

## CE Message

Kei ngaa maunga whakahii, kei ngaa wai tukukiri, kei ngaa maataawaka, teenaa koutou katoa.

Welcome to the first quarterly newsletter of 2023. An outcome from Watercare being granted its water take consent for the Waikato River is that it will provide \$2 million of funding each year to the WRA for the 20-year consent duration.

This funding is to support river restoration opportunities and the first funding payment has now been received.

The boards of Watercare and the WRA also met in Hamilton recently. This provided an opportunity for the WRA to share with Watercare how it will apply its funding.

The WRA board decided that an administratively simple, transparent, and legally compliant approach is to use Watercare funding for the first \$2 million of successful funding applications in our annual funding round.

The WRA will continue to meet the remainder of the funding. Both boards also discussed wider opportunities to work together, particularly focusing on the lower Waikato River.

Ngaa manaakitanga

**Bob Penter**  
Chief Executive



## Clark's dream to restore sites of significance becomes a reality

Hauturu Clark has a dream to restore and protect sites of significance for his whaanau, Ngaati Tiipaa hapuu, and Waikato-Tainui iwi.

That dream is becoming a reality thanks to contract restoration work he has done with Papakura Marae, Waikato River Authority, Waikato-Tainui, and the Waikato Regional Council.

Hauturu was successful in applying for \$360,000 from the Waikato River Authority three years ago to plant native trees on his maunga Te Puke o Tahinga, which is nestled behind Te Kotahitanga Marae the home of his hapuu Ngaati Tiipaa in Port Waikato.

Hauturu has planted natives such as manuka, puuriri, mahoe, and other smaller shrubs around the maunga as part of a three-year WRA project, and native birds are returning, as are kaimahi and whaanau reconnecting with their maunga.

"It was awesome; you can't beat living on your whenua and getting paid to work there; there's nothing better than that - it's my dream job."

What began as a partnership between Hauturu and his wife Amy has grown to three employees in his first year and eight employees in his second year under the banner of his own company, Te Papatipu Planting Ltd - Native Restoration. He has several contracts, including one with the Waikato Regional Council to conduct weed releasing at Lake Kimihia and another with Waikato-Tainui to plant native trees and weed control at Ruakura.

While Hauturu is pleased with the growth of his business and contracts in Hamilton and Huntly, he remains committed to Te Puaha o Waikato, the Waikato River mouth.

"That is my ambition: to clean up the river at Te Puaha o Waikato and all of our whaanau sites."

Te Papatipu Planting Ltd's Hauturu Clark says restoring sites of significance to his iwi is his dream job.



## ● Sarah Ulmer invites whaanau to participate in Te Awa River Ride



Sarah Ulmer, a former Olympic gold medalist cyclist, is encouraging people to join the Te Awa River Ride celebration in Waikato on Sunday, 26 March.

Sarah, the first New Zealander to win an Olympic cycling gold medal in Athens in 2004, is the Trail Manager for Te Awa River Ride and is inviting whaanau and communities to join a celebration to honour the completion of the 65-kilometre track through the Waikato that began 14 years ago.

"We want to commemorate every kilometre of the river ride from Ngaruawahia in the north to Karapiro in the south, and we want people to walk, bike, run or scoot across as much of it as they can on that day as we celebrate its completion and end it with a celebration at the Hamilton Gardens," says Sarah.

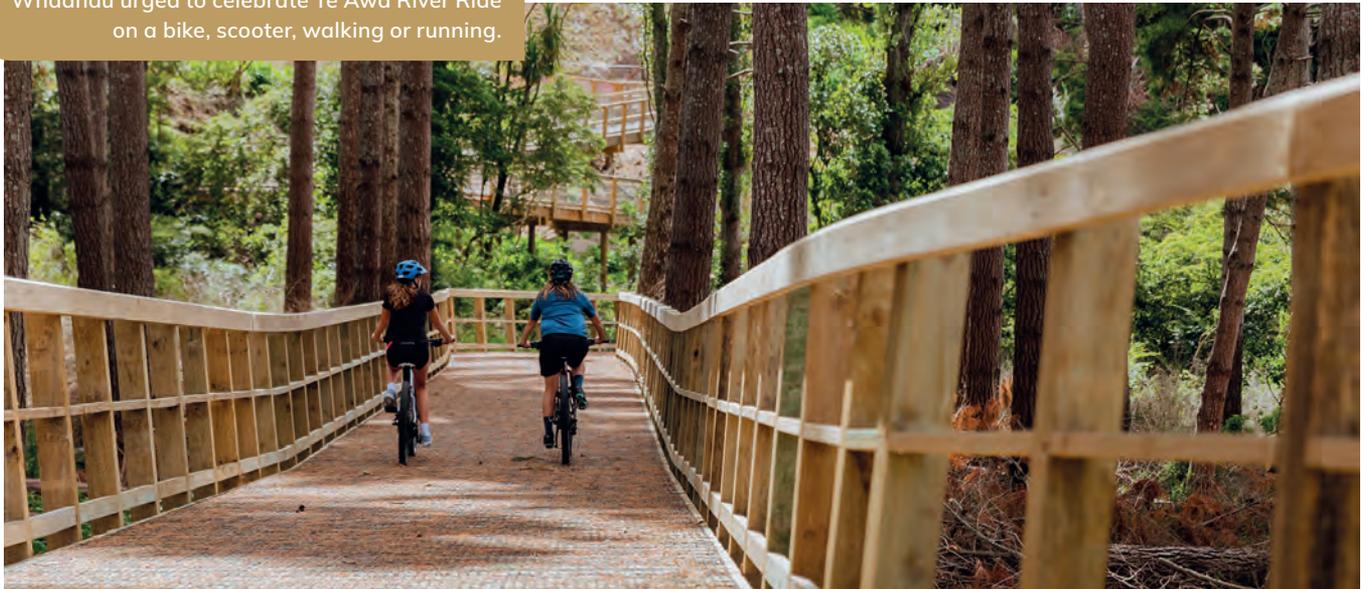
From 11 am to 2 pm, whaanau are encouraged to visit the 27 stations along the Waikato part of the Te Awa River Ride and acquire a passport and stickers from each stop. The number of stickers equals the number of entries into the prize draw of over \$13,000 in prizes (including kids' bikes and two e-bikes). Prize-giving, family entertainment along with Gourmet in the Gardens will be held at Hamilton Gardens at 3:30 pm.

