

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Strong iwi involvement in river clean-up projects

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS ANNOUNCED \$6 MILLION FOR RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECTS IN ITS JUST COMPLETED FUNDING ROUND, WITH MORE THAN A THIRD OF THESE PROJECTS BEING IWI LED.

Overall, a total of 38 projects have been funded in 2018.

Authority Co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Roger Pikia, say a feature of the funding round has been a close alignment with the Restoration Strategy for the Waikato and Waipā rivers and the strong participation of River Iwi.

"In recent years there has been a clear trend for successful projects to reflect a strategic approach to restoring and protecting our rivers, streams and wetlands. This has carried through in this funding round. The strong involvement of River Iwi is also welcome," says Mr Pikia.

The largest project to be funded this year is a continuation of the Waipā Catchment Plan implementation which will involve working with approximately 70 farmers and landowners within identified priority catchments. The \$1.6 million of funding will work towards reducing sediment levels going into the Waipā River and its tributaries. Sediment from the Waipā River is a major factor in reducing the water quality in the lower Waikato River.

In the past eight years of funding the Waikato River Authority has allocated more than \$44 million to 288 clean-up projects. ■

Landmark hui

A large representation of River Iwi, together with the Crown and the Waikato River Authority, took part in a landmark hui on the future of the Waikato and Waipā rivers last month.

The hui took place in Hamilton on November 7.

The hui looked at ways in which river iwi, the Crown and the Authority can work more closely together on a range of issues for the benefit of the Waikato River and its catchment.

The facilitated workshop discussion was attended by staff and governance representatives.



Attendees at the Waikato River workshop in Hamilton.

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

It has been a busy end of year for the WRA. We completed our 8th funding round and it was great to see projects successfully lifted from the Restoration Strategy that Environment Minister Parker launched earlier this year. Our advocacy for the Vision & Strategy has been pursued across a number of fora. We held our AGM on the back of publishing our 2017/18 Annual Report. We have also received positive media coverage across several articles in as many weeks. One of these articles considered our progress in developing a Waipā Agri-Impact Fund. This is potentially a new tool for our catchment that attracts investor support to our river restoration efforts. The Waikato Regional Council was quick to see the potential of impact investment and their support to initiate this work proved invaluable. We have demonstrated impact investment is achievable at a catchment scale with sound commercial and environmental returns on investment. This is a bold and ambitious approach and nothing less than this is required to achieve the Vision of a restored and protected Waikato and Waipā Rivers' catchment.



Bob Penter
 Chief Executive

Rowing NZ feature in sustainability

ROWING NZ HAVE BEEN NAMED FINALISTS IN THE 2018 WORLD ROWING SUSTAINABILITY AWARD BY WORLD ROWING (FISA), THE INTERNATIONAL GOVERNING BODY FOR ROWING.



Crew from the New Zealand men's eight training on Lake Karapiro.

This is the first year of the award category and Rowing NZ Chief Executive Simon Peterson says the nomination is a strong endorsement for NZ Rowing's work with the Waikato River Authority.

Rowing NZ currently have 55 athletes training in a four month block referred to as 'Summer Squad'. With no international travel or competition until mid-2019, selected Summer Squad athletes will begin visiting schools in the Waikato area to deliver key Waikato River Authority messages surrounding the use, protection and rehabilitation of local waterways.

"We recognise that the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River needs to be understood and adopted by the younger generation to ensure a healthy and protected river for the future. We have introduced multiple competitions throughout the 2019 Aon Maadi Cup hosted at Lake Karapiro, with strong messaging surrounding the work of the Waikato River Authority," says Simon Peterson.

Competition entries will be judged on their environmental and sustainability merits. ■

New Board Members

The Waikato River Authority has two new board members in place following the resignations of founding Co-Chair Tukoroirangi Morgan and Tuwharetoa appointee Heemi Biddle.

Waikato-Tainui's replacement has been named as Rangi Mahuta, with Tuwharetoa appointing Danny Loughlin.

The contributions of both Tuku Morgan and Heemi Biddle were highlighted at the Authority's AGM which was held last month.

The Authority currently has one other vacancy following Raukawa's Vanessa Eparaima also stepping down from the board. ■

SmartyGrants

The Authority's new online funding application and project reporting system SmartyGrants is expected to be fully utilised by all current projects early in the New Year.

The new system was used successfully for the 2018 application process, and work is well underway to ensure all reporting can be carried out for new and existing (uncompleted) projects by early 2019. For projects funded prior to 2017 that are uncompleted, arrangements will be made for the transfer to SmartyGrants and the new milestone reporting. The system can be accessed through the Authority website at www.waikatoriver.org.nz



Hundreds of koi hunted in Waikato River system

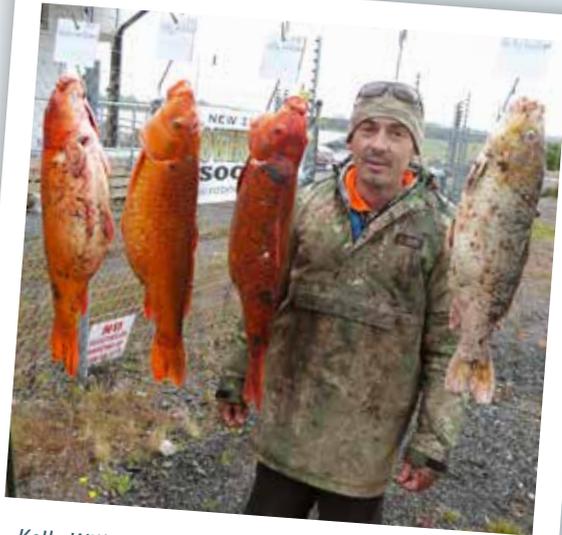
Bow hunter Kelly Willison took out the Waikato River Authority sponsored trophy for the largest koi carp landed as part of the annual hunting tournament this year.

