

## Project enhances safety at Puketaha School

Improving a section of road has led to a safer school community and an impressed principal.

The Waikato District Alliance, a joint venture between Waikato District Council and Downer NZ, identified a 230m section of Sainsbury Rd for reconstruction this year, which included the area outside Puketaha School.

As well as applying new aggregate to the road surface, the WDA built a footpath for school children, built a clearly defined car parking area and a waiting bay for children crossing the road.

The team at Waikato District Alliance is focused on improving safety on the district's roading network and safety improvement initiatives such as these are often delivered through major works programmes.

Waikato District Alliance is also trialing new road markings outside the school that is designed to create a traffic calming approach to increase drivers' awareness of the school.

Puketaha School principal Geoff Booth said the Waikato District Alliance's work has improved safety for children considerably.

"The increased number and clearly defined car parks, waiting bays, footpath and painted triangles on the road have ensured that drivers are very aware they need to slow down as they approach the school," said Mr Booth. "In addition it has reduced the stress levels



Waikato District Alliance staff members, from left, Peter Clark, Steven Uffindell, Lyndon Dixon, and Robin Mathew join Puketaha School principal Geoff Booth and pupils to celebrate the completion of a project to improve safety outside the school.

of parents. Having safe options for where you can park has meant that our community is less stressed and panicked for the end-of-day pick-up, meaning less risk of poor driving decisions."

Waikato District Alliance's Renewals Manager Steven Uffindell said the new traffic-calming road markings are also being used in Hastings.

"These have been proven to work effectively. The trial will stay in place for a year until the site receives its second coat of seal at which time feedback on its effectiveness will be collected and if there is a benefit markings will be reinstated on the new seal," said Mr Uffindell.

On completion of the project last month, Mr Booth said the working relationship with Waikato District Alliance had been first class.

"Once the project got started there were fantastic levels of communication between all members of the working team," said Mr Booth. "We felt the council listened to our needs and were very considered around their approach. We are simply delighted with the finished product. It has exceeded our expectations and as a result our children and community are benefactors of having a safe and well-marked car park and crossing area."



# Mayor's Message



A major issue we are grappling with at the moment is how to best manage our water business in the future.

The rapid population growth of our district, increased standards, an ageing infrastructure and country-wide staffing shortages in the water industry means we simply must look at alternatives to the status quo.

Our water business consists of the wastewater, stormwater and drinking water systems (the three waters) in our urban areas. It's a big part of what we do as a Council, and it's an area facing serious change and upheaval. Following the well-publicised issues at Havelock North where more than 5,500 people got very ill, we anticipate that public health expectations for drinking water will significantly increase in the future.

We've been very upfront about our own challenges with wastewater management and our Council has already committed to making major improvements to our system so we minimise any negative impacts on our environment. Given these challenges, and given we have a legal obligation to provide the most efficient and cost-effective water and wastewater services, we need to look at how we deliver these critical services in the future. It is too important to continue with 'business-as-usual' when the status quo is no longer able to deliver what we need.

We have been preparing a business case for what a Council-owned waters company, supported by our current water and environmental partners Watercare and Waikato Tainui, might look like. In effect this option would mean shifting our three waters business from our existing Council organisation to a separate company that would still be owned by Council, but be operated at arm's length with the support of our partners. The company would still be a Council organisation; it would be structured differently to provide much more focus on water issues.

Our Council will compare that business case with another model being put forward by Hamilton City and Waipa District which would

essentially see all three councils combining to share services. Once our Council has chosen a preference we can then fully dive into the detail and flesh out the full potential impacts and opportunities for our organisation and community. Before any decision is made our community would be widely consulted and information will be widely available. Water is a critical issue for everyone and everyone should have a say.

Either model, if adopted, would mean change for our organisation. But it is clear is that doing nothing is not an option. The way the industry, regulations and expectations are changing means we must act now to set ourselves up for success in the future and ensure we are delivering the very best water and wastewater services and in a way that our community can afford.

