

LINK

WAIKATO
DISTRICT NEWS

August – September 2016



Waikato
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kauhīhera āa Takiwāa o Waikato

The Horotiu cycle bridge will finally link Ngaruawahia to the rest of the Te Awa River Ride.

Iconic cycle bridge to call Waikato home

The longest cycle bridge in the country, to be built in Horotiu, will link Ngaruawahia to the rest of the Te Awa River Ride which runs along the Waikato River to the Hamilton Gardens, Te Awa River Ride General Manager Jennifer Palmer says.

There has been a massive amount of collaboration over the years between a group of dedicated people, which now sees the project coming to fruition this summer.

Two years ago, the Urban Cycling Fund and the New Zealand Transport Agency got involved with the project as big funding partners and this made building the bridge realistic.

Studies were done to look at the options and to see what the benefits would be. In the end building a bridge ended up making the most financial sense. There were going to be other benefits too, including the iconic bridge becoming a tourist attraction. On a more local level children wouldn't have to ride to school along the State Highway.

Jennifer says working on the project with Waikato District Council has been a great partnership.

"Before the project, the idea was to fundraise, build the bridge and then we'd gift it to the Council. It's now very

much "our project" collectively, not just Te Awa's which has been really nice," Jennifer says.

Obviously the bridge will be an asset to those close to the river trail, but the entire Waikato district will also reap long term benefits.

"It literally connects the dots so all of a sudden you have a connection from Ngaruawahia to the Hamilton Gardens. The bridge will also be the most iconic feature of the entire 70 kilometre cycleway. To have that a stone's throw away from Ngaruawahia and in the Waikato district is really cool."

The bridge itself will be sturdy and require minimum maintenance and upkeep. Jennifer says they decided to spend the money upfront so it does not become a burden for Council and the district's ratepayers.

Jennifer says the community can also play its part in what is expected to become an exciting tourism venture. When you look at tourist hot spots

like the Otago Rail Trail or Forgotten World Adventures in Taumarunui, the community has supported the initiatives with business opportunities alongside the activities.

Once the bridge is completed this summer a special ceremony which will be open to the whole community will be arranged, so watch this space.

The stats

Cost: \$1.8million for the bridge itself.

The specifics: 140 meters long, 2.5 meters wide, cable network arch bridge made of steel and concrete.

Bridge project funders include: Brian Perry Charitable Trust, New Zealand Transport Agency, Waikato District Council, Waikato District Community Wellbeing Trust, WEL Energy Trust, Lion Foundation, NZ Community Trust, Grassroots Trust, Trillian Trust and Trust Waikato.

INSIDE

Waikato
district
elections
matter

Page 2



Coming
soon: new
look Huntly
library

Page 3



See the
person
behind the
high viz

Page 7



Biodiversity growing in Waikato district

After a year-long collaborative process with 4,500 landowners, Waikato District Council has identified about 1,000 'Significant Natural Areas' (SNAs) in the district which need protecting.

These areas include wetlands and peat lakes, lowland forest and kahikatea stands, and coastal ecosystems. While some SNAs are on public land, most are on privately held blocks.

General Manager Strategy and Support, Tony Whittaker says the good news is that landowners in the district are keen to preserve natural heritage and the district is benefitting from gains in biodiversity.

"We want to support landowners with this and this year, under the Council's Conservation Strategy, we've approved the first Council grants from a conservation fund set aside to help private landowners carry out work to protect ecologically significant sites."

In May Council approved a \$4,000 grant to a Tauwhare landowner to purchase trees and plants. These trees and plants would help the Wright's Bush Restoration Group restore a block of private bushland adjoining Wright's Bush. The habitat supports skinks, kereru, tui, ruru, bellbirds, bats and other native species. The site is protected by a QE2



In May, Council's Strategy & Finance Committee approved a grant to help the Wright's Bush Restoration Group restore a block of bushland on private land adjoining Wright's Bush.

covenant and the community group is involved in ongoing management of the area. Another grant of \$4,290 was made to Waitetuna farmers Shayne and Kathy Gold to purchase plants to enhance a significant wetland area identified on a private block as part of the SNA process.

How are SNA's identified?

The process to identify SNAs for the District Plan kicked off last year in advance of the Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) new Regional Policy Statement. This statement calls for no net loss of biodiversity value in the region.

Using WRC aerial photos to identify potential SNAs, Waikato District Council staff contacted 4,500 property owners in September and October last year for feedback. About 1,200 landowners engaged with Council staff in writing, by telephone or through one-on-one meetings.

