

Rīpoata Whiringa Pōti Tōmua **2025 Pre-Election Report**



Making your Waikato
even better, together

**VOTE
2025**
LOCAL ELECTIONS

**PŌTI
2025**
NGA PŌTITANGA Ā-ROHE

He taiao mauriora
Healthy environment

He hapori hihiri
Vibrant communities

He ōhanga pakari
Strong economy

Kia tau iho ngā manaakitanga a te wāhi ngaro ki runga ki a tātou katoa, tae atu rā ki te Arikini Kuini Nga wai hono i te po kua eke ki te tūranga i mahue mai i a Kiingi Tuheitia. Koia rā i whakataukīngia ai te kōrero,
*“ko Tuheitia ki te rangi,
ko Nga wai hono i te po ki te whenua”.*
Paimārire.

Nō reira, kei te Kiingi, te ika nui o te tau, e tangihia tonuhia ana e tō iwi. E te hunga mate, koutou i haohia i te kūpenga o Taramainuku, haere ki tua o Paerau, haere ki te iti o kahurangi, okioki ai.

Ka huri ki a tātou, ki te hunga ora. Nō reira, e ngā maunga whakahī, e ngā wai whakatare taniwha, e ngā karangatanga maha puta noa i te rohe, ko te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Waikato e mihi atu nei ki a koutou tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

May the providence of the unseen realm cascade upon all of us, especially upon the Māori Queen Nga wai hono i te po, who recently ascended the throne. As the saying goes,
*“Tuheitia is in heaven,
Nga wai hono i te po is on earth”.*
Peace and goodwill.

Therefore, the King, the pre-eminent member of those who have been caught up in the net of Taramainuku, your people continue to grieve. Depart, with all our deceased to the next world, to the stars.

To those living in the Waikato region, we acknowledge you, your ancestral mountains, your waterbodies, your people and your communities. Warmest regards from Waikato Regional Council.

Ngā ihirangi

Contents

4	E whakaaro nei au I've been thinking
6	Tō tātou rohe About our region
7	Pōtitanga ā-rohe Local elections 2025
7	Key dates
8	Ngā rohe pōti Our constituencies
9	Ngā hononga iwi Iwi partnerships
10	Te whai wāhi mai Participation in local elections
10	Thinking about standing for council?
11	Takatū Waikato Making a stand for the Waikato
11	Tā mātou aronga matua Our purpose
11	Ngā aronga nui Our strategic priorities
12	He taiao mauriora Healthy environment
13	He hapori hihiri Vibrant communities
14	He ōhanga pakari Strong economy
15	Ā mātou mahi It's what we do
20	Pūtea Finances
26	He pūrongo anō Find out more
26	Documents under the Local Government Act
26	Documents under the Resource Management Act
27	Documents under the Biosecurity Act
27	Documents under the Land Transport Management Act
27	Other documents

E whakaaro nei au I've been thinking

The time has come to reimagine how we organise and deliver public services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The 2025 local body elections present an exciting opportunity to begin a national conversation about the future of central and local government services, how they are funded, and how we can best deliver positive outcomes for our environment, our communities and our economy.

Whether you're considering standing for regional council or not, you'll no doubt have heard discussions about the future of regional councils on the back of the Government's Resource Management Act reforms.

I say yes, it is time to talk. Let's have conversations about the public services provided by local and central government, iwi and other stakeholders, and the scales at which each might be delivered more efficiently and effectively.

Regional councils, established through the 1989 local government reforms to bring together some 600 catchment, rabbit, pest and drainage boards, were set up to efficiently deliver services best managed at a regional scale. Waikato Regional Council alone incorporated more than 40 of these entities, with central government of the day also adding transport responsibilities to our portfolio of functions.

We work within legislative frameworks set by central government. We manage land, water, air and other natural resources, ensuring they are allocated fairly and sustainably so they will continue to benefit the economy and environment for people into the future. Environmental protection is an essential service, and regional councils make an important contribution to New Zealand's collective environmental stewardship that ensures businesses, farmers and growers have ongoing access to export markets.

We protect lives, livelihoods and national and local infrastructure and services by building and maintaining flood defences. Every year, the flood management schemes across New Zealand protect hundreds of thousands of Kiwis and deliver over \$11 billion in benefits.

We have a crucial role in civil defence and emergency management (CDEM), coordinating and delivering effective emergency management for the Waikato region.

Regional councils also manage pest plants and animals, prevent and clean up pollution, keep people safe on our waterways and plan transport systems that connect people to opportunities.



By undertaking these services, we shape this country's future. We create the right conditions for the growth, resilience and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand. We're big enough to deliver services efficiently and effectively, yet we're small enough to have place-based knowledge of our landscapes and communities. We want to work in a constructive partnership with central government, alongside iwi and stakeholders, to change and improve our regulatory settings so they can best serve our communities and deliver agreed outcomes.

We do see the need for change. We're a growing nation and our future demands a smarter, more connected system of national and local government, one that aligns functions with the right scale, empowers local voices, and invests in long-term partnerships.

Let us have the conversations required to move forward together towards a New Zealand with healthy environments, vibrant communities and a strong economy.

We look forward to working with you.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'cl. mly'.

Chris McLay
Chief Executive

Key issues facing the region

- Cost of living – the cost of food, rent, power and interest payments are hitting households hard, and with the Waikato median weekly household below the national average, it is a challenge to fund essential public services.
- Resource Management Act reform – the impacts this will have on managing natural resources and the environment.
- Regional resilience – preparing for and responding to natural hazards and the impacts of severe weather events.
- Flood protection infrastructure upgrades – funding of asset renewals, and investigation into sustainable solutions.
- Biodiversity – maintaining and improving indigenous biodiversity on private land and the coastal marine area.
- Biosecurity – long term management of invasive species such as freshwater clams (*Corbicula*) and exotic *Caulerpa* seaweed.
- Water quality and availability – reducing contaminants entering our waterways, particularly in the Waikato and Waipā catchments, and safeguarding sustainable access to quality fresh water into the future.
- Population growth and urban development – rapid expansion and the impacts on three waters infrastructure, transport infrastructure and land use.



Tō tātou rohe

About our region

The Waikato region is the fourth largest in New Zealand, and one of the most productive. Its prime location and diverse economy are the springboard for innovation and boundless opportunity.

The rohe is a powerhouse for primary industries, including pastoral agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, as well as enjoying scale and breadth in manufacturing and services.

We are a significant area for mineral production, and we generate more electricity than any other single region.

