

February 2019

LINK



WAIKATO
DISTRICT
NEWS

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Summer photo competition winner, taken by Catherine Tafto of August enjoying the sea, sun and sand at Sunset Beach at Port Waikato.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Firstly, a happy New Year to you all. I hope you all enjoyed a break with family and friends over the festive season and the kids are now settling back into routine at school. As we move into February and Council meetings get underway it's a great time to look ahead at what the year will bring.

2019 will be a busy year for Council. In the next few months we'll be coming to you for your feedback on the Blueprints. These are important documents that will inform Council about what projects and initiatives our communities feel most passionate about. Make sure you keep an eye out for when we'll be back in your towns and make sure your voice and opinion is captured.

As I sit here trying not to melt in the heat, it's a reminder that we should all be conserving water. The Waikato district is currently experiencing water restrictions which I would encourage everyone to abide by. These restrictions are in place to help us be more mindful about the amount of water we use. Did you know that each minute you add to your shower time uses about 14 litres of water? Reducing our water use also has benefits when it comes to our water rates and how much we have to pay.

Speaking of water, our newly formed Water Governance Board is working towards establishing new management of our water network with Watercare from 1 July this year. As customers, you won't be inconvenienced and considerable savings will be made in the district over time.

As of 4 February, we're in a restricted fire season. This means a fire permit is required to light a fire in open air. You can apply for a permit at www.checkitsalright.nz. Please keep in mind that a small fire can easily get out of control. Our rural fire brigades do great work, but they've been incredibly busy this summer.

That's it from me, see you next time.



Allan Sanson

Mayor, Waikato District Council

TOP 5 SPOTS TO HAVE YOUR FISH N CHIPS

With summer well underway, check out the top 5 spots to have your fish n chips as voted by our Facebook followers.

1 Southern Cross Fisheries, Main St, Huntly

2 Jo's Takeaways, Marine Parade (Kopua Domain), Raglan "...and then eat them at Wainui Reserve."

3 Shiris Takeaways (Whatawhata Rd) in Ngaruawahia has the best chips

4 Just slightly over the boundry is Kaiaua Fisheries (who also do GF options!), East Coast Rd, Kaiaua

5 The Fish Shop, George St, Tuakau



We need more people!

You may have seen that Waikato District Council is recruiting quite a few staff at the moment. This is because in 2018 we reviewed our organisation to ensure we had the skills and capacity needed to deal with the job at hand; helping to build liveable, thriving and connected communities.

As a result of this we are doing some things differently. We overhauled our operations, took extra steps to get our teams working really well together and we have improved our community planning. But to make this change successful we need more great people. Perhaps you are one? Or you know someone who might be?

Visit www.joinourteam.co.nz for all the details.

Smart Water tips

Is your water bill above average but you don't know why? Have you thought about whether you might have a leak?

Follow Water Savings expert Chris' simple steps and find out one way or another whether you are silently losing water.

Chris' step-by-step guide:

1. Turn off any water-using appliances in your house (like washing machines & dishwashers) and don't use any water overnight.
2. Record the numbers on your water meter and take a photo.
3. First thing in the morning before using any water (including the toilet), take another reading & photo.
4. If the readings are different and you haven't used any water, you may have a leak.



Water Savings expert Chris shares some simple steps to find out if you're losing water.

HOW TO READ YOUR METER

1. LOCATE
2. OPEN
3. READ

GATE VALVE This turns off the water to your property. It can either be a red, blue or bronze tap.

WATER METER ID This number is unique to your water meter.

BLACK BACKGROUND These numbers show cubic metres used. You are charged based on cubic metres.

RED BACKGROUND These numbers show litres used (you are not charged for litres).

WATER USE DIAL When spinning this shows water is being used.

HOW TO CHECK FOR LEAKS

1. Turn off any water-using appliances in your house (like washing machines and dishwashers) and don't use any water.
2. Record the numbers on your water meter or take a photo.
3. Wait two hours or overnight then take another reading.
4. If the readings are different and you haven't used any water, it is recommended that you contact a registered plumber to locate a possible leak.

If you think you have a leak call Chris today and book in a FREE home water visit. Chris will come to your house and do some checks on your water appliances and identify leaks*. Chris can also install free water restrictors for taps and showers if needed. To book a home visit call 0800 492 452 or send an email to waters@waicd.govt.nz

*If an underlying leak is found that does not relate to your household water appliances, you will need to arrange and pay for a registered plumber to detect and find the leak for you.

