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KEY DATES

Upcoming council meetings

Stakeholders, strategy and technical excellence drive changes

Waikato Regional Council has embarked on a significant change programme.

Last month, chief executive Vaughan Payne confirmed a new, streamlined organisational structure focused on stakeholders, strategy and technical excellence.

As a result, some existing positions have been disestablished and new senior roles created. Overall, management numbers have been reduced by a third from 52 to 34.

A recruitment firm has been engaged to assist with the appointment of five new positions, which include three executive roles reporting to the chief executive - Director Community and Services, Director Strategy and Science and Director Integrated Catchment Management. There are also two new third tier positions advertised - Manager of Customer and Community Partnerships and Chief Information Officer.

Applications for all positions close on Friday 11 April and it is expected appointments will be confirmed by the end of May.

Visit us at the Waikato Show!



Aka Aka Otatau Drainage
Subcommittee
Friday 11 April – 9.00am

Waikato Raupatu River
Trust and Waikato
Regional Council Co-
governance Committee
Tuesday 15 April –
10.00am

Hearings Appointment
Subcommittee (if
required)
Wednesday 16 April –
9.30am

Integrated Catchment
Management Committee
Wednesday 16 April –
10.00am

Lake Taupo Zone
Subcommittee
Tuesday 29 April –
10.00am

Council
Wednesday 30 April –
10.00am

Visit our website for [full meeting details, including agendas.](#)



Regional council and partners contain diesel spill

Waikato Regional Council has been working with its partners to deal with a diesel spill into Lake Taupo.

The spill happened early on Tuesday morning (8 April) after a truck and trailer unit crashed off state highway 1 near Hatepe, between Taupo and Turangi, and ended up on the lake shore.

It is estimated that up to 700 litres of diesel has been spilt on to the shore or into the water.

The spill was initially contained with equipment from Genesis Energy and the regional council. Taupo's Department of Internal Affairs harbourmaster and local iwi Ngati Tuwharetoa also assisted with the response.

Containment equipment has subsequently been removed and placed on standby as the council is confident the diesel will now safely evaporate naturally and pose no further threat to the environment. Evaporation will occur within approximately 24 hours, said incident response manager Derek Hartley.

"We will continue to monitor the situation in case the crash poses any other threat to the environment and oversee the clearing up of the crash site."

Your Waikato in letterboxes



**Saturday
12 April,
4pm - 7.30pm**

**Lakeside Court,
Hamilton Gardens**

BYO picnic and
enjoy the fun.

'Learn about our special
native bat making
Hamilton its home'

There's lots to see and do –
face painting, bat arts and
crafts activities, a sausage
sizzle, presentation and
videos on the big screen.

At sunset, join us as we explore the
popular bat hideouts in the Gardens.
Remember to bring a torch!

Updates about this event will be posted on
our Facebook page.
www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/projectecho
www.facebook.com/ProjectEcho



Do you cycle on Waikato's rural roads?

Waikato Regional Council is carrying out some research on rural road cycling to inform future safety work in the region. We'd love to get as many responses as possible from cyclists of all ages and abilities who use our rural Waikato roads. [Click here](#) to complete the short survey by 11 April 2014.



Real people talk about real impacts of drink driving: new video



A new 'drive sober' video clip has just been launched and highlights how much drink driving impacts the community.

Produced as part of the 'Driver sober – protect your whanau' campaign with the Kia Magic netball team, the video is one of several being released over the ANZ Championship season to raise awareness of the prevalence of drink driving and the harm it causes.

"The video is unscripted and when we filmed it at a Hamilton shopping centre and the university rec centre we had no idea what kind of response we would get from people," said Waikato Regional Council's road safety team leader, Jo Carling.

"We found plenty of people who have their own story to tell on how they've been impacted by drink driving," she said.

A young man who features in the video issues a plea to viewers not to make the mistake he made at the age of 15, which has left him in a wheelchair.

"His message is really compelling," said Ms Carling. "This campaign will be worthwhile if it stops even one person from drink driving or saves them from the kind of life-changing trauma he has suffered.

"Others who share their stories in the clip include Magic star shooter Ellen Halpenny (pictured) and Kate van der Hulst, a netball mum whose husband was seriously injured in a crash."

To hear his story and others, watch the video at www.reducetherisk.co.nz. There's also the chance to win free tickets to see the Kia Magic team in action at the next home game, being played at Claudelands Events Centre on Sunday 20 April at 7.20pm.

The 'Drive Sober' campaign involves multiple stakeholders including Kia Magic netball, Waikato Regional Council, local authorities, New Zealand Police, and the NZ Transport Agency.

Council concludes 'buttermilk lake' investigation



The Waikato Regional Council has concluded its investigation into the “buttermilk lake” discovered at Atiamuri, in the South Waikato, last October. As a result of the investigation formal warnings for breaches of the Resource Management Act have been issued to three parties.

“On the face of it this initially appeared to be a relatively serious environmental incident,” states council investigations manager Patrick Lynch. “However, now that we have looked into all of the relevant factors and surrounding circumstances we are confident that it looked far worse than it was.

“We have established that approximately 5 million litres of buttermilk was discharged onto land at the Atiamuri property over a two week period. Due to the topography where the buttermilk had been discharged, the soil type there, and some earlier earthworks that had been completed on site, we are satisfied there was no immediate loss of any contaminant to ground water or surface water.

