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## Annual Plan 2023/24

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The Chatham Islands Council adopted the 2023/24 Annual Plan on Thursday 29 June 2023.

The plan provides our activities and budget for the upcoming financial year including key projects, finance, and rating information.

The Council relies heavily on receiving an annual Crown appropriation which currently sits at just over \$4M. We do the best with what we have, but this budget does mean we often struggle to meet new legislative requirements and reforms and what would be considered “best practice” in New Zealand.

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Interestingly, in November 2021, McGredy Winder was engaged to review the Council's ability to meet its statutory obligations. It was pleasing to see that an increase to nearly \$8M/year was recommended. However, Central Government has yet to agree to this increase. This means environmental standards compliance work, among others, will be deferred to future years.

## Highlighting our key projects

### Roading infrastructure

Roading infrastructure works are undertaken regularly to enhance the efficiency, reliability, and safety of the Chatham Islands road network. The cost of maintaining the roading networks and establishing capital projects is high in proportion to the population and Waka Kotahi commits an 88% subsidy rate to the funding of the Islands' roading network.

The key project for 2023/24 is the design works for a barge loading facility at Owenga, and pre-design works for the Maipito Bridge replacement.

### Water and wastewater schemes

Waste management will continue to be a focus in the coming year. In the past year we have done much in this space thanks to project funding from the Ministry for the Environment including further storage and the establishment of a new weigh bridge to facilitate better reporting.

New signage at the transfer stations has also been organised, as well as other resources and education material for locals. Council is continuing to work with waste receivers in Timaru with the view to exporting recyclable waste off the Island. We are also working with Chatham Islands Shipping to find an affordable means of making this happen.

### Three Waters reforms - Affordable Water

Three Waters reforms, now known as Affordable Water, continues to demand a lot of staff resource. The proposed Affordable Water reforms will result in the Chatham Islands being a standalone entity supported by Crown funding using the existing Crown appropriation.

Reforms has enabled significant upgrades to occur to our water and wastewater facilities both at Waitangi and Kaingaroa through the stimulus funding from Three Waters and a Ministry of Health grant. However, the Waitangi supply is still vulnerable during dry times when we apply restrictions to make sure demand meets supply.

Better Off funding has also been awarded to the Council which is to be spent on projects in consultation with imi and iwi. You can find further details of this in the Annual Plan document.

### Working together

We continue to work closely with Hokotehi Moriori Trust, Ngati Mutunga O Wharekauri Iwi Trust and Chatham Islands Enterprise Trust (CIET).

As the four main entities on the Island, we meet monthly to discuss what each of us are doing and we come together to provide a collective view on Island issues. A wider stakeholder group also meet twice a year to update the various Government departments on what's happening on the Island.

### Financial forecasting

The current financial climate has had a magnified effect on the Chatham Islands with the cost of living reaching unsustainable levels. For low and fixed-income earners there is little relief, with relief offered by the Government not being fit for purpose on the Island. The biggest driver has been the cost of diesel which drives most of the Island, including the power grid which resulted in electricity being as high as \$1.37 per unit.

As part of the review of the Island's Investment Strategy, Council continues to work with the entities, including CIET's application for renewable energy sources on the Island. Council has adopted a 3% rate increase. Our usual approach to rating increases is to do this in line with inflation, although this is increased slightly to reflect the cost of transporting goods to the Island. Inflation is currently sitting at 6.7% (March 2023).

We know that with the current cost of living crisis, household budgets are being squeezed from every direction and a rates increase of this nature would make things even more difficult for you, which is why Council agreed to 3%.

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