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Hot off the press...

Our next printed issue of *Your Waikato* has been hitting letterboxes this week. The front page lead focuses on our upcoming involvement at **Fieldays**, being held next week at Mystery Creek (11-14 June). You can also read more about the environmental education and restoration projects we're funding, the results of a survey of rural road cyclists, our response to the discovery of kauri dieback on the Coromandel, how to provide feedback on work to develop a regional land transport plan...AND MORE!

[Check it out online as a PDF or e-book.](#)



QSM honour for Taupo Beef farmer

COUNCIL MEETINGS

June 2014

Regional Transport Committee
Monday 9 June – 9.30am

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Joint Committee
Monday 9 June – 1.00pm

Integrated Catchment Management Committee



Tuesday 10 June –
10.00am

Hamilton Public Transport
Joint Committee

Wednesday 11 June –
10.00am

Regional Public Transport
Plan Development
Committee

Wednesday 11 June –
1.00pm

Hearings Appointment
Subcommittee (if
required)

Thursday 12 June –
9.30am

Strategy and Policy
Committee

Thursday 12 June –
10.00am

Environmental
Performance Committee
Thursday 12 June –
1.00pm

Lake Taupo Protection
Project Joint Committee
(Taupo)
Thursday 19 June –
10.30am

Healthy Rivers Wai Ora
Committee
Tuesday 24 June –
1.00pm

Council
Thursday 26 June –
10.30am



Congratulations to Taupo Beef farmer Mike Barton, who this week received a Queen's Service Medal for services to farming and the environment. Mike and his wife Sharon, pictured above, feature in a story on page 2 of our June issue of *Your Waikato* which is available to [read online](#).

Fieldays: 11-14 June at Mystery Creek

SHARE YOUR
IDEAS
AT FIELDAYS 11-14 JUNE

Creating an even better future for Waikato requires creativity today. Share your ideas at our Fieldays® stand and be in to win a wonderful Waikato weekend adventure for two.



Every idea counts - from small and simple to completely 'out there' suggestions that could radically transform how we use the Waikato's natural resources and what we produce from them.

Visit us at PF19 in the pavilion to see what innovative things others are doing and what might work for your business. We'll also have plenty of staff on site to chat.

To win a wonderful weekend for two, put your idea on our magnetic wall when you visit us at PF19, or share your ideas online via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or our [website](#).

The winner receives*:

- One night's luxury accommodation for two at [Earthstead Villas](#) in Cambridge, including a welcome platter and organic breakfast.
- Free bike hire and shuttle service for two people to ride the Karapiro section of the [Waikato River Trails](#).
- Two free passes for the southern enclosure of [Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari](#).

* Terms and conditions apply.

Lake Waikare algae identified





This pictured substance is believed to be what's giving Lake Waikare its red colour at the moment.

It's a powder of a carotenoid – a plant pigment – called zeaxanthin which can be produced by a naturally occurring algae called *Monoraphidium*.

That's the algae recently identified by scientists at Cawthron Institute and Waikato University as causing the red blooms in the lake this year. It's believed to probably be non toxic.

“Our regular sampling of [Lake Waikare](#) indicates densities of the *Monoraphidium* algae in April were almost 300 times higher than the numbers detected there last year,” says council water scientist Bill Vant.

“The red-coloured pigment is contained in the microscopic algal cells, and if enough of these are present, the water can be very red.

“Discolouration like this is very concerning and highlights the significant ongoing environmental challenges faced by Lake Waikare and other shallow lakes in our region.”

It is unclear how long the discolouration will continue.

Mr Vant said NIWA's recent report on the Waikato River catchment for the Ministry for the Environment had highlighted how there was no quick fix to the environmental challenges faced by the lakes.

The [Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/Wai Ora: He Rautaki Whakapaipai project](#) – involving the council and river iwi partners – will set targets and limits for water quality in the Waikato and Waipa river catchments. This project, involving all stakeholders with an interest in water in the two rivers, will have implications for lakes such as Waikare and land uses that affect them.

It is likely to take many years, probably generations, before significant improvements to water quality can be demonstrated. This is simply due to the many pressures needing to be addressed and the large size of the lake and its wider catchment.

We're hiring ▶▶

For farmers ▶▶

Landowners impressed with council clean-up



Landowners near Te Aroha say they've been very impressed with the help given by Waikato Regional Council cleaning up or repairing damage after the tail end of Cyclone Ita ripped through the area just before Easter.

"They've been brilliant," said farmer Kym Davey, who farms between Te Aroha and Matamata, and who suffered two damaged bridges during the flooding and a lot of stream bank damage on her property. Rainfall was at one-in-100 year levels in places.

The deluge that hit the area came on 17 April when Cyclone Ita hit the Kaimai ranges from Waiheke Road through to State Highway 29. In 10 hours local landowners reported 250-385 millimetres fell, while the river flow at the council's Shaftesburys Bridge recording site went from 29 to 160 cubic metres a second.

Water in some 18 streams swollen by the huge downpour caused widespread damage to farmland and farm assets. A large number of slips sent debris downstream, blocking streams and causing water, silt and debris to flow on to paddocks. Farm fences and bridges were completely wiped out in places.

The cleanup began on 18 April (Good Friday) with council staff and local contractors giving up their Easter break to start putting the streams back in their channels, repairing badly eroded areas and removing trees and debris from stream beds and paddocks. Some \$180,000 has been spent so far, with the work paid for by a special fund set up for such events.

"It has taken four weeks to get to a stage where the streams are back in their channels and the more serious erosion has been repaired," said Hauraki area manager Jason Roxburgh.

"There have been up to eight diggers working up to seven days a week to complete this work to allow the landowners to get back to their normal operations. This has been a fantastic effort by the machine operators, local landowners and council staff.

