

Maunga ki Tai

New approach to the funding of certain projects

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY IS PREPARING FOR ITS ANNUAL FUNDING ROUND AND IS LOOKING TO BRING IN A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO HOW IT FUNDS SOME LARGER PROJECTS.

This year the Authority will identify two or three large projects, selected from the Restoration Strategy, with a view to seeing these projects given priority.

“The publication of the Restoration Strategy last year has meant the Authority is able to be increasingly strategic with its restoration funds. We believe that by identifying some larger and important projects we will make the most impact with our funding resources,” says Mr Luxton.

Authority Co-Chairs Hon John Luxton and Roger Pikia say for these larger



and important projects the funding process will operate more like a tender from applicants.

Mr Pikia says the Authority will identify its preferred projects as part of the development of the 2019 Funding Strategy.

“As well as making strong use of the Restoration Strategy, we will also use our network of advisors and stakeholders, who will all be part of identifying how we can make some big advances. Obviously understanding who might be able to complete the identified work is also crucial,” says Mr Pikia.

The Authority has earmarked \$6 million to be applied to the contestable process to support the best and most effective work for the betterment of the Waikato and Waipā rivers.

FUNDING TIMELINE 2019



MESSAGE FROM THE CE

In this newsletter you will read that this year we are identifying several specific projects for funding from the Waikato River and Waipā River Restoration Strategy that was launched by the Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment, in March last year. We will still fund projects that applicants propose where these fit within our broad priorities identified in our 2019 Funding Strategy when it is published in June. However, relying on self-elected projects from within our applicant community alone does not always ensure funding applicants apply for the most effective restoration projects. The addition of these Restoration Strategy projects represents a shift in our funding approach to better ensure we fund projects that most effectively support progress towards our Vision of a restored and protected Waikato and Waipā Rivers' catchment. This move to specific projects will enable a targeted approach to restoration progress while ensuring we maintain a contestable funding process.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

Major urupā restoration

A MAJOR URUPĀ RESTORATION ON THE BANK OF LAKE WAIKARE HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH FUNDING FROM THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY.

The urupā has special historical significance as a place of burial for many of those killed in the battle of Rangiriri.

The restoration work has included stabilisation work to prevent erosion as well as planting and improved access. The work has been carried out by Waikare Marae and Waikato-Tainui.

Marae Kuia Ann Mitchell says there were extensive burial caves as part of the urupā, many of which have been lost to lake erosion.

"A lot of people were buried here. During the battle of Rangiriri our people paddled across the lake at night to bring the dead back for burial. This project will protect the remaining caves as well as the larger urupā.



Waikare Marae kaumatua, Waikato Tainui staff and project organisers at the restored urupā on the edge of Lake Waikare. The project has taken more than two years to complete and was helped with \$250,000 of funding from the Waikato River Authority.

Workshop on freshwater aspirations

The Waikato River Authority hosted a workshop, just prior to Christmas last year, where stakeholders across the spectrum of interests in the Waikato River were able to present and listen to a range of views around aspirations for freshwater in the catchment.

Those attending included Waikato-Tainui, DairyNZ, Mercury, Watercare Services, AgResearch, Ministry for the Environment and Waikato Regional Council.

Authority Co-Chairs Roger Pikia and Hon John Luxton say the workshop was an important opportunity for engagement at a board and executive level. They say it was useful in a number of areas including sharing information both ways prior to the work around the Vision & Strategy review.

Right: Waikato Regional Council Chief Executive, Vaughan Payne, speaks at the workshop on freshwater aspirations hosted by the Waikato River Authority.



Groundwork restoration for Motukakaho Island

PHYSICAL WORKS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED ON MOTUKAKAHO ISLAND IN THE WAIKATO RIVER NEAR PORT WAIKATO AIMED AT IMPROVING THE BIODIVERSITY AND WHITEBAIT HABITAT.

