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#### COUNCIL MEETINGS

**August 2014**

Strategy and Policy Committee

## Bar crossing films aim to save lives



Bar crossings consistently show high accident rates in the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and the rest of the country.

So, Waikato Regional Council has joined forces with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to [produce a fantastic series of films](#) featuring Waikato harbourmaster Mat Collicott and Coastguard unit members explaining the must dos of making a safe crossing.

The films are already proving popular, with more than 3000 views in the first two weeks. The films include the notoriously dangerous Raglan, Tairua, Bowentown and Kaituna bars, as well as a general 'how to' film.

Basic tips for making a safe bar crossings include checking the weather before heading out, checking the tide times, always avoiding low tide, talking to locals about the bar conditions and contacting

Tuesday 12 August 2014  
– 10.00am

Finance Committee  
Thursday 14 August 2014  
– 10.00am

Coromandel Zone  
Subcommittee meeting,  
Whitianga  
Thursday 21 August 2014  
– 10.00am

Council meeting  
Thursday 28 August 2014  
– 10.30am

Please [visit the regional council website](#) for agendas and minutes of meetings.

Coastguard before and after doing the crossing. Everyone must wear a lifejacket, and loose items including anchors should be tied down.

“Three Kawhia bar incidents in the past two months highlight a real need for good quality education to be available to the boating public,” says Waikato Regional Council maritime services manager Nicole Botherway.

Water Safety New Zealand CEO Matt Claridge says: “These films are an easy and accessible education opportunity for skippers. It is essential to get education before attempting to cross any bar.”

## Council working with communities to create right conditions for whitebait



The whitebait season opens this Friday (15 August) and work by the Waikato Regional Council and community groups across the region are helping to create the right conditions for a good season.

Regional council freshwater ecologist Mike Lake says most whitebait species like to lay their eggs above the normal water level amongst dense, moist vegetation.

“So some of the work that’s going on around the region to fence waterways and re-establish natural conditions along the banks of rivers and streams will be helping more whitebait spawn successfully,” he says.

“The juveniles that escape the whitebait net then go in search of suitable places to call home. Clean, healthy rivers and streams with lots of cover and shade provide the perfect conditions for young whitebait to reach adulthood. And more adults, means more whitebait,” Mr Lake says.

However, introduced fish compete for habitat and prey on the fish species that make up the whitebait catch. And invasive pest plants clog up the places where whitebait live, and don’t always provide the same good habitat – especially for whitebait to lay their eggs in.

One pest plant the regional council is keen for people to keep an eye out for when they head out to their favourite whitebaiting spot this season is [yellow flag iris](#). It grows up to 1.5 metres high and as we head into spring its yellow flowers are an easy identifier.

People who spot a patch of yellow flag iris should call our biosecurity team on 0800 BIOSEC.

#### Additional information:

- The [Department of Conservation](#) regulates the whitebait fishery and its rules about the size and structure of nets, the manner of fishing, and the timeframes within which people are allowed to fish are available on its website.
- Whitebait stands must be registered with the regional council. [Download the form from our website](#), or call us on 0800 800 402 and we'll post a copy out. It doesn't cost anything and once a stand's been registered it never has to be again.
- When whitebait is running there are restrictions on what you can do in and around waterways. So landowners should call us before they remove blockages or start any works to restore areas of erosion along river and stream banks.

## Waikato biosecurity leader receives national award

Waikato Regional Council's biosecurity group manager John Simmons found it a nice touch that the trophy for his national pest animal management award was a replica of a kokako.

One of the most satisfying highlights of his work over the years, he says, has been involvement in increasing the population of the endangered forest bird in the King Country from "a few pairs" in the late 1980s to "hundreds" today.

"That increase – which we've helped achieve along with the Department of Conservation and the Otorohanga Zoological Society – shows what can be achieved through agencies working together on protecting our threatened, iconic bird species," says Mr Simmons.

The PC Nelson Memorial Award he has won is from the Biosecurity Institute, a professional body for those working in the biosecurity sector. It is given annually to those who have excelled in animal pest management.



Mr Simmons became involved in biosecurity in the late 1980s following the formation of regional councils from a disparate group of local authorities. He helped drive major changes in animal pest control to improve efficiency and reduce costs to ratepayers. He also helped develop national standards for pest control, while helping to drastically reduce the incidence of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in the Waikato through better control of possums.

