

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Authority submits on Healthy Rivers Plan

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS FORMALLY SUBMITTED ITS SUPPORT OF THE REGION'S HEALTHY RIVERS PLAN BUT HAS CAUTIONED THE PLAN HAS PROBABLY NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH IN RELATION TO THE RESTORATION OF LAKES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FARM ENVIRONMENT PLANS.

In lodging the submission, the Waikato River Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan say overall the Authority is supportive of the pace and direction proposed within the plan.

"However, we have also signalled we believe there are areas where greater effect can be given to the

Vision and Strategy, notably around implementation and monitoring of proposed farm environment plans and greater protection for the shallow lakes of the region," says Mr Luxton.

Mr Morgan says in making its submission, the Authority is upholding the mana of the Vision and Strategy.

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

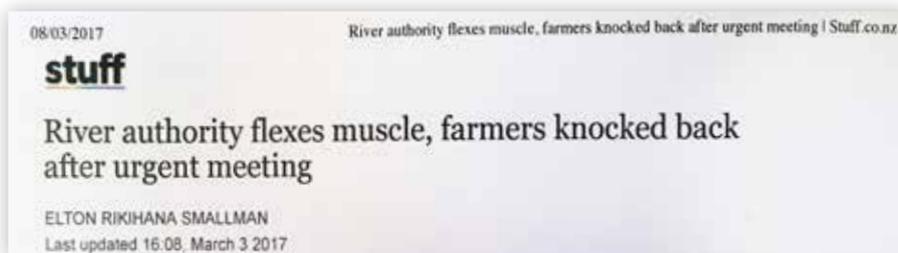
Promoting Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (the Vision and Strategy) is a function the Authority has diligently undertaken since inception. It is less 'newsworthy' than the amazing restoration projects we fund but no less worthwhile in supporting our goal of a restored and protected Waikato River catchment. We reported on some of our efforts in this space in our last Annual Report, which can be found on our website. In particular, the Authority has played a strong leadership role throughout the Healthy Rivers Plan process. This included our presence on Te Rōpū Hautū – the Plan's steering group, joining River iwi and the Waikato Regional Council.

We have also reinforced, this month, our involvement in legal developments around the Healthy Rivers Plan. Following a court challenge recently instigated by Horticulture New Zealand (and others), the Authority sought and was granted 'party to proceedings' status. Horticulture New Zealand seek to unwind the notification of the Healthy Rivers Plan, something the Authority does not support.

We will always remain absolutely committed to ensuring the Vision and Strategy is the primary direction setting document for the Waikato and Waipa rivers, and continue to pursue opportunities to promote that outcome.



Bob Penter
 Chief Executive



Above: The Authority's stance on the direction of the Healthy Rivers Plan received national news media coverage.

\$6 million available in 2017 funding

The Waikato River Authority is this year again making \$6 million available to fund clean-up projects when the 2017 funding round opens.

Applications will open on 3 July and close on 16 August, with funding announcements expected to be made in late October.

As part of the funding process, the Waikato River Authority will publish a review of its Funding Strategy. The updated strategy will be available in May, prior to the opening of applications.

Manaaki Tuna update

The Waikato Tainui College for Research and Development Manaaki Tuna project accomplished key milestones recently with the creation of tuna ponds and an indepth information day.

The habitat ponds were built in partnership with Puniu River Care, and their partners Waikato Regional Council and Agresearch, and were created through excavating, fencing and planting. Within a few weeks of completion tuna were captured from the pond, indicating that they are already providing good habitat.

As part of the project, a tuna wananga was held at Mangatoatoa Marae. The wananga was well attended with rangatahi through to kaumatua being represented. Whanau helped set and retrieve nets, learned about the three different freshwater tuna species, the lifecycle of tuna, the challenges faced by tuna such as habitat loss, long lifecycle and over fishing. They also learned about the different parts of tuna, and how to determine the age of a tuna.



Rangatahi from Mangatoatoa Marae get 'hands-on' experience at a tuna wananga run by the Waikato Tainui College for Research and Development as part of the Manaaki Tuna project.

Working together for the Puniu River

The long-term vision of restoring the Puniu River and its catchment has become a showcase in iwi and community collaboration.

Puniu River Care founder and CEO Shannon Te Huia says there has been iwi input from Maniapoto, Waikato-Tainui, Raukawa and Tuwharetoa for the undertaking. He says in addition, more than 40 different stakeholder groups, marae and other organisations share the goal of what is trying to be achieved.

The Puniu River was once a rich source of tuna and provided many picnic and swimming spots for the local people. Currently the river is not classified as being of a swimmable standard, the tuna stocks have depleted in some areas, the banks of the rivers are eroding and over 10,000 tonnes of sediment discharges into the Waipa river from the Puniu River every year.