Another big issue Council is dealing with right now is our Long Term Plan. This is the chief direction setting document that all Councils are legally obliged to have. In it we shape our future, map out our future investment, and set service levels for all our activities for the next decade. We are always interested in hearing your views about the future of our district, so please check our website or email us at [info@waidc.govt.nz](mailto:info@waidc.govt.nz)

Finally from me, for those new to water meters, the user pays system to cover the costs of your water supply started on 1 July. This means the less you use, the less you pay.

For tips on how to use less water and how to test for leaks check the Waikato District Council website.

**Allan Sanson**

Mayor, Waikato District Council

## Electronic building consent applications now accepted

**Submitting a building consent application? If you are, you'll now find it much easier and quicker.**

You can now submit it electronically, as well as track your building consent online. We are now accepting consent applications that are emailed with a Dropbox link or applications saved on a USB stick. Previously people had to print out two copies and bring them to one of our offices.

"This will reduce printing costs for our customers, saving them money and time," says Building Quality Manager Merv Balloch. "It makes it much easier for people that aren't near one of our offices or don't have time to bring them in."

We have information that explains how to submit your building consent, including file type and size limits. You'll find this at:

[www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/building](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/building)

[www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz)

We've also made other changes with you in mind.

You'll now receive the BLD number (which identifies your consent number) at the beginning of the application process which will make it easier if you want to make a payment online.

It also means you can track your building consent online. Go to our website and search 'building consents'.

Chief Executive Gavin Ion says the changes will also save time for Council staff. "With a 50% increase in building consent applications over the past 2 years, it's important that we make the process as efficient as possible."

# Planning for growth in the district

**Household growth rate in Waikato district is expected to surpass Hamilton and match Auckland's growth rate over the next 26 years. The information comes from an economic profile compiled by Market Economics Consulting to support our District Plan review.**

Our new proposed District Plan is on track to be publicly notified in 2018. It will integrate the Waikato and Franklin sections into a single plan for the first time since the district's boundary changes in 2010.

Estimating household growth from population projections, the Social and Economic Profile says Waikato district can expect growth of 660 to 880 households every year leading to a total growth of 14,000 to 19,000 households by 2043 with demand for a similar number of additional houses.

While this amount of growth is small in comparison with our larger neighbours, it comes off a small base of 25,700 households in 2016. This means that our projected household growth rate of 56% to 73% for 2016-2043 will outstrip Hamilton (49-67%) and peg closely with Auckland (53-76%) over the same time.

The profile's predictions are already supported by the number of building consents issued in Waikato district which – at 716 and 796 for past two years ending March - has even surpassed Wellington, making Waikato district the fourth highest-growth area in the North Island and seventh in New Zealand.

However, the Social and Economic Profile shows that this growth pattern is chequered with the northern and southern parts of the district growing the fastest, and with lifestyle accommodation (valued at more than twice the property values of houses and flats in the district) being the fastest growing type of residential property to date.

Our district is characterised by small towns, with only six having populations of more than 2,000, but with 42 identifiable communities centred on a town, village, school or local hall.

Overall low income households (dominated by single person households) make up 20% of the total and high income households (dominated by two parent families) make up 28% of the district's households.

As a reflection of our location between two major cities, only 54% of our workers find jobs within the district, with 46% working in Hamilton, Auckland or another town.

In 2016, there were 8,666 businesses in the district employing 21,662 people and contributing \$1,471 million to the national economy.



*Waikato district can expect growth of 660 to 880 households every year leading to a total growth of 14,000 to 19,000 households by 2043.*

Farming, especially dairying, is expected to remain the main economic activity, although there will be growth in construction, retail, hospitality and arts and recreation to serve our growing population.

Other statistics (that are not a focus of the profile) show commercial development in Waikato district is moving ahead of the national average as businesses see opportunities for growth free from congestion, but within easy logistical reach of the bigger markets.

Waikato district attracted 183 new businesses and nearly 1,000 new jobs in the year to March 2016.