“This reduction in bovine TB has been really satisfying given the way it helps protect the regional economy and the possum control involved has a range of other environmental benefits at the same time,” says Mr Simmons.

He is soon to move on from his council job and take up the interim general manager’s position at the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, which is overseeing the pest-proof bird sanctuary project around Maungatautari near Cambridge. He is also planning consultancy work.

“Waikato’s rural-based economy and its many fantastic natural places will continue to need support through control of pests like possums and rats, and I’m committed to remaining part of this kaupapa.”

We’re hiring



For farmers



## Taupo nitrogen monitoring deed approved



Waikato Regional Council has agreed to adopt and sign a deed for the long-term monitoring of the world-leading Lake Taupo Protection Project.

The decision comes as the project enters the home straight in terms of achieving its target for reducing nitrogen getting into the lake.

Nitrogen from surrounding land can leach into the water and stimulate the growth of algae which affects lake health.

The project has been steadily working towards a 170.3 tonnes a year reduction in nitrogen inputs. A report to a recent council meeting said the project was on course to this year fully meet this target.

Currently the project has secured nitrogen reductions of more than 150 tonnes a year through a variety of mechanisms, including paying people to end or change land uses. A contract for the remainder is expected be finalised before the end of December.

Efforts to reduce nitrogen in the lake have been supported by more than \$80 million from central government, Waikato Regional Council, and Taupo District Council (TDC).

After the 170.3 tonnes target is met there will be ongoing monitoring of land use to ensure the reductions are maintained. The monitoring deed agreed to will be between the regional council, TDC and the Lake Taupo Protection Trust.

A report to the council said close monitoring of a nitrogen “cap” and adherence to the individual nitrogen discharge allowances (NDAs) of landowners consented under the cap is one of the critical elements of the project to help protect the public’s investment.

Waikato Regional Council is specifically responsible for monitoring the performance of the consents authorising individual NDAs and those land use activities that are permitted under the regional policies to protect the lake, the report said.

Council chairperson Paula Southgate welcomed the progress being made: “It’s great to be getting close to meeting our target and this monitoring regime will be very important for protecting the public investment in keeping the beautiful Lake Taupo healthy.”

## **Graham’s Creek working party sets project principles**



A multi-stakeholder working group set up to help manage ongoing flooding issues at Graham's Creek on the Coromandel has established a set of project principles, including looking to achieve minimum cost.

The working group is made up of technical staff from the Waikato Regional Council and Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC), regional councillors Stuart Husband and Clyde Graf, and community board chair Bob Renton, as well as six landowner representatives.

Besides looking to achieve minimum cost, a group workshop held recently decided that principles that would guide decision-making include:

- The need to meet timeframes for council funding and agreements
- Achieving the highest level of flood protection for the greatest number of properties possible, that is cost effective and technically viable
- Providing for aesthetic values as much as possible
- Maximising ecological enhancement opportunities
- Taking an integrated catchment approach to the issues
- Providing for future planning and needs
- Being acceptable to the floodway landowner.

Meanwhile, TCDC is looking at design options for the causeway as part of the flood management approach and will have these reviewed by an independent engineer.

The working group's establishment follows the Waikato Regional Council's decision to budget up to \$600,000 for flood protection works this financial year and TCDC's commitment in its 2014-2015 Annual Plan to upgrade the Manaia Road causeway bridge. One of the conditions attached to the regional council's funding was that a joint working group refines and confirms the works programme.

## Focus on Waikato and Waipa rivers



A stakeholder representative group looking at how to restore the health of the Waikato and Waipa rivers has drafted a statement focusing on

the issues it's trying to address.

The Collaborative Stakeholder Group (CSG) represents stakeholders and the wider community in the Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/Wai Ora: He Rauaki Whakapaipai project. It is the central channel for stakeholder and broader community involvement in the project.

The CSG's draft 'focus statement' was last week signed off at the Healthy Rivers Wai Ora Committee meeting. It is:

*To come up with limits, timelines and practical options for managing contaminants and discharges into the Waikato and Waipa catchments to ensure our rivers and lakes are safe to swim in and take food from, support healthy biodiversity and provide for social, economic and cultural wellbeing.*

CSG members will seek responses to this statement from the sectors and communities they represent at a stakeholder forum in October 2014, and then from the wider community from February to June 2015.

