

This advertisement is authorised by the Hauraki District Council

Our information is hot property

What can I do about the cows mooing in the paddock over the back fence? It's really loud and disturbing.
How can I get a registered name on a boat?
Who do I get to tarseal my driveway?
Where can I get some rat baits for free?
Which is the best cafe in town?



These are just some of the unusual information requests our customer services team members have received – and though none relate directly to Council services, we were able to help with some of them!

More commonly, people want to know about various fees and charges, applying for consents, noise control, or using Council halls, and every day we are asked for property information. Often, perhaps at the suggestion of a real estate agent, the inquirer will simply request “the property file” for a specified address.

However, while we sometimes hold considerable information about a property in a combination of paper and digital forms, in other cases we may have very little. One reason for this is the present Hauraki District Council inherited the records of its predecessors that included the Hauraki Plains and Ohinemuri County Councils, and Paeroa and Waihi Borough Councils; and we also acquired records for Kaiaua when that area was transferred into Hauraki from the Franklin District in 2010. Each of these authorities had different information requirements.

Another big factor is the age of the property. Prior to the 1980s, not as much information was stored. Particularly scant detail was kept about state houses and railway houses.

But there are exceptions, such as when an old house has had significant alterations and the appropriate consents have been issued. Or we may hold a particular piece of information you need, like a floor plan or drainage plan. Please do ask!

For a residential property, if we have only a little information we can email you the documents for free. If we have significant information, we can create a CD for you at a cost of \$20 or a memory stick for \$30. Prepayment is required.

If the property is commercial, we can send you a quotation.

Before you purchase ANY property, we advise reducing the risk of hidden surprises by getting a LIM (Land Information Memorandum) report from the Council. This tells you what the Council knows about a property and any issues that may affect it – for instance whether the building has passed its final inspection, whether it's connected to Council water and sewerage, or prone to flooding. So it's well worth the \$200 investment! A LIM is issued within ten working days, or within three working days if you require it urgently. An urgent LIM request costs \$350.

Beware of the yellow invader

It may look harmless growing on our roadsides, but when yellow bristle grass ‘jumps the fence’ it poses a serious threat to pasture.

The Council is already planning its summer spray campaign against the invasive annual weed, beginning in October when germination starts. Though this may seem a long way off, farmers need to implement their own parallel control strategies for the roadside spraying to be effective.

What's the problem? Yellow bristle grass is unpalatable to stock after the seed heads emerge, from about mid-January until the first frost. So animals avoid it, meaning pasture is under-utilised. Meanwhile the seeds are rapidly further dispersed by animals, water, soil movement, machinery, and through contaminated hay or maize brought into paddocks. Once established, the species is notoriously hard to remove, even with a combination of hand weeding, herbicides, and early topping of seeds.

Yellow bristle grass thrives in pastures that are weakened over winter or early spring, and reaches a height of 25 cm to 45 cm. But on open land the young leaves often grow along the ground, and the weed can be difficult to spot until it produces a distinctive spiky seed head. By then, the seed is probably dropping for next season. The glyphosate spray we use will not kill the seeds once the seed head has fully emerged, so timing is important!

We encourage farmers to learn to recognise yellow bristle grass and plan now for controlling it.

More Information and photos can be found on the websites <http://www.dairynz.co.nz/feed/pasture/pests/yellow-bristle-grass> or <http://agpest.co.nz/?pesttypes=yellow-bristle-grass>.



Why have my rates gone up when my valuation hasn't?

Rates are based on property valuation, right?

Answer: This year's revaluations are just one factor in calculating rates. Fixed ‘per property’ charges across the District or a ward make up a large part of most people's rate bills. These are not value-based – because services like reserves upkeep or cleaning public toilets cost the same and provide the same benefit whether you live in a palace with sprawling gardens or a humble bach.

The value-based portion of your rates bill tries to fairly spread the cost of services such as roading. But if your valuation goes down or stays the same, your rates bill won't necessarily follow suit. Rather, your property value determines your share of the rates needed to run the Hauraki District.

Imagine the total value of all properties as a pizza, divided into different sized slices. Your neighbour's property is worth more than yours so his piece of the pizza is larger.

Then you receive your rating revaluations. The value of your property has dropped by 4%, but so has the value of every other house. Therefore, your proportion of the total pizza stays the same, so there will be no change in your value-based rates.

However, if at the same time it costs more for the Council to provide certain services – say, footpaths – you will still pay the same percentage but the whole pizza and each of its slices will be bigger.

If you're still puzzled about how your rates have been calculated, get in touch with us at the Council. We know that changes can be tricky to understand, and welcome any questions.

Understanding your property valuation

It used to be known as a “GV” or Government valuation. Now your property valuation, which the Hauraki District Council has independently assessed every three years, is called a Council rating value or “RV”. But despite its name, it is only one factor in determining your District and Regional Council rates.

The RV has three main components. The **capital value** is an estimate of the probable price that would have been paid for the property as at date of valuation on 1 July this year. The **land value** is the probable price that would have been paid for the land only. The **value of improvements** is the difference between the two, reflecting the added value given to the land by assets such as buildings or landscaping.

Objecting to a valuation

If you believe your new rating value does not accurately reflect the market worth of your property, we suggest first asking the Council about your concern. We may be able to provide clarification about an issue.

If you then wish to lodge an objection, this must be submitted in writing by the deadline date specified on the valuation notice, on the official form available from Council offices or from our website.

In conjunction with our contracted valuers, the Council will then reconsider your RV in the context of your reasons for objecting.

Franklin Policies Revoked

At the meeting of 29 July the Council decided to revoke 24 Franklin District Council policies and strategies that apply to the Kaiaua area.

Since 1 November 2010 when the Auckland Council was formed, Kaiaua has been included in the Hauraki District. Before that date, Kaiaua was part of Franklin District Council, who had 159 plans, policies, strategies and bylaws. After the amalgamation, we were legally obliged to enforce these for the Kaiaua area alone.

The majority of the policies, plans and rules were revoked when we took over the Governance of Kaiaua in 2010. Others were revoked during reviews of our own similar policies or were replaced by new policies contained within our Hauraki Long Term Plan.

There are still a handful of the Franklin District Council policies remaining as active policies, which are an integral part of the Franklin section of the District Plan. These will eventually be revoked when they are merged with the equivalent Hauraki section documents. This will occur in conjunction with a future Plan Change to merge the Franklin and Hauraki sections of the Hauraki District Plan.