

# We listened

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In line with our obligations under the Local Government Act, Christchurch City Council adopted a Draft Annual Plan and a consultation document on 28 February 2023. The consultation document formed the basis for the formal consultation process. It outlined key issues covered in the Annual Plan, the Council's proposed approach to these matters and preferred options for addressing them.

We received 811 submissions on our Draft Annual Plan from individuals and groups across the whole of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula, with 115 people and groups presenting their submissions in person or virtually over five days of hearings.

Creating an Annual Plan is a tall order at the best of times, but particularly in the current economic environment New Zealand – and the world – finds itself in in 2023. We're all very familiar with the forces that are playing out – rising interest rates, inflation, supply issues, a tight labour market and geopolitical instability.

Staff, alongside our new elected Council, pulled out all the stops to keep this year's rates increase well below the general 7% inflation rate we're seeing across New Zealand. Importantly, we've done this without compromising the services and facilities enjoyed by all our residents, or investment in our city's future.

Thank you to all who contributed, particularly our community boards, who played a major role in this process.

## What we heard

The financial pressures that households are facing were front of mind for many submitters this year. Submitters acknowledged the significant amount of work that had gone in to keeping the proposed rates increase low, and appreciated that we'd considered the financial pressure on households as we developed the Draft Annual Plan.

On the other hand, a large number of submitters expressed apprehension that such a conservative rates increase could compromise the long-term progress of the city. These submitters tended to be concerned about the growing impacts of our changing climate and urged us to allocate greater resources towards initiatives aimed at reducing emissions and minimizing the effects of climate change.

Concern about climate change and reducing our emissions ran through many submissions this year, with submitters urging us to take climate change seriously and do more to support emissions reduction and ensure we meet our climate goals. This was particularly prominent in the points people made on transport.

Transport remained a significant focus for submitters, with hundreds of submitters addressing a range of transport issues. Over recent years, we've seen a shift in the nature of the submissions on transport issues – this year we've seen the primary issues covered by submitters shift away from the maintenance and quality of our transport infrastructure. Instead, there's been a strong emphasis on prioritising investment in public transport infrastructure, footpaths, streetscapes, and cycleways, and the future of our transport network.

Many submitters highlighted the importance of investing in active and public transport, with many indicating they would support more investment in footpaths, cycleways and public transport infrastructure. While some were happy with our proposed spend in these areas, many indicated that they would like to see us spending more. These submitters regularly noted that transport is a significant source of emissions in Christchurch, and urged us to invest more in activities, programmes and projects that will help reduce emissions.

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Safety was a focus of many submissions addressing transport issues, with calls for us to do more to make it safer to travel in Christchurch. Safety was a theme across all transport categories, particularly in relation to investing in cycling infrastructure. Submitters highlighted the importance of providing safe cycling infrastructure across the city and called for us to get on and deliver the promised major cycleways network.

Residents in the east continue to express their frustration with what they see as a lack of progress in their neighbourhoods. Many submitters advocated for work planned in these areas to be completed earlier than currently programmed. Other submitters from areas all across the city highlighted the ongoing impacts that regular surface flooding is having on their quality of life, urging us to do something to resolve these ongoing issues.

We were again reminded by several submitters of the value that our community facilities provide for residents and communities. Once more, our residents have told us that we should not undervalue the service or sense of community that our community facilities provide and foster. This was highlighted by submitters addressing the rebuild/repair of the South Library and additional canoe polo courts at Lake Roto Kohatu in particular.

Submitters highlighted the importance of the South Library for communities in the south of the city, with

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a clear message that the community expects a fit-for-purpose facility out of the repair/rebuild process. Submitters expressed a significant level of concern about a reduced budget or scope for the facilities. Submitters addressing the need for additional canoe polo courts at Lake Roto Kohatu highlighted the importance of providing facilities that offer young people in our city a range of opportunities to be active and participate in the sports and activities that they enjoy.

Once again, the desire to take a partnership approach on projects was a key theme among many submissions. We have a range of communities, community groups and organisations who care deeply and want to work with us on achieving good outcomes. Submitters also suggested we should explore more partnership opportunities, particularly in the context of disposing of Council-owned land. Many submitters suggested alternative uses for the land which would involve us partnering with communities, groups or organisations to achieve outcomes that would have wider benefit for our communities and residents.

Numerous submitters talked of a need to reduce wasteful spending and focus on core services or the basics – however, there was little consensus on what is a core service or what the basics look like. The reality is, these are likely to differ from resident to resident – one person’s ‘nice-to-have’ is another person’s core service.

There were several topics and issues where the preferences or opinions of submitters were divided. The proposed increase to the daily residential water allowance and the Wheels to Wings cycleway were just two of many examples. In some instances, submitters talked about finding the right balance on an issue, which serves as a good reminder of the need to bring together and balance the varying views, opinions and preferences of our residents and communities when making decisions.