Posting a 2.2% growth in businesses for that year, Waikato district overtook a national business unit growth of 1.6%, while employment growth of 4.6% in the district accelerated ahead of the national figure of 2.7% for the same period.

In a separate move, the Government's ultrafast broadband (UFB) programme announced earlier this year will support our commercial and residential growth, with eight Waikato district towns part of the latest UFB rollout including Tuakau, Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Taupiri, Ngaruawahia, Horotiu, Whatawhata and Raglan.

# Youth Action

## Teenagers follow in the footsteps of China's most famous New Zealander

Waikato District Council supports a number of Youth Action Groups to develop governance and leadership skills through project planning and participation on local community boards and committees.



*Caleb Monk, left, and Tuene Henderson enjoyed a cultural and educational trip to China last month. Absent from photo: Marina Wihongi.*

Last month, three teenagers took advantage of that support when they were encouraged by Council's Youth Engagement Advisor Shannon Kelly to apply for a scholarship issued by The New Zealand China Friendship Society.

Members of Youth Action Groups in Onewhero and Te Kauwhata Caleb Monk, Tuene Henderson and Marina Wihongi checked a number of items off their bucket lists after their applications proved successful. The scholarships, worth \$2000 each, allowed the trio to experience and learn about another culture as they travelled to China for two weeks. Caleb, Tuene and Marina were able to retrace the footsteps of New Zealand author, poet and pamphleteer Rewi Alley to some of China's most spectacular cultural and historic attractions.

Alley is considered to be the most famous New Zealander in China. He contributed perhaps more than any other foreigner to the Chinese revolution. He dedicated 60 years of his life (from 1927 to his death in 1987) to his adopted country, while remaining a New Zealander at heart.

The Great Wall, Beijing's Forbidden City, the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an and Shanghai's Pearl Tower were all 'must-sees', and learning about the lives of youth in China was a 'must-do' on the Waikato teenagers' trip. The group also spent time at the Rewi Alley Research Centre and museum at Lanzhou City University gaining an appreciation for the legacy and impact Alley had on the lives of local people.

"It was way too good of an opportunity that I just couldn't pass it up," said Tuene, a sentiment echoed by Marina who was travelling out of New Zealand for the first time.

Caleb, who described receiving the scholarship as surreal was looking forward to the bright lights and the bustle of a different country, as well as the opportunity to engage with and be educated by Chinese youth about their lives.

If you would like to know more about Youth Action Group visit [www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-district/youth-action-groups](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-district/youth-action-groups)

## Youth group takes action on health

The importance of mental and physical health was shared with over 250 students recently during a Health Expo held at Ngaruawahia High School. As part of a Waikato District Council initiative 'Govern Up', the expo was organised by local youth action group Embrace the Future using \$1,000 of Ministry of Social Development grants secured by Council.



*Malakai Tengu, left, and CJ Houia check out the Ngaruawahia Tu Tangata Charitable Trust stand.*



*Chantal Roycroft, quiz winner, with the Ngaruawahia-based Embrace The Future Youth Group and Waikato District Council's Youth Engagement Advisor Shannon Kelly, right.*



*A WINTEC representative measures Grace Punga-Sullivan.*

# Staff and contractors embrace protocol for work near redoubt

An important milestone in the Pokeno Wastewater Phase II Project was reached last month when work to install the network moved into the area surrounding Queen's Redoubt.

Pokeno is an area of huge historical significance due to its position as a Maori settlement area and a key strategic point for European forces in the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s.

Given this history (detailed below), there is a potential that pre-1900 buried archaeological remains of Maori and European occupation might be found in parts of Pokeno.

Because of this potential, archaeological monitoring and cultural protocols are key parts of the Pokeno Wastewater Phase II Project.

Hero Potini of Ngaati Tamaoho and archaeologist Alexei Simmons of Simmons & Associates Ltd briefed contractors Fulton Hogan, Waikato District Council staff and local residents month about what was required during this potentially delicate section of the project.

