

June 2018

LINK



WAIKATO
DISTRICT
NEWS

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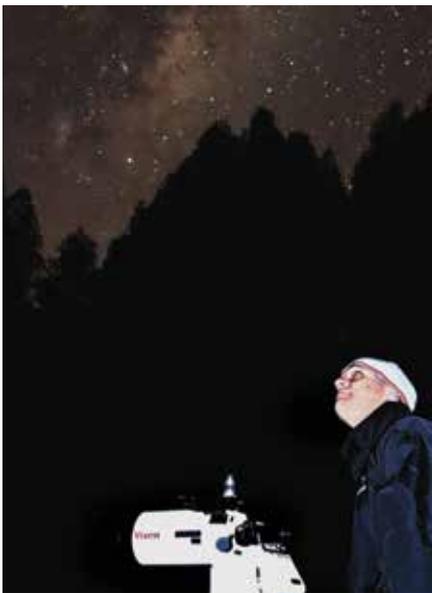
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The minor glow of Raglan's street lights compared to the orange glow of Auckland and Huntly in the distance.

LED lights lead to return of dark sky

Council has almost finished a district-wide programme of replacing existing street lights with LED lights. The benefits are well-known but our road safety engineer Gareth Bellamy reveals another that many people may not have considered.



Gareth Bellamy inspects the night sky.

For many people the greatest joy from astronomy comes from simply standing beneath a clear dark sky and marvelling at the heavens.

Today, however, a growing number of people can no longer see the true beauty of the night sky from their urban homes and even some of the brightest stars are lost in the glare of light pollution.

Sadly today, particularly in towns, a new generation are growing up that will never see the skies, we ourselves marvelled at as children.

Light pollution is artificial light that shines where it is neither wanted, nor needed.

The most obvious is in the increasing illumination of our night sky mainly from street light fixtures that shine into the sky and there it is scattered by air molecules, moisture and aerosols in the atmosphere causing the night sky to take on an orange appearance. This is known as “sky-glow” that you will have seen looking over towards towns and urban area.

Street lights using sodium bulbs waste nearly 50% of their illumination into the sky as their light is not fully “directed” to the ground, they are very costly to run and require regular replacement.

Waikato District Council is currently upgrading its entire lighting network to new LED luminaires. Not only are they significantly less costly to run, but the upgrade received an 85% funding subsidy from the NZ Transport Agency.

Benefits of LED lighting



Reduced maintenance costs
LEDs should last about 10 -15 years with little maintenance apart from cleaning.



Ability to connect individual street lights to a computerised management system. This would provide remote fault monitoring and allow for dimming of lights.



Enhancing road safety
Improved driver reaction time due to light clarity.



Community benefits
Reduced crime and more desirable light quality.



Environmental benefits
lower electricity consumption, less light spill, LEDs do not contain mercury.

But the best bit is, these lights have less than 1% light reflected back into the sky.

So a heavily subsidised upgrade, less power bills and a giant step towards getting our night skies back - a triple win!

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



The first installment of the next rating year will soon be with you. As you'll notice, there are some significant increases for some people.

In this issue of Link, over on page 3, you can read about what rates provide for your community.

What I talked about in the last issue of Link is still our number one concern – we simply can't continue to deliver the services and infrastructure that you need with the amount of money we've been collecting through rates.

The cost to deliver drinking water to your tap that is up to New Zealand requirements, as well as to provide you with a wastewater network that doesn't overflow is increasing and there is a common misbelief that just because we're Council, we can do things on the cheap. This couldn't be further from the truth – in fact - we face huge increases in the building of our infrastructure. This is because New Zealand and the district is experiencing a very buoyant market with competitive trade. Contractors we use must also meet certain standards, both in quality and health and safety, under new government legislation.

Making decisions to increase rates would always be a hard choice to make. Our communities deserve to have their services delivered in a professional and acceptable manner, but the price for this is going up. Where do we save money?

I'd like to take this opportunity to celebrate a few successes.

Our district libraries recently moved into the modern age and launched an e-collection. Working collaboratively with a number of other councils from around the country, your local library can now offer a suite of new services. If you're a library member you can access our collections 24/7 on your device for free. E-books and e-magazines are also available. Check it out online by visiting www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/libraries.

Waikato District Council has also been announced as a finalist in not one, but two Local Government of New Zealand Excellence awards.

