

Your rates working for you

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation and has significantly impacted our Country and communities. It is council's responsibility to maintain essential services in order to maintain the health and wellbeing of our communities through this uncertain time.

Rates fund just over 70% of Council's annual income. In turn, this is then invested back into the community to provide you services and support. We are continuing to provide essential services to our community such as water, waste water, rubbish collection, our cemeteries and emergency management. Additionally, we are continuing where possible to deliver business continuity in our other activities, for example maintaining our world of online library resources and e-membership offerings.

With all that being said, we understand that your rates invoice might not be welcome this quarter.

As a Council we can work with you to consider payment options on a case by case basis. If you are experiencing hardship please contact Council by emailing rates@horowhenua.govt.nz, or calling **06 366 0999** as soon as possible, so we can help you.

You may also be eligible for a rates rebate.

What is a Rates Rebate and how do I apply for one?

A rates rebate is a reimbursement of your rates. To be eligible, you must be:

- Named as a ratepayer for that property, and;
- Living at that property on 1 July 2019.

If you are receiving NZ Superannuation, WINZ benefits or your combined income is within a certain threshold you may be entitled to a rebate of up to \$640.

Find out how to apply by searching rates rebates on Council's website, or call us on **06 366 0999**.

I'm facing hardship but am not eligible for a Rates Rebate, what other support is available?

The Accommodation Scheme assists those with accommodation costs, including homeowners seeking help with their rates. Homeowners must occupy the house that they are paying accommodation costs for as their own home and payments will depend on a person's financial position, accommodation costs, family circumstances and where they live.

You can apply for the Accommodation Scheme through Work and Income's website or by phone on **0800 559 003**.

How do I find out which of Council's services and facilities have been impacted by COVID-19?

Please visit www.horowhenua.govt.nz/covid-19 to see which services are still being delivered remotely. Alternatively, you can call us on **06 366 0999**.

Facility services available online



Did you know that while our facilities are closed, you can still access many of their great services online?

Libraries Horowhenua have a world of e-books, e-audio books and fascinating databases for you to discover with Your Library online. If you're not a Libraries Horowhenua cardholder, you can sign up for an e-membership online. To access and find out more visit tetakere.org.nz.

If you did manage to get books out before the facilities were closed don't worry, all overdue charges will be waived during this time.

Our facilities may be closed, but our team are working hard, from home to help you find educational and creative outlets to get you through this time. Of course, our team is also continuing to buy material, catalogue and prepare books for loan, prepare for the massive return of books, and make sure you have an awesome supply of new material for loan when we reopen.

A letter to Horowhenua from Mayor Bernie Wanden

We're in this together.

As a council we are conscious of the impact the current environment has had on many families, including their ability to pay rates. I am aware that the arrival of this rates invoice will be unwelcome for many in our community. The Government have provided avenues for assistance through the Rates Rebates and Accommodation Supplement schemes, and I implore you to take advantage of these if you require and are eligible.

Rates fund services which are essential and ensure council can still deliver as many activities as possible, despite the circumstance. While Officers and Elected Members may not be in the office at this time, I can assure you work is continuing in the background remotely. Not only are we providing essential services such as water, rubbish collection and emergency management, but we are looking to the future. We are planning and investigating ways in which we can best support our community once we are able to return to some form of normality.

This time of uncertainty can be very stressful and worrying, however there are a number of support services available to hopefully ease the burden. If you need someone to talk to or share how you may be feeling free call or text 1737 or visit 1737.org.nz.

A regional local welfare helpline has also been established. If you require household goods, services or essential items please call the Freephone number 0800 725 678. This is being answered by a call centre in Palmerston North who then send the requests to our welfare team at council.

While the Ministry of Social Development service centres are closed, case managers are still available to help people in need. There is information on the wide range of support available on their website or by calling 0800 559 009.

Many within the primary industries found this summer tough, and are now having to respond to a new difficult situation. Rural Support is available for farming families for advice, information and services. Please reach out to them if you need on 0800 787 254.

I want to thank our essential service workers, across the district, in a number of different roles. Thank you for your dedication and support for our community over this time.

We, as a community, can in return support the work that they are doing by following the directions issued by the government. Not only does this save lives, but it ensures those who need to be at work are not put at risk. But while we may be physically separated, we do not have to be socially separated. Reach out to your friends, family and neighbours whether that be by phone, over the fence or using the internet. Keeping in contact with those you will love will help get us through.

Thank you for your continued kindness and understanding.



Mayor Bernie



Horowhenua
2040 Vision