Kelly landed the largest fish at 8.1 kilograms and also the second biggest fish at 7.2 kilograms.

A total of 40 bow hunters took part and in total more than 1200 fish were shot.

The tournament known as the World Koi Carp Classic was based in Huntly and saw most of the fish shot in the Waikato River, followed by the Whangamarino and Lake Whangape. In total, 2.7 tonnes of fish were taken from the river, lakes and streams in the Lower Waikato catchment during the tournament.

This is the 29th year that the fishing tournament has been held.



Kelly Willison was one of the most successful bow hunters taking part in the annual Koi Carp Classic tournament, landing the two heaviest fish.

Mixing farming with lake restoration

THE KERR FAMILY ARE PROVING THAT PASTORAL FARMING CAN GO HAND-IN-HAND WITH LAKE RESTORATION.

Lance Kerr and his family have been involved in work to improve the margins of both Rotongaro and Rotongaroiti lakes while also farming 229 hectares of dairy and dry stock.

As well as funding from the Waikato River Authority, Lance has also worked with the Waikato Regional Council and the Te Whangai Trust.

Among the challenges in undertaking the work are changing water levels during planting.

"The waters levels in the lake can change so quickly,

within days the lake could drop by a metre and vice versa" he says.

Lance says he is determined to see the lake margins improved.

"It's our responsibility to leave our mark, and have the land better than when we came to it" he says.

A bonus for the project is that native birds, kereru and tui have found their way to the lake thanks to the new riparian plantings creating a food source.

In the four years of carrying out the lakes project the Kerr family has retired four hectares of land with 1.5 kilometres of fencing and 31,000 native species planted. ■



Lance Kerr in front of Lake Rotongaro riparian plantings aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of the lake.

Recruiting for a ground breaking role

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO HAS BEGUN A SEARCH FOR A GROUND BREAKING ACADEMIC ROLE WHICH WILL HAVE ITS ROOTS IN TRADITIONAL MĀORI KNOWLEDGE.

The new Mātauranga Wai academic chair will be a foundation member of Te Waiora - Joint Institute for Freshwater Management, a partnership between the University and NIWA. The position will be co-funded by the Waikato River Authority and the University.

The mission of the Institute is to increase better freshwater management decision-making and strategies and to also to nurture the current and the next generation of freshwater scientists and managers.

University of Waikato's Professor Bruce Clarkson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, says establishing the inaugural Waikato River Authority Mātauranga Wai chair will promote mātauranga māori research and postgraduate supervision within the Institute, NIWA and across the University as a whole.

"This appointment will be the first for New Zealand and encourage co-operation and collaboration as well as helping achieve iwi freshwater research priorities and outcomes.

"The appointment will also complement the Institute's recent decision for equal iwi representation on to its governance," he says.

The Waikato River Authority sees a close link between the academic role and the aspirations of the Vision & Strategy for a healthier and protected Waikato River. The Mātauranga Wai Chair was funded as part of the 2018 funding round from the Authority with a multi-year grant of \$517,000. Recruitment is expected to get underway in the New Year with an appointment in place later in 2019. ■

AGM 2018

The Waikato River Authority's 8th Annual General Meeting was held in central Hamilton on Thursday 1st November.

Sixty people attended the meeting.

As well as a presentation of financial reports and highlights of the Authority in the past 12 months, the AGM also heard from guest presenters on their funded projects:

- Grant Blackie from the Waikato Regional Council on Waipā Catchment Plan work;
- Simon Peterson from Rowing NZ on its partnership with the Authority;
- Stu Muir on whitebait habitat restoration on land bordering the Waikato River at Aka Aka.

Copies of the Authority's 2018 Annual Report were also made available.



Strong policy focus for WRA

The Waikato River Authority has seen a strong focus on policy work in the past few months engaging with Government agencies responsible for 20 separate pieces of legislation.

The Authority's Policy Advisor Julian Williams says interaction with Government agencies has been around ensuring all responsibilities to the Vision & Strategy are met.

The Waikato-Tainui settlement process for the Waikato River determined the settlement with the Crown needed to ensure the strongest possible influence in policy frameworks to improve the health and wellbeing of the catchment's waterways and lakes. The Vision & Strategy was therefore enabled under the 2010 settlement legislation as the primary direction setting document for all activities that impact the health and wellbeing of the catchment. Its legislative status is such that the Vision & Strategy prevails over national and regional policy statements if these are not consistent with it.

In addition, the Authority has been involved in submissions to the Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Bill, Waikato District Council Proposed District Plan, National Planning Standards and further submissions to the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 (Healthy Rivers Plan). ■