Our North Waikato Integrated Growth Management Programme Business Case (a detailed plan between ourselves and other government organisations to plan for long term growth, land use and transport links in the North Waikato) has been announced as a finalist in the Best Practice in Governance, Leadership and Strategy category and the Te Awa River Ride - Ngaruawahia to Horotiu project as a finalist in the Best Practice Contribution to Local Economic Development award.

The winners of these awards will be announced on 16 July and my thanks must go to the staff who worked on these projects and the communities who have worked alongside us to achieve these great results.

Allan Sanson

Mayor, Waikato District Council

TOP 5 PLAYGROUNDS

Waikato District Council manage community playgrounds and skateparks, which are in most urban neighbourhoods in the district. They cater for age groups ranging from toddlers to teenagers. These facilities are free to access and are available all year round. Here are some of our favourites:

1 Dr John Lightbody Reserve Tuakau



Tuakau's John Lightbody Reserve playground

2 Te Kauwhata Village Green Te Kauwhata including the skatepark



Te Kauwhata's Village Green playground

3 Huntly Domain Huntly two playgrounds including the skatepark



4 The Point Ngaruawahia including the skatepark

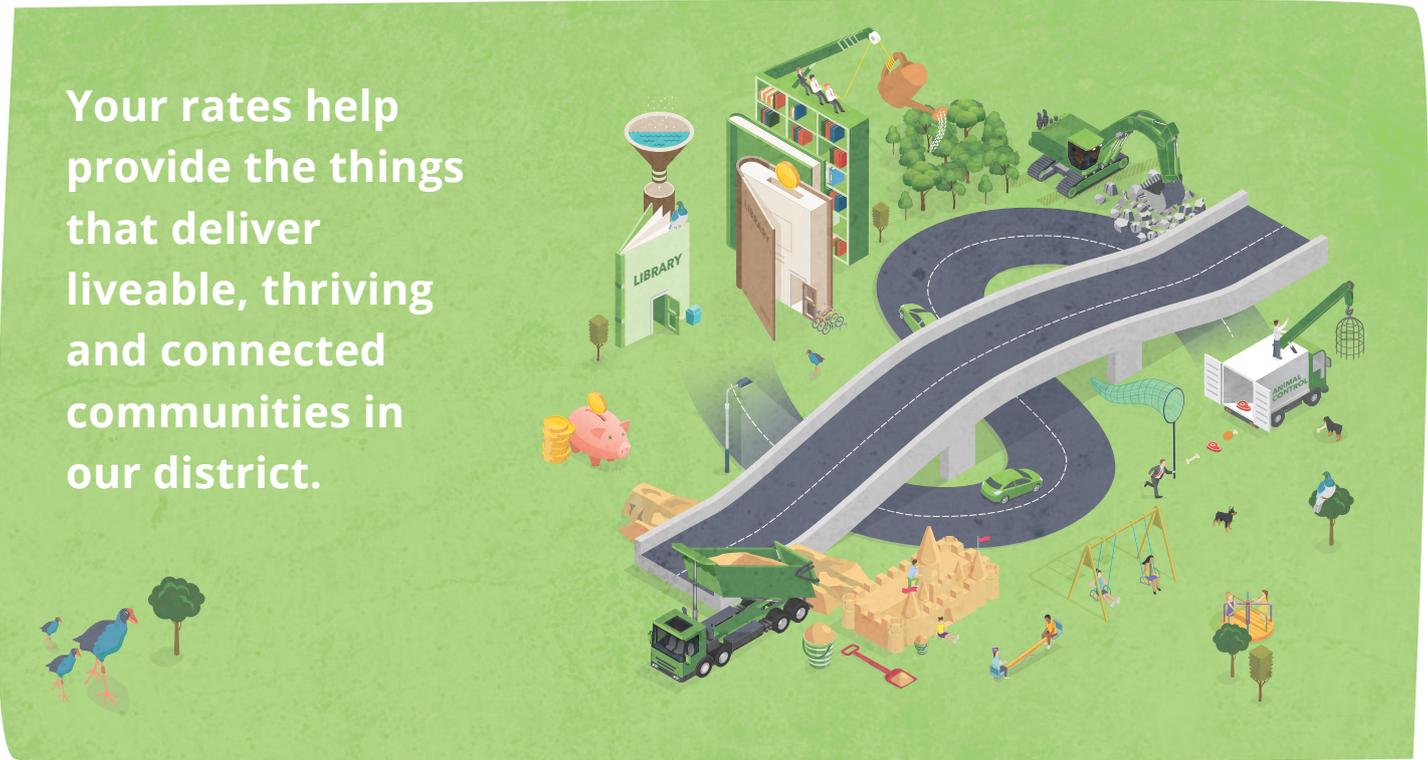


Ngaruawahia's The Point playground

5 Te Kowhai Village Green Te Kowhai

Money from rates benefits us all

Your rates help provide the things that deliver liveable, thriving and connected communities in our district.