Both teams were fully engaged and expressed an interest in what may be found as work progresses. All present at the meeting were keen to know more about the history of Pokeno.

The failsafe system, which includes accidental discovery steps to follow if a pre-1900 deposit is exposed and no archaeological monitor is at the work site, was explained.

The teams will work carefully in the area surrounding Queens Redoubt, scouring the earth for items of potential historical interest as they dig trenches for wastewater pipes.

These could include bottles, clothing, rubbish sites and military equipment.

The process is to immediately stop work if something is discovered; contact site supervisor who will in turn contact the archaeologist. A buffer zone of 3m-5m is then need to be set up and work will continue outside the buffer zone until staff are directed to return.

The present village of Pokeno is close to the sites of two Maori villages, Pokino and Mangatawhiri, which existed before the Waikato Campaign of the New Zealand Wars began. Both were abandoned when the threat of war became readily apparent.

The archaeological remains of a Ngati Tamaoho flourmill east of State Highway 1 at Pokeno attest to the agricultural history of Maori in the area.

European immigrants took note of Pokeno's agricultural potential. A few established farms here by the 1860s. Sagg's



Queen's Redoubt as it was in 1863. SOURCE: Beere, Daniel Manders, 1833-1909; *Negatives of New Zealand and Australia*. Ref: 1/2-096088-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.



The site of Queen's Redoubt today in Pokeno.

farmhouse was east of the intersection of Helenslee and Pokeno Roads and Selby's farm was south of the railway tracks.

In late December of 1861 British and colonial soldiers followed the farmers. Over the next six months, the troops were engaged in building the Great South Road and constructing Queen's Redoubt.

Pokeno was a sea of soldiers' tents and amenity structures, including canteens and stores.

On 11 July 1863 General Cameron established his headquarters at the Redoubt. The following day the Waikato Campaign of the New Zealand Wars commenced. Queen's Redoubt served as the command post for a network of redoubts until late November 1863.

Thirteen months later the soldiers that remained at Queen's Redoubt were engaged in assisting a large group of Scottish settlers who arrived on the Helenslee.

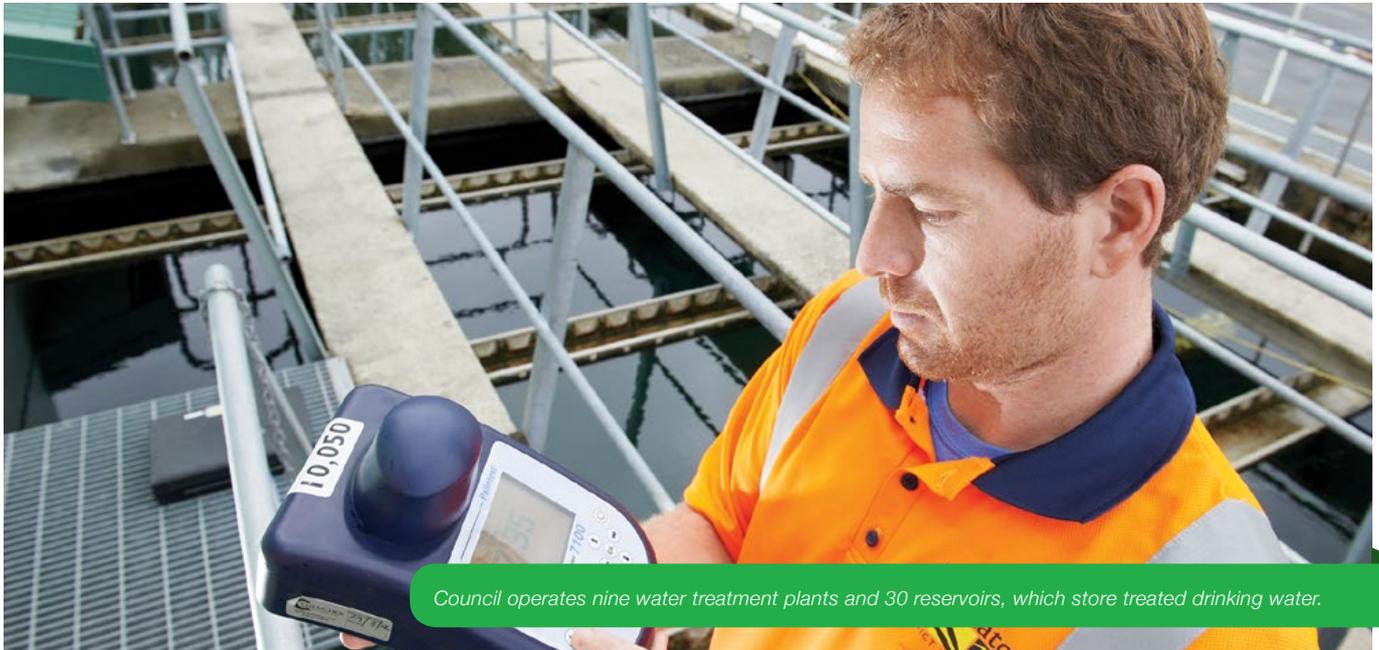
The NZ Government's Waikato immigration scheme attracted the Helenslee settlers, as well as others to the region.