The Waikato is home to the country's fastest growing city, Hamilton, and is among the fastest growing regions. At the heart of the 'golden triangle' connecting Hamilton, Auckland and Tauranga, the region is a convenient access point for freight and logistics. The Waikato also enjoys a significant array of educational opportunities from early childhood to institutes of technology and a highly ranking university.

The region is home to popular and award-winning visitor destinations such as Hobbiton, the Waitomo Caves, Hamilton Gardens, Coromandel Peninsula, Raglan/Whāingaroa and Lake Taupō. Our inland waterways and coastal areas are also very popular summer destinations for water sports and boating.



25,000km²
land area



1200km
of coastline



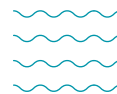
527,500
people



224,387
rateable properties
(as at 30 June 2025)



431,278ha
of marine mammal
sanctuaries



425km
Waikato River, the longest in
New Zealand



Internationally significant
wetlands Whangamarino,
Kopuatai Peat Dome and
Firth of Thames



3400ha
Maungatautari Sanctuary
Mountain, New Zealand's
largest mainland
ecological island



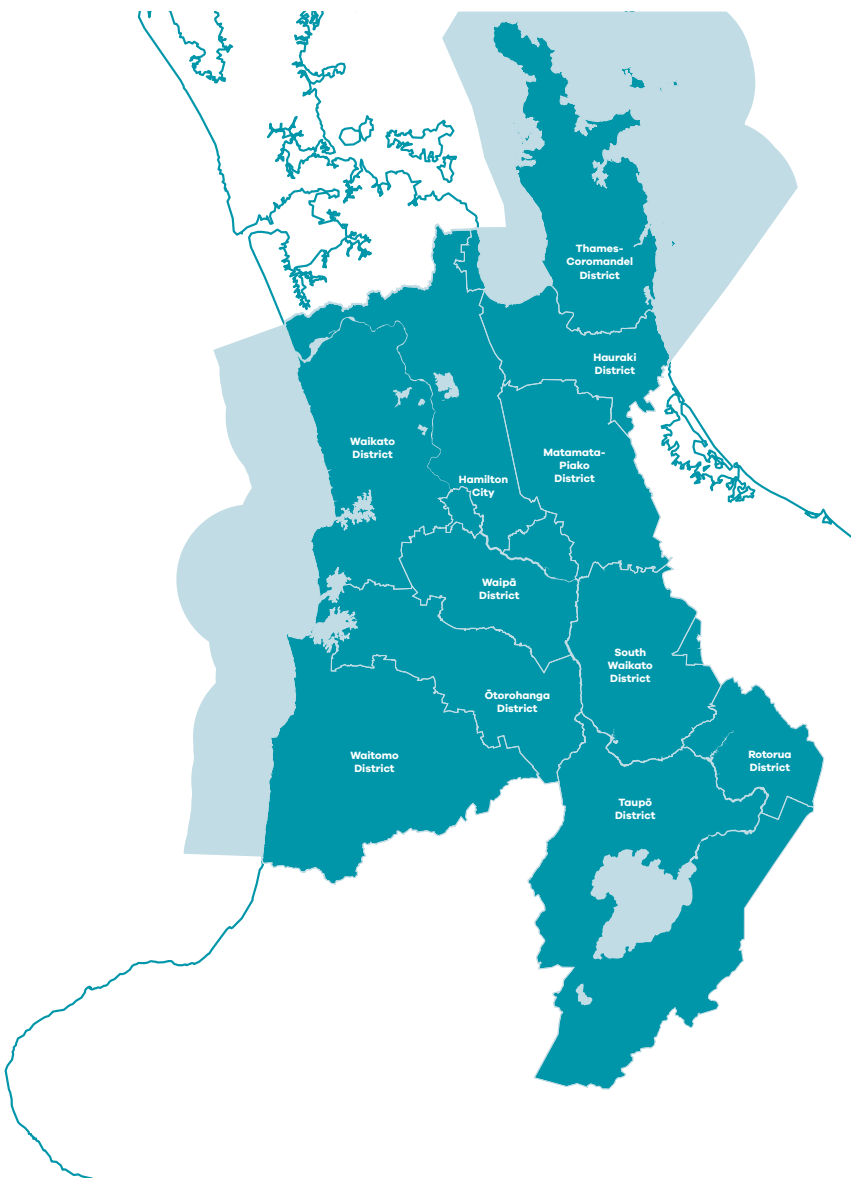
70 per cent
of New Zealand's
geothermal resources



623km²
Lake Taupō, the largest lake
in Australasia



Tongariro National Park,
New Zealand's oldest
national park and a World
Heritage area



Pōtitanga ā-rohe

Local elections 2025

Local authority elections are being held on 11 October 2025. This will be your opportunity to become a candidate to sit at the decision-making table for Waikato Regional Council and/or to vote for who you think will best represent your interests and views.

Newly elected members will make decisions about the region on your behalf for the next three years. We want both our voters and candidates standing for election to be well informed. This report is designed to help voters and candidates understand the big issues facing the region. It tells you about Waikato Regional Council's role, and the part that councillors play. It also looks at the work (mahi) we undertake and some of the big pieces of work we'll be carrying out over the next three years.

