

Maunga ki Tai

Applications approach \$13 million for latest funding round

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS THIS YEAR RECEIVED ONE OF ITS BIGGEST FUNDING APPLICATION TOTALS TO DATE FOR POTENTIAL RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECTS.

There were 62 requests for funding, amounting to \$12,882,926. The funding round is also notable for the strong showing in iwi and marae applications.

Waikato River Authority Co-Chairs, Hon John Luxton and Roger Pikia say the number and scale of applications indicate both a desire and commitment from the wider community to get in behind the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and Waipā River.

“With up to \$6 million earmarked for distribution by the Authority in this funding round, it is clearly going to be a challenging exercise to decide which projects will go forward. Early indications are that there are many strong and worthwhile projects included in the list of applications,” says Mr Luxton.

Strong showing of iwi applications

“In the lead-up to this funding round the Authority has been proactive in liaising with iwi groups on potential projects, so it is encouraging to see that approximately a third of the applications, by both number and value, are from iwi connected organisations. Clearly there is an increasing level of capacity and capability from iwi in this area,” says Mr Pikia.

The total value of projects in this year’s funding round is close to \$34 million meaning a substantial level of co-funding has been included in applications.

The Authority will be going through its project evaluation process with decisions announced on successful projects at the end of October. In eight years of funding to date, the Authority has allocated \$44 million to more than 290 projects.



MESSAGE FROM THE CE

The Board of the Authority met recently and considered the issues presented by climate change. When the Vision & Strategy was developed a decade ago there was little, if any, consideration of climate change. The Vision & Strategy is currently silent on climate change, although many of its objectives could be affected by it. The task of restoring the Waikato and Waipā River catchments over the next 70 years means it is difficult to imagine that climate change would not play a role. This needs to be well considered to ensure medium and long-term restoration investments are resilient to climate change. The Board noted the responses adopted by various organisations including declaring climate emergencies and urgency. Sensibly, it decided a science-led approach should inform its consideration of this matter and will hold a workshop later this year with River iwi, Waikato Regional Council and others that can support a robust discussion of the science and consideration of the responses to climate change.

Bob Penter
 Chief Executive



The Waikato River below Hamilton Gardens

Whirinaki Valley *field day*



People attending the Whirinaki Valley field day discuss the pros and cons of wetland retirement.

A well attended field day for a Waikato River Authority funded project for Whirinaki Valley Integrated Management took place earlier this year.

Approximately 30 people from the catchment attended to see some of the wetland and riparian retirement work that has taken place.

The project is being led by the Waikato Regional Council in partnership with Te Awara River Iwi Trust with funding of \$366,000 from the Authority. Community support for the project has grown significantly since it was granted funding in 2017. The Whirinaki Catchment is 23,000 hectares, much of which is highly fragile soils at risk from severe slip and sheet erosion. Algal blooms and silting of the Whirinaki Arm of Lake Ohakuri, which is on the Waikato River, is being caused by erosion from nearby pastoral land use. One of the aims of the project is to work with the community to change on-farm practices and improve water quality.

Protecting Kahikatea stands *for the future*

A Waikato River Authority project to help save and restore remnant stands of kahikatea on Waikato and Waipā farmland has been completed.

Carried out by NZ Landcare Trust, the project saw 10 different stands of the historic trees come in for attention and preservation.

Project manager Nardene Berry says the restoration work has been some of the most successful she's been involved with from the point of view of what has been achieved, and for the enthusiasm it has generated with landowners.

The project involved working with seven different landowners and encompassed fencing, weed control and planting.

The kahikatea once dominated the forests which covered much of New Zealand's swampy lowland areas. They were cleared to make way for farmland and in the late 1800s they were used to make millions of boxes to export butter and cheese. The kahikatea's soft, pale and odourless wood was perfect for these boxes.

The Waikato River Authority contributed \$77,000 in funding towards the kahikatea preservation project, with the NZ Landcare Trust also securing another \$57,000 in cash and in-kind contributions.



Volunteer workers on Rosemary and Graeme Davison's property at Otewa near Otorohanga where a kahikatea fragment was fenced and planted. (Photograph Nardene Berry).

RiverCare successfully completes flag ship project

One of the earliest large environmental projects to be funded by the Waikato River Authority, and subsequently expanded with other funders, has been completed by Waikato RiverCare.

Over the past six years, Rivercare has planted nearly 28,000 plants and native grasses over nearly six hectares of Waikato River margins in the wider Huntly area.

The Taupiri Ki Waenganui project has provided work opportunities for 12 different independent contractors and has included work contributions from more than 80 people including volunteers.

The Waikato River Authority allocated funding of \$400,000 to the project during its first funding round in 2011.

Top right: Waikato RiverCare plantings from year three of the Taupiri Ki Waenganui project in the Huntly area.

Bottom right: Waterside Planters, led by Ed Haunui directs a planting operation on the banks of the Waikato River for Waikato RiverCare.



Successful year for completed projects

The Waikato River Authority year end (30 June) saw another large group of completed projects.

In total 22 projects were completed which totalled to more than \$5 million of Authority funding.

Project Outcomes

Outcomes from Waikato River Authority funded projects completed in the 2018/2019 year include:



22

Projects completed during the 2018/19 year



342,500

Native trees planted for restoration



77

Kilometres of fencing to protect land and water



1453

People who attended community engagement



550

Hectares of land restored and enhanced



\$2.1m

Amount of cash co-funding achieved for projects

Freshwater kaitiaki

A kaitiaki project based around freshwater monitoring has been completed by Raukawa with support from the Waikato River Authority.

The project involved hands-on training in the use of the NIWA developed SHMAK (Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kits) to measure and monitor water quality.

More than 200 people were involved in completing the practical training.

"It was great the way we have been able to build capacity, especially with our rangitahi, to ensure we have a great kaitiaki programme for the future," says Raukawa Programme Leader Marian Ruri.

She described the project as outstanding for the practical value it brought to marae.

Marian Ruri says the skills learned through the project are already being applied in a marae setting as well as being used in other restoration projects and water quality programmes.

As part of the project, a video on how to use the SHMAK kits has also been made by Raukawa project team.



The freshwater kaitiaki project involved a large number of people in practical training in water monitoring.

SEE VIDEO View it on the Waikato River Authority YouTube channel



Media day on the water

Local and national news media arrived in force for the annual Rowing NZ media day at Karapiro recently, prior to crew heading off to world championships.

Rowing NZ helps to promote the wellbeing of the Waikato River and the work of the Waikato River Authority as part of its relationship with the Authority. More than 30 media attended the day, with many of them spending time on the water to see the rowing crews in action.



A large contingent of both print and broadcast news media attended the Rowing NZ open day at Lake Karapiro. Media were also made aware of the Authority's connection with Rowing NZ as part of the day.