For more tips and information on saving water visit www.smartwater.org.nz

How do you check your meter?

THIS IS WHO I AM

This is who I am is a feature that tells us a little bit more about our elected members.

Eugene Patterson

Name: Eugene Patterson

Ward: I'm honoured to represent the Ngaruawahia Ward.

Family: I am married to Carmen, have two children Jacob and Sarah, 1 dog and 2 cats. Carmen and I grew up here in Ngaruawahia, I have 2 sisters and my dad Stan lives with us also.

Use three words to describe the Waikato district: People, culture, community.

What are the biggest issues facing the Waikato district in the next few years? Growth, water and wastewater.

What is your favourite thing about the Waikato district? Its location, the awesome community I represent and looking out from my deck to the Hakarimata Range.

Best job you've ever had and why? Having Madison's in Jesmond Street, Ngaruawahia for over a decade. Pretty hard work at times but being able to catch up with people from all parts of our community daily as well as tourists was always rewarding.

Worst job you've ever had and why? While living in London, I had a job with a recruiting agency where I had to take three different trains to work. I was working 12 hour shifts in large freezer stores in the middle of winter. Then getting paid at the end of the week to only just break even after bills – needless to say, I didn't stay long.

What annoys you the most? Social media, especially people posting information without knowing the facts; and people posting photos of what they are eating – who cares?

If you could go to one place in the world that you've never been to before, where would it be? There are many places I would like to visit, with Cuba being high on the list.

Your favourite album: I don't have a favourite album, but I like listening to the likes of Neil Young, Pink Floyd, etc. I like going to concerts and listening to any live music.

You've got a day off, what do you do? I love going fishing, chilling with family and friends, pottering around outside or making something in the shed. And of course, a nice cold beer at the end of the day.



THIS IS WHAT I DO

Ben Wolf

This is what I do is a feature that tells us a little more about Waikato District Council staff and what they do.

Name: Ben Wolf

Family: Great Apes

Role: Ecologist.

How long have you worked for Waikato District Council?
2250 days.



Ben Wolf is Council's Ecological Planner. He plants trees and kills possums.

What does your role involve? The short answer is I plant trees and kill possums (sorry possums). I do a lot more than that of course, and it all boils down to protecting, enhancing and developing natural habitats, native biodiversity and ecological assets. There are around 2000ha of parks and reserves in the District, of which about 1400ha is natural habitat with ecological values. Council has a responsibility under the Resource Management Act to protect and enhance indigenous habitats and biodiversity – and my role is responsible for trying to find ways to do the best we can to achieve that.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your role? Seeing improvements to habitats over time, being successful in getting funding, winning awards and recognition from my peers, learning, working with other public bodies and mentoring people.

BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE WAIKATO

Bringing the world to the Waikato is a feature that tells us a little more about Waikato District Council staff who are from around the world.

Dan Su

Name: Dan Su

Job title: Operations Engineer

Country of origin and how long you lived there: I was born in China and lived there for over 25 years.

How long have you been in NZ? I first came to New Zealand in 2012 with my wife and moved to Hamilton in 2013 to continue my degree at Wintec.

What do you love about the Waikato District? The beautiful Waikato River, its natural beauty is breathtaking. There are multiple outdoor activities you can try from fishing, hiking to surfing. It's a peaceful and friendly community to live in.

What is the biggest difference between life in New Zealand and life in your country of origin? Life in China is fast and intense. Cities are growing day by day due to the economic boom. China has convenient public transport in cities, such as a bullet train, subway, bus and a bicycle- share system.



Operations Engineer Dan Su lived in China for more than 25 years but now calls the Waikato home.

People like to enjoy the nightlife, most restaurants and shopping malls are open until midnight. However, overpopulation, noise and air pollution are the most undesirable conditions in these cities.

What do you miss most about home? I miss my family, old friends, many varieties of seafood and fruits.

What's one thing about life in your home country that most New Zealanders would not know about? China is a huge country with only one time zone. In some places the sun doesn't rise until 10 am. In the past China had 5 different time zones. The government decided to set one time for the whole country in 1949. Since then, everybody uses the official Beijing time.

“China is a huge country with only one time zone.”

You need to convince someone to go on holiday to your country of origin. What do you say? There are many friendly people, go and enjoy your adventure. Eat the unbelievable street food, ride the high-speed bullet train between cities, watch an opera show, go to the top of the towering 500 meter high hotel for a drink, visit historic village on a day trip.