Key dates

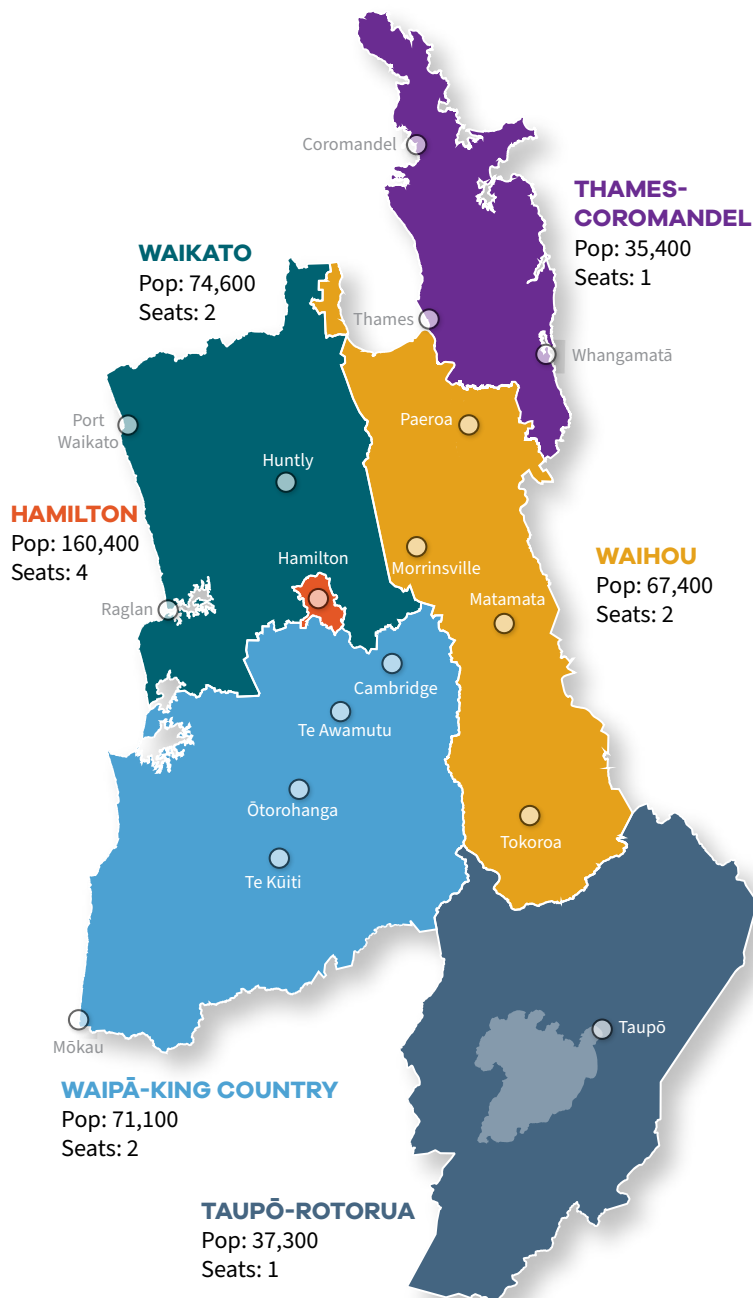
4 July 2025	Candidate nominations open and roll opens for public inspection.
1 August 2025 at 12 noon	Candidate nominations close and roll closes.
6 August 2025	Candidates announced.
9-22 September 2025	Voting documents delivered.
7 October 2025	Last day for posting vote by mail. After this date, votes must be returned to council's secure ballot boxes.
11 October 2025 at 12 noon	Election Day – voting closes midday.
11 October 2025 from 12 noon	Progress results.
16-22 October 2025	Declaration of results.

Ngā rohe pōti

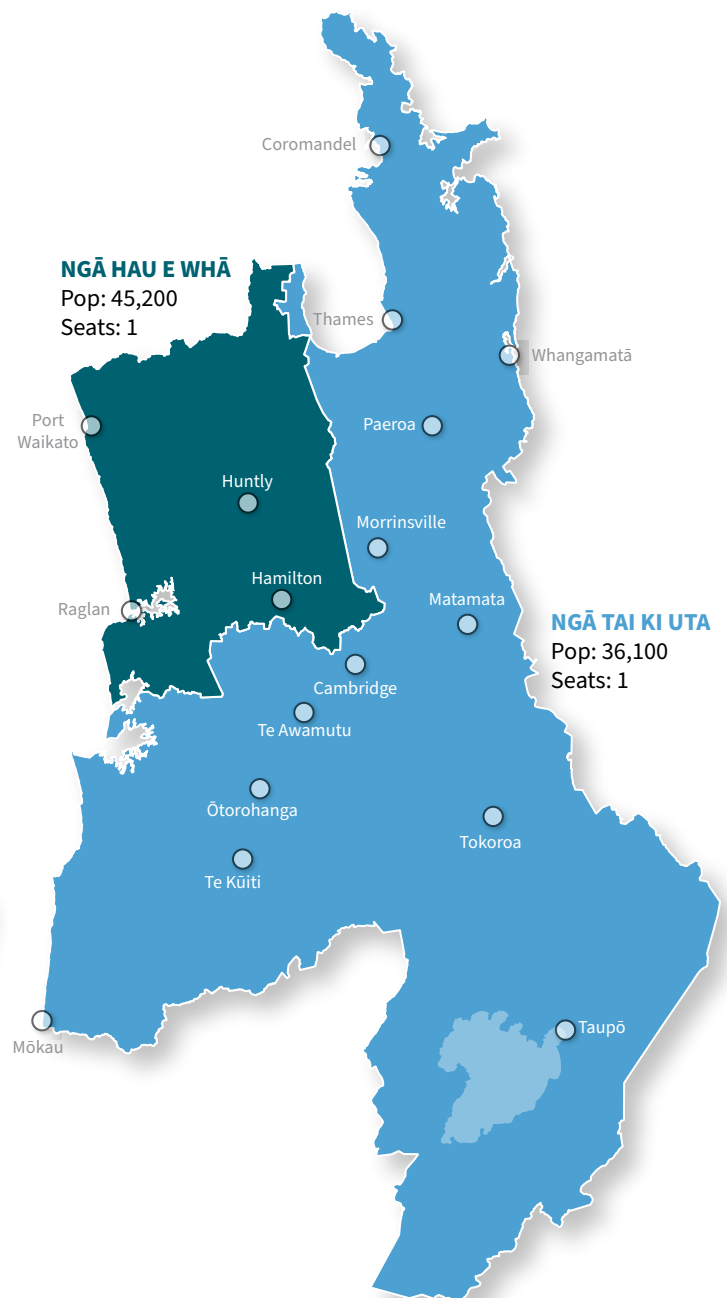
Our constituencies

Waikato Regional Council has 14 elected councillors from eight constituencies – including two Māori constituencies – from across the region.

General constituencies



Māori constituencies



Ngā hononga iwi

Iwi partnerships

In 2012, the council voted in favour of establishing two Māori constituencies for the 2013 triennial elections – making history as the first council to do so under the Local Electoral Act. However, ensuring strong and lasting Māori representation requires a range of mechanisms and commitments beyond just electoral processes.

We've established co-governance and co-management arrangements with several iwi partners and over time the council has grown more confident in working alongside iwi. Working together allows us to maximise opportunities for mutual benefit. It's important to acknowledge that iwi organisations do not have the same level of resourcing as councils, so we must be intentional about working in ways that accommodate iwi priorities and enable meaningful engagement.

Waikato Regional Council has made significant progress in fulfilling its Treaty obligations and strengthening its partnerships with iwi. Looking ahead, there are key developments that will continue to shape this space, including:

- the pending Pare Hauraki Collective Settlement
- the outstanding Waikato-Tainui Treaty settlement for the west coast harbours Raglan/Whāingaroa, Aotea and Kāwhia.

