

13 March 2023

Sham Pancha
Via FYI website

Kia ora Sham,

Financial spending by WCC

Thank you for your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 14 February 2023. You requested the following information:

I am really concerned about the WCC increasing rates while we are all above over our heads with inflation and ridiculous cost of living. There was an article on stuff on 9 Feb on "Creatives a top priority for city's new mayor". I am just stunned with our broken public transportation in the city, crime, broken infrastructure the spending priority is for creatives.

I am concerned on what are the priorities of WCC and where do the council see costs being reduced? Could you please explain the following and the above:

- *What proportion of my rates goes to what projects?*
- *How did you prioritise the projects?*
- *What savings have you made to reduce my rates bill?*
- *How much do we pay WREDA each year?*
- *How much do we pay the Council Controlled Organisations each year?*
- *How many staff does the WCC employ, what are their titles, and what are their salary ranges? How much does WCC spend a year on staff?*
- *Why buying a \$13m car park building in Newtown was important?*

Wellington City Council has granted your request for information. Please see the below response:

I am really concerned about the WCC increasing rates while we are all above over our heads with inflation and ridiculous cost of living. There was an article on stuff on 9 Feb on "Creatives a top priority for city's new mayor". I am just stunned with our broken public transportation in the city, crime, broken infrastructure the spending priority is for creatives.

On 28 February, Wellington City Councillors approved the draft annual plan budget for 2023/24, which includes a proposed 12.3% rates rise. This works out to an average of \$8 per household per week and would apply from 1 July 2023.

The budget prioritises continued investment in essential infrastructure, resilience, and climate action. More information is available here: [Wellington City Councillors approve draft annual plan budget](#)

Public transport is part of the work programme of Greater Wellington Regional Council. If you have concerns about public transport, you may wish to contact them directly [Greater Wellington Regional Council – Contact form \(gw.govt.nz\)](#)

- 1. What proportion of my rates goes to what projects?**
- 2. How did you prioritise the projects?**

Information on the proportionality of rates to service is publicly available. It can be found under our Long Term Plan (LTP): [Our 10-Year Plan - Volume two \(wellington.govt.nz\)](#) Please see page 94 of the LTP. Further on in the LTP is detailed analysis of each activity class.

Please see the attached which was sent out with rates invoices in August 2022 which provides details on significant projects and how rates are broken down in each area.

- 3. What savings have you made to reduce my rates bill?**

Council faces significant cost pressures from increased inflation rates, depreciation costs, increased cost in borrowing and rising insurance costs. To help manage these cost pressures, Council has agreed to:

- Defer any new additional funding matters to the 2024-34 LTP for consideration
- Delay debt repayments (for covid related borrowing costs)
- Delay leaky homes rates funded provision
- Utilise some prior year accumulated surpluses to offset the rates increase
- Additional organisational savings
- Increase user fees and charges for 2023/24 in line with the Revenue and Financing Policy to ensure those that benefit from a service pay an appropriate portion of the costs.

The draft Annual Plan was discussed at a recent Council meeting, which included the budget. The minutes of this are available on our website below, the budget is discussed on page 13 which includes approaches to offset cost pressures:

[Minutes of Kōrau Tōtōpū | Long-term Plan, Finance, and Performance Committee - 23 February 2023 \(wellington.govt.nz\)](#)

- 4. How much do we pay WREDA each year?**
- 5. How much do we pay the Council Controlled Organisations each year?**

The payments are not a set amount and change each year; therefore, we have provided the most recent figure.

CCO (Council Controlled Organisation)	2022/23 Operating Grants
Basin Reserve Trust	\$735,000
Experience Wellington	\$8,405,000*
Karori Sanctuary Trust	\$1,122,000
WellingtonNZ (WREDA)	\$13,432,000
Wellington Zoo Trust	\$3,752,000

*NB: Does not include annual Experience Wellington Rental Grant. Total = Experience Wellington Operational Grant + Carter Observatory Operational Grant

Wellington Water™

Please note that this excludes depreciation and any allocated costs, this is only the costs invoiced by Wellington Water Ltd for operating, maintaining, renewing, and upgrading the city's three waters network.

Financial year	OPEX (Operating costs, maintenance, and repair)	CAPEX (Capital Expenditure) (renewing and upgrading the city's three waters networks)
2022/23	\$35,893,310	\$61,995,288

You may also find the below publicly available reports useful:

Page 80 of the annual report [Wellington City Council Annual Report 2021/2022 - Volume 1](#) which includes Economic Development Performance.

Page 59 of the annual report which outlines Council investment in controlled entities: [Wellington City Council Annual Report 2021/2022 - Volume 2](#)

Information on the funding and performance of CCO's is available in each of their Annual Plans.

6. How many staff does the WCC employ, what are their titles, and what are their salary ranges? How much does WCC spend a year on staff?

Staff information and breakdown is available on page 142 of our Annual Report: [Wellington City Council Annual Report 2021/2022 - Volume 1](#)

Our salary ranges and job descriptions are available on our website in response to a previous request: [irc-3809-pay-bands-response.pdf \(wellington.govt.nz\)](#)

7. Why buying a \$13m car park building in Newtown was important?

Wellington City Council has not recently purchased a parking building in Newtown; however, a purchase was made for 474-unit titled carparks in an existing parking building on Tory Street. Please see below regarding the Tory Street parking building. If you require different information, please let us know.

The Council voted to purchase 474-unit titled carparks the Century city parking building in Tory Street for \$13 million at a meeting on Thursday 15 December 2022.

The minutes from the Council meeting are available on our website [Minutes of Te Kaunihera o Pōneke | Council - Thursday, 15 December 2022 \(wellington.govt.nz\)](#) however, the section regarding car parking was public excluded under section 48(1)(a). Publicly excluded minutes from Council meetings are unable to be released without further consultation and process as this requires permission from the Chief Executive to lift the public exclusion. Please advise if you require this and we can advise a timeframe in providing this to you.

It is intended that the Council would operate the building as part of the Council's wider parking activity. This is consistent with the strategic direction of the Council's Parking Policy and will support Council to manage the expected changes to on-street parking because of the implementation of

Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) and other initiatives that will redefine the parking landscape across the city.

It will provide short-stay off-street parking, which will then allow for better access to the increasing number of retail and hospitality offerings in and around Tory, College, and Jessie Streets.

The car parks would initially be operated as a mix of short term and monthly leased car parks. However, changes to that model over time are envisaged with the potential to convert a percentage of the parks to support the Council's wider objectives. This could potentially include dedicated EV (Electric Vehicles) charging stations, dedicated car share parking, cycle/e-cycle charging and parking.

Please note, we may proactively release our response to your request.

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

Kind regards

Claudia Holgate
Senior Advisor, Official Information