

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Reviewed **funding strategy** aims for tighter direction



The Waikato River near Whakamaru photographed in December 2013.

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY WILL OPEN ITS 4TH FUNDING ROUND FOR RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECTS ON 1 JULY THIS YEAR FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF ITS FUNDING STRATEGY.

The Authority Board has decided that applications will close on 29 August to allow funding decisions to be made and communicated prior to the end of the year.

As part of its funding process, the Waikato River Authority carries out an annual review of its Funding Strategy that is published before each funding round.

This year the Strategy will be subject to a comprehensive review.

Waikato River Authority co-chairs Tukoroirangi Morgan and Hon John Luxton say the Authority believes it is timely to set tighter priorities in regard to clean-up projects.

"We've been pleased to support a wide range of projects in our first three years of funding, but we now wish to become more focused and provide more direction to funding applicants."

Among the areas the Authority is likely to give prominence to as part of the review of the Strategy include:

"We aim to provide more direction to funding applicants."

Water Quality - A greater emphasis on wetland projects and those that deliver a direct and tangible improvement in river water quality.

A Co-ordinated Approach - Projects that form part of multi year strategic plans by applicants and that have links to other catchment projects.

Lower Waikato and Waipa - Projects that impact positively and directly on the Waipa River and lower Waikato River, which are the areas that are the most degraded.

In past years the Waikato River Authority has had between \$6 million and \$7 million available for Waikato River clean-up projects. It is expected that a similar amount will again be available for the coming round.

Information on the 2014 Waikato River Authority funding process will be available on:
www.waikatoriver.org.nz/funding

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

The Authority has had a busy start to 2014 as deeds of funding (DoF) are developed, agreed and executed between the latest round's successful recipients and the Authority. These DoF provide the detail that is required once a project is approved by the Authority. Matters such as a project plan, cashflow forecast, quality control, risk, and communications may be included, and essentially the DoF is a contract for delivery of a service or outcome.

In this newsletter you will read that the Authority is looking to apply a sharper focus on the types of projects it funds. This will be developed over the next several funding rounds but is an important signal to our applicant community that we are taking a more strategic and long-term approach to the funding we award. To date our funding priorities have been quite broad and the projects funded have depended on what is of most interest to applicants. Over successive funding rounds you will see our funding priorities become more targeted to the point where specific sites and/or projects are announced with a call for proposals to complete related projects.



Bob Penter
 Chief Executive



Horotiu section of Te Awa River Ride opens



HUNDREDS OF WAIKATO RESIDENTS WERE ABLE TO SATISFY THEIR CURIOSITY ABOUT THE HOROTIU SECTION OF THE TE AWA RIVER RIDE WHEN IT OFFICIALLY OPENED JUST PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS.

The Te Awa cycle path section south of the Horotiu Bridge. The recently completed section includes river side picnic areas.

“people are just really excited about cycleways.”

The summery day brought around 500 cyclists and walkers of all ages to try the three-kilometre section of the ride, which links the Horotiu Bridge with the start of the Hamilton section. The Waikato River Authority was a major funder of this section of the project.

Te Awa River Ride project director Jennifer Palmer said it was an amazing day, and in the five minutes after the gates opened a dozen people had headed down the track.

And feedback was positive.

“I think people were really surprised at some of the things they saw. There’s a really cool boardwalk,

there’s a beach, so there’s just lots of really unique things,” she said.

“I think people are just really excited about cycleways in general, but this is a pretty spectacular section.”

The Horotiu section had a budget of about \$1.5m and takes riders behind Fonterra’s Te Rapa factory.

It also opens up access to the Mangaharakeke Pa site, which is one of the largest in the Waikato.

And there were a few famous faces around for its opening - Olympians Sarah Ulmer and Rob Waddell each presented a young spot prize winner with a bike.

Tracking down the koura



NIWA SCIENTISTS HAVE SECURED FUNDING FROM THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY FOR A PROJECT THEY HOPE WILL TAKE THEM A STEP CLOSER TO DISCOVERING WHY THE NUMBER OF FRESHWATER CRAYFISH, OR KOURA, IN THE UPPER WAIKATO RIVER HAS DRAMATICALLY DECLINED.

Koura are a taonga species and an important traditional food source for Maori, as well as being an integral part of freshwater ecosystems.

NIWA ecotoxicologist Sue Clearwater says a preliminary survey of koura in Lakes Atiamuri and Ohakuri last year was halted when scientists and interns from Te Arawa River Iwi Trust were unable to find any koura in the mainstem of the river, despite their earlier proliferation.

“This preliminary survey suggested the population decline in the river was much worse than we had originally thought.”