Rates help to fund the services that are provided on your behalf to benefit us all.

These include:

- Building and maintaining local roads, cycleways and pathways
- Providing clean drinking water
- Treating and disposing of our waste water (in townships)
- Collecting rubbish & recycling
- Creating and maintaining our parks and reserves (and cemeteries)
- Running our libraries and other community facilities (e.g. swimming pools and halls)
- Maintaining an animal control service
- Ensuring local food and liquor outlets are properly licensed
- Ensuring building and development happens in a safe, planned way
- Facilitating local initiatives through discretionary funds
- Organising and facilitating events (eg ANZAC services, youth events, 'placemaking' initiatives)
- Supporting economic development and employment initiatives for the good of our district.

We've had a lot of changes in the past year that mean your rates might be changing in the 2018/19 year.

We've had a district-wide property revaluation which Quotable Value Ltd (QV) undertook in 2017. But please remember that Council does not collect more rating income as a result of increased property values or less rating income if values decrease. However, it does affect the distribution of rates between ratepayers and that means some ratepayers will pay more.

We asked what you thought about the Long Term Plan 2018-28 earlier this year and the final version of this will soon be adopted. Once the Long Term Plan is approved, rates are then set which pays for the work to be done. As you would have seen in the consultation document, there are some significant rate increases.

You can expect to receive your first rates notice in August for 2018/19.

We estimate that average residential rates in our district will be \$2,700 a year*, but some properties will be rated more and some less. You get all the services listed above, and more, for this money. We hope you agree this represents value for money, especially when you compare it with your other living costs. For example, running an average family car costs about \$3,400 (including WOF, petrol, registration and insurance), and consider what you pay for your electricity for your home for a year, or even what you might pay for phone and internet services.

**Your rates depend on what type of property you have (e.g. residential, rural, commercial), its value and location, and the services available. If you don't get water, wastewater or a rubbish collection, for example, you won't be charged for it. Ratepayers can check their property rates through Council's rating information database at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/rid.*

THIS IS WHAT I DO

Merv Balloch

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

Name: Merv Balloch

Role: Building Quality Manager and Local Controller for Civil Defence Emergency Management.

Family: My wife Lisa.

How long have you worked for Waikato District Council?

I have been at council for 15 years. I started as a building inspector in August 2002. I moved to the manager's role in 2007.

What does your role involve?

In terms of my day job I head up the building team which consists of 11 Building Inspectors, 5 Building Review Officers and 4 Administration Staff. This role has a number of challenges especially when the district is facing increases in growth.

In addition to heading the Building Team I am the Local Controller for Civil Defence and Emergency Management for our district. I am responsible for running Council's response to emergency events such as severe weather events, flooding, earthquakes etc. In the event that there are extraordinary circumstances that affect our business or our community we have introduced an Incident Management framework which includes a specialist Incident Management Team. This team manages incidents of various natures which have in the past include computer viruses and gun threats against Council and can be scaled up or down to meet the needs of any given incident or emergency right up to and including a full scale Civil Defence emergency.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your role?

Meeting the needs of our customers and getting their consents processed and out to them in a professional and timely manner with the minimum of fuss and inconvenience.

What's the most challenging aspect of your role?

Trying to predict workloads and then staff to meet the needs of our customers is a continuing challenge. As the building industry seems to go in cycles of boom and bust, having enough staff during the boom period and then finding work for them in the bust period is difficult. Trained staff are hard to find and even finding the right type of person to train into the roles is a challenge.



Merv Balloch, who is Waikato District Council's Building Quality Manager and Local Controller for Civil Defence Emergency Management, in Council's Emergency Operations Centre.

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

As Civil Defence Local Controller, it's my job to coordinate the help and the resources that will get to you in an emergency. However, folk need to do their bit to help themselves as depending on the severity of the emergency; help might not get to you immediately. It's important wherever possible that each person should have three days' worth of supplies. That includes food, water, warm clothing, bedding and don't forget your pets.

Why is Council a great place to work?

Without question it's the people. The organisation has some incredibly talented and committed people working for it and they all strive to serve our customers.

