

## **Rates Remission Review**

**Meeting:** Council Briefing  
**Date of meeting:** 14 October 2020  
**Reporting officer:** Christine Toms, Revenue Manager

### **Purpose/Ngā whāinga**

This report provides Elected members with an overview of the existing rates remission policies. It discusses potential changes and reasons for considering any changes to the existing policies. The report seeks feedback as to whether existing policies should be reviewed at this time and whether new policies could be introduced alongside the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.

### **Context/Horopaki**

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) provides that a Council must adopt a policy on the postponement and remission of rates on Māori freehold land, and that a Council may adopt a rates remission policy and/or a rates postponement policy.

Adopted policies must be reviewed at least once every 6 years, using a consultation process that gives effect to the requirements of section 82 LGA. The existing Policies are attached.

Kaipara District Council policies were last reviewed in November 2017 and these were adopted alongside the Long Term Plan in 2018.

### **Discussion/Ngā kōrerorero**

#### **Māori Freehold Land Rates Postponement and Remission Policy**

There were no proposed changes to this policy at the last review in 2017. The Local Government (Rating of Whenua Māori Amendment Bill) has not yet passed through Parliament, but has been through the Select Committee stage. An incoming Parliament will need to vote to reinstate it. It is recommended that the current Maori Freehold Land Rates Postponement and Remission Policy remain unchanged until after the Rating of Whenua Māori Amendment Bill is introduced, at which time the policy can be fully reviewed, taking the legislative changes into consideration.

Attachment C shows that during the 2019/2020 rating year there were only two properties in the district that received rates remission in relation to this policy. Additional resourcing is enabling more focus in this space, with the expectation that the number of properties receiving rates remission will increase.

#### **Rates Postponement and Remission Policy**

This Policy received minor changes at the last review in 2017. With the recent changes to the organisational structure it is timely to amend any reference to the General Manager Finance to that of General Manager Sustainable Growth and Investment.

Staff have researched the policies of a number of Councils to see what others offer. These Councils were: Auckland, Far North, Stratford, Tararua, Taupo, Western BOP and Whakatane. There are a number of similarities among policies. Notably 4 of the 7 Councils have similar rates postponement for financial hardship policies, but only one other has a remission for financial hardship policy. Attachment C shows that Kaipara District Council currently has no remissions for either of these policies.

The green cells in the table below indicate common policies that these other Councils share with Kaipara District Council.

	Auckland	Far North	Stratford	Taranaki	Taupo	Western BOP	Whakatane
Postponement for Financial Hardship							
Remission for Financial Hardship							
Remission of Penalties							
Remission of UAGC							
Community, Sporting and Other							
Miscellaneous Purposes							
School Sewerage Charges							
Water leak							

As shown above, only one other Council provides a policy for Miscellaneous Purposes. It should be noted that whilst Attachment C highlights that last year there were no properties receiving remission for this reason, that a remission under this policy has been provided for the current rating year.

### Possible Additional Rates Remission Policies

To support Kaipara District Council Community Outcomes it may be appropriate to consider additional rates remission policies. Other Councils provide rates remission for a variety of other scenarios, such as: Land Subject to Protection for Outstanding Natural Landscape, Cultural, Historic or Ecological Purposes (Far North), Remissions for Biodiversity (Indigenous Vegetation, Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna and Wetlands (Stratford), Remission for Promoting Business Development (Stratford).

### Next steps/E whaiake nei

Staff are seeking Council direction on the depth of review of current rates remission policies and whether additional policies should be introduced alongside the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan.

### Attachments/Ngā tapiritanga

	Title
A	Māori Freehold Land Rates Postponement and Remission Policy
B	Rates Postponement and Remission Policy
C	Policy Summary