

## What is a unitary authority?

A unitary authority is a territorial authority that also has the powers and functions of a regional council.

## What is the unitary group?

There are six unitary authorities in New Zealand. However, two of those, Auckland and the Chatham Islands, occupy their own council groups. Therefore, the unitary group consists of the remaining four: Gisborne District Council, Nelson City Council, Marlborough District Council, and Tasman District Council.



## Council profiles

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## Group comparison tables

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**Note:** You can access council profiles or group comparison tables directly by clicking (or using “CTRL click”) on the hyperlinked title (e.g., “Reference profile” or “Nelson City Council”).



Demographics	What is this?
Population for 2024 (no.)	Number of people ordinarily resident in the council area
Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	Percentage change in population between 2023 and 2024
Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )	Total surface area of land within council boundaries



Rates revenue	What is this?
Change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	Actual and forecast percentage changes of total rates revenue (including growth, penalties and remissions, and metered water revenue) from year to year. These are <b>unlikely</b> to reflect real rates increases for households and businesses.
Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	
Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)	



Debt*	What is this?
Credit rating (and rating agency) for 2025	Independent opinion of the capability and willingness of a council to repay its debts, reflecting the council's financial strength or creditworthiness. Not all councils have credit ratings.
Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	Total debt, less liquid assets, over cash earnings (such as rates and other revenue, excluding certain contributions). A higher percentage generally indicates a greater reliance on debt.
Net debt/total revenue change for 2023 to 2024	Actual difference in net debt/total revenue from year to year (i.e., not a percentage change of the previous percentage)
Debt headroom for 2024	Net debt/total revenue remaining until a council reaches its borrowing limit with the Local Government Funding Agency



Operating expenditure	What is this?
Actual operating expenditure in 2024 (\$000)	Total amount spent on operations (e.g., salaries and utilities)



Personnel	What is this?
Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	Total full-time equivalents (working at least 37.5 hours per week)
Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)	Total personnel costs (excluding elected member remuneration)

Capital expenditure by activity for 2024 (%)



Percentage of total capital expenditure for each activity group (e.g., roading) in 2024



Capital expenditure	What is this?
Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	Total amount spent to acquire or upgrade assets (such as equipment or buildings)
Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	Actual capital expenditure divided by planned. Less than 100% indicates a council has not spent as much as planned.
Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)	Sum of forecast capital expenditure for the next three years

Balanced budget	What is this?
Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	Outcome of dividing council revenue by operating expenditure (excluding certain contributions, assets, gains or revaluations). Less than 100% indicates that operating expenses are greater than revenue, as defined in regulations.
Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	
Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)	

\*The Local Government Funding Agency supplied results for debt measures.



Demographics	Result	Group median
Population for 2024 (no.)	53,000	53,700
Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	1.3	1.3
Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )	8,385	9,001



Rates revenue	Result	Group median
Change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	8.1	9.1
Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	11.4	12.3
Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)	10.6	10.0



Debt	Result	Group median
Credit rating (and rating agency) for 2025	Unrated	AA-
Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	107.7	120.5
Net debt/total revenue change for 2023 to 2024	41.1	15.3
Debt headroom for 2024	67.3	151.5

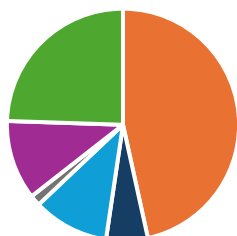


Operating expenditure	Result	Group median
Total operating expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	239,775	192,600



Personnel	Result	Group median
Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	389	355
Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)	31,186	31,510

Capital expenditure by activity for 2024 (%)



- Roading
- Wastewater
- Water
- Stormwater
- Flood protection
- Other capital



Capital expenditure	Result	Group median
Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	91,049	88,037
Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	130	108
Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)	456,176	336,141

Balanced budget	Result	Group median
Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	127	119
Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	109	98
Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)	106	101

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- [Annual plans](#)
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Demographics	Result	Group median
Population for 2024 (no.)	51,600	53,700
Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	1.6	1.3
Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )	10,458	9,001



Rates revenue	Result	Group median
Change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	9.9	9.1
Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	13.2	12.3
Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)	9.6	10.0



Debt	Result	Group median
Credit rating (and rating agency) for 2025	AA- (S&P)	AA-
Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	42.5	120.5
Net debt/total revenue change for 2023 to 2024	9.1	15.3
Debt headroom for 2024	247.5	151.5



Operating expenditure	Result	Group median
Total operating expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	182,790	192,600



Personnel	Result	Group median
Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	319	355
Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)	30,616	31,510

Capital expenditure by activity for 2024 (%)



- Roading
- Water
- Flood protection
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Other capital



Capital expenditure	Result	Group median
Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	84,320	88,037
Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	81	108
Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)	357,982	336,141

Balanced budget	Result	Group median
Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	125	119
Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	102	98
Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)	110	101

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Demographics	Result	Group median
Population for 2024 (no.)	54,400	53,700
Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	0.2	1.3
Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )	422	9,001



Rates revenue	Result	Group median
Change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	8.3	9.1
Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	16.6	12.3
Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)	7.4	10.0



Debt	Result	Group median
Credit rating (and rating agency) for 2025	AA- (S&P)	AA-
Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	133.3	120.5
Net debt/total revenue change for 2023 to 2024	20.2	15.3
Debt headroom for 2024	156.7	151.5

