

## ***Rates Newsletter May 2020***

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The steps taken to eliminate Covid-19 have temporarily changed our world. Waitomo District Council has continued to deliver Essential Services to keep our District Community healthy and safe through the unprecedented experience of the Level 4 Lockdown and beyond as we all look forward to a virus free future.

Our services include the production and distribution of safe drinking water, waste water treatment systems, kerbside collection of rubbish, burials at cemeteries, essential local road and safety repairs and supporting emergency services (Civil Defence).

Council staff have supported delivery of essential services. All possible steps were taken to keep people safe where staff and contractors exited their home bubbles to back-up and support delivery of our wide range of services. Your rates help in part to fund those services, to keep our District Community operating and to stay healthy and safe.

### **Support**

The Government has provided a wide range of support programmes; ranging from a wage subsidy to keep people in jobs through working with banks to provide credit options such as mortgage holidays. People who unfortunately, have lost employment or are on reduced incomes may qualify for support such as the Accommodation Supplement administered by the Ministry of Social Development through Work and Income.

The Government's COVID-19: Economic Response Package aims to protect the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders. The wage subsidy scheme in particular was developed to help both businesses and most importantly affected workers in the short-term, as we all adjust to the economic impacts on our COVID-19 affected community. If you have not yet accessed Central Government's Economic Response Package, please visit [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

### **Rates Rebate**

If you have not claimed a rates rebate in the period since 1 July 2019, we encourage you to visit our website to check your eligibility using the rates rebate calculator. The rates rebate application form is also available on the website or alternatively contact our customer services team to assist you in applying for a rates rebate. Applications for the 2019/20 year close 30 June.

### **Paying your rates**

The easiest, most convenient way to pay, is by way of direct debit. This method ensures no penalties are applied and allows you to spread your payments across the rating year without being concerned about keeping up with the various payment due dates. If you do

not already have a direct debit in place, we encourage you to take up the option, complete the required form and return it to us for processing.

You can also pay your rates by cheque and internet banking. Payments by credit or debit card can be made over the phone by contacting our Customer Services Team. Please do continue to pay your rates in the usual way. We, as a District Community will recover from this temporary setback.

### **Payment Arrangements**

We are here to help. Please talk with us. If you think you might have difficulty meeting payments then get in touch and let's work out how we can assist. If you are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay your rates in full by **29 May 2020**, please get in touch to check out possible options available to you. Remember also, that there are other places that you can go to get help, including your bank.

A 10% penalty will be charged on the unpaid amount after **29 May 2020**. However, please remember, late payment penalties will not apply if a suitable payment arrangement has been agreed prior.

### **Rates Remission**

If you have been unable to pay the current rates instalment by the due date, and have a good payment history you may be eligible for penalty remission.

Council will also consider remission of rates in cases of extreme financial hardship. Please visit our website for Council's remission policy and application forms.

### **You can contact us**

Please remember that even though our facilities may be closed temporarily, we are still here for you and you can:

- Email our customer services team – [info@waitomo.govt.nz](mailto:info@waitomo.govt.nz)
- Email our rates team – [rates@waitomo.govt.nz](mailto:rates@waitomo.govt.nz)
- Phone us - 0800 932 4357
- Visit our website – [www.waitomo.govt.nz](http://www.waitomo.govt.nz)
- Or search for us on facebook @WaitomoDistrictCouncil

We, as a community are facing COVID-19 together, and we are here to support you. Take care everyone, remain strong, be kind, and unite against COVID-19.



CHRIS RYAN  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**