"There is still more follow up work required such as fencing, fallen tree removal and less serious erosion repairs carried out," said Mr Roxburgh.



A scene on John Magill's Manawaru property after the flooding. Mr Magill said the council was on to his property on Good Friday to deal with stream problems.



The same scene on John Magill's property after council works. "We were very happy with the speed with which the council responded and the help given to get the streams back on their right course."

Teaming up for Hamilton Halo



Waikato Regional Council has welcomed Hamilton City Council as a partner in the popular **Hamilton Halo** project, which has been carrying out pest control to increase the number of tui and other native birds visiting and living in the city.

Under a **new memorandum of understanding signed last week** between the two councils and Landcare Research, HCC has committed to working with the regional council on control of rats and possums at high value biodiversity sites around the city, such as parks and gullies.

Under the agreement, the regional council and Landcare Research will provide technical advice and support to the new Hamilton City and

regional council pest control operations at the selected new sites, as well as continue with their involvement in control at the existing Halo sites outside Hamilton.

Keep up to date with the latest Hamilton Halo news on [Facebook](#).

Funding for a good cause



Waikato Regional Council's Environmental Initiatives Fund provides one-off grants to environmental restoration or education projects.

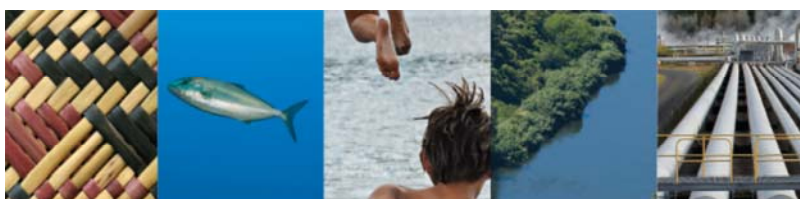
Already this year 18 such projects in the Waikato have received funding.

Among them is A Rocha NZ, which has been granted \$15,000 toward the cost of developing a comprehensive restoration plan for Karioi mountain near Raglan. A remnant population of the native grey-faced petrel (pictured), also known as oi, nests on the mountain, and the volunteer group has been working to protect it.

Visit our website to find out more about the [Environmental Initiatives Fund](#) and for details on how to apply.

And if you are looking for ways to get involved in existing environmental projects, or you want some ideas on what to do in your own backyard, visit [The Ripple Effect website](#).

Rates increase held below one per cent



Waikato Regional Council ratepayers face an average rate increase of just 0.9 per cent after deliberations on submissions to the 2014/15 draft annual plan.

Most ratepayers will pay less than \$5 extra a year for activities and services focused on our environment and economy.

The council considered 172 submissions in making its decisions during its meeting last week. The regional council has agreed to **fund the national bovine tuberculosis (TB) eradication programme** for one more year at the existing level of \$650,000. **Floodway improvement works at Graham's Creek** will also go ahead after a budget of up to \$600,000 was approved.

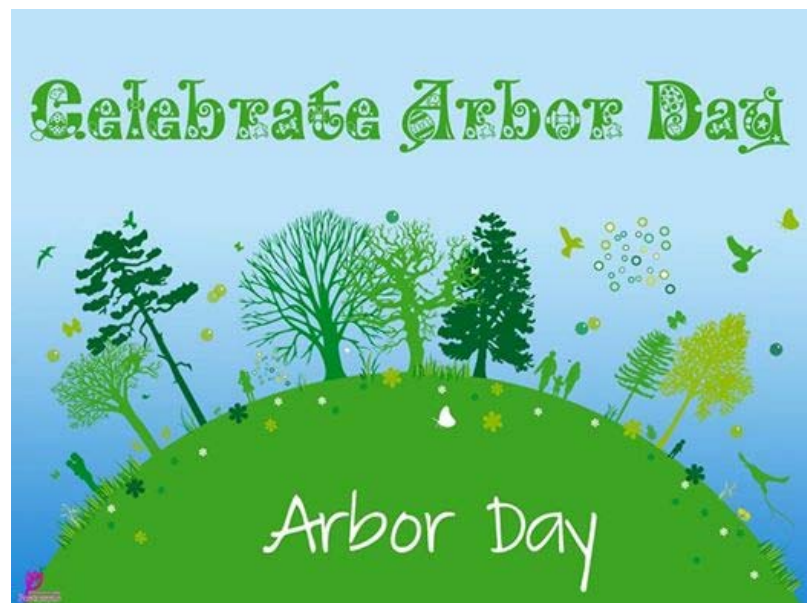
The 2014/15 budget also includes:

- an extra \$2.2 million over each of the next two financial years on a collaborative process designed to ensure the most effective plan change possible to restore and protect the health of the Waikato and Waipa rivers
- an additional \$259,000 on pest management, bringing the total spend on pest control to \$9.15 million next year
- \$300,000 for the internationally-lauded Maungatautari Ecological Island Project.

However, the **establishment of a passenger rail service** between Waikato and Auckland will be considered in the development of two transport planning documents currently under review. And a proposal to **alleviate flooding in the upper Maungahaumia Stream catchment** won't go ahead after a small community of 82 electors voted against it.

The plan will be formally adopted on 26 June 2014.

Regional council joins Arbor Day planting



Waikato Regional Council staff were among hundreds of people who helped to plant 30,000 plants at Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park as part of early Arbor Day celebrations in Hamilton last Friday. It was a bit chilly, and a bit wet, but we had fun getting stuck into the mud. See below just a few of the pictures taken on the day.



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Forwarded our e-newsletter and interested in receiving it direct to your inbox each month? [Sign-up online now.](#)



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