Our vision is to foster iwi partnerships that are enduring, effective and beneficial for everyone.

Learn more about our iwi relationships from Mali Ahipene, Pou Tuhono at Waikato Regional Council.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/our-iwi-relationships



Te whai wāhi mai

Participation in local elections

There are not enough New Zealanders currently participating in the local government process – by not having their say on the issues that matter, by not voting or by not standing for office.

We will be regularly updating our website to provide you with the information you need to best participate as a candidate or a voter in the 2025 local elections. We'll provide information about:

- the roles and responsibilities of this regional council
- the requirements and commitments of regional councillors
- the candidates who will stand for Waikato Regional Council in 2025.

Thinking about standing for council?

Elected members are responsible for:

- representing their constituency and its communities
- ensuring good governance for the region as a whole
- decision making on a wide range of matters, including services, budgets, policies, and bylaws
- providing leadership for strategic policies
- overseeing council performance to ensure accountability
- effectively managing resources and strategies
- selecting the chief executive.

This is your opportunity to become a candidate to sit at the decision-making table of Waikato Regional Council. Find out what it takes to be a regional councillor, and what you need to get started.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/stand-for-council

Candidate Handbook

Everything you need to know about Waikato Regional Council and standing for local election is in our Candidate Handbook.



[Candidate Handbook PDF](#)

Democracy Dave

View our short videos on the council's various democratic processes and support for elected members.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/democracy-dave



Takatū Waikato

Making a stand for the Waikato

The work we do at Waikato Regional Council is currently shaped by six strategic priorities identified in our strategic direction. This work collectively helps us build a region prepared and well positioned to respond to new challenges and protect and enhance our region.

Our incoming council will have the opportunity to review the strategic focus for the next three years.

Takatū Waikato | Making a Stand for the Waikato outlines our six strategic priorities and goals for success.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/wrc-strategy



Tā mātou aronga matua

Our purpose

Working together for a Waikato region that has a healthy environment, vibrant communities and strong economy.

Ngā aronga nui

Our strategic priorities



Wai
Water



Rerenga rauropi, tiakitanga taiao
Biodiversity and biosecurity



Takutai moana
Coastal and marine



Hononga hapori
Community connections



Hanganga tauwhiro
Sustainable development and infrastructure



Whakaheke tukunga
Transition to a low emissions economy



He taiao mauriora

Healthy environment

Regional councils play a crucial role in environmental management. They are responsible for managing the effects of land use, fresh water, air and coastal waters, as well as developing a Regional Policy Statement and issuing consents for activities that impact the environment.

We are all custodians or kaitiaki of the environment for future generations. We should all want to leave our environment in a better state than how we found it.

Our scientists monitor the region's rivers, lakes, estuaries and coasts, groundwater, soils, land, air quality and geothermal areas. We monitor these resources so we can inform our communities about their current state, how it's changing over time and what the key pressures are. We also use this data to identify problems and find solutions.

We work with landowners to incentivise activities that will protect catchments, and develop plans and policies aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of fresh water in our region.

We've also committed to a range of biodiversity work, including the development of a regional biodiversity strategy aimed at improving terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity.

Learn more about our work to improve the health of the environment from Dr Mike Scarsbrook, Manager of Environmental Science at Waikato Regional Council.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/our-environment





He hāpori hihiri **Vibrant communities**

One of our jobs is to support communities to be healthy, self-sustaining, vibrant and resilient. Where people are socially connected, have access to educational and economic opportunities, it's safe to raise our families, our environment is being looked after and we're resilient enough to bounce back from natural disasters.

We provide public transport services in the region, clocking over 4 million passenger trips per year, and support community transport service providers with our Waikato Community Transport Grant Fund. We maximise partnerships wherever possible, including supporting communities at a grassroots level through initiatives such as our Natural Heritage Fund.

Community resilience is a key area of work and one of the biggest challenges we face as a region. Changes to our climate mean we need to think about the sustainability of our existing infrastructure, both our flood scheme infrastructure and the assets they protect. We're also working with the territorial authorities in our region to understand the long-term challenges facing our communities and developing targeted community adaptation plans in response.

Learn more about the work we're doing to create vibrant, well-connected and resilient communities from Janine Becker, Director of Customer and Corporate Services at Waikato Regional Council.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/our-communities





He ōhanga pakari **Strong economy**

Regional councils play a key role in a region's economy by managing natural resources, ensuring sustainable development, and supporting economic growth through planning, infrastructure, and collaboration.

Our fertile land and reliable water supply make the Waikato region ideal for primary production. We're an energy powerhouse, featuring hydroelectric power schemes and geothermal generation, and have significant potential for renewable solar and wind generation. Our region has an extensive marine area and forest resources that offer potential for innovative products.

The economy has evolved without much need to worry about water, but that is changing: limits are being reached. Adapting to climate change, biosecurity and biodiversity loss will be key issues for the region to manage if it is to maintain its economic base. We'll also need a resilient economy to face natural hazards in the context of a changing climate.

Our location, adjacent to Auckland and Tauranga, is also important, and Hamilton is the fastest growing city in New Zealand. Infrastructure – including road and rail – that effectively brings Waikato, Auckland (and Tauranga) closer together will solidify Waikato's role as a logistics hub and improve supply chain efficiency.

The laws governing natural resources are currently undergoing reform and this will be an important chance for the council to work with central government to get it right for our region and our economy.

Learn more about our region's economy from Blair Keenan, Principal Economist for Waikato Regional Council

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/our-economy



Ā mātou mahi

It's what we do

Regional councils tackle tasks that demand a regional scale approach. Our responsibilities are different to that of territorial authorities (district and city councils), which govern smaller geographic areas.

Over the next three years, councillors will be required to make decisions on some of this work. Others will be guided by our legislative obligations. The work we have planned for the 10 years from 2024 is set out in our long term plan.

Read our *Mahere Whānui 2024-2034 Long Term Plan*

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp

Biodiversity



We have responsibilities to maintain indigenous biodiversity on private land and in coastal areas and freshwater environments, but we also invest in community-led projects that include public conservation land.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/biodiversity-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Develop a regional biodiversity strategy together with Biodiversity Accord partners.
- Pilot a trial terrestrial biodiversity monitoring programme.
- Support the restoration of indigenous biodiversity by implementing **Te Āki Tūroa | Nature+ Framework and Plan** to reduce the council's corporate emissions.
- Grow the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme.

