

NEWSLETTER

Grey District Council - September 2024

Mayor's comment

Your rates invoice for this quarter is due in September due to an error in the initial setting of rates for 2024/205.

While the mistake didn't affect the overall general rate rise of 13.65%, the allocation of costs across the nine rating categories would have created unintended consequences. The error was identified through the process of calculating sample rates, and I'm grateful to the team that caught the mistake before it affected ratepayers.

To ensure we meet our statutory requirements of 14 days notice between setting the rates and lodging the invoices, the first rates demand was pushed out to September. All subsequent invoices will go out as usual.

While it's a significant rise at 13.65%, the reality is it's a necessary increase to ensure we are able to continue to provide services and infrastructure at the level required. We know there are a lot of people struggling at the moment with cost increases across the board, so please be aware that we provide a rates rebate for low income families, and we have a number of options readily available for paying rates, including weekly and fortnightly payments to spread the cost across the year. Please get in touch if you need to. We have a great team who can provide good advice and excellent support.

The average rate rise around the country this year has been 15% and this is unacceptable to all of us. You would have seen around the country in the media many stories of councils struggling.

The fact is that the rating model for Local Government has become unsustainable and something has

to change. We've been talking to Government about ideas such as a return on mineral royalties, GST returning to councils or DOC land being rateable but we are still not seeing traction or commitment to assistance. We will continue to lobby government as the system simply can't carry on the way it is.

Sewer separation

One of the biggest issues we're facing this year and over the next few years is that of sewer separation. For many years, sewer and stormwater in Greymouth, Cobden and Blaketown were collected by means of a single, combined system. This meant that raw sewerage was going into the Grey River. In 2009, Council provided a dedicated sewer collection system at the gate, and households were expected to undertake on-site separation to ensure this issue was rectified.

With Council's Resource Consent from the Regional Council coming up for renewal, it's essential we take action to address the problem immediately. There are around 2,000 properties that haven't undertaken the separation work and this is now unacceptable. We have been advised that we are not complying with the requirements which means we must ensure that no sewerage enters our stormwater system. This can only be achieved by every household separating on-site and connecting to the Council's sewer scheme.

Those households that we don't have evidence of having separated their systems will receive a letter



outlining the requirements. If you have done this work and we don't have it on our files, it's important you send us the details so we can update the details of your property.

Council is working on a number of options for assisting homeowners to do this work, including covering the cost of Building Consent fees. We are also aware, however, that there needs to be a level playing field and those who have already undertaken the work are not unfairly penalised.

Properties that haven't separated or have plans in place to do so by July 2025 will be connected by Council on behalf of the property owners on a cost-plus basis. For obvious reasons we would like to avoid this so I encourage you to get this work done urgently if you haven't already done so. We are aware that there are some properties that have had trouble with their connections and will be working through those case by case.


Tania Gibson
Mayor

MĀWHERA
GREY
DISTRICT COUNCIL





YOUR RATES

By now you should have received your first rates bill for the 2024/2025 rating year. This will show the adjustment for the average rate increase of 13.65% set down in the Annual Plan 2024-2025, which was updated at an Extraordinary Meeting of Council in August.

Your rates are made up of General Rates (to fund activities such as roading, refuse disposal sites, stormwater, parks, community services, district planning, flood protection and much more) and Targeted Rates (to pay for services such refuse/recycling collection, water and sewer, or to fund specific activities, ie economic development).

Your rateable land value, the area of the district you live in and what the property is used for helps determine how much rates you pay towards Council services and activities. Rating evaluations are completed every three years by Quotable Valuations (QV), with the last review completed in 2021.

Anyone who is having trouble paying their rates is very welcome to reach out to Council. We can discuss payment options to make things more manageable and other assistance that may be available. We want to help everyone to stay on top of their rates.

Paying rates

There are many easy ways to pay your rates, including:

- in person through cash, EFTPOS, Visa, or MasterCard.
- online with direct debit, telebanking, internet banking, automatic payment or by credit card over the internet.

Rates rebates

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides for a rebate on rates of up to \$790 to low-income homeowners.

Applications for the current rating year (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025) can be made from 1 August. Homeowners who received a rebate in the 2023-2024 year will automatically be sent a reminder letter to apply for a rebate. Forms will be available from Tainui Street offices.

Email rates invoices

You can sign up to receive your rates or debtor invoices via email or to pay your rates by direct debit. Please visit our website for details.

If you have any questions about your rates, you can visit our website, www.greycdc.govt.nz/rates or call 03 769 8605 to speak with our friendly rates staff.



CHANGES TO POST

The good folk at NZ Post have advised they will soon stop diverting mail from our physical address to our post box.

This means any mail addressed to us at 105 Tainui Street **won't be delivered.** It will be returned to sender.

If you are sending us mail, please make sure you address it to
PO Box 382, Greymouth 7805.



Footpath upgrades

Work is well underway on a new footpath around the perimeter of our housing units in Ngarimu and Frickeleton Streets as well as new parking areas for this complex. This is due for completion in the next couple of weeks and will complement our fantastic housing asset and ties in the once disconnected flats with the cenotaphs and footpaths on Tainui street.