The Pokeno Wastewater Phase II Project is progressing well and is expected to be completed by September 2017.

# Service Delivery

## Water is free – it's the journey that costs

Ratepayers in Raglan, Ngāruawahia and Huntly are now being charged for their water supply under the water meters system.



*Council operates nine water treatment plants and 30 reservoirs, which store treated drinking water.*

For those new to water meters, and the rest of the community, we thought it would be useful to explain what exactly you are paying for when it comes to water supply.

It is important to note that it is illegal for councils to make a profit out of water. The water itself is free. It's what happens to it once it starts its journey from source to tap that you are paying for. Under the water meter system the way you are charged for water supplied to your house is split into two parts.

The first is the fixed charge, which is charged on your rates. If you compare this to how you pay for electricity, this element could be seen as your fixed daily line charge. It covers your infrastructure costs – maintenance of pipes, pumps, valves and meters for example.

The second is the usage charge, which appears on your water bill. This is generated from the readings on your water meter. This figure, \$1.82 per cubic metre (1000 litres), covers the cost of water treatment and supply. Going back to the electricity analogy, this would be what you know as your unit charge – the amount of power you actually use.

The treatment of water is extremely important to protect the health of our community. Much like the way you have to boil water in the bush when you're camping before you drink it, we can't supply water straight from its source.

So how do we supply the community with water? The water supply process starts with the consented collection of water from

[www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz)

multiple sources including the Waikato River and groundwater sources (streams, rivers and springs). These source waters generally contain a number of impurities which require treatment before it becomes suitable for household supply. Council is responsible for ensuring the supply of 'potable' (drinkable) water to our ratepayers.