Science and monitoring



We monitor the state of the environment and produce significant science and data on water quality and quantity, soil health, biodiversity, geothermal activity, coastal and marine ecosystem health, coastal hazards and air quality. We also collect information about our communities and the economy.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/science-and-monitoring-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Increase terrestrial biodiversity and coastal environment monitoring.
- Complete a regional spatial data inventory to support a strategic spatial strategy for future land use and resource management decisions.
- Continue to investigate sustainable peatland in the region.

Maritime services



We look after the region's harbours and coastal and inland waterways to ensure they are safely navigable.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/maritime-services-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Implement new harbourmaster functions at Port of Taharoa.

Biosecurity



We provide regional leadership in activities that prevent, reduce or eliminate adverse effects from invasive pests and diseases that can significantly damage our environment, economy and native species.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Support **kauri protection** in the region.
- New surveillance programmes to manage invasive pest plants.
- Support for the long term management of freshwater clams (*Corbicula*) and exotic *Caulerpa* seaweed.
- Support the Tipu Mātoro National Wallaby Eradication Programme to **control wallabies** on our boundary with Bay of Plenty.

Regional transport



We're responsible for planning and funding land transport initiatives within the Waikato region, including public transport, road infrastructure, and managing regional land transport plans in collaboration with the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/transport-planning-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Advance our transition to a zero-emission bus fleet.
- Launch new bus networks in Hamilton and across the region.
- Review **Regional Land Transport Plan**.
- Develop a regional road safety strategy.
- Determine the future of interregional passenger rail services beyond the trial period.
- Continue to build transport alignment with neighbouring regions, and support national, regional and sub-regional transport outcomes.
- Implement a simplified region-wide public transport rate.

Resource management



We are responsible for regulating the use of the region's natural resources, such as water, soil, air, geothermal areas and the coastal marine area. We also seek ways to minimise the adverse effects to people, property and the environment as a result of resource use.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/resource-use-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Implement **Plan Change 1** and **freshwater farm plan** regulations.
- Implement regulatory outcomes from RMA reforms.
- Implement changes to the **Regional Coastal Plan**.

Flood protection and land drainage



We plan, fund, build and maintain assets that protect our communities, productive land, the main trunk, state highways, roads and other essential infrastructure from flooding.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/flood-protection-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Plan the implementation of the ***Sustainable Infrastructure Decision-making Framework***, including investigation of nature-based solutions to help mitigate flooding.
- Deliver construction, upgrades and maintenance of the region's flood protection infrastructure, including projects supported by the Regional Infrastructure Fund.
- Review our approach to critical infrastructure funding.

Catchment management



We provide incentives to landowners in priority catchments and sites to carry out erosion prevention and mitigation, fence off native bush, and retire and plant riparian margins, wetlands and steep hill country.



waikatoregion.govt.nz/catchment-management-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Develop a regional catchment management framework.
- Implement a new river and catchment management work programme for Wharekawa (Kaiaua).
- Implement harbour catchment management plans for west coast harbours Raglan/Whāingaroa, Aotea and Kāwhia.
- Develop a catchment restoration plan for the Kauaeranga and Kirikiri catchments.
- Develop a catchment action plan to promote options for the rehabilitation of Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland.

Policy and planning



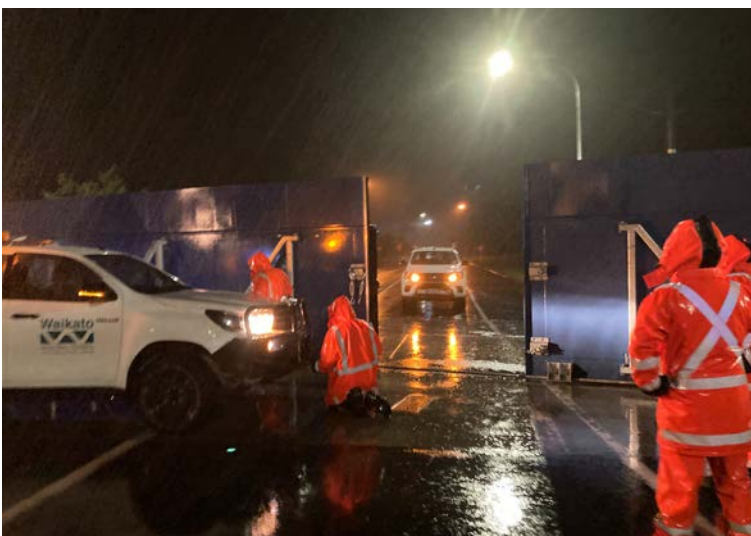
Regional councils develop policies and plans to manage natural and physical resources within their regions, including through district and council plans.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/policy-and-planning-its-what-we-do

Major projects for the next three years

- Advocate on behalf of the region regarding legislative changes, including RMA reform.
- Progress the **Regional Coastal Plan** through deliberation phases.
- Develop a water security management plan for the region.
- Develop a regional spatial strategy.

Regional resilience



We work to increase regional resilience to natural hazards and have significant obligations and responsibilities in times of emergency.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-resilience-its-what-we-do

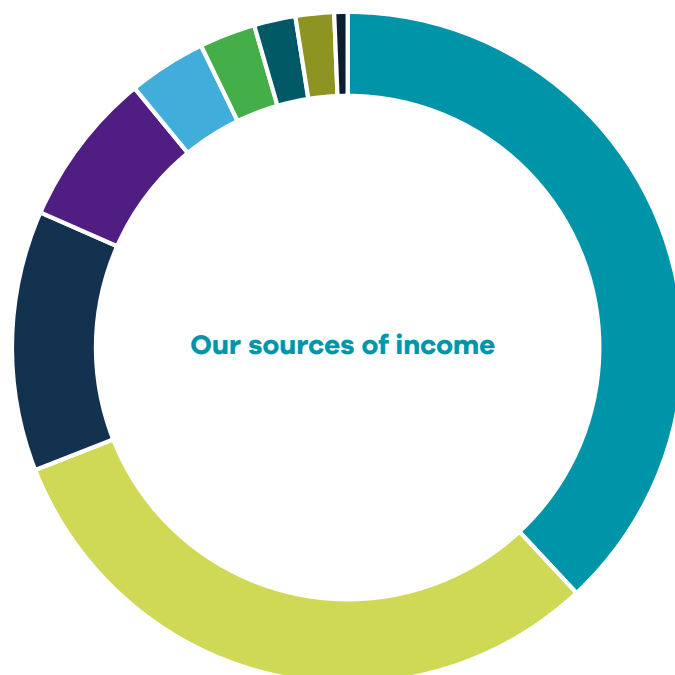
Major projects for the next three years

- Develop a regional resilience strategy and plan.
- Maintain technical support and participation in community adaptation and planning by territorial authorities.
- Provide accurate and localised hazard and climate advice to territorial authorities, communities and national researchers.
- Provide guidance on flood risks to inform district and regional plan reviews.