We have also undertaken other renewals and improvements to add resilience to our footpath network across the region.

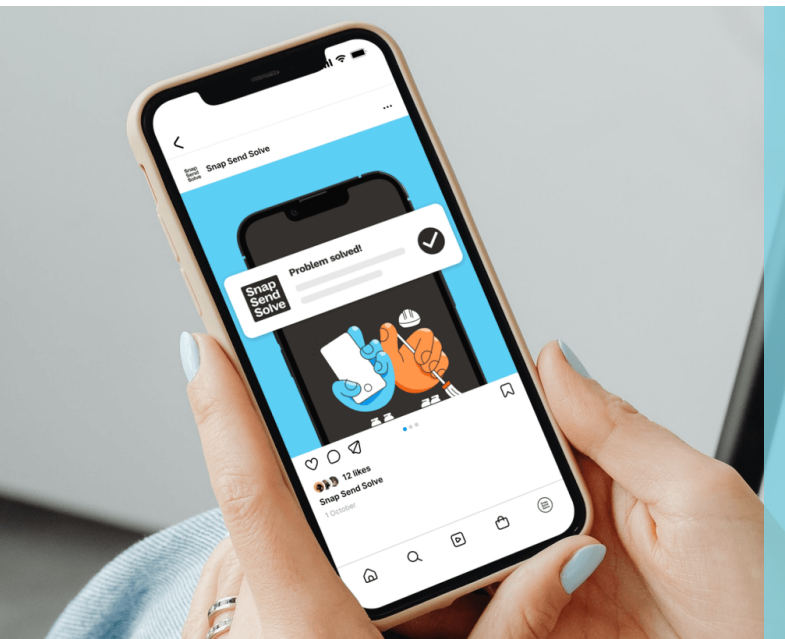


New payment date for rates

To align with all other Councils, Grey District Council rates are now due on the 20th of the month, not the end of the month as previous. To avoid penalties, rates must be paid by 4.30pm on the 20th of the month or the first business day after the 20th if it falls on a weekend.

While this month's rates are due a month later than normal due to an error setting the rates for this year, all subsequent invoices will be due in the usual month - November, February and May.

Please get in touch with our team if you're having trouble meeting these deadlines.



Give us your feedback

Council aims to be one exceptional team, providing outstanding customer service to our community.

Council uses HappyOrNot as an effective and easy way for our customers to tell us if we're on the right track or not. Please complete the surveys at our facilities and let us know if we are doing a great job or you have some helpful suggestions to make our services better.

Snap Send Solve not only lets us know if something in our community is broken or damaged, it also lets you provide feedback on our efficiency and communication. Please take a moment to complete the survey when prompted.

Council will continue to perform the annual Resident Satisfaction Survey to measure our performance.

Thanks for helping us lift our game.



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Lake Brunner Scenic Trail

The Lake Brunner Scenic Trail (LBST) is one of three successful projects within the Grey District that received a portion of the Three Waters Reform \$2.93M Better Off Funding Package announced in August 2022.

Close to 11km of the 15km trail has now been constructed, starting from the Moana Community Centre and continuing well into the middle of Bain Bay. In early March, the trail reached the Hohonu River, where a new 40m swing bridge will be constructed.

Building will now start on the last 3.6km section of the trail from the Bain Bay picnic area to Mitchells via the closed DOC Trail (Bain Bay to Mitchells).

Bridge construction continues with the recent build of the Harris Family bridge to replace the temporary culverts. This bridge was built remotely by the Trades Academy students at the Greymouth Polytechnic for the trail. The Year 2 Polytechnic students are from local high schools who attend the Polytechnic one day per week.

You are welcome to walk and ride this spectacular area, become familiar with the Trail progress, and share your pictures with family and friends. A special thank you

continues to go out to the growing number of sponsors who are supporting this project at varying levels.

One final big push is now needed to secure the funding required to complete the trail to Mitchells. The Trust has raised \$1.3m to date but will still need around \$350,000 to reach the final goal.



Early in June the LBST committee, together with John Rathburn on his launch, hosted Mayor Tania Gibson and Councillors for a tour of the trail.

MTFJ

MAYORS TASKFORCE FOR JOBS

The Grey District Council is excited to continue the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Community Employment programme for another 12 months.

The programme is a nationwide initiative which is funded by the Ministry of Social Development through Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ).

MTFJ prides itself on being a network of New Zealand Mayors working together to ensure all young people are going into sustainable employment in their local area.

Our team work with the young person to create a specific plan which supports their goals and aspirations for their future. Each young person's situation is unique, so our team uses a tailored approach to suit each situation.

Since the programme started in September 2020, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs – Grey District has achieved great success in our local community:

- 277 placements into employment
- 133 apprentices in employment
- 136 employers involved

If you or someone you know wants to know more about MTFJ, please reach out to MTFJ coordinator Serena Moles to have a chat about whether you may be eligible for funding.

027 700 7376

serena.moles@greydc.govt.nz



Real Futures

Keep an eye out on social media for our Real Futures series. We're catching up with young Coasters who have stayed, or gone away to train and come back to the best Coast.

We're dispelling the myth that there are no opportunities for young people in Grey, one great story and one incredible individual at a time.

Grey District Council

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