What has been the most challenging aspect of your role?

Funding availability, partner support, staff availability, ground truthing, politics, cultural and historical issues, landowner support, co-funding, climate pressures, CRMs, management support, edge effects, linkages, added value, stakeholder input, unforeseen issues, requests from other departments, vexatious customers and access to reserves.

Tell us something about your role that most people won't know about:

I use living organisms to fight weeds rather than using chemical sprays (where possible).

Why is Council a great place to work? Diversity, distance and dosh. A diverse habitat range to get involved in, a diverse variety of people, a diverse set of logistical, political and process issues to navigate, a wage and proximity to my home.

What's the weirdest customer complaint you've dealt with? There are so many, here are a selection of the weird and wonderful:

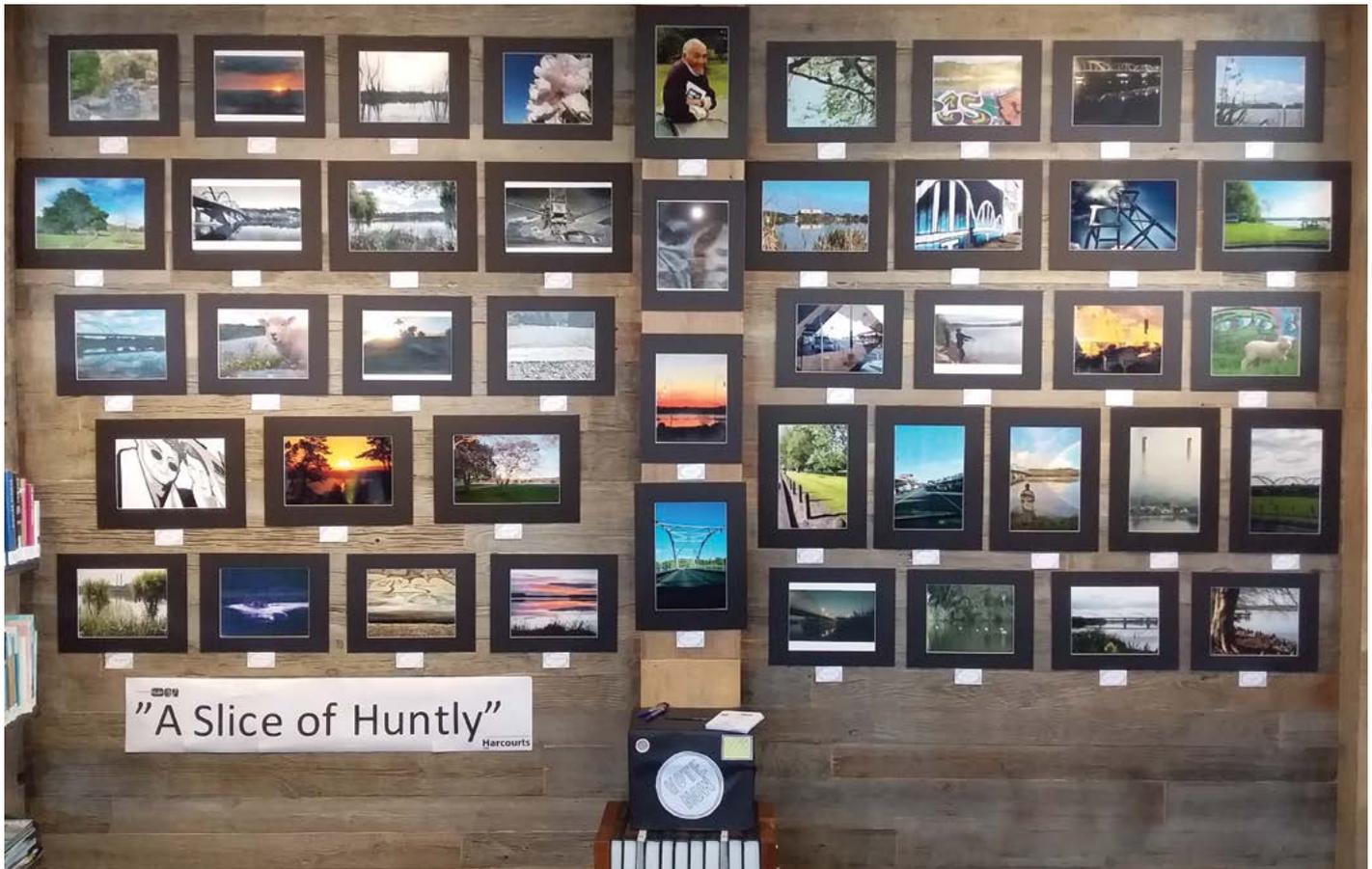
The person who does not need oxygen: *“I don't like sweeping up leaves – can you please cut down all the trees in Huntly”.*