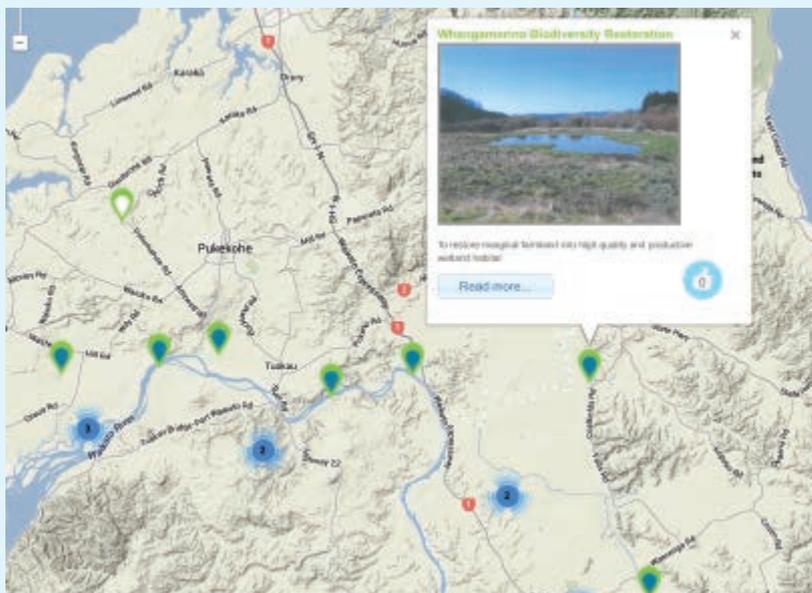
Dr Clearwater says scientists do not yet know what has caused the population decline in the Waikato River but

The Ripple Effect

AN INITIATIVE FROM THE WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL HAS SEEN CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS MADE IN A COMPREHENSIVE MAPPING OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROJECTS IN THE WAIKATO CATCHMENT.

A site called The Ripple Effect has all Waikato River Authority funded projects mapped with supporting information about individual projects behind each mapped point. There are more than 100 WRA projects mapped including those from the 2013 funding round.

The numbered disks represent a cluster of projects in close proximity that can be viewed by clicking on the disk. The site can be accessed via the Waikato River Authority website or directly at www.makearipple.co.nz



A sample page looking at the mapped projects on The Ripple Effect website for Waikato catchment environmental projects.

Tracking down the koura ... (continued)

suspect several culprits. The most likely is the eel, or tuna, which are now prevalent in the hydro lakes along the river since the start of an elver transfer programme in the mid-1990s.

The water storage and flow management in the hydro lakes may have contributed along with changes to water quality and habitats. Introduced species such as catfish may also have been contributors to the koura decline. Dr Clearwater says a combination of factors is likely.

The new NIWA survey is to focus on the deep, less accessible areas of the river from Huka Falls, through Lakes Aratiatia, Ohakuri and Atiamuri. It will include using divers, the traditional tau koura harvesting method involving sinking large bunches of bracken to the river bed, and selective electric fishing in tributaries above and below weel barriers.

"From this we will gather information on how the koura populations are doing and get an idea of what is affecting them."

It is proposed the findings will be used to guide iwi in management decisions about koura in their region.

Landowners get behind Streamcare Group to clean up the Mangapiko



Mangapiko Farmer Doug Smith explains the clean-up story on his farm at an open day to view progress. Thousands of native plants will be put in place on his property in the coming winter.

FARMER DOUG SMITH HAS BEEN ON THE SAME MANGAPIKO LAND ALL HIS LIFE, LAND THAT WAS DEVELOPED BY HIS GRANDFATHER.

So for him and wife Naomi to lend their support to the Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group in their quest to rehabilitate the Mangapiko Stream between Te Awamutu and Pirongia seemed an obvious thing to do.

Doug remembers having his legs stained black for days after wading in the stream 40 or 50 years ago. Back then he says the stream had major pollution. There has been marked environmental improvement since then but Doug and Naomi are keen to see the stream back to something like it was when his grandmother was a girl ... crystal clear water. Doug concedes this is probably not feasible due to the land change that has happened in the catchment but he says river bank planting and clearing of willows will make another significant improvement.

Doug has cleared the stream banks in readiness for winter planting by the Streamcare Group which has funding support from the Waikato River Authority to help carry out the work.

There is 25 kilometres of stream to be improved, the latest section of 6 kilometres has 3.5 kilometres bordering the Smith's property.

Waikato River Authority announces new board members

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS ANNOUNCED THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS FOLLOWING THE RETIREMENT OF TWO IWI AND ONE CROWN REPRESENTATIVE LATE LAST YEAR. TWO OTHER CROWN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN RECONFIRMED FOR FURTHER TERMS.

The new board members are Vanessa Eparaima (*Raukawa*), Weo Maag (*Maniapoto*) & Traci Houpapa (*Crown*). In addition, other Crown appointees reconfirmed for a further term of three years are Hon John Luxton (*co-chair*) & Jenni Vernon.

The Waikato River Authority has a ten-member board that is comprised of five Waikato River Iwi and five Crown appointees and is co-chaired by Mr Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan (*Tainui*).

The Crown appointments are made by the Hon Amy Adams as Minister for the Environment, with the Iwi appointments made by the respective river Iwi.



Tukoroirangi Morgan
Iwi Appointee – Waikato Tainui
Co-Chair



Hon John Luxton
Crown Appointee
Co-Chair



Roger Pikia
Iwi Appointee – Te Arawa
Deputy Co-Chair/Chair
Investment Committee



Jenni Vernon
Crown Appointee
Deputy Co-Chair



Peter Buckley
Crown Appointee



Vanessa Eparaima
Iwi Appointee – Raukawa



Alan Livingston
Crown Appointee



Heemi Biddle
Iwi Appointee – Tuwharetoa



Traci Houpapa
Crown Appointee



Weo Maag
Iwi Appointee – Maniapoto