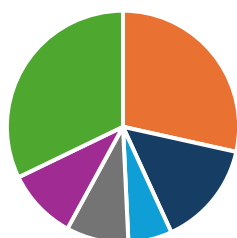


Operating expenditure	Result	Group median
Total operating expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	178,690	192,600



Personnel	Result	Group median
Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	327	355
Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)	31,834	31,510

Capital expenditure by activity for 2024 (%)



- Roading
- Wastewater
- Water
- Stormwater
- Flood protection
- Other capital



Capital expenditure	Result	Group median
Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	85,025	88,037
Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	95	108
Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)	314,300	336,141

Balanced budget	Result	Group median
Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	101	119
Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	83	98
Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)	95	101

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Demographics	Result	Group median
Population for 2024 (no.)	59,800	53,700
Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	1.2	1.3
Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )	9,616	9,001



Rates revenue	Result	Group median
Change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	12.1	9.1
Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	10.3	12.3
Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)	10.3	10.0



Debt	Result	Group median
Credit rating (and rating agency) for 2025	AA- (S&P)	AA-
Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	143.8	120.5
Net debt/total revenue change for 2023 to 2024	10.3	15.3
Debt headroom for 2024	146.2	151.5

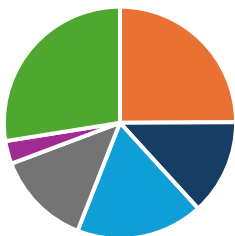


Operating expenditure	Result	Group median
Total operating expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	202,410	192,600



Personnel	Result	Group median
Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	383	355
Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)	38,130	31,510

Capital expenditure by activity for 2024 (%)



- Roading
- Water
- Flood protection
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Other capital



Capital expenditure	Result	Group median
Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	104,374	88,037
Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	121	108
Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)	266,379	336,141

Balanced budget	Result	Group median
Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	112	119
Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	93	98
Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)	90	101

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- [Annual plans](#)
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## Demographics

Unitary group	Population for 2024 (no.)	Population change for 2023 to 2024 (%)	Land area for 2025 (km <sup>2</sup> )
Gisborne District Council	53,000	1.3	8,385
Marlborough District Council	51,600	1.6	10,458
Nelson City Council	54,400	0.2	422
Tasman District Council	59,800	1.2	9,616
<b>Group median</b>	<b>53,700</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>9,001</b>

## Rates revenue

Unitary group	Change from 2023 to 2024 (%)	Forecast change for 2024 to 2025 (%)	Forecast change for 2025 to 2026 (%)
Gisborne District Council	8.1	11.4	10.6
Marlborough District Council	9.9	13.2	9.6
Nelson City Council	8.3	16.6	7.4
Tasman District Council	12.1	10.3	10.3
<b>Group median</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>

## Debt

Unitary group	Credit rating for 2025	Net debt/total revenue for 2024 (%)	Net debt/total revenue change from 2023 to 2024	Debt headroom for 2024
Gisborne District Council	Unrated	107.7	41.1	67.3
Marlborough District Council	AA- (S&P)	42.5	9.1	247.5
Nelson City Council	AA- (S&P)	133.3	20.2	156.7
Tasman District Council	AA- (S&P)	143.8	10.3	146.2
<b>Group median</b>	<b>AA-</b>	<b>120.5</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>151.5</b>

For more information, please see reference profile, landing page content on methodology and limitations, and glossary.



## Operating expenditure

Unitary group	Total operating expenditure for 2024 (\$000)
Gisborne District Council	239,775
Marlborough District Council	182,790
Nelson City Council	178,690
Tasman District Council	202,410
<b>Group median</b>	<b>192,600</b>

## Personnel

Unitary group	Staff numbers for 2024 (FTE)	Personnel costs for 2024 (\$000)
Gisborne District Council	389	31,186
Marlborough District Council	319	30,616
Nelson City Council	327	31,834
Tasman District Council	383	38,130
<b>Group median</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>31,510</b>

## Capital expenditure

Unitary group	Total capital expenditure for 2024 (\$000)	Actual/planned capital expenditure for 2024 (%)	Forecast total capital expenditure for 2025 to 2027 (\$000)
Gisborne District Council	91,049	130	456,176
Marlborough District Council	84,320	81	357,982
Nelson City Council	85,025	95	314,300
Tasman District Council	104,374	121	266,379
<b>Group median</b>	<b>88,037</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>336,141</b>

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## Capital expenditure by activity in 2024 (%)

Unitary group	Roading (%)	Waste Water (%)	Water (%)	Storm water (%)	Flood protection (%)	Other capital (%)
Gisborne District Council	46.6	5.8	10.6	1.5	11.1	24.5
Marlborough District Council	45.2	7.8	14.1	1.2	6.6	25.0
Nelson City Council	28.5	14.7	6.1	8.7	9.9	32.2
Tasman District Council	24.9	13.3	17.7	13.3	3.2	27.5
<b>Group median</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>26.3</b>

## Balanced budget

Unitary group	Revenue/operating expenses for 2022 (%)	Revenue/operating expenses for 2023 (%)	Revenue/operating expenses for 2024 (%)
Gisborne District Council	127	109	106
Marlborough District Council	125	102	110
Nelson City Council	101	83	95
Tasman District Council	112	93	90
<b>Group median</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>101</b>

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