cause significant delays. The proposed pricing structure is designed to encourage users to consider Thornton and Ōhiwa boat ramps where possible, helping spread demand.

Is it fair to charge non-locals?

In New Zealand, it is common practice for residents to pay less while visitors contribute more on a user-pays basis.

Non-residents do not contribute to harbour and boat ramp upkeep through rates, so the proposed charges ensure they contribute to the costs of using these facilities.

Are new staff needed to manage this new system?

No. The payment system will be managed primarily by the service provider, with only minimal input from Council staff.

What will the actual benefit be to the rate payer?

This additional revenue helps reduce pressure on rates by contributing more directly to the ongoing costs of maintaining and operating port and boat ramp infrastructure.

Will there be negative impacts on local businesses?

Whakatāne District covers a large geographic area and as a result, visiting boaties already travel significant distances to reach Whakatāne.

We sit on the lower end of the scale for resident charges.

Would Council consider a trial for the boat ramp user fee system?

Yes.

Find out more