Transport Minister Michael Wood, as well as the mayors of Waikato and Waipā District Councils, and Hamilton City Council, will take part in the Te Awa River Ride event.

The Waikato River Authority has long been a supporter of Te Awa River Ride, contributing about \$1.5 million over the last decade. Our funds were used to plant native tress, fencing, control pests, remove weeds, and oversee the project.

For further information visit [www.te-awa.org.nz/celebration](http://www.te-awa.org.nz/celebration).

Whaanau urged to celebrate Te Awa River Ride on a bike, scooter, walking or running.



## ● Te Ture Whaimana Review Progress Update

Te Ture Whaimana Review is about more than just a process. This is an intergenerational project, that will help communities now and in the future in enjoying and prospering from their engagement with the river.

As part of the project the review team are investigating ways that the future generations, our rangatahi could shadow the engagement process, to pick up skills for the future and build capacity within the taiao knowledge sector. Keep an eye out for future development in this space!

We are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River, and everything it encompasses for generations to come.

The first round of invites to the River Iwi and the Crown are being circulated. These hui are to inform and educate about the role of Ture Whaimana in the regulatory hierarchy and provide an opportunity to constructively engage and

be heard in the process. What's working, what's not, what's missing and what should we be aiming for are all questions we would like to see raised.

Following on from introduction sessions held with all five River Iwi late last year, hui continue to be had with River Iwi, with the team meeting with Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board's Ngā Kaihautū o te awa o Waikato in late February. Ngā Kaihautū members were engaged in the kōrero and a hui with Te Arawa River Iwi affiliates is in the pipeline.

These hui followed an interactive presentation on the Te Ture Whaimana Review process to the Waikato River Authority board in December last year,

where the board made clear their focus on ensuring a strong mātauranga process is adopted from stage 1 onwards.

More information about the review, upcoming events, and meetings will be available on the Waikato River Authority website. Our website also provides an option to subscribe and review newsletters.

TE TURE  
WHAIMANA  
Review

# Restoring the water level at Lake Kimihia

Lake Kimihia is an important natural site for Waikato-Tainui iwi, particularly the three local hapuu of Ngaati Naho, Ngaati Mahuta, and Ngaati Whāwhākia.

As a result of open cast mining, the lake had reduced in size over the years from 318ha to 44ha and became so shallow that it frequently dried up completely over the summer.

Waikato Regional Council (WRC), Waikato-Tainui, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and landowners worked together to establish a strategy to reinstate the lake level and restore wetland edges. The total project cost is about \$1.86m, which includes \$202,000 from WRA.

WRC project manager Kate Ross says the Ministry for the Environment (MFE) provided financing to the council from its Public Waterways and Ecosystems Restoration Fund. These funds were used to construct an earth bund and weir to restore the level of the lake to what it was in the 1980s. This work was completed in May last year.

“Raising the water levels will keep the lake from drying up in the summer, provide better habitat for native species and expand the size and extent of wetlands and the lake edges,” says Kate.

“Of course, this summer we have had a lot of rain so the lake has definitely not dried out, but we can definitely expect to see a healthy and thriving environment in drier conditions moving forward.”

The council also received funding from the WRA Clean-up Trust, Genesis Energy and Kanoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit for the ecological and cultural enhancement of the site, including the fencing and planting of riparian margins and surrounding wetlands.

Kate says mana whenua have been involved with planting and plant maintenance, and there should be opportunities for them to get involved in the future as kaitiaki of Kimihia.

“Waahi Whaanui is leading the development