The island, also known as Potter's Island, is privately owned by the Potter family which has formed a Trust to carry out the restoration work.

Ponds and channels, which allow whitebait to spawn, have been cleared of weeds and opened up to the river current. Motukakaho is one of the larger river islands with an area of approximately 100 hectares.

The restoration work is being project managed by Stu Muir who has already carried out other restoration projects along the river.

He says as well as enhancing what will be extremely valuable whitebait habitat so close to the mouth of the river, work on Motukakaho will offer a chance to reintroduce many of the larger native trees to the river which will in turn provide habitat for many native birds.

Stu Muir says the tree planting and pest eradication is widely supported by the local community which is keen to take part.

Channels have been opened up on Motukakaho Island to enable whitebait spawning. These drains were originally dug by hand in the early 1900s by the Potter family.



SEE VIDEO www.waikatoriver.org.nz



Strong investment interest

There has been strong interest from potential investors following on from the Waikato River Authority's backing of research and business plan development for land use change in the Waipā catchment.

The Authority funded investigation into possible land use change away from traditional dairy farming that provides both a financial and environmental return for investors.

Publicity around the project has drawn interest both nationally and internationally from companies and individuals who are prepared to look more closely at the investment.

The Waipā catchment business case looks at moving a number of farms to low impact organic dairying with some associated land change.

Left: The story of Waikato River Authority support for impact investment has gained interest from the news media as well as potential investors.

Meadow Walk eight years on

ONE OF THE PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED IN THE FIRST YEAR OF WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY FUNDING CONTINUES TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY.

The Cambridge Tree Trust has worked with the Waipā District Council and hundreds of volunteers to retire farmland and create a walk with 20-thousand native plants and 1.5 kilometres of fencing.

Don Willoughby (CTT Chair) says The Meadow Walk project was always a vision for him and other community members but was only able to come to reality with funding from the Waikato River Authority.

Don says the community response to the project over the years has been huge.

"We have had schools, police cadets, and service clubs who have volunteered their time and donated to the cause".

"There were moments when I was worried we didn't have enough work for everyone because there were so many people involved," he says.



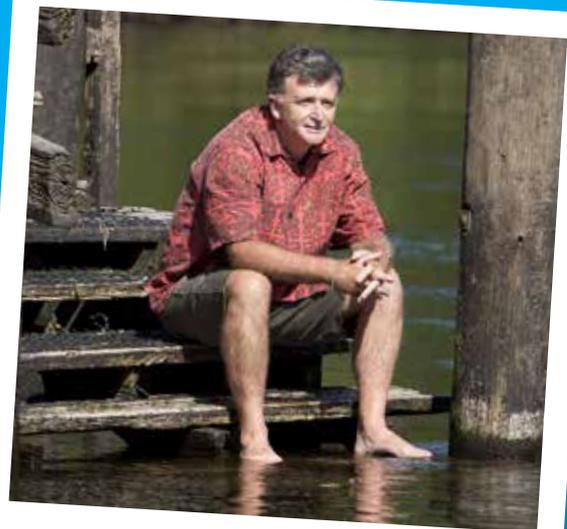
Left: The Meadow Walk was previously boggy farmland but now includes an area of wetland

Right: Ron Willoughby of the Cambridge Tree Trust says the project has been a huge community effort.

John Quinn remembered

The Waikato River Authority lost a friend and supporter when NIWA freshwater scientist John Quinn passed away late last year.

John was a trusted advisor to the Waikato River Authority and through his work instrumental in helping the Authority understand the enormity of its task ahead in restoring the Waikato River catchment. His thought leadership of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers' Report Card was groundbreaking for not only our catchment but at a national scale. It is legacy work that will underpin our catchment restoration journey for a number of decades. John's humbleness, intellect, and good company is a loss keenly felt by the Authority team.



John Quinn, who passed away late last year, pictured at one of his favourite places at the Wellington Street jetty on the Waikato River.