

# PAMELA CHILES

## **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. I will attempt to not increase rates by keeping the council's costs down.
2. Trim the number of specialist consultants.
- 3.

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

I will do all I can to not increase rates as many ratepayers are finding it difficult to make ends meet already. Councils are publicly elected bodies so they have to answer to ratepayers, but in recent years there have been a lot of private consultants employed by the council. They are not answerable to the public and have made decisions which are out of touch with public opinion and need. They are funded by ratepayers but they are not accountable to ratepayers. I wish to decrease the number of specialists employed by the council and create more transparency in all dealings of the council. This will have the double consequence of decreasing the expenditure of the council and promoting a more democratic process.

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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. Resolve not to go into debt even if it means making the unpopular decision to increase rates.
- 2.
- 3.

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

It is a flaw in the democratic process if councillors make popular decisions not to increase rates so that they may be re-elected. This leaves future councils in the unfortunate position of having to finance any debt incurred using ratepayers' money. It is very poor management of public funds and should be avoided by all means possible.

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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. Investigate to find areas of duplication.
- 2.
- 3.

**Comments (200 words max):**