



PSA 

Local Government

Kāwanatanga-ā-Rohe

PSA submission guide

Auckland Council annual budget 2023/24

This guide is to help you make a submission on Auckland Council's proposed annual budget for 2023/24.

For each question we've provided:

- The option we recommend choosing from the options available in the submission form
- Some ideas about the types of comments you may want to make in response to each of the questions.

A few tips to start with:

- You don't need to answer all of the questions, so don't be put off doing a submission if there are questions you don't know how to answer.
- Answer the questions in your own words. This is much more useful than just copying and pasting what we've suggested, although you can use our suggestions as a guide.
- You can write as much or as little as you like.
- Try to be specific and use examples from your own experience (eg, about which services you're particularly interested in, why they're important to you, and what it would mean to lose them).

You can make your submission, and find out more about the proposed budget, [here on the Auckland Council website](#). **Submissions are due by 11pm Tuesday 28 March.**

Question 1 - Operating spending reductions

What is your preference on the proposed operating cost reductions?

We recommend choosing either:

"Do not proceed with some reductions and instead further increase rates and/or debt", or
"Do not proceed with any reductions and instead further increase rates and/or debt".

This is probably the most important question of all, so we encourage you to answer it. If the proposed cuts go ahead they will have real impacts on all kinds of services, events, groups and organisations that rely on this money; and they will cost jobs.

Here are some things you might want to talk about in your answer:

- The midst of a cost-of-living crisis isn't the time to cut back on services, it's a time to invest in the collective good.
- Some of the services facing cuts are ones that help our lowest income and most vulnerable people: services that help youth into employment, address homelessness, help people understand their rights and access vital services. In a cost-of-living crisis these services are needed more than ever.
- Some of the services facing cuts are ones that make our communities resilient and connected - exactly what we need in the face of the kinds of emergencies and events that have occurred in recent times.
- Council workers are part of the community too, and the wages we pay them go back into our community. The proposed cuts put their jobs at risk.

You may also want to:

- Give examples of specific services that are under threat, and why they're important to you.
- Give examples of you you'll be affected by cuts in services.

Question 2 - Amending Auckland International Airport Limited (AIAL) Shareholding Policy

What is your preference on this proposal to change the AIAL shareholding policy to enable the sale of all Auckland Council's shares?

We recommend choosing the option: **"Don't change the policy, keep all our shares and further increase rates and/or debt"**.

Here are some things you might want to talk about in your answer:

- Selling off shares provides a one-off return but cuts off any future income Aucklanders could receive from this asset.
- Once we sell off our shares in this asset it will be very difficult to get them back.

Question 3 - Managing rates and debt

What is your preference on our proposal to manage rates and debt?

We recommend choosing the option: **"Other"**.

Here are some things you might want to talk about in your answer:

- The council should consider raising general rates beyond the 4.66% (or an average of around \$3 per household per week). This amount is below inflation, which means that in real terms it's not just failing to keep up, it's going backwards.
- To put it in perspective: it would take a rates increase of around \$5.30 per household per week above what's currently proposed to entirely address the council's budget deficit. The council needs to consider at least bridging some of the gap between what's proposed and what's necessary to avoid cutting services and jobs in the community.
- No one likes paying more in rates, but it's important we invest in the things we need and the things that make Auckland a well-functioning, resilient city where people want to live.

- The Water Quality Targeted Rate and the Natural Environment Targeted Rate should not be frozen. These rates could contribute around \$50 million per year towards addressing Auckland’s budget deficit.
- Auckland Council has relatively low levels of debt (when compared to the debt-to-revenue ceiling) and a strong credit rating. This is our backup for a rainy day, and this is quite literally Auckland’s rainy day.

You may also want to:

- Say if you’d be willing to pay a bit more in rates to make sure we kept some of the services that are important in the community.

Question 4 - Storm response

What is your preference on our proposal to manage the impact of future storms?

We recommend choosing the option: **“Proceed with the proposal to increase our operating budget by around \$20 million each year”**.

Here are some things you might want to talk about in your answer:

- This spending is absolutely necessary to help keep us safe from the effects of future storms and flooding.

Question 5 - Local board priorities

We don’t have recommended answers for this section. The answers depend on which local board area you live in, and what priorities your board has set.

Question 6 - Changes to other rates, fees and charges

We recommend supporting each of the proposals in this section.

Question 7 - What else is important to you?

Do you have feedback on any other issues? Or is there anything else you would like to give feedback on?

This is your opportunity to cover anything else you want to say.