Identifying SNAs is part of a much wider three-year process of reviewing the District Plan. This review requires Council to gather technical information to support desirable natural areas and heritage site outcomes. Council also needs to identify what infrastructure changes are needed to support growth in the region. A first draft of the new District Plan is expected to be available for public consultation by the end of February 2017.

Make sure you're enrolled to vote in this year's election

Take the opportunity to Vote Waikato!

Waikato district elections matter! They are your opportunity to make change in your community. You will soon be able to take this opportunity and cast your vote in the 2016 Waikato district elections.

Waikato District Council's Electoral Officer, Dale Ofsoske, says the people elected will be representing you, your whaanau, your hapu, your town and your community.

Voting papers are being delivered to registered voters from 16 September, with all papers expected to be delivered by Wednesday 21 September.

People who have not received their papers by then should contact the Electoral Office on 0800 922 822.

Make sure you post your vote back by Wednesday 5 October 2016 so it is received before the close of voting (noon Saturday 8 October 2016).

You can also hand deliver your vote to a ballot box during the voting period (Friday 16 September 2016 to noon Saturday 8 October 2016).

You can find a list of where the ballot boxes will be across the district at votewaikato.co.nz/vote

VOTE 
WAIKATO.

"Be the same or be the change"

Are you enrolled to vote?

Although electoral rolls have now closed, you can still enrol to vote. You will need to request special voting papers to do this.

- Visit www.elections.org.nz to enrol.
- Freephone 0800 36 76 56, or free-text your name and address to 3676.
- Visit any PostShop for an enrolment form.

The growing north

It's not breaking news that our district is growing rapidly, particularly areas in the north such as Pokeno and Te Kauwhata.

As a result, Council staff have been busy processing building consents at a rate never seen before. Building consents for new dwellings in our district rose 54 percent in the past financial year (up 117 percent from the number of new dwellings being consented three years ago). As well as this, general building consents were up 34 percent and applications for resource consents were also up 34 percent. Council has employed a number of new staff to cope with this demand.

We all expect there to be facilities where we live and Council is looking at ways we can make our communities better. We're currently speaking with Pokeno residents about a proposed dog exercise area at the Pokeno Domain as well as proposing one at Te Awa Reserve in Tamahere. Investigations

are also continuing into a possible northern recreational facility.

Another positive is the progression of the Pokeno wastewater project. Waikato District Council has agreed to the second stage of the Pokeno wastewater project which will soon go out to tender.

Council has been discussing the second stage with residents and signing people up since last year.

Planning where the pipes will go is underway and when finalised, a contractor will be sought to complete the work. Subject to contractor availability, construction is expected to start this summer with completion anticipated mid-2017.

If you haven't signed up yet and wish to, it's not too late. Council has allowed for additional connection agreements



Pockets in the north of the district are growing significantly.

from residents to be accepted up to and during the construction period.

Properties eligible to connect to the second stage and choosing to connect while construction gets underway will still be able to receive the 50% subsidy towards the costs. To find out more about this and other projects Council is working on, visit our website.

If you are interested in signing up for the new e-newsletter from the Building and Resource Consent Team, see page 8 for more detail.

Huntly library refurbishment

Coming soon, but that means we've had to move.

You may have noticed that Huntly library and Council services have relocated to a temporary home.

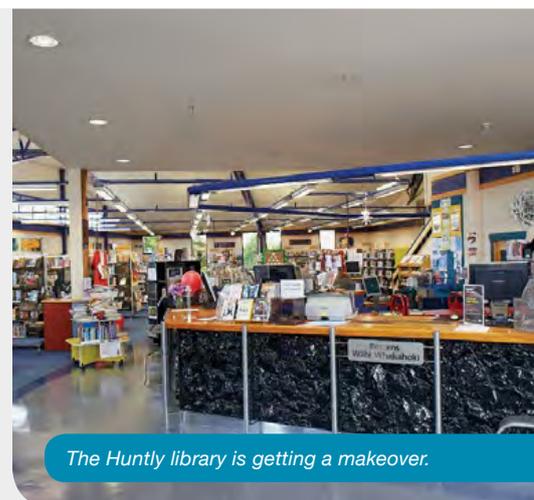
Library services will be available to the community from the Huntly Civic Centre, with other Council services located in the same building out of the former North Waikato News office. Only eftpos and cheques will be accepted during this time.