Puniu River Care is determined to bring about change.

Most recently Puniu River Care has pushed ahead with significant development of its plant nursery programme increasing plant volumes for catchment planting. A new irrigation system has been set up at Mangatoatoa pa nursery and a second nursery built at Owairaka pa and a training programme started. More than 70,000 native plants have been earmarked for planting this coming year.

Shannon Te Huia says the relationships with partners and stakeholders are incredibly important.

"In particular the funding we have had from the Waikato River Authority has been extremely valuable in terms of us being able to develop our capacity and capability. The funding has been instrumental in us being able to deliver on our project," he says.

Puniu River Care has had nearly \$250,000 of funding approved from the Waikato River Authority.



The Mangatoatoa pa plant nursery which has been established by Puniu River Care with funding input from the Waikato River Authority.

Maniapoto reconnecting with their awa

Three projects connecting Ngati Maniapoto with their awa are underway with funding from the Waikato River Authority.

Ngahuia Herangi, Whanake Taiao Team Leader at Maniapoto Maori Trust Board, says the three projects reconnect Maniapoto people with their awa, whenua and waahi tapu by focusing on building the capacity and capability of iwi using mātauranga Māori to achieve environmental outcomes and long term sustainability.

"Collaboration and working together at all levels is key to restoring the mauri of our awa. These projects are being implemented with co-funding from the Waikato River Authority, Waikato Regional Council, Mercury and Waitomo District Council. We thank our funders for their continued and on-going support."



Maniapoto Tiaki Taiao Cultural Health Indicator Project. The aim of the project is to enhance tāngata whenua capacity and capability building and increase opportunities to participate in community monitoring of waterways to inform freshwater management decisions. The tool will also assist rangatahi in educational learning experiences through the development of a Cultural Health Indicator App in Te Reo Māori and English. This project also aligns to the policies and actions in the Maniapoto Environment Management Plan (2016), Maniapoto Priorities for the Restoration of the Waipā River Report (2014) and the Maniapoto Fisheries Plan (2015).

Major progress for Matahuru Wetland restoration

A major wetland restoration around the Matahuru Stream on the southern shores of Lake Waikare has made strong progress.

The project is being led and managed by the Nikau Estate Trust with funding from the Waikato River Authority.

About 36 hectares of willow and pest weeds and grasses are being cleared and the area replanted with natives.

Trust spokesperson Tarewa Nikau says the success of the project is through the very significant collaboration between Matahuru Marae members, Waikato-Tainui, the regional council as well as local landowners.

"We've cleared enough land to already put in place 60,000 new plants and the work going on currently will see another 60,000 plants this coming planting season," he says.



Contractors Treescape and Riverside Planters have been heavily involved in the Matahuru clearing and planting work. The restoration work has also involved tribal members and other volunteers.

The multi-year project is expected to take another 3 years before it is completed. There will then be up to 400,000 manuka plants throughout the wetland when restoration work is finished.

The Matahuru work has to date received more than \$500,000 in funding from the Waikato River Authority.

Telling a cultural history

A project to explain the cultural history and connection to the Waikato River for Ngati Tahu-Ngati Whaoa is underway with the installation of the first 'story telling' pou.

The project, in the upper catchment of the river, identifies sites where ten kohatu and iPou will be installed.

The kohatu are large pieces of stone which have been taken from a quarry at Maunga Kakaramea. The kohatu are then polished and carved, and an iPou is installed near the kohatu to share korero regarding each site and its connection with Te Awa o Waikato.

The iPou don't contain any electrical connections but consist of a carved pole in the ground which holds an area code (QR code) which can be swiped with a mobile phone. The QR code connects directly to a website where a story and explanation of the significant site is explained.



Chair of the Ngati Tahu – Ngati Whaoa Runanga Trust, Roger Pikia (also a member of the Waikato River Authority), at the blessing of the Aratiatia Kohatu in December 2016.



Billboard highlights restoration work

A BILLBOARD RECENTLY INSTALLED NEXT TO STATE HIGHWAY ONE AT RANGIRIRI HIGHLIGHTS THE RIVER RESTORATION WORK AND PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL, TAINUI DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY.

The riparian planting in behind the billboard is expected to grow quickly over the next few years. Thousands of motorists are expected to see the billboard on a daily basis (about 20,000 vehicles per day), which offers an opportunity to highlight this project and other work funded by the Waikato River Authority.



The Waikato River Authority team recently took part in a workshop to plan work around the Healthy Rivers Plan, the launch of the Restoration Strategy and promotion of the Vision and Strategy.

Left to Right: Keri Neilson (Trust Fund Manager), Jo Pikia (Admin Manager), Philip Burton (Communication Advisor), Michelle Hodges (Policy Advisor), Bob Penter (Chief Executive), Julian Williams (Engagement Advisor).