

22 February 2024

The Taxpayer's Union
requests@taxpayers.org.nz

Kia ora,

2024 Ratepayers Report

I refer to your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 19 December 2023. Please find below the information requested, followed by our response to each:

I request the following information for the **2022/23 Financial Year** (Please use **GST inclusive** figures where applicable):

1. Average residential rates

- a. The average **residential** costs of rates and other Council charges, **where average residential costs = (X + Y) / Z**.
 - Please ensure that the figures used (X, Y, and Z) are disclosed in the response, where:
 - **X** is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to residential rating units;
 - **Y** is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to residential rating units (for example charges relating to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc.); and
 - **Z** is the number of residential rating units (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for residential, please use the closest definition (such as urban).
 - If possible, the median residential rates payment by residential units.

Please do not include Council charges that are not part of the rates demand (for example retail sales of Council rubbish bags).

Please include all residential rates in this calculation, regardless of location, as we are aiming to compare residential rating units (i.e., non-income producing) to non-residential (commercial/rural, income-producing).

Average Residential Costs	F2022/2023
average residential costs of rates and other Council charges, where average residential costs = (X + Y) / Z	\$3,730
X is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to residential rating units	\$268,227,553

Y is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to residential rating units (for example charges relating to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc.); and	\$13,674,650
Z is the number of residential rating units (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for residential, please use the closest definition (such as urban).	75,581

The median residential rates payment by residential units - \$3,440.58

2. Average non-residential rates

a. The average **non-residential** costs of rates and other Council charges, where **average non-residential costs = (X + Y) / Z**.

- Please ensure that the figures used (X, Y, and Z) are disclosed in the response, where:
 - X is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to rating units except those defined as residential*;
 - Y is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to rating units except those defined as residential* (for example, charges related to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc); and
 - Z is the number of rating units except those defined as residential* (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for non-residential, please use the closest definition (such as commercial).
 - If possible, the median non-residential rates payment for the council.

Please do not include Council charges that are not part of the rates demand (for example, retail sales of Council rubbish bags).

***Please ensure that this definition matches that used to calculate average residential rates so that the respective X values of both requests add up to total rates income for the 2022/2023 Financial Year.**

Average Non- Residential Costs	F2022/2023
average non-residential costs of rates and other Council charges, where average non-residential costs = (X + Y) / Z .	\$34,657
X is the total of all rates (general and targeted) charged by the Council to rating units except those defined as residential*;	\$161,319,600
Y is the total amount of user charges or levies applicable to rating units except those defined as residential* (for example, charges related to metered water, infrastructure contributions, refuse collection, fire protection etc); and	\$19,867,400
Z is the number of rating units except those defined as residential* (however defined by the Council) within the Council's district or city. If the Council does not have a classification for non-residential, please use the closest definition (such as commercial).	5,228

The median non-residential rates payment for the council - \$7,740.07

3. Personnel

1. The total number of staff dismissed due to poor performance.
2. If applicable, the FTE number of staff employed by council-controlled organisations (CCO's).
3. If applicable, the total FTE number of staff employed by the council, excluding council-controlled organisations.
4. The total number of staff (non-FTE, including casual staff)
5. The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$100,000.
6. The total number of staff including those employed by council-controlled organisations receiving remuneration in excess of \$200,000.

Staff Numbers F2022/2023						
	Dismissed for poor performance	FTE number of staff employed by CCOs	Total FTE number of staff (excluding CCOs)	Total number of staff (non-FTE including casual)	Staff receiving remuneration in excess of \$100,000	Staff receiving remuneration in excess of \$200,000
Council*	0		1,470.67	2061	534	40
Karori Sanctuary Trust (Zealandia)	0	58		127	5	1
Wellington Zoo Trust	0	77.19		110	6	2
Wellington Cable Car Limited	0	17		22	2	0
Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency Limited (Wellington NZ)	0	127		247 **	48	7
Wellington Museums Trust (Experience Wellington)	0	90.64		206	9	1
Basin Reserve	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Wellington Water	0	319.39		327	117	9

Please note:

- Information relating to the Council can be found in our 2022/23 Annual Report in [Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#) respectively.

** With respect to the total number of staff (non-FTE including casual) for the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency Limited (Wellington NZ). This total of 247 is made up of 127 staff across the group on a permanent basis and appx 120 casuals on their books - this fluctuates based on event needs.

3.1. Management

1. The FTE number of managers employed.
The Taxpayer’s Union defines a manager as: any staff member who is responsible for a team of staff, or who has an employee/employee’s reporting to them and organises them to achieve their departments or organisation’s specified goal. The Chief Executive team is included in this definition.
2. The ratio of management to total staff numbers.

The information below includes all staff that have people leadership responsibility (managers and team leaders from Tier 1 to Tier 7) as of 30 June 2023.

	Employee headcount	Employee FTE
Total number of people leaders	359	354.74
Ratio management to employees	1:6	1:4

3. The average and median salary of a manager.

Average Salary	\$130,773.27
Median Salary	\$123,900.00

3.2. Communications

1. The FTE number of communications & marketing staff employed.

The Communications team at Wellington City Council includes strategic communications, internal communications, media relations specialists, social media, and content creators and editors. The Council does not have a Marketing team.

As of 30 June 2023, the strategic communications team (6.8 FTE) provides advice and support across and for all levels of the organisation. Their roles are wider than traditional communications roles, as a significant proportion of their work is engagement and consultation with our communities.