The only noticeable different during this time will be a reduced number of books and the computers will not be available – WiFi will be available for those with personal devices. The

library's SKOOB programme, and toddler time sessions will also not be running.

The Huntly library building hasn't been updated since it was constructed in the 1990s. Although it is structurally very sound, the library is looking very tired inside.

"This is our busiest site and our 'head office' for the district-wide library service. In addition to new carpet, paint and increased security measures, we will be creating an environment which speaks to Huntly's heritage.



The Huntly library is getting a makeover.

Our desire is that the refurbished space creates a pride of place and sense of belonging to staff and customers through good project management, community involvement and story-telling relevant to this part of our district," Ms Duignan says.

Greenspace



Most refuse bags have a size on them when they're purchased, usually on the fluorescent tape holding the bags together.



If you use a garden sack, it can only be filled to 60 litres, no more.

Sizing up the change

We have just been through a big refuse and recycling service change. There has been an amazing response so thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this happen. In this article we are focusing on why we've made these changes and guidelines around bag size.

Firstly, the Waste Minimisation Act, introduced in 2008, gives Council more responsibility in managing waste. The landfill levy the Government introduced as part of the Waste Minimisation Act means that the cost of sending waste to landfill will further increase in the future. So, we really need to focus on reducing what we send to landfill now in a way that will reduce the total cost to our community.

Council is required under the Act to produce a Waste Management and Minimisation Plan which shows how we plan to manage our waste in the district. Our goal is 'zero waste for the Waikato district'.

Most importantly, we can't use the default position of doing nothing or just carrying on like business as usual. We are in a very dynamic period of change. There is enormous impact to our environment and the doing nothing approach is not an option. Connecting people with what they waste through a user-pays system creates a point when you have to consider whether that 'thing' you are about to throw away has the potential to be re-used, recycled or re-purposed to something else. The Less Waste Saves More campaign aims to directly connect people with what they are wasting and asks them to consider if there is another option.

Bag size

We have three different scenarios in our district:

- Raglan uses pre-paid bags of two sizes 60/25 litres
- Tuakau township has 120 litre wheelie bins
- The rest of the district uses any bag as long as it's only filled to 60 litres **and** doesn't weigh more than 20 kilograms.

Let's clarify what using any bag means for you. We have said you can use recycled bags or purchase any bag up to 60 litres for your refuse and the bags can weigh up to 20 kilograms.

Recycled bags are calf meal sacks, chicken feed bags or dog biscuit bags. These bags range in size and can be used but must only be filled to 60 litres.

"There has been some confusion in recent weeks about bag size. What does a 60 litre bag look like if it doesn't say it on the bag?"

There has been some confusion in recent weeks about bag size. What does a 60 litre bag look like if it doesn't say it on the bag? Most bags have a size on them when purchased, usually on the fluorescent tape holding the bags together.

However, we are aware that some people prefer to use other bags such as the garden sack because they are stronger and better at preventing animals ripping the bags. These bags are usually more than 60 litres. In the case of the garden sacks, these are usually 103 litres. If you use one of these bags, it can only be filled to 60 litres. We understand the reasons people use these bags but they will only be collected if filled to 60 litres, no more.

Please be mindful that the 60 litre/20kg rule has always been the case but over time, these large bags are being overfilled and now oversized bags are orange or green stickered and are not being collected by the contractor.

Finally, all refuse and recycling must be out at 7.30am on the morning of your collection day.



Be a reading hero! Register for our reading programme at your local library.

Be a reading hero!

'Be a reading hero' is a fun reading programme that will be held in our libraries over six weeks in September and October.

The programme is designed to inspire children to explore the power of reading in a fun and interactive way. Children are invited to read books from all of our junior collections.

After reading each book, your child will fill out a page in their 'I am a reading hero' booklet with the title and author. They may also choose to write or draw something about the book. We encourage them to tell us about what they have read and to get a sticker for each reading response. To extend their reading adventure, we have further heroic activities that they may choose to complete.

All participants are invited to join us for two in-library activities during the school holidays, as well as celebrating with us at a finale party. Prizes will also be given out to participants throughout the programme.

The reading programme starts 12 September, two weeks before the September school holidays, and ends two weeks after, on 21 October. Registrations are open from the 12-24 September.

To find out more visit your closest library.

Take the lead

Our new Dogs in Libraries programme has been designed to allow children to practice their reading skills in a relaxed, non-threatening environment.

Research shows that sitting down and reading to a friendly dog has been found to help a child's fear of being judged and over time, their reading ability and self-confidence improves.