The person who wanted glass trees: *“I am all for creating habitat, but can you please plant trees we can see through?”*

The dairy farmer whose cows don't poop: *“My drains are backing up, can you clean them? Oh and of course, none of that poop came from my farm.”*

What the best compliment you've received? There have been a few including *“My great-grandchildren will really appreciate all the work you have done.”* I've also been lucky enough to be involved in winning a number awards for this work, but to me the best compliment is seeing habitats recovering, or birds returning to habitat as it develops.

Huntly shows off its creative side



An exhibition of local photography organised by Huntly Friendship House at the Huntly library last year.

Huntly's first 'Arts in the Park' family day at Fraser Park last week shared a wide range of local talent with a supportive community.

A network of enthusiastic and talented people and groups, brought together through a growing Huntly arts development programme, manned stalls offering the opportunity to take part in activities ranging from clay and mosaics to beading, flax weaving and painting. Giant board games, food stalls, and music and dance performances rounded off a day of family entertainment.

It was a showpiece for an arts development programme that last year included more than 50 local arts and performance workshops involving about 1,400 Huntly residents, as well as an ongoing local 'placemaking' programme to rejuvenate parts of the town centre.

It's all been thanks to the work of the Huntly Friendship House working in partnership with Waikato District Council, as well as Huntly West Hub, local schools, groups, artists and volunteers, with support from Creative NZ's Creative Communities Scheme, and WEL Energy Trust.

Waikato District Council's Economic and Community Development Manager Julie Dolan says, "It's exciting to see a real community of interest in the arts developing in Huntly out of good ideas, seed funding, support from our community development team, and a lot of local effort."

Huntly Friendship House manager Victoria Kemp says, "We're doing it at a pace we can manage, and it's growing. We're now on the lookout for local talent to develop more workshops and other activities this year."

"We've also been displaying local artwork in the Huntly library – right now it's photography from our summer competition - so I encourage everyone to go to the library to see it."

She says, "We're also on a roll developing our next placemaking plans with the Huntly Community Board."

With help from the Menzshed, Huntly art club and gardening club, a bare alleyway off Main St will soon be brightened with a wall mural and planted boxes, while other local artists will be decorating meter boxes along Main St.

For more information about support available for community development go to:
www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/communitydevelopment

Ngaruawahia pools initiative a success

A throng of noise can be heard rising up from Ngaruawahia's Market St as crowds of young people enjoy cooling off.

Ngaruawahia Community Board's recent initiative to offer discounted entry into the town's swimming pool is proving a hit with the locals and they say they couldn't be happier.

Just in time for Christmas, the Community Board announced they would cover half the cost of entry for swimmers. For the remainder of the summer, entry for adults is \$2 and children just \$1 with children under 3 free. Feedback from the community also resulted in an extension of the opening hours, from 5pm to 6pm.

Ngaruawahia Ward Councillor Eugene Patterson says the Community Board were thrilled the initiative has been so well received by the community. "It's really pleasing to see so many young people and families enjoying time together cooling off this summer. Providing a safe place to swim for our people is also important to the Community Board and with this in mind, we'll be seriously considering taking this initiative on next summer too."

Feedback from the community has also seen enquiries made about running learn to swim lessons at the pools next summer. Watch this space for more info on this.

At the time of going to print, the Ngaruawahia Community Board and a raft of sponsors were gearing up to host a special Family Fun Day at the pools on Waitangi Day. Entry was free and the crowds enjoyed a sausage sizzle, activities by Sport Waikato and music by local DJ Paul Henckel. We hope you all had fun!



The Ngaruawahia Pool has been a hive of activity thanks to a great initiative by the Ngaruawahia Community Board.

Chinese mayors take tour of Xtreme Zero Waste

Late last year, a group of around 20 mayors and deputy mayors from China visited Raglan's Xtreme Zero Waste (XZW). XZW site tour guide Karen Breckon describes in her own words the experience.