Pūtea Finances



- Regional transport connections - \$64.6 million
- Integrated catchment management - \$37.7 million
- Science, policy and information - \$36.5 million
- Flood protection and control works - \$33.9 million
- Resource use - \$31.9 million
- Customer, community and services - \$8.4 million
- Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management - \$4.5 million
- Regional hazards and emergency response - \$2.8 million
- Corporate and self funding - \$1.7 million
- Council controlled organisations - \$100,000



- Targeted rates - \$84.7 million
- General rates - \$69.0 million
- Government grants - \$27.9 million
- Other income - \$16.6 million
- Direct charges - \$8.3 million
- Consent holder charges - \$6.0 million
- Investment fund distribution income - \$4.5 million
- Investment fund capital protection income - \$4.1 million
- Interest income - \$1.4 million

Funding impact statement

	2022/23 Actual (\$000)	2023/24 Actual (\$000)	2024/25 Estimated (\$000)	2025/26 Annual Plan (\$000)	2026/27 LTP (\$000)	2027/28 LTP (\$000)	2028/29 LTP (\$000)
Sources of operating funding							
General rates, uniform annual general charges, rates penalties	61,599	64,493	65,643	69,729	72,394	78,134	77,256
Targeted rates	61,210	67,673	75,690	84,657	94,804	94,588	95,644
Subsidies and grants for operating purposes	33,579	33,781	30,201	27,890	33,224	29,514	29,180
Fees and charges	27,029	28,458	31,289	30,508	28,318	31,608	31,700
Interest and dividends from investments	5,893	8,769	9,684	9,994	9,335	9,739	10,170
Local authorities fuel tax, fines, infringement fees, and other receipts	643	735	930	441	441	441	441
Total operating funding (A)	189,953	203,909	213,437	223,220	238,517	244,026	244,392
Applications of operating funding							
Payments to staff and suppliers	177,620	180,331	196,585	205,501	213,223	214,361	214,620
Finance costs	1,184	1,760	1,347	2,990	4,639	5,055	5,304
Other operating funding applications		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications of operating funding (B)	178,804	182,091	197,932	208,490	217,861	219,416	219,924
Surplus (deficit) of operating funding (A-B)	11,149	21,818	15,505	14,730	20,657	24,610	24,467
Sources of capital funding							
Subsidies and grants for capital expenditure	-	4,710	3,181	5,974	-	-	-
Development and financial contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase (decrease) in debt	5,272	1,994	17,036	4,800	6,842	9,208	(96)
Gross proceeds from sale of assets	-	1,095	725	-	-	-	-
Lump sum contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other dedicated capital funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total sources of capital funding (C)	5,272	7,799	20,941	10,774	6,842	9,208	(96)
Applications of capital funding							
Capital expenditure							
- to meet additional demand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- to improve the level of service	2,503	1,532	2,761	6,390	3,916	2,314	3,079
- to replace existing assets	13,689	30,715	33,981	19,853	17,083	22,546	13,089
Increase (decrease) in reserves	229	(2,630)	(296)	(739)	6,499	8,959	8,203
Increase (decrease) of investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications of capital funding (D)	16,421	29,617	36,446	25,504	27,498	33,818	24,371
Surplus (deficit) of capital funding (C-D)	(11,149)	(21,818)	(15,505)	(14,730)	(20,657)	(24,610)	(24,467)
Funding balance ((A-B)+(C-D))	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary balance sheet

	2022/23 Actual (\$000)	2023/24 Actual (\$000)	2024/25 Estimated (\$000)	2025/26 Annual Plan (\$000)	2026/27 LTP (\$000)	2027/28 LTP (\$000)	2028/29 LTP (\$000)
Current assets							
Cash and cash equivalents	18,721	16,426	25,661	4,314	4,829	4,506	4,439
Trade and other receivables	22,865	26,627	24,051	28,194	27,613	28,252	28,294
Prepayments	2,902	1,818	1,322	1,881	3,313	3,289	3,269
Inventories	1,372	1,521	2,051	1,521	1,430	1,459	1,487
Work in progress	626	989	970	1,554	1,577	1,611	1,633
Other financial assets	6,500	4,921	14,252	6,000	19,000	22,000	24,000
Derivative Financial Instruments	-	776	9	776	-	-	-
Total current assets	52,986	53,078	68,316	44,240	57,763	61,117	63,121
Non-current assets							
Financial assets	102,243	102,979	104,325	114,352	119,998	125,765	131,910
Other financial assets	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Investments in CCOs	1,255	1,264	1,570	1,111	792	701	701
Biological assets	224	290	229	290	290	290	290
Intangible assets	5,600	5,447	2,108	4,825	3,457	2,024	945
Property, plant and equipment	995,696	1,007,276	1,012,386	1,048,917	1,058,604	1,068,249	1,124,327
Derivative Financial Instruments	1,490	432	431	432	1,467	1,467	1,467
Total non-current assets	1,106,528	1,117,708	1,121,069	1,169,947	1,184,628	1,198,516	1,259,660
Current liabilities							
Trade and other payables	32,556	28,822	26,683	29,827	37,166	36,899	36,668
Employee benefit liabilities	7,254	7,314	7,786	7,792	8,429	8,687	8,823
Borrowing	11,153	5,066	14,139	5,747	10,911	11,369	11,663
Derivative Financial Instruments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	50,963	41,202	48,608	43,366	56,506	56,955	57,154
Non-current liabilities							
Employee benefit liabilities	2,288	1,495	1,755	1,593	2,659	2,740	2,783
Derivative Financial Instruments	-	-	0	-	-	-	-
Borrowing	19,237	27,318	35,281	52,336	74,136	82,886	82,494
Total non-current liabilities	21,525	28,813	37,036	53,929	76,795	85,626	85,277
Net assets	1,087,026	1,100,771	1,103,741	1,116,892	1,109,090	1,117,052	1,180,350
Equity							
Accumulated funds	212,877	212,361	204,637	206,244	205,125	206,193	207,783
Other reserves	874,149	888,410	899,104	910,648	903,965	910,859	972,567
Total equity	1,087,026	1,100,771	1,103,741	1,116,892	1,109,090	1,117,052	1,180,350

Current assets

Current assets reflect assets that are cash or can be converted to cash within 12 months. These assets are required to meet the council's obligations during the year. As the council receives the bulk of its income from rates in October, it is important for the council to hold cash reserves, particularly in the first four months of the year.