What's the weirdest customer complaint you've dealt with?

One of my staff was stopped at the side of the road doing some paperwork; he was approached by a lady complaining that the street light wasn't working so she couldn't find her neighbours place at night.

What the best compliment you've received from a customer?

That the building team at Waikato DC are the easiest and best they've dealt with. Customers appreciate we go the extra mile for them.

BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE WAIKATO

Wanda Wright

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.

Name: Wanda Wright

Job title: Committee Secretary

Country of origin and how long you lived there: South Africa, 26 years

How long have you been in NZ? 20 years.

What do you love about the Waikato district?

The rural countryside and the people.

What is the biggest difference between life in New Zealand and life in your country of origin?

Peace! Truly - it is amazing to NOT have to live in constant fear for your life (living with bars in front of the windows, locking your car doors, sleeping with a gun under the pillow).

What do you miss most about home?

The wildlife; the African animals.

What's one thing about life in your home country that most New Zealanders would not know about?

Difficult question... With the influx of South Africans into New Zealand, most Kiwis would have heard our sayings, even our 'slang' and a lot of things about the country. Something small I got really excited about the other day was seeing a medium-sized green frog in our garden! It was amazing. We used to see frogs quite a lot, even the big bull-frogs with teeth. The Afrikaans word for frog is "padda". It was very cute and reminded me of my childhood days.

You need to convince someone to go on holiday to your country of origin. What do you say?

Oh, if you love nature and animals, go to a private Game Reserve. Do an evening safari! It changes you when you're THAT close to nature and these majestic animals. That and the smell of rain on the African soil stays in your blood and in your heart.



Wanda Wright says the biggest difference between life in New Zealand and South Africa is peace.

THIS IS WHO I AM

Lisa Thomson

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

Name: Lisa Thomson **Ward:** Whaingaroa/Raglan

Family: I'm the youngest of 13, so it's big!

What is your favourite thing about the Waikato district?

It's my home, it's where I come from.

What is the biggest issue facing the Waikato district in 2018? Affordability

for our communities and balancing what we need to undertake in terms of our council functions with the resources we have. Managing the pressures of growth, forward thinking planning to ensure the best outcomes for our communities, building trust and strong partnerships with our communities.



Councillor Lisa Thomson (above, left).

Use three words to describe the Waikato district? People, community, diversity.

Favourite holiday destination and why?

We can't afford to go on holidays often, but living here in Raglan is pretty much like being on permanent holiday, especially summer time; the smell of sun dried washing, walking to the beach for a swim, hanging out at the jetty, locals having fun and loving life, the sunsets, great community and most importantly good coffee, its living life in paradise.

If you could go to one place in the world that you've never been to before, where would it be? Japan.

Worst job you've ever had and why? Selling ad space for a directory - telesales wasn't for me.

What is your favourite album of all time? Pixies 'Surfa Rosa' or Sly & Robbie 'Language Barrier'

Best film? There's too many! Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, Like Water for Chocolate, The Castle, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Boy or Life is Beautiful...

Best thing on TV? Midnight Diner.

What radio station do you listen to? Raglan Radio.

Worst thing on TV? Anything with Mike Hosking in it.

Your favourite meal? Larb Gai, spicy Thai chicken salad, the more hot chilli the better.

If you could meet any celebrity, who would it be and why?

Moana Maniapoto Jackson, Naomi Klein or Maya Angelou if she were still living.

What's your favourite sports team and why? Any of our Raglan Area School teams! It's awesome to see our rangatahi taking part in sport.

You've got a day off, so you... Relax!

District's representation to be reviewed

At least once every six years the Waikato District Council is required to review its representation arrangements, as set out in the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA). The last time we reviewed our arrangements was in 2012 so we are going to review them again in 2018 (a process which we started last year).

The review is an opportunity to take a good look at how individuals and communities in our district are being represented and if it is possible for us to make this representation even more fair and effective. Here we can make some decisions on the total number of elected members we have, whether or not we want to elect them from wards or 'at large' across the whole district, the boundaries and names of the wards, as well as the number of elected members for each of the wards.