The programme has been run in other parts of New Zealand and around the world with fantastic results. It's been shown to increase a child's relaxation while reading, it's less intimidating than reading to people and it allows children to proceed at their own pace.

"We're extremely excited to bring this programme to the Waikato district," Animal Control Team Leader, Megan May says.

The Dogs in Libraries programme uses three dogs – owned by our Animal Control Officers – that have been trained and tested for health, safety and temperament. Library staff and a dog handler will be present at all times to help facilitate the session.

To express your interest, contact your local library for more information.

Our Dogs in Libraries programme will help your child build their reading ability and confidence.



Celebrating Matariki through the written word and the arts

Congratulations to the winners of our Matariki library competition.

Waikato District libraries encouraged people to celebrate Matariki (Maori New Year) through the written word and the arts, by writing a short story, poem or designing a book cover.

"Matariki is a special time of the year, which our libraries are thrilled to support,"

says Customer Delivery Manager, Angela Parquist.

"The Matariki celebration is a great way to encourage our communities to engage with their local library creatively."

The age categories were 5-9 years old, 10-15 years old and 16 years



Pictured are some of the winners of the Waikato District libraries Matariki competition at a prizegiving held in the Council Chambers last month.

and over. The competition was judged by artist Paul Bradley, Tuakau author Janet Pates and Raglan resident Nadine Rogers.

Special Delivery

We're here to help you

This series outlines our services and facilities because we aim to deliver the best. Learn about what they are, what we do, how we do it and why we do it – so we can help you get the most out of them.

Council loves to support community groups by way of funding.

A wide range of funds are available for groups who are looking to run events or work on projects.

If anything is happening in our communities funding wise, generally you'll find Waikato District Council in the mix, whether we have funded the event or project or we've simply pointed them in the right direction.

"Whether you're a community group like the Scouts, a community house or a Playcentre through to those with larger projects like the recent Te Awa River Ride, Council is here to assist you with funding," Council's Community Development Co-ordinator, Lianne Van Den Bemd says.

Council's main aim is to help those with not-for-profit purposes. We also fund capital works projects, events, small projects and provide funding towards much larger projects.

Lianne is a liaison between Council and our community groups. "We have a wide range of discretionary grants which the community can apply for. What it comes down to is, if you're doing something in your community that will benefit a number of people but you need help, come and see us, we'd

"We've also given the Menz Shed in Huntly \$10,000 as a seed fund so the group can get started with fundraising towards their new shed."

be only too happy to talk to you," Lianne says.

As an example, the Waikato District Community Wellbeing Trust Fund recently granted \$13,000 to the Ngaruawahia Community House to have their roof replaced. That was a really great project to fund, Lianne says.

"We've also given the Menz Shed in Huntly \$10,000 as a seed fund so the group can get started with fundraising towards their new shed."

"We fund right across the district. Recently we gave a few thousand dollars for a sun shade at Golden Beads

www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz



Ngaruawahia Community House staff, from left, Maine Mahara, Vanessa Rice and Anne Ramsay.

Montessori in Tamahere. Mangatawhiri Playgroup/ Playcentre has also received funding to go towards a sun shade for their sandpit."

"Women's Refuge has also been funded to attend different events and markets across the district so they can talk about the great need for Women's Refuge. The benefit to our district is really far-reaching with all of the projects we support," Lianne says.

Planning and Strategy Manager, Vishal Ramduny says Council is proud to support our community in this way, as often the many groups and organisations would find it difficult to hold events or to be involved with projects if it wasn't for the funding.

"We want to see our communities thrive."

However, Vishal wants to stress that Council is only one organisation which helps groups and not-for-profit organisations. There are other funding opportunities outside of Council which groups may not be aware of, "but we have the knowledge to direct you to the right place," he says.

It is important to note that there are set funding rounds with deadlines and criteria which must be met. There are different types of funds which are more suited to particular events and projects. For example, a new heritage project fund has recently been established which isn't for social services, but rather to support Christmas and Anzac events, placemaking and arts based projects including Matariki.

If you are interested in learning more about what types of funding Council provides and how to make an application, visit waikatodistrict.govt.nz/funding

Also, look out for the Annual Report Summary in your next LINK which is due out in early November where we will be detailing how much Council has funded groups and organisations in the past year.

See the person behind the hi-viz – they don't deserve to be abused

Waikato District Council roading staff put in long hours to work on the district's roads.

Yet it has come to Council's attention that roading and Waikato District Alliance staff, in particular those in traffic management, are suffering unnecessary abuse on a daily basis.

