

# Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the  

**Waikato River Authority**

## River funding also aims to boost *post-Covid* recovery

THE LATEST FUNDING TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE WAIKATO RIVER AND WAIPĀ RIVER IS ALSO EXPECTED TO GIVE AN ECONOMIC BOOST TO LOCAL RIVER COMMUNITIES.

The Waikato River Authority has this week increased its annual funding for river clean-up projects above what was expected, in part to ensure support for environmental and iwi groups recovering from the financial impacts of Covid-19.

A total of \$6.2 million has been allocated to 38 projects.

Waikato River Authority Crown Co-Chair, Paula Southgate, says the Authority's 2020 funding round has been one of its most successful in 10 years of operation.

"The Authority board was pleased to be able to increase the level of funding it has made available. This was due to the strength and quality of the applications to carry out river restoration and also the desire by the board to support river communities." Ms Southgate says ensuring prosperous communities is an integral part of the Vision & Strategy for the Waikato River.

Iwi Co-Chair, Roger Pikia, says the funding round has also been notable for the impressive number of iwi projects

successfully funded. "We've seen the number of applications from iwi grow over recent years and the number of applicants partnering with iwi has also increased. That trend has continued this year with 16 iwi led projects receiving \$3.2 million he says. Mr Pikia says there has also been strong alignment with the Authority's funding strategy with a priority for wetland restoration.

Among the projects funded this year is the restoration of Lake Kimihia north of Huntly, now highly visible from the Huntly by-pass expressway. The project is being led by Waikato Regional Council with strong support from Waikato-Tainui, the Department of Conservation and local landowners. The project involves raising the level of the lake and undertaking restoration of wetland margins.

Pūniu River Care has also been funded nearly \$600,000 to carry out a series of environmental projects focussed in Waipā River catchment.



*A restored kahikatea wetland at Waikoha in the Waipā catchment previously funded by the Waikato River Authority*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CE

AUCKLAND'S CURRENT WATER CRISIS HAS HIGHLIGHTED THEIR ALMOST TOTAL RELIANCE ON THE WAIKATO RIVER AND CATCHMENT TO PROVIDE THE WATER NECESSARY FOR THE CITY AND RESIDENTS. IT IS CLEAR, IN THIS REGARD, THAT AUCKLAND AND THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAVE COMPETING INTERESTS. OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO THE WAIKATO RIVER.

Of course we have taken a wider view of the need to help Auckland, but not at a permanent cost to the river and its catchment communities.

As we have worked through the issues of the future health and wellbeing of the Waikato River with Auckland and Watercare there now appears to be a greater appreciation of Te Ture Whaimana and what it will take to meaningfully restore and protect the awa.

Waikato water is of huge benefit to Auckland. The task to restore and protect the Waikato River is a massive undertaking that will need more than just the resources of the Authority.

We welcome a closer working relationship with Auckland so that we can help them, where we can, and also ensure an improving future for the Waikato River for the benefit of everyone.



**Bob Penter**  
 Chief Executive

# Project Mapping Launch

The Authority is expecting to launch a new content platform within its website in the next few weeks, which will begin to map all funded projects.

The mapping functionality, which is GIS (Geographic Information System) based, plots individual projects and allows comprehensive views of the catchment with layers of information.

The first phase of the project involves the mapping of 2018 and 2019 projects with information in behind each of the plotted projects including photographs, videos as well as details about project progress and funding.

Authority Funding Manager, Michelle Hodges, says the mapping tool will allow potential funding applicants, and anyone else interested, to see where and what work has been carried out with Waikato River Authority funding.



“We are also ensuring a close connection back to the Restoration Strategy for the Waikato and Waipā Rivers by showing what has been completed, and what projects could still be worked on,” she says.

The building of Project Mapping will be an ongoing undertaking for the Authority with the first stage available on [www.waikatoriver.org.nz](http://www.waikatoriver.org.nz)



*A tuna trap is constructed on a stream bed at the Okowhao pumping station close to Lake Okowhao near Huntly.*

## Looking out for tuna

A project to look after migrating tuna (eels) in the lower Waikato, particularly at water pumping stations, is underway gathering important information aimed at a better future for the native species.

The project is being carried out by Waikato Regional Council and Waikato-Tainui College and has multiple funding partners including Waikato River Authority.

One aspect of the project involves understanding the feasibility of trap and transfer of tuna to help eliminate barriers to migration and reproduction. Information gathered will help understanding around logistics, costs and benefits of trapping and transfer in a way that allows Waikato-Tainui to further develop their role as kaitiaki.