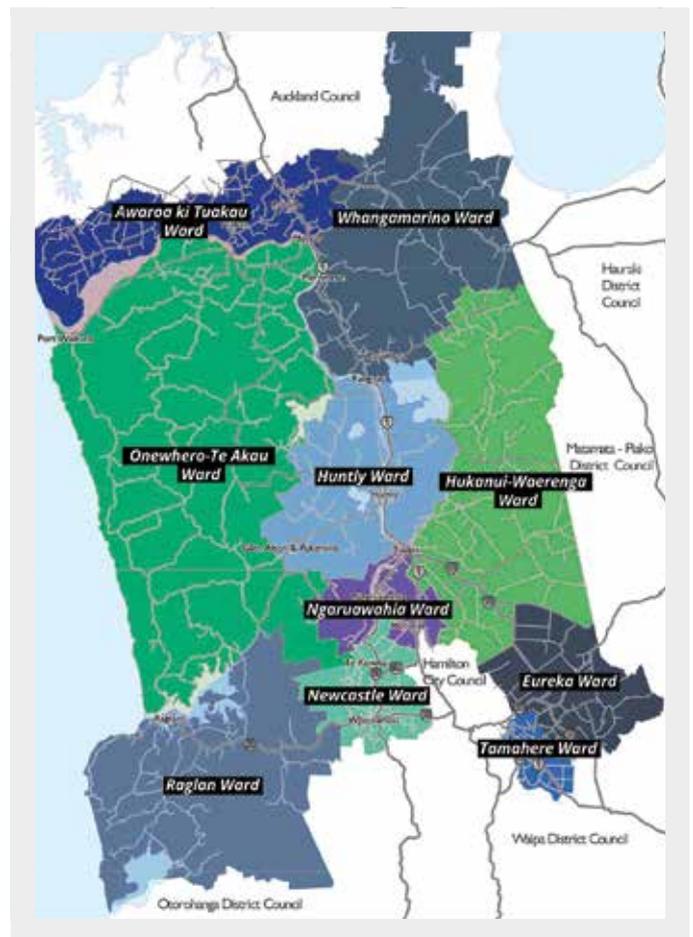
Our representation is currently arranged so that the mayor is elected by electors at large, 13 councillors are elected by electors from 10 wards and 30 community board members are elected by electors from 5 community boards. In 2017 Council made two other important decisions as a part of the process, the decision to retain First-Past-the-Post as the electoral system and the decision not to introduce Maori wards in the district.

An initial proposal has been prepared and Council is looking to keep the current arrangements (mayor elected at large, 13 councillors and 30 community board members and 5 community boards) with a few boundary changes to be made to some of the wards in the northern part of the district and to the Onewhero-Tuakau Community Board which will ensure we continue to be compliant with the requirements set out in the LEA.

At the moment, our northern most ward Awaroa ki Tuakau has more people in it than can fairly be represented by 2 councillors. To address this, it is proposed to make some small ward boundary changes to this ward, as well as in the Whangamarino, Hukanui-Waerenga and Huntly Wards. In addition, it is proposed that the Onewhero-Tuakau Community Board be disestablished and a new Tuakau Community Board established (for Tuakau and its immediate surroundings) with the balance of the current community board area south of the Waikato River becoming the Onewhero Community Committee.

Consultation of the Waikato District Council Representation Review 2018 is now open. It would be great to have your feedback and input on our initial proposal before the final proposal is made in September this year; you can make a submission by going to www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit

The results of this review will apply to the 2019 and 2022 triennial elections.



The current Waikato District ward map.

Next steps:

- **20 June 2018** – Consultation on the initial proposal opens
- **1 August 2018** – Consultation on the initial proposal closes
- **29 August 2018** – Hearing held on the initial proposal
- **10 September 2018** – Council resolves its final proposal
- **12 September 2018** – Notification of final proposal and period for appeals/objections opens
- **12 October 2018** – Period for appeals/objections closes
- **By 10 April 2019** – Determination on the final proposal by the Local Government Commission (if required)

Giving young drivers the best start to life on the road

With the onset of winter comes more difficult driving conditions for all motorists.

Poor visibility, wet roads and the possibility of icy surfaces means all drivers need to be at the top of their game.

This is particularly the case for young or inexperienced drivers as it takes time to get used to the importance of driving to the conditions.

Data shows that young restricted drivers are more at risk of having a serious crash in the first six to 12 months of driving solo on their restricted licence than at any other time in their lives.

Waikato District Council plays a pivotal role in educating young drivers in our area.



Young driver days, co-ordinated by Waikato District Council, cover car maintenance as well as driving skills.