What is Healthy Rivers:  
Plan for Change/Wai Ora:  
He Rautaki Whakapaipai?

What is the Collaborative  
Stakeholder Group?

## Tui Mine project reaches major milestone



The Tui Mine remediation work at Te Aroha has reached a major milestone, with the transfer of assets to the Department of Conservation and Matamata-Piako District Council.

The \$21.7 million remediation project at the heavily contaminated site has involved Waikato Regional Council, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), Matamata-Piako District Council (MPDC), the Department of Conservation (DOC) and local iwi.

The formal transfer of capital assets at the site to DOC and MPDC marks the final completion of construction works at the site and the

project entering a “maintenance” phase, says the regional council’s special projects manager Ghassan Basheer.

“This transfer means the responsibility for the ongoing management of the completed assets and works now formally sit with the organisations who own the land involved,” says Mr Basheer.

“However, the regional council, the Ministry for the Environment and iwi will remain involved in the implementation of maintenance and environmental programmes, as well as cultural monitoring until 2016.”

Past problems meant Tunakohoa Stream was contaminated with heavy metals leaching from the mine and it was unsuitable for swimming, fishing, drinking or irrigation. The Tui Stream was dead and unable to support any aquatic life. Both streams flow into the Waihou River, and eventually into the Firth of Thames, so the mine’s toxic legacy has extended well beyond Te Aroha.

However, post-remediation monitoring undertaken for the regional council has shown an excellent improvement in the ecological health of both the Tunakohoa and Tui streams.

## Professional, ethical approach ensures good environmental outcomes



Waikato Regional Council and design firm URS have won a prestigious award for the Tui Mine remediation work.

The Auckland branch of the Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand recently presented the Arthur Mead Award to the regional council’s river and catchment services group manager Scott Fowlds (pictured on the right) and special projects manager Ghassan Basheer.

This award recognises the project’s professionalism and ethical approach, and the extensive effort put into ensuring good environmental outcomes at the site.



## Four Dame Te Atairangikaahu Scholarship winners for 2014

Protecting the environment and helping with Māori development are goals broadly shared by the four winners of this year's Waikato Regional Council - Dame Te Atairangikaahu Scholarships.

The Waikato University students come from Great Barrier Island, Helensville, Rotorua and Turua (near Thames).

The scholarships were presented at the end of a full council meeting in Hamilton recently.

Cr Tipa Mahuta, the council's deputy chair, was impressed by the desire of the winning students to work with the environment and help their iwi.

"These scholarships are a really valuable way of supporting emerging leaders and it is great to see the way they plan to help the wider community and their iwi going forward."

The scholarships were established in 1991 to mark the 25th anniversary of the accession of Te Arikiniui, Dame Te Atairangikaahu, to pay tribute to her leadership of the Māori people and appropriately ensure the further education of the Māori people in the region at the University of Waikato.



Gina Reed, (Ngapuhi, Te Atihauni-a-Paparangi) from Great Barrier Island. \$2000. "My career plans are to work as an environmental planner to help keep Aotearoa beautiful. I would love to work for my own iwi in the future to help enhance our role as kaitiaki and help keep new



Hemi May Hill (Te Āti Awa) from Helensville. \$800. Plans a Graduate Diploma in teaching and to become a bilingual primary school teacher.

generations connected and aware of our environment.”



Kiriana Isgrove (Ngati Tamatera) from Turua. \$600. “For 2015-16 I plan to do my masters, and at this point I would love to get involved in environmental genetics to combine my love of environmental and biological sciences. Here we can find what genes are important for a particular species to be suited to a particular environment and understand how these genes are turned on but also how they make the animal better adapted for that environment. This would be important for the conservation of populations. For a career I really want to be involved in research, to discover new phenomenon in the field of genetics which will give conservation and restoration efforts a modern technique that can be implemented to enhance these efforts.”



Brendon Haaka Tangiora (Rongomaiwahine, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngai Tahu) from Rotorua. \$600. “I would like to be employed by either iwi or local government in an environmental management or planning role. I would especially like to acknowledge my tipuna by reciprocating my services back to my whanau. I am particularly interested in how I could utilise and enhance my skills to benefit the Tai-ranga-whenua section of the Waikato Regional Council.”

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