“I think that it is fair to say that a high standard of remediation has subsequently occurred on site. All of the contaminant has been removed and lawfully disposed of.

“The discharge was a very large volume and its discharge into the storage pond was unlawful; however, taking into account the lack of adverse environmental effect and the positive response by the parties involved we have decided to issue formal warnings to the land owner, an individual involved in the management of the property, and the dairy supply company involved.

“We are also satisfied that changes to procedures at the dairy supply company concerned make a recurrence of this event extremely unlikely.”

Our picture shows the buttermilk lake part way through its remediation process, with material being pumped out.

We're partnering with others to stop spread of kauri dieback





Waikato Regional Council will be working with other agencies to prevent the spread of kauri dieback disease, detected in a forest just north of Whitianga.

It's the first time the disease has been detected in the Waikato region.

"The discovery on the Coromandel Peninsula is incredibly disappointing given the work over a number of years to keep it out of the region," said the regional council's biosecurity and heritage group manager, John Simmons.

"Our focus is now on continuing to work in partnership with other agencies to contain and prevent the spread of the disease to more stands of kauri on the Coromandel Peninsula," he said.

The discovery was made after a landowner noticed dead trees on a ridge in the Whangapoua Forest/Hukarahi Conservation Area and spoke with a member of Kauri 2000, who then contacted the regional council.

"One of our staff trekked to the location so we could obtain samples for testing from the base of three trees, with the results confirming the presence of Phytophthora taxon Agathis (PTA) or kauri dieback disease in two young trees.

"It's great that the landowner has been so proactive in alerting people, because it now enables the [Kauri Dieback Programme](#) to put measures in place to contain and prevent its spread," said Mr Simmons, who is a member of the national programme's leadership team.

The council had already increased the amount of funding for the Kauri Dieback Programme in the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan, from \$25,000 to \$72,000 a year.

The Kauri Dieback Programme has supported the [Kauri 2000 Trust's](#) prevention and awareness initiatives, and the regional council has also provided grants via its environmental initiatives fund.

Mr Simmons said Kauri 2000 has "worked hard on the Coromandel Peninsula to raise awareness of the disease and steps people can take to prevent it from impacting our precious kauri forests".

The affected Department of Conservation forest is mainly used by hunters and Conservation Minister Dr Nick Smith has closed the area to reduce the risk of its spread and assess the extent of the disease, as well as decide on its ongoing management.

[Find out what you can do to prevent spread of this disease.](#)

Waikato part of new water website





Waikato Regional Council is part of a new website displaying the results of water quality monitoring for rivers throughout the country.

The website, [Land, Air, Water Aotearoa \(LAWA\)](#), is a collaboration between New Zealand's 16 regional and unitary councils, the Ministry for the Environment (MFE), Cawthron Institute and Massey University.

A New Zealand first, LAWA displays state and trend information for over 1100 freshwater monitoring sites, giving the public access to all of the country's water quality monitoring in one place and in a common, easy to understand format.

"We're pleased to be part of this initiative which adds to the work we're currently doing to create a better connection between communities and their local waterways," said Waikato Regional Council chairperson Paula Southgate.

"Freshwater is a vital asset to our country and it's important that the public can see and understand for themselves the state of a particular river or catchment and how it may be affected by what's going on around it."

The council measures a range of parameters when assessing water quality, including E. coli, nitrogen, phosphorus, water clarity and pH. By using LAWA, you can see how a particular site, catchment or region compares to others around the country. You can also see if the site is improving, stable or degrading.

Water quality is measured at more than 100 sites in the Waikato region. Over the past 20 years, water quality was largely stable in two-thirds of the records. Some 16 per cent of records showed important improvements, while 18 per cent showed important deteriorations. Improvements were common in records of ammonia, while deteriorations were common in records of nitrogen and turbidity.

[Watch this animation, to find out more about LAWA.](#)

Farmers turnout in record numbers for Effluent Expo





Farmers turned out in record numbers for Waikato Regional Council's fourth Effluent Expo, held at Mystery Creek this month.

Over 50 exhibitors were on show indoors and outside, with the aim of supporting farmers who want to boost farm profits while minimising their environmental impacts.

As well as the regional council and key sponsor DairyNZ, there were exhibits ranging from effluent irrigators through to storage ponds and systems designers.

"This year's record turnout of more than 650 demonstrates an ever increasing commitment from farm owners, sharemilkers, farm managers and workers, and agri-industry professionals to improving effluent management," said expo organiser Electra Kalaugher, an environmental farming systems adviser at the regional council.

"It's great that the expo is really being seen throughout the industry as a one-stop shop to support farmers in upgrading their effluent systems.

"We were especially happy to note that about half the expo's visitors were farm owners, who are the decision makers for major investments like upgrading their effluent systems," she said.

"I'd particularly like to acknowledge the support of DairyNZ and also the efforts of Fonterra, Open Country, Tatua and Miraka in promoting the event to their farmers."

While the majority of attendees were from the Waikato, some farmers came from as far away as Northland, Taranaki and the Wairarapa. In previous years the expo has drawn about 500 attendees.

The expo also featured a range of seminars presented by industry experts on effluent issues. Many of these seminars were packed out and the presentations will shortly be available on the council's website, www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/forfarmers.

Ms Kalaugher said the high level of interest in the expo from both farmers and exhibitors bodes well for next year's event.

For farmers 

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Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Freephone 0800 800 401