You can read the full thematic analysis of the submissions and a summary of Council officers’ responses at [ccc.govt.nz/annualplan](https://ccc.govt.nz/annualplan)

## How your feedback helped shape the Annual Plan

Overall, submissions show that the community is generally in support of continuing our current approach – doing the basics and doing them well by keeping our water supply clean and safe, maintaining our roads, footpaths, facilities and assets, and adapting to climate change.

To help achieve that, the Annual Plan 2023/24 includes \$606.6 million for the day-to-day costs of running the city, \$190.7 million for debt servicing and repayment, and \$746.4 million for our capital programme, based on what can realistically be delivered in light of the current economic challenges.

A summary of the key elements of the Annual Plan 2023/24 that were included as a result of submitters' feedback can be seen below. We value your input and are continuously looking for ways we can make it easier for you to engage with the Council. If you have any specific feedback on the engagement process, please let us know at [engagement@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:engagement@ccc.govt.nz)

Thank you again for your feedback, insight and direction.

## The big changes in this year's Annual Plan

Below is a summary of the big changes made as part of this year's Annual Plan, informed by what the Council heard as feedback in submissions, and from people and groups present.

- Increasing the Excess Water Supply Targeted Rate average daily allowance from 700 litres to 900 litres for residential properties.
- Setting the Uniform Annual General Charge at \$153.
- Changing the general rate differential on business properties to 2.22. The value of business properties did not increase at the same rate as residential properties in the last revaluation, and this change will maintain the contribution that business properties make to general rates.
- An extra \$36 million investment in the transport network, in part reflecting residents' views on the need for ongoing focus on roading and enabling travel choice.
- Allocating \$2 million to a roving footpath maintenance crew, to give effect to the Mayor and councillors' desire to enhance service in this area.
- Agreeing to start construction on the Wheels to Wings cycleway as soon as staff and local councillors have completed further work with the affected communities to address previously identified concerns as part of the detailed design process.
- Using additional one-off revenue receipts, plus \$0.5 million from the Capital Endowment Fund, to offset rates.
- Minor fee increases for some groups using the Council's community facilities.
- Penalties on unpaid rates and excess water invoices will increase from 7% to 10% in line with interest rates.

## Changes from draft to the final plan

Below is a summary of changes made from the Draft Annual Plan 2023/24 as a result of feedback.

- Increasing the amount of planned subvention receipts by \$10 million in each of 2023/24 and 2024/25 to reduce the rates requirements in those years.
- That only \$500,000 is taken from Capital Endowment Fund to fund grants that are normally funded by rates for 2023/24.
- An extra \$500,000 of capital spending for Takapūneke Reserve.
- Reinstating \$100,000 to the capital programme for the Ōtākaro-Avon cycleway.
- Providing \$200,000 to the capital programme for Stage 1 of the Southern Lights cycleway in 2023/2024 to enable design and engagement.
- Providing \$200,000 to the capital programme for Evans Pass Road and Reserve Terrace remedial works in 2023/2024 to enable design and engagement.
- Bringing forward a \$50,000 budget provision to implement active transport improvements to Ferry Road.
- Increasing the delivery budget for Surf Lifesaving NZ's paid summer holiday programme by \$79,000 to extend the service by seven days and to continue to pay the living wage.
- Setting the fee in the Schedule of Fees and Charges for the following meeting rooms at \$0.00 for all bookings: Tūranga Meeting Rooms 2.1, 2.2, 3.3 and 4.3.
- Granting \$60,000 from the Capital Endowment Fund to the New Brighton Project for the provision of a community guardian worker trial in the New Brighton Mall area in the summer of 2023/24.
- Reducing budgeted expenditure on the Provincial Chambers in 2023/24 from \$2 million to \$500,000, with the \$1.5 million reduction being retimed to 2024/25.
- Removing 2M Waipapa Avenue and 5E Palinurus Road from the list of Council properties identified for potential disposal.

## Rates

- An average rates increase for all ratepayers of 6.41% for 2023/24. This is higher than the 5.68% average rates increase we proposed when the Draft Annual Plan went out for consultation in March, but lower than the 14.6% the Council was faced with in late 2022, and the roughly 7% rate of inflation seen across New Zealand.
- An average residential rates increase for 2023/24 of 6.60%, which equates to an extra \$4.01 a week for the average household, or \$208.57 a year.
- An average business rates increase of 5.71%, which equates to an extra \$880.24 a year, or \$16.93 a week. This is lower than the proposed 5.83% increase.
- For an average remote rural property, a rates decrease of 0.48% has been approved for 2023/24, which equates to a reduction of \$13.64 a year, or \$0.48 a week. This reduction is lower than the proposed 0.69% decrease.