

# LINDSAY WINDSOR ALGRA

## **Rates**

We acknowledge that Regional Council rate increases have been amongst the lowest in our region, however, local government rates are increasing in excess of CPI. Ratepayers are in a cost-of-living crisis. Growth cannot be an excuse as it is simply a factor you will have to deal with.

### **How will you manage Rates increases?**

1. Central Government Grants
2. Reduction in consultant spending
3. Wise investments

### **Comments (200 words max):**

Our budget is around \$200million, Auckland recently said they would spend \$800million on 8 raised rail/road crossings based on what they call an increase in productivity. Not sure how they increase productivity when you just get stuck in the next set of traffic lights, but this highlights an underlying issue with both councillors and MPs not knowing the value of a dollar and appeasing lobby groups. If the Transport Minister is going to throw money around like confetti then he better get his checkbook ready because I'm coming for a large sum.

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## **Debt**

Debt has been the easy option for local government entities to resort to in order to hold rates down in the face of inflation, growth, and a need to be re-elected. Councils such as Hamilton and others have had rating downgrades pointing to a failure by Councils to prudently manage their finances.

### **How will you deal with debt?**

1. Consultation with lower rates
2. Opting for Grants rather than Debt
3. Using debt as a last resort rather than the first option

### **Comments (200 words max):**

The concept of a poison pill is creating the conditions in which those who come after you will swallow said pill and die. Council and Government based debt is a bit like this, tying the hands of elected officials so they can't keep their election promises, hence to me debt should be avoided. Now I see you have partners such as Kiwi Bank and Trusts, perhaps they would like council related debt, perhaps they invest in government bonds, but i am not one who is a fan of throwing money in a term deposit and then having to take on debt just so that investment can mature. I also have an issue with people thinking they have to spend their entire budget, walk around Auckland CBD or around Hobsinville point and it reminds me of playing Rollercoast Tycoon 3 where you had to spend a certain amount of money so you would spam planter boxes everywhere. Its simply a disgusting waste of rate payers money they should have returned, rather than spend it on worthless crap that would cost even more to remove.

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## Amalgamation

The amalgamation of some or all of Waikato Councils has been an issue the Chamber has been canvassing for some years. Auckland has been amalgamated, and the net result is seen as positive for their community with little diminution of democracy.

*"For the 2025/2026 rating year, Auckland Council has announced a total rates increase of 5.8%, equating to approximately \$223 per year for the average residential property."*

**What is your considered position on Amalgamation?**

☐

For amalgamation

☒

Against amalgamation

**If in favour of change, how would you implement it?**

1.

2.

3.

**Comments (200 words max):**

I would call the Auckland Super City Council a poison pill left by Helen Clark, while many would argue it was based on the concept of councils not doing the same job, i would say it was the removal of councils competing with one another to get the best value for their rate payers. The Super City Council has resulted in a massive ballooning of staff, rather than slimming it down. Skypath is a great example because if i recall 2016 you had a council engineer throw the idea away saying it was not feasible, then along comes Chris Hipkins, spends over \$54million, on an idea said to cost \$66million for Skypath, another \$33million for Seapath and we have nothing to show for it expect a lease on an empty building. Amalgamation doesn't work because of the power of lobby groups against your own experts, who you simply ignore and then waste 10s of millions. Auckland is a failing city, Auckland CBD is so broken, with parking, with climate fanatics, with AT lobbying, you can't even get a motorcycle up Queen Street. They simply removed all the safeguards to outside interference and have pillaged the ratepayers of Auckland and as a result, social engineering has been the solution to civil engineering problems. Even now they want to replace car parks at train stations with high density housing while the city suffers an unemployment issue, these people are idiots and the pecking order, the hierarchy removes people's voice. I would seriously push back against your notion of a positive outcome, you just need to look at Major Browns desperation for further capital as the problems mount, its only going to get worse and require more extreme action.

Perhaps I am missing the point of your questions, perhaps you are asking the wrong questions.