Other financial assets, as reported in the annual plan, includes the value of term deposit funds invested for a period longer than three months. These funds are held to meet deferred operating and capital expenditure projects.

Financial assets include the council's investment fund. This fund was established through the proceeds from the sale of shares in the Port of Tauranga and Ports of Auckland. The fund is invested in a diversified portfolio, with the broad investment goals of ensuring the assets are invested prudently and in alignment with the council's mission, vision and rules.

Returns from the fund are used first to protect the base capital of the fund for future generations, and then to provide a subsidy that offsets the general rate revenue requirement.

The current investment portfolio is made up of the following investment classes:

- trans-Tasman equities
- global equities
- emerging market equities
- property and infrastructure
- New Zealand bonds
- global bonds
- New Zealand cash.

The return from the fund (after fees and inflation) over the last ten years has been 5.08 per cent per annum (to 31 March 2025). This compares to the current target annual return from the fund of 4.9 per cent per annum*, after fees and inflation, which is assumed to be 2.6 per cent per annum.

Investment in council controlled organisations represents the council's interest in two shared services organisations: Waikato Local Authority Shared Services Ltd (WLASS), trading as Co-Lab, which provides a range of shared services to Waikato councils, and Regional Software Holdings Ltd (RSHL) which provides shared services across the regional sector. The council holds these investments for strategic purposes rather than for the return on investment achieved.

Other non-current assets

Other non-current assets are primarily made up of the council's property, plant and equipment. A revaluation of these assets is planned for the 2025/26 financial year, with changes in asset values based on the change in various construction indices. The indices are used to estimate the increase in costs that would be incurred to replace the assets at the time of the revaluation. An assessment of the change in the value of these assets is undertaken at the end of each financial year to determine whether there has been a material change in their value which would indicate an earlier revaluation should be undertaken. The assessment made on the impact to valuations at 30 June 2025 is not assumed to be significant enough to trigger a full revaluation.

Borrowing

In order to meet the costs of infrastructure, new works and other projects with long term benefits, the council has in place an external borrowing programme. At 30 June 2025, the council has borrowed \$49 million from the Local Government Funding Agency. Based on the work programme included in the *2024-2034 Long Term Plan*, we expect our external borrowing programme to reach \$102 million by the end of the 2033/34 financial year.

Derivative financial instruments

As part of the borrowing programme, the council has entered into interest rate swaps in order to manage the risk of future interest rate movements. Effectively, these swaps fix future interest rate payment costs. The nature of the swaps creates both liabilities and assets. The liabilities and assets will reduce to zero over the life of each swap.

* The fund return target was revised in 2024 following a change to the Statement of Investment Policy and Objectives.

Compliance with limits in the financial strategy

The council's financial strategy, adopted as part of the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, contains the following limits that help guide financial decision making.

- Total rates revenue will comprise up to 75 per cent of the council's annual revenue requirement.
- Increases in the total rates revenue requirement will be limited to 10 per cent increase in rates from current ratepayers.

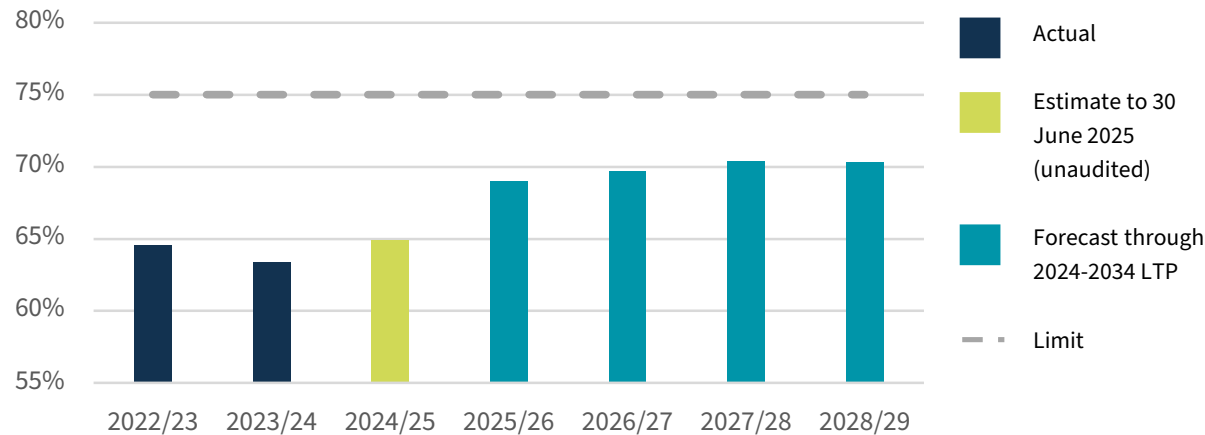
These limits apply to periods commencing 1 July 2025. The council's performance against these benchmarks is summarised in the graphs shown on below.

In relation to borrowing, the financial strategy sets the following limits.

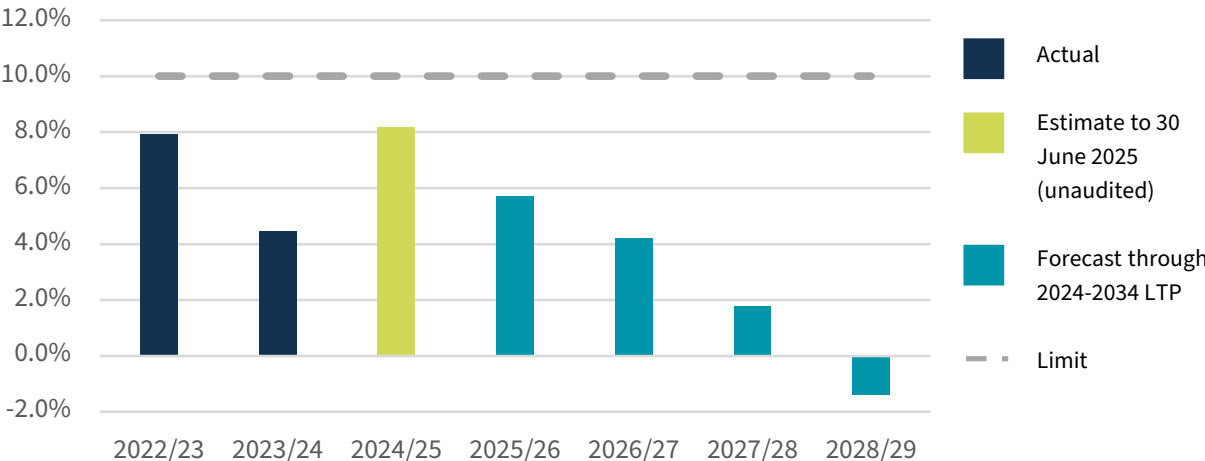
Financial covenant	Limit
Net external debt/total revenue	<100%
Net interest on external debt/total revenue	<10%
Net interest on external debt/annual rates revenue	<15%
Liquidity	>110%