"Maybe two of our guests spoke English, another two or three spoke very minimal English. I thought that for non-English speakers to engage in such a long and detailed tour indicated a very high interest level.

Their primary interest was how XZW had engaged community support since the very beginning, and how we continue to do so. I talked about the heart of XZW and our connection with the hearts of people in our community. I talked about Maui Dolphin Day and I talked about when you have people's hearts, you can make a huge amount of good things happen - an idea that really resonated with them. We discussed how XZW began, not by Council, but by families in the town who were determined to start - literally - cleaning things up.

We discussed how the leachate has since been cleaned up, and the positive impact on the harbour. We discussed the employment this created and the educational opportunities here.

They had assumed that XZW must have hired experts for each new development - especially in the horizontal composting unit. I explained that, to the contrary, we have used local knowledge, passion and experience. They were quite amazed by this and most wrote notes at this point - about engaging locals to get the work done, and also the importance of an ongoing conversation with the town as a way to hear new ideas.



Around 20 Chinese mayors and deputy mayors recently visited Xtreme Zero Waste.

They took photos of each area of the site and asked a lot of questions - wanting to know how the whole place functions, how workers are paid and if there have been issues around resource consent.

We discussed the waste hierarchy - that recycling is currently a necessary 'mop up', but also the need to engage with government and businesses to make changes at a higher level. We discussed the goal of zero waste, and I emphasised that XZW does have that goal, even though (as they commented) it looks difficult.

We talked about China's decision to stop taking the world's recycling, and I told them that XZW applauded that move - that it was time for each country to take responsibility for their own rubbish.

By the end of the tour (nearly 2 hours) many of them were obviously moved by what XZW has done and keen to look at creating similar enterprises in their home towns. In addition to presenting us with gifts from China and examples of their own plastic-bag-alternatives, many of them individually asked the translator to thank me again and to share some small personal stories about initiatives in their home towns and cities. 'Inspirational' was the key word they used to describe us.

It was a hugely enjoyable tour, and I felt that they took so much away with them. Actually though, it was quite reciprocal - I got so much from being able to share this story with people who wanted to make changes in their own homes. Lovely!"

We want to hear from you about the Blueprints

We're nearly there! It was great visiting all our communities in the later part of last year, as we heard what was important to you and what you wanted for your town and community. We're busy preparing the Blueprints and will

be aiming to come to you for feedback in March and April to make sure we've got it right. Drop-in sessions will be held across the district if you have questions, but for now keep an eye out on www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/blueprints



DP submissions summary due out

Our staff have been beavering away summarising nearly 1,000 submissions we received last year on the Proposed District Plan. The summary is due to be published early next month, and further submissions invited, before the hearings process begins later in the year. Further submissions allow for views that support or oppose the original submissions, but are limited to anyone representing relevant aspects of public interest, or who is deemed to have a greater interest in the Proposed Plan than the general public.

Launch of new Libraries app

Our libraries have launched an exciting new app that will allow you to access the library anywhere, anytime. You can download it on Google Play or the Apple App store – just search for 'Waikato District Libraries'. You can place and manage items you put on hold, or digitally browse the library and find the items you want. You can also link other family members' cards to yours.

Libraries and offices become smoke free sites from 1 March



As part of focusing on the health and wellness of our people and our communities, all Waikato District offices and libraries will be smoke free from 1 March. This new initiative aligns with the Government's goal of being a smoke free nation by 2025. Smoking and vaping has not been permitted inside our buildings for a long time, but from 1 March, staff and the general public will be discouraged from smoking and vaping in close proximity to our offices and libraries.

Kohe is famous!

One of our Dogs in Libraries stars, Kohe, is world famous! The darling Kohe features in a new book called 'Celebrating Dogs' which is a delightful collection of stories and photographs capturing the best side of dogs from all over the wider Waikato. A copy of this book can be found at each of our libraries. Next time you pay us a visit, make sure you take a look!



GOT A QUESTION ABOUT COUNCIL BUSINESS?

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Te Kauwhata

Tuakau Office

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Tuakau

Dates for the next Link:

Our next edition of Link will be distributed from 15 - 20 April 2019. If you don't receive your Link during this period please contact news@waidc.govt.nz with your address details so we can look into the non-delivery. Please note that if you have a 'No Junk Mail' sign on your mailbox we can't deliver the newsletter.