There are a number of initiatives in place, overseen by Waikato District Council Road Safety Co-ordinator Megan Jolly. These include:

- Co-ordination of five young driver days a year that include both practical experience and group activities around driving. The one-day course targets drivers who are nearly ready to sit their restricted licence or for those already on their full licence. Course content covers emergency braking, parallel parking, peer pressure, driver distraction, car maintenance, sober driving, and a one on one road assessment with qualified driving instructor. The cost is \$50 per student. Parents/caregivers are also expected to attend at no cost.
- Funding of a community driver mentoring programme in Huntly and Ngaruawahia that assists young drivers on their learners to get their restricted licence. The programme provides free lessons with a qualified instructor and also provides a driving mentor and car for young drivers to get supervised driving experience.
- Support of the organisation Students Against Dangerous Driving (SADD) in secondary schools. SADD empowers young drivers to make safer and better choices on the road. Council also co-ordinates a regional workshop for SADD leaders in schools, which is free to attend.

All these initiatives are designed to help prepare young people for a lifetime of driving.

Shaun Lion-Cachet's two children have attended Council-run young driver days. He said they were invaluable and played a part after his children passed their restricted tests with flying colours at their first attempt.

"We have been quite serious with our children, spending lots of hours with them while they were learning, as well as sending them both on instructor led training," said Shaun.

"Your course however filled the gaps and took it to the next level with the psychology behind road safety as well as the practicality around keeping the car safe.

"We're very grateful for your help. Keep up the good work."

For more information contact Megan Jolly at mfj@xtra.co.nz

District Plan to be approved by Council

The District Plan Review process has been a long one, but the chance to formally have your say is nearly here.

Over the past two years we have held a number of open days so we can understand your issues and to share with you how we are proposing to address these through objectives, policies and rules in the Proposed Waikato District Plan (the Plan). We've taken this feedback on board when finalising the Plan.

More recently we've been consulting with a group of people in the community about different aspects of the Plan and how it might affect them. We wrote to landowners who may have a Significant Natural Area, historic building, notable tree, landscape or natural character area added to their property to see what they think. This feedback has been taken into account as we prepare the Plan to be adopted by Council this week and then have it formally notified next month.

Once the Plan is notified you will be able to have your say on what is included through the submission process. This period is open from 18 July until 9 October 2018 and we encourage you all to have your say by either visiting our website or filling in a submission form which will be available from all of our offices and libraries.

What is the District Plan and why do we have one?

The District Plan controls the way land is used, developed and subdivided. It helps determine where activities can take place, under what restrictions and what natural and cultural features should be protected.

The rules of the District Plan set out the activities you can do as of right (permitted activities) and the activities that you need resource consent for. It also specifies the information that must be submitted with resource consent applications.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) every local authority in New Zealand must have a district plan. District plans are important as they identify the key resource management issues, what the community wants done about the issues and ways to achieve the outcomes the community wants.

Next steps

- **27 June** – Plan adopted by Council
- **18 July** – Plan notified and submission period opens
- **9 October** – Submission period closes

Change to policy

We have updated our existing Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy and we're seeking your views.

Key proposed changes in the proposed Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings Policy 2018 are; the removal of the earthquake-prone portion from the policy, as this is now covered under the Building Act 2004; and the inclusion of "affected" to the heading of the policy.

To read the draft policy and make a submission go to www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit

The policy has two main purposes:

1. To reduce the potential risk posed to residents by dangerous, affected or insanitary buildings;
2. To provide a clear framework on how Council will manage unsatisfactory building conditions.

The submission period is from 18 June to 18 July.



Please Note: This is not a building in our district.

Register your dog online!



Do you have a new dog or have you moved recently?

You can now register your dog online as well as update any of your dog registration details.

Already registered? Don't forget to renew your registration by 20 July.

Visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/dogrego to find out more.

Our lines are clean!

The end of June is cause for celebration around the district as this means the wastewater network has been fully cleaned and inspected.

While we found some interesting items, including marbles and curtains, and repairs in some areas have been identified, residents can be assured that the network has had a good once-over.



Interesting items have been found across the district's wastewater network including marbles and chunks of metal.

GOT A QUESTION ABOUT COUNCIL BUSINESS?

 /WaikatoDistrictCouncil

 twitter.com/WaikatoDistrict

 waikatodistrict.govt.nz

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Huntly

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15 Galileo Street
Ngaruawahia

Raglan Office

7 Bow Street
Raglan

Te Kauwhata Office

1 Main Road
Te Kauwhata

Tuakau Office

2 Dominion Road
Tuakau

Dates for the next Link:

Our next edition of Link will be distributed from 20 - 25 August. If you don't receive your Link during this period please contact news@waldc.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.