The project also involves looking at ways to improve the construction and operation of pump stations to make it safer for tuna passage.

# 'River first' approach with Waikato water for Auckland

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS TAKEN A 'RIVER FIRST' APPROACH IN TALKS WITH AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL AND WATERCARE AIMED AT HELPING THE CITY THROUGH A POTENTIAL WATER CRISIS.

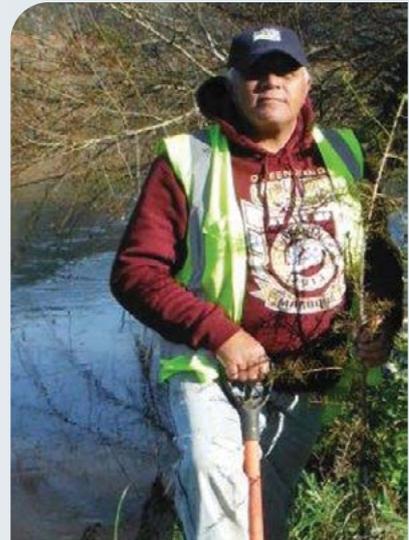
The Authority, along with Waikato-Tainui and the Waikato Regional Council, has met with officials from Auckland City and Watercare on a number of occasions in recent months to help find a way through a shortage of drinking water for Auckland. The first meeting was a water summit held in Hamilton which also included attendance by the Minister for the Environment Hon David Parker and Minister for Local Government Hon Nanaia Mahuta.

Watercare currently has a consent to take 150 million litres per day from the Waikato River but is seeking

additional water from the river in both the short and long term to help address Auckland's water needs.

Authority co-chair Roger Pikia says the Waikato has helped, and will continue to help Auckland with its water needs but there must be reciprocity back to the river.

"Our view is that the river must come first. With that acknowledgment, we are pleased that Auckland has stated that it is committed to future substantial investment to help with the restoration of the Waikato River. This is right and proper and is welcomed," says Mr Pikia.



## Passing of Ed Haunui

The Waikato River Authority wishes to pay tribute to a valued friend and partner who passed away in early October.

Ed Haunui of Waterside Planters had built a reputation, in the last few years in particular, as a great advocate and worker for the river.

Ed's dedication to his mahi has meant the delivery of a number of key planting projects especially in the area of the lower Waikato River.

Ed will be deeply missed.

*E te Rangatira, kua wehe ki te poo kaahore he otinga, ki te okiokinga I o taatou tipuna, haere, haere, haere atu raa. Paimaarire.*



(right to left) Authority Co-Chair Roger Pikia with Environment Minister David Parker, Waikato Regional Council Chair Russ Rimmington and Rukumoana Schaafhausen (far left) at a media conference following the first water summit in Hamilton on 1 July 2020 to discuss how the Waikato could help Auckland through its current water crisis.

## WRA 2020 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for the Waikato River Authority will this year be held in the upper catchment in early December.

The time and venue for the meeting will be advertised as soon as it is confirmed.

# Three new iwi appointees to board

CHANGE TO THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY BOARD OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF THREE NEW IWI APPOINTEES.

Tipa Mahuta (Waikato-Tainui), Nachele Griffiths (Raukawa) and Wikitōria Tāne (Maniapoto) have recently been appointed. This follows the change to all five Crown appointees to the board a few months ago.

The full board is: Co-Chairs Roger Pikia (TARIT) and Paula Southgate (Crown); along with Jackie Colliar (Crown), Dylan Tahau (Crown), Erina Watene-Rawiri (Crown), Stu Kneebone (Crown), Danny Loughlin (Tuwharetoa) together with the three new iwi appointees.



**TIPA MAHUTA**  
Waikato-Tainui appointee



**NACHELE GRIFFITHS**  
Raukawa appointee



**WIKITŌRIA TĀNE**  
Maniapoto appointee

Further details on all Waikato River Authority board members can be found on the Authority website at [www.waikatoriver.org.nz](http://www.waikatoriver.org.nz)

## Covid-19 operations

The Waikato River Authority continues to operate under Covid-19 guidelines while also having a focus on helping funded projects.

Authority staff have been able to work from home when necessary through Alert Level changes, which has meant project funding payments have continued to be made.

The Authority is expecting that there maybe delays to the completion of some projects because of the earlier lockdown.

The Waikato River Authority board has committed to using its future funding, in the short term, in a way that can support any recovery required from the impacts of Covid-19.

Unite  
against  
COVID-19