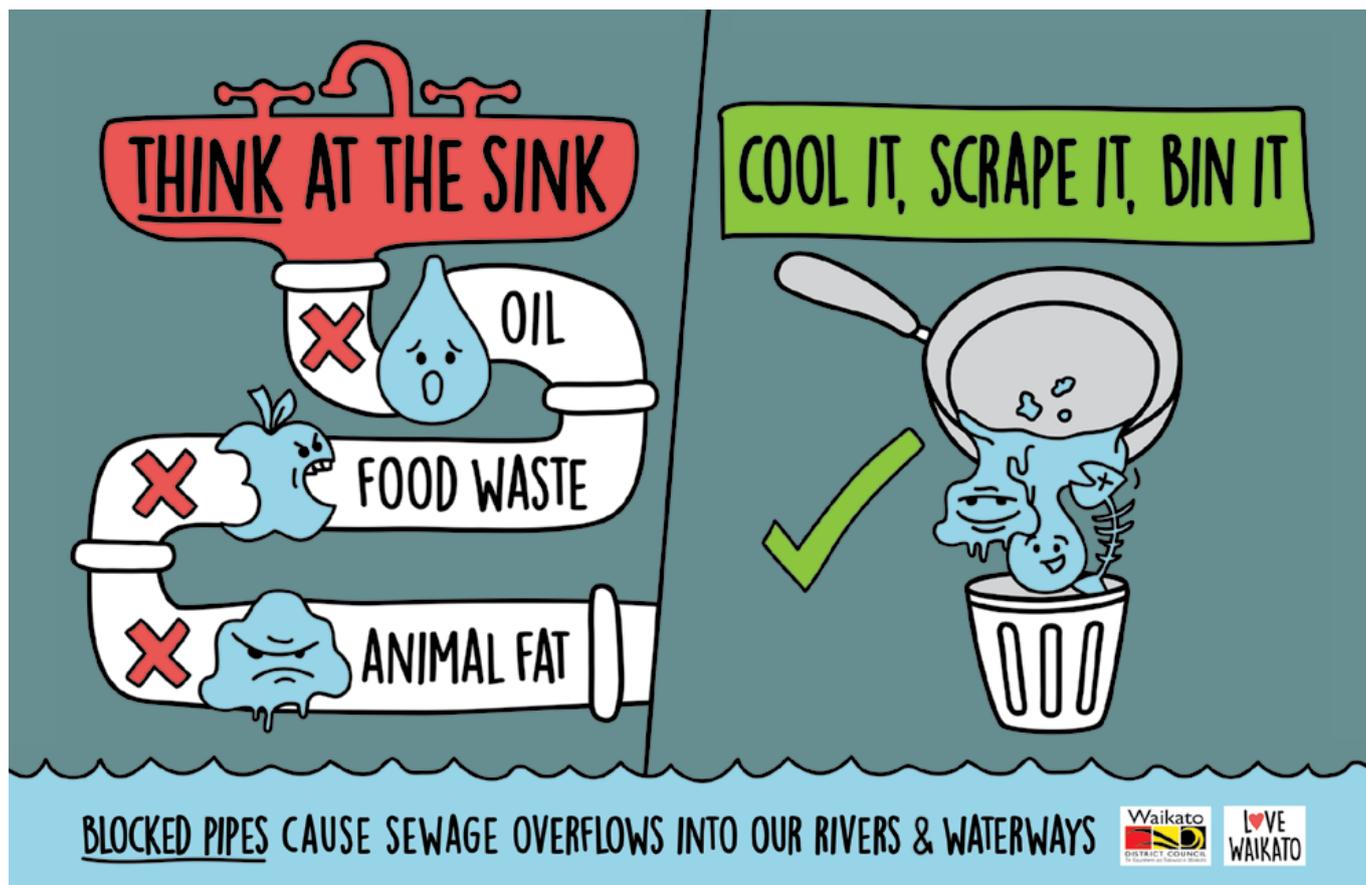
The reticulated water supply is provided through a network of intake structures, reservoirs, pump stations and an extensive underground pipe network. This water is used by rural and urban areas for domestic and industrial purposes.

We operate nine water treatment plants and 30 reservoirs, which store treated drinking water, with a total capacity of over 19,000 cubic metres. We maintain over 700 km of pipelines providing over 13,000 properties with a reticulated water service. Each plant takes untreated water and removes contaminants including suspended solids, bacteria, algae, minerals and pollutants. The end result is treated drinking water.

Using meters as a system for charging ratepayers for water serves two purposes. It encourages more efficient use of water and it's fairer than charging a flat rate for everyone – the less you use, the less you pay. Water is a precious natural resource and we encourage the community to be smart with their water use.

There are tips on how to do this at [www.smartwater.org.nz](http://www.smartwater.org.nz)

For more information, including payment options, go to [www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/watermeters](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/watermeters)



## Ponder on the porcelain and think at the sink

You don't need to engage your brain much to go to the toilet or do the washing up. But Waikato District Council is asking its residents and ratepayers to do exactly that as it embarks on a public education programme all about wastewater.

