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Metro Water bills forecast to hit $7000 a year in Wellington – before rates

Tom Hunt | The Post

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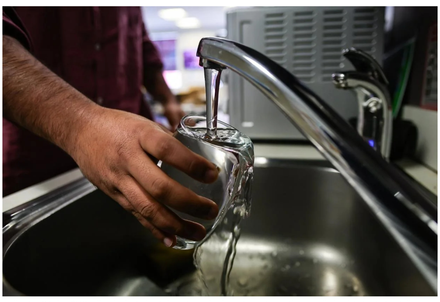


Wellington City has $143 million budgeted in its long-term plan for water meters with a pencilled in date to start installing from mid-2027.
AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / STUFF

The novelty of your new Metro Water bill looks set to lose its shine with projections showing residents will be paying nearly $20 a day to keep the taps running and toilets flushing – and then come rising rates.

Wellington City Council indicative figures show the average Wellington household will, in the second half of 2025, pay $2572 a year per water connection as part of council rates.

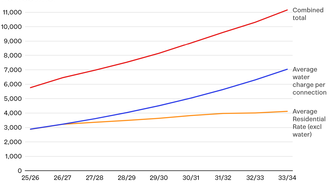
Some time soon after July next year, water will be charged separately. Water alone is expected to cost an average of $7041 by mid-2033. That is a daily increase from $7.04 to $19.20.

Meanwhile, rates are expected to drop when Wellington's new water entity, working title Metro Water, takes over next year, but continue to climb from there. Metro Water will run water in Wellington City, Hutt City, Upper Hutt and Porirua.

The total amount paid by an average Wellington household for rates plus water will be $4869 next year. That is expected to hit just over $11,000 seven years later, in the second half of 2033, when it will cost $30.58 on average per day, per household to keep the council and taps running.

Mayor Tory Whanau alleged candidates vying to take her job while promising lower rates were "likely talking about the agreed transition in water service funding that is already set to occur".

Out of pocket? How water and rates will affect an average Wellington homeowner



From July next year, the average Wellington ratepayer would get a reduced rate anyway but that was because the water rate would be charged by Metro Water.

"This shift is already on the horizon regardless of who is elected mayor of Wellington," Whanau said.

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But there will be a way for individuals to potentially keep the water bills down – water meters, which Whanau is a proponent of.

Critics say they are a way to increase charges but proponents argue they will help detect leaks and mean people pay for the water they actually use.

Hutt City Council confirmed it had budgeted to start installing meters in the next financial year while Porirua expects to install them between 2027 and 2029.

Upper Hutt has $569,000 for a business case this year but no funding budgeted to install meters.

"This shift is already on the horizon regardless of who is elected mayor of Wellington," says Wellington mayor Tory Whanau.
MONIQUE FORD / THE POST

Wellington City has $143 million budgeted in its long-term plan for water meters with a pencilled in date to start installing from mid-2027. A confirmed start date would come in September.

Mayoral candidate Ray Chung said rising residential rates plus the water bill made for "unsustainable" bills and the council needed to cut excessive spending.

He opposed compulsory water meters, which were designed to measure use and not find leaks. Most leaks were in the network while meters only read the water going from tobies to homes.

Candidate Karl Tiefenbacher said, with water rates charged separately from rates, it was "vital" to have a corresponding drop in rates while efficiently delivering core services.

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