Our internal communications team (3 FTE) provides support and advice to connect and inform our over 2,000 employees.

The media team (2 FTE) receives and responds to around 2,500 media enquiries per year. The social media and content team (4 FTE) is responsible for our five channels (166,000 followers), website news content, Our Wellington magazine and monitor our channels seven days a week.

Totalling 15.8FTE

2. The average and median salary of communications & marketing staff.

Of this group above, the salary information is below:

Average Salary	\$104,110.82
Median Salary	\$99,354.00

3.3. Consultants & contractors

1. Total expenditure on consultants and contractors. Please ensure that this includes CAPEX and OPEX spending.
2. Total number of consultants and contractors paid. Please note that this refers to companies/entities, rather than total employees.

In response to this question last year, we confirmed that ‘the Council is finalising a new contract management system, which is soon to go live, and in the future will be able to record the information requested above as it accumulates data overtime’.

I’d like to take this opportunity to provide an update in response to this question. I can confirm that our new contract register go live date was delayed. As with any new system, it will take time to accumulate robust data and therefore we will not have a complete year of records until next year.

We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 17(g) of the Act because the requested information does not exist.

3.4. Core services

1. The FTE number of staff employed to work on the delivery and/or maintenance of local infrastructure.
The Taxpayer’s Union defines Infrastructure FTE as hours worked by staff who are directly responsible for maintaining council assets and services, including physical involvement in environmental services, stormwater, roading, water supply, wastewater, and solid waste management.
2. The FTE number of staff employed to provide regulatory functions.
The Taxpayer’s Union defines Regulatory FTE as hours worked by staff who are directly responsible for upkeeping and enforcing council functions and income, including parking, democracy services, rates collection, building and planning consents, and health licensing.
3. The FTE number of staff employed in customer-facing roles.
The Taxpayer’s Union defines Customer Service FTE as hours worked by staff who are directly responsible for communicating and providing aid for members of the public, such as at libraries, pools, art galleries, venues and events and customer services, whether in person or by phone.

With respect to the FTE number of staff employed in questions against 3.4 above, the Council does not hold this information to the level of detail you seek. As staff are salaried, we do not record the number of hours spent on the varying areas of their roles, which includes regulatory work, assisting in work relating to local infrastructure, or when officers meet with customers face to face as and when required.

As such, this part of your request is refused under section 17(g) of the LGOIMA.

However, information held in the Council’s [Annual Report 2022/23](#) may be of interest to you. Specifically, page 142 in the above link, which provides a broader breakdown of the FTE of staff in each respective council group, including Infrastructure and Delivery and Customer and Community.

4. Audit and Risk Oversight

Audit and Risk Oversight	F2022/2023
a. How many members are on the Council’s Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent)?	Eight in members in total. The list of members can be found here .
b. Of those members, how many are elected and how many are independent of the council?	Five elected. One appointed Pouwiwi/Mana Whenua representative. Two independent of the Council.
c. Is the Chair of the Committee an independent member?	Yes.
d. Does the Council have a lawyer (with a current practising certificate) on the Committee?	No.
e. Does the Council have an accountant (with a current practising certificate or a full member of the Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand) on the Committee?	Yes (three).
f. Does the Council have a code of conduct requiring political neutrality from Council staff?	Yes.

5. Payments to third parties

- The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to any Chamber of Commerce, including GST.
- The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), including GST.
- The total payments made by the Council (or any council-controlled organisation) to the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM), including GST.

Payments made to third parties F2022/2023			
	A. (Chamber of Commerce)	B. (Local Government NZ)	C. (NZ Society of Local Government Managers)
The Council	\$16,387.50	\$172,599.37	\$66,378.00
Karori Sanctuary Trust (Zealandia)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wellington Zoo Trust	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wellington Cable Car Limited	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wellington Waterfront Limited	\$16,387.50	n/a	n/a

Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency Limited (Wellington NZ)	\$6,221.50	n/a	n/a
Wellington Museums Trust (Experience Wellington)			n/a
Basin Reserve	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wellington Water	\$16,387.50	n/a	n/a

6. Debt

1. Net debt (total for the council) as a percent of rates income
2. The dollar amount of debt per rating unit
3. The dollar amount of interest paid per rating unit

1. Net debt as a percent of rates income

Net Debt % of Rates Income	F2022/2023
2023 Rates Debt including water	\$1,141,957 (\$000)
2023 Rates Income	\$424,990 (\$000)
\$ Percentage	268.7%

Please note: The above figures are from the Annual Report excluding GST. This includes general rates, targeted rates, metered water supply, penalties, and adjustments.

2. The dollar amount of debt per rating unit

\$ Amount of Debt per Rating Unit	F2022/2023
2023 Rates Debt	\$1,141,957 (\$000)
Rating unit (Total)	81,155
\$ Amount per unit	\$14,071

3. The dollar amount of interest paid per rating unit

\$ Amount of Interest paid per Rating Unit	F2022/2023
2023 Interest paid on borrowings	\$51,433 (\$000)
Rating unit (Total)	81,155
\$ Amount per unit	\$633.76

Please note, the above information has been answered on the interpretation that these questions relate to debt against Council borrowings. This may differ from last year's answers, where information provided was based on the interpretation that the questions raised related to debt against outstanding rates balances.

Right of review

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response, you may request the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the Council's decision. Further information is available on the Ombudsman website, www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note, we may proactively release our response to your request with your personal information removed.

Thank you again for your request, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Ollie Marchant
Official Information