Wastewater is the water that is disposed of into sewer pipes from homes and business. It comes from toilets, sinks, showers, washing machines and industrial activities.

Council is currently running its Wastewater Overflow Continual Improvement Programme which is an extensive package of work that involves a series of projects that will improve its wastewater infrastructure. One of the more surprising statistics that the community may not be aware of is that a staggering 80% of wastewater overflows in the Waikato district from 2014-16 were caused by blockages.

The main causes of these blockages are:

- Foreign objects such as wipes, clothing, sanitary pads and nappies being flushed down toilets.
- And grease, oil and food scraps being poured down the kitchen sink.

Sewer pipes are generally only 15-20cm in diameter and clearly not designed to carry objects like wipes, nappies and sanitary pads. If cooking oil or grease from cooking meat is poured down the sink, it solidifies as it cools into a disgusting mass of congealed fat, sometimes referred to as fatbergs. As this is happening, foreign objects like wipes get stuck on to the lumps of fat and that

causes the lumps of fats to grow, eventually blocking a pipe and causing a spillage of sewage on to land or into our waterways.

While Council staff are busy improving the state of our wastewater pipes, the community can play its part in reducing the number of sewage spillages.

And it really is quite simple. Only flush the three P's down the loo – pees, paper (of the toilet variety) and poo. Dispose of things like wipes, nappies and sanitary pads in the rubbish bin. And we should all pull the plug on pouring oil, cooking fats or food scraps down the kitchen sink. You can soak up leftover oil with paper towels or let grease from cooking meat solidify in a container and put them in the bin.

Basically the message in the kitchen is – don't forget you oughta, pour nothing but water down the drain. Sewage spillages cost everyone money. They also damage our precious environment.

If Council's operational goals of improving our wastewater network can be combined with the community's efforts in the bathrooms and kitchens of their own homes, it's a win-win for the people of Waikato district and the environment that we live in and hold so dear.

# Just Briefly



## District Plan review roadshow

Our new proposed District Plan is on track to be publicly notified in 2018, but before that happens the Waikato District Council planning team will be on the road to tell you all about it and get your feedback.

The team is planning to run a series of drop-in sessions throughout the district in November to consult with you about the District Plan and how it's being developed to meet the district's needs now and in the future.

The proposed new plan will integrate the Waikato and Franklin sections into a single plan for the first time since the district's boundary changes in 2010.

Once the proposed District Plan is publicly notified in the New Year there is a further opportunity for feedback through more formal submission and hearing processes as laid down by the Resource Management Act.



## Renew library books online

You can now renew your library items online! It's a simple process; go to [waikatodistrict.govt.nz/renew](http://waikatodistrict.govt.nz/renew), complete the short form and you are done. A Library Coordinator will be in touch to confirm your item has been renewed. Give it a go next time you want to renew a book.

## District revaluation coming up

Every three years we are required to revalue all the properties in the Waikato district. We employ Quotable Value Ltd (QV) to undertake this process and the new rating value will be used to calculate your rates from the start of the next rating year, from 1 July 2018.

All property owners can expect to receive notification of the revaluation of their property in late October and will have until late November to lodge an objection.

The rating value is a reflection of what a seller might expect to receive if they sold the property at the time of the revaluation (1 July 2017) excluding chattels (eg. furniture, personal items). A change in your rateable value does not mean rates for your property will change by a similar percentage. The rating valuation is only one part in determining the total rates you will pay.

Waikato District Council does not collect more rating income as a result of increased property values or less rating income if values decrease.

## Got a question about Council business?

 [/WaikatoDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/WaikatoDistrictCouncil)

 [twitter.com/WaikatoDistrict](https://twitter.com/WaikatoDistrict)

 [waikatodistrict.govt.nz](http://waikatodistrict.govt.nz)

## Helping hand for small businesses

A small business guide for people looking to establish a business in the Waikato district has been developed by the economic development team. The free, user-friendly guide is available as an online download at [www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/guide](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/guide) and provides an overview of Council processes.

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