Foreman Dave Gardner works long hours to make our roads better and safer to drive on.

He works for the benefit of you as a road user. He and his colleagues deserve to be treated with respect.

"People need to realise we're not doing it [stopping or holding up traffic] for fun," Dave says.

"It's for their own safety as well as ours. Most just want to get to where they're going and some don't really care about the people in the middle."

He and his teams are out on the roads to make them safer and our journeys more enjoyable.

Dave has been in the roading industry for 14 years and he believes the abuse of road workers seems to be getting more frequent. "Everyone seems to be in more of a hurry."

The Horotiu father of three gets up at 5am every day. He's in the yard by 5.30am to prepare for the day. By 6am he and the crew are heading to site. The crews are on site by 7am and are ready to start work by 7.30am – the time most of us are getting ready to go out the door. On a usual day the crews don't get home until 8pm.

In particular, Dave and his team are in the business of resealing roads. This involves traffic management at each end of the site which is where the negative reaction from the public can occur. "Our traffic controllers at either end of the site, they cop it all, they get the full brunt of it," he says.

Dave says staff don't often stick with the work and turnover in the industry is high. He believes the way staff are treated by the public can be directly linked to this. "The odd time you could expect, but day in day out, it really gets to them. They're just trying to do their job; they need to make a living for their families just like you and me."

Dave's partner has experience with the industry, so she acknowledges the behaviour some members of the public demonstrate. She knows what Dave has to deal with and Dave knows she does get worried about what the public can do.

The majority of the public are great, Dave believes, but the crews do see both ends of the spectrum. There are those who

appreciate the work the crews do. Many give the crew a wave and Dave's team has even received a plate of pikelets from nearby residents.

Then there is the verbal abuse and bottle throwing. "It's the bad ones you seem to remember," Dave says.

This behaviour will not be tolerated by Council, Waikato District Alliance Manager Doug Carrasco says.

"Our staff work in all conditions to make our roads safer for all road users. This inconvenience during construction is a small price to pay for a safer experience when travelling the roads of the district, particularly during bad weather conditions.

"We only have a few months of favourable weather to complete this work and our staff have to put in a concerted effort to make this happen.

"Behind every road worker is a father, mother, partner, son or daughter who is putting in the hard yards to make our journeys safer. All we ask is for you to be patient and courteous to our people who are working in the best interest of all road users."



Dave Gardner and his colleagues deserve to be treated with respect while working on the district's roads.

The roading maintenance season starts about now, running from September through to April and depending on the weather, sometimes into May. The construction season is short due to New Zealand weather conditions.

Just Briefly



Emerge and See

As promised, here is a handy tip from our friends at Civil Defence Waikato.

Talk to your children and mokopuna about disasters.

As parents and caregivers, we should consider talking to our young people about disasters which could happen in our community and what to do to keep safe. This can help to reduce fear and anxiety and helps everyone know how to respond.



Growing Places e-newsletter launched

We've recently launched a new e-newsletter, Growing Places, from the Council's Consents and Building Quality departments. The e-newsletter has been established to help keep you informed about important information regarding building consents and resource consents in the Waikato district. In the first issue stories include staff changes, changes in Pokeno, development contributions, district plan changes and helpful tips. If you would like to sign up for the e-newsletter, visit waikatodistrict.govt.nz/growingplaces

Port Waikato erosion report released

Waikato District Council and Port Waikato residents have a plan in place should erosion continue at Sunset Beach.

The beach is an unpredictable area which could see either erosion or growth of the beach depending on a number of environmental factors.

General consensus has been reached which says that a planned retreat of public assets from erosion is the suitable response. The Port Waikato community has since identified where they would like to see assets such as the hall and car park moved to if erosion

dictates this. If erosion continues, Council and the community's preferred option includes keeping car parking as close to the existing Sunset Beach car park as possible. The purchase of private property may be needed for this option to occur. The recommendations also include relocating the community hall to the Port Waikato rugby grounds (Albie Phillips Reserve) if it has to move.



We will be liaising with local iwi to assess any cultural issues regarding the recommended options.

Dates for the next Link

Our next edition of Link will be distributed from 31 October to 5 November with your Annual Report Summary. If you don't receive your Link during this period please contact communications@waidc.govt.nz with your address details by 11 November so we can look into the non-delivery. *Please note: If you have 'No Junk Mail' on your mailbox we can't deliver the newsletter.*

Got a question about Council business

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