The council has outlined its borrowing programme to 2024-2034 Long Term Plan. Current and projected debt levels are compliant with the borrowing limits set out in the financial strategy.

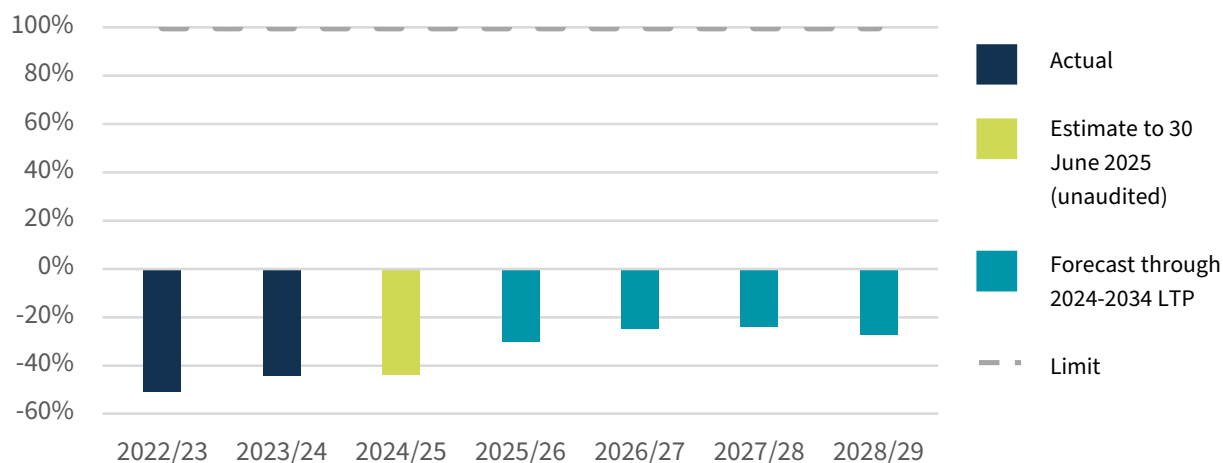
Rates revenue as a percentage of total revenue



Increase in total rates revenue from current ratepayers



Net external debt* as a percentage of total revenue



Audit of information

While the *Pre-Election Report* itself hasn't undergone an audit, most of the financial data has already been independently reviewed. The 2022/23 and 2023/24 results are taken from our annual reports, which have been audited by Audit New Zealand. Forecasts are provided until 2028/29.

At the time of preparing the report, the council is finalising its accounts for 2024/25 which will then be audited by Audit New Zealand. Therefore the financial data provided for 2024/25 is based on our estimated financial performance and position at 30 June 2025. Actual results for the year are likely to vary from these.

*Net external debt is defined as total consolidated debt less liquid financial assets/investments

He pūrongo anō

Find out more

Check out our mahi

Dive into our story hub which showcases some of the inspiring work we're doing in collaboration with communities, landowners, iwi and other agencies.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/story-hub

Our strategic direction

Why we're here and our six strategic priorities.

Making a Stand for the Waikato | Takatū Waikato.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/wrc-strategy

Documents under the Local Government Act

Long term plan

What we're going to do and the money we're going to spend to do it over the next 10 years.

Mahere Whānui 2024-2034 Long Term Plan

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/ltp

Annual plan

Our work plan for the year ahead, the money we'll spend, and its impact on rates.

Mahere ā-Tau Annual Plan 2025/26

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/annualplan

Annual report

Our statement to the community about how we performed.

Whakarāpopototanga o te Pūrongo ā-Tau | Annual Report 2023/24

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/annual-report

Documents under the Resource Management Act

Regional policy statement

An overview of the resource management issues in the Waikato region, and the ways in which integrated management of the region's natural and physical resources will be achieved.

Waikato Regional Policy Statement | Te Tauākī Kaupapahere o te Rohe o Waikato

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/rps

Regional plan

Implements the Regional Policy Statement and contains policy and methods to manage the natural and physical resources of the Waikato region.

Waikato Regional Plan

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-plan

Regional coastal plan

Contains policy and methods to manage the allocation and use of coastal resources.

Waikato Regional Coastal Plan

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/regional-coastal-plan

Documents under the Biosecurity Act

Regional pest management plan

Sets out the rules occupiers in our region must comply with, to protect the things we value in our region.

2022-2032 Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan | Tūtohu Mahere Whakahaere ā-Rohe o Waikato Mō Ngā Kīrearea

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/rpmp

Biosecurity strategy

Not a statutory document. Outlines our regional biosecurity priorities.

Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032 | Rautaki Tiakitanga Taiao o Waikato 2022- 2032

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy-2022-2032

Documents under the Land Transport Management Act

Regional land transport plan

How we intend to develop the region's land transport system over the next 30 years.

Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan | Mahere Waka ā-Rohe o Waikato 2024-2054

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/rltp

Regional public transport plan

The priorities and needs of public transport services and infrastructure over a 10- year period.

Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032 | Mahere Waka Tūmatanui ā-Rohe o Waikato

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/rptp

Other documents

Waikato and Waipā River Restoration Strategy

Provides a framework to help with 'on the ground' activities for restoration work. Developed between Waikato River Authority, Waikato Regional Council and DairyNZ with support from mana whenua, landowners and others in the catchment.

 restorationstrategy.nz



He taiao mauriora ▲ **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

Policy Series PS25/15
ISSN 2230-4339 (Print)
ISSN 2230-4347 (Online)
July 2025 #7625

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401