

Maunga ki Tai NEWSLETTER

Wetlands a priority in 2020

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY WILL BE PRIORITISING WETLAND RESTORATION WHEN IT CONSIDERS FUNDING DISTRIBUTION IN 2020.

The Authority has announced it will again be allocating up to \$6 million this year for clean-up projects that support the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and Waipā River.

The Authority co-chairs say the strategic direction for funding decisions remains.

"We are fortunate to have the Restoration Strategy for the Waikato River and Waipā River as a guiding document. The strategy was developed collaboratively, and helps the Authority and those wishing to become involved in catchment restoration, focus effort in the most beneficial areas," says Crown co-chair Hon John Luxton.

This year's funding round will be the tenth to be carried out by the Authority.

Iwi co-chair Roger Pikia says the focus around wetlands this year is driven by both the Restoration Strategy and the important role of wetlands.

"Wetland loss has been extreme in the catchment over the past decades and the protection and enhancement of what we have left is crucial, even more so when this loss is viewed in the context of climate change and the ecosystem services that healthy wetlands perform," he says.

Applications can be made on-line through the Authority's website at www.waikatoriver.org.nz

2020 FUNDING TIMELINE



The Waikato River Authority is this year widening its window for funding applications to allow more time for project preparation and collaboration, particularly with iwi.

The Authority will this year open for funding applications on Monday 8 June and close on Thursday 13 August.

Up to \$6 million is being made available for projects that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and the Waipā River.

The Authority will be releasing its 2020 Funding Strategy in May which will again emphasise the importance of the Restoration Strategy for Waikato River and Waipā River in the decision making for funding of clean-up projects.

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

Late last year the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) recommended the Authority shares its knowledge with other funders and continues to develop effectiveness reporting. To date, we have met with the Taranaki Regional Council to share our funding approach and systems as the council and Waitara River iwi work together to implement a \$34 million restoration of the Waitara River. We are also working with Whanganui River iwi on a follow-up hui to share our approach. The Ministry for the Environment and the Authority have also started to work together collaboratively to improve our collective approach to the monitoring and evaluation of clean-up projects' effectiveness.

Our work on advocacy of the Vision & Strategy is now achieving equivalency with our funding progress, and there is a full programme of policy proposals approaching that presents an exciting opportunity to adopt a collective approach with our River iwi.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

WRA hosts climate change workshop

The Waikato River Authority hosted a workshop in December last year to consider opportunities to respond to climate change, within its work to restore and protect the Waikato and Waipā rivers.

Over 70 people attended across river iwi, industry sectors, Crown Research Institutes, community groups and Crown agencies.

The Authority recognises that climate change is an issue with considerable impact on the restoration work funded by the WRA.

Climate change adaptation and resilience opportunities were major themes of the presentations at the workshop.

It is also recognised that a co-benefit of the Authority's on-going work is in the area of greenhouse gas mitigation. Of WRA funded projects that were completed last year, 342,500 new plantings were made which contributed to carbon sequestering.

A full programme, together with presentations can be found on the Authority's website at www.waikatoriver.org.nz



Those attending the WRA hosted climate change workshop gather outside the Waikato-Tainui College venue in December last year.



WRA co-chairs Roger Pikiā and Hon John Luxton bike alongside the Waikato River to the climate change workshop.

Bridge access to Taupiri nears *completion*



A project supported by the Waikato River Authority to create bridge access over the Mangawhara River to Taupiri Maunga is near completion.

The purpose of the bridge is to provide safer access to the tribally sacred mountain, the scenic reserve and urupa (cemetery). The bridge is now secured to the abutments either side of the river, safety barriers attached and concrete seal completed.

Remaining works include upgrades on Watts Grove access street, as well as planting and the finishing of bridge approaches.

The bridge is expected to open in April 2020 with a formal ceremony.

OAG Summary Report on freshwater management

The Office of the Auditor-General has published a summary report on the work that it carried out during 2019 looking at the funding and management of freshwater in New Zealand by public organisations.

The Report gives a further summary of its work on Crown Investment in Freshwater Clean-up which was carried out in 2018 and 2019.

The summary report had this to say about the Waikato River Authority:



“ Our work on the funding of the clean-up of freshwater bodies included looking at how the Waikato River Authority manages projects. We did this to improve our understanding of common challenges with, and lessons about, freshwater clean-up.

We observed that the Waikato River Authority’s vision and strategy provides guidance and a plan to ensure that longer-term considerations inform funding decisions. The vision and strategy are complemented by a 5-year to 15-year clean-up Restoration Strategy.

In our view, this helps freshwater clean-up projects to be integrated, prioritised, and co-ordinated. In turn, this means that they are likely to have a long-term and cumulative effect on freshwater quality. We consider that, in the Waikato region, this will ultimately increase the overall effectiveness of clean-up funding.

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Waikato River Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Roger Pikia say the OAG commentary is an endorsement of the Authority’s work in what can be a difficult area.

The Office of the Auditor-General’s full report is available at www.oag.govt.nz/2020/water-management

RIVER SWIMMING IN THE HOT AND DRY

LOWER THAN USUAL SUMMER RAINFALL



Multiple swimming spots in the Waikato River as it runs through Hamilton have proved popular for cooling off in the hot and dry summer.

Hamilton recorded only around a quarter of its average rainfall in the first eleven weeks of summer from 1 December, which was a total of 69 mm. There have also been multiple days of over 30 degree temperatures.

The Wellington Street beach jetty (pictured) has been well used through nearly every day of summer.

Restoring *Lake Waikare*

The restoration of Lake Waikare is arguably one of the most challenging environmental projects in the Waikato, but with help from the Waikato River Authority that challenge is being taken on.



As a kaitiaki of the lake north of Huntly, Tawera Nikau (Waikato Tainui, Ngāti Makirangi) has been leading a 7-year long clean-up project to restore the health of the wai that was once both economically and recreationally an integral part of life for his hapū.

The Waikato River Authority has recently completed a video story about the project.

In the video, Tawera Nikau talks about the spiritual significance of Lake Waikare, scientific research around the planting of manuka, and how partnering with the Waikato River Authority is helping the Nikau Estate Trust towards their vision of a healthy, flourishing lake for future generations.

The project involves the restoration of a 20-hectare wetland on the southern side of the lake where the Matahuru Stream joins the lake. In addition, the Trust is partnering with ESR Crown Research Institute to measure the effectiveness of manuka plantings to take-up unwanted nutrients entering the lake.



For more of our project stories, information about us and how to apply for funding, visit www.waikatoriver.org.nz

New WRA appointment

The Waikato River Authority has a new business operations manager with the appointment of Tuti Cooper.

Tuti introduces herself as a proud whaanau member of the iwi of Waikato "ko Taupiri te maunga, ko Waikato te awa, ko Waikato te iwi, ko Ngaati Aamaru te hapuu, ko Te Awamaarahi te marae".

Tuti has recently been working with the Department of Conservation to implement its Conservation Accord with Waikato-Tainui which contributes to the goal of restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and its relationship with Waikato-Tainui. Prior to that, Tuti was the Administrative Director at the Waikato-Tainui College for Research and Development at Hopuhopu.

Tuti's background includes working as a personal assistant to the late Sir Robert Mahuta and Secretariat Manager for the Guardians Establishment Committee, the forerunner to the Waikato River Authority.



WRA appoints new business operations manager Tuti Cooper