

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE GARRY POOLE

Welcome to the Wellington City Council's 2008/09 draft annual plan, which sets out our work programme for 2008/09 and explains any differences – new projects, and changes to existing projects – since last year's plan.

We are forecasting total operating expenditure of \$328 million, requiring a 4.8% increase in the total rates take. This is below the 7.1% increase we had previously forecast. We have done this by deferring some capital expenditure and by making operational efficiencies. Reducing the rates increase further would require cuts to the services we provide.

While some new initiatives are proposed in this plan, to a large extent the increase in total rates reflects increasing cost pressures we face in delivering key services such as maintaining the transport network and looking after the city's environment. These cost pressures are due to higher oil prices and rising construction and energy costs.

This plan is a consultation document – we look forward to hearing your views on our programme and on proposed new projects and budget changes.

Finally, in the coming year we will be reviewing our entire work programme as we develop our next long-term plan, which will cover the period from 2009 to 2019.

As part of this we will be seeking your views on our work, the services – and the service levels – we provide and on issues the city will face over the next decade. This includes the balance between services and affordability. This is a key challenge, one that needs your input, to ensure that together we make Wellington even better.



GARRY POOLE

 *Our vision is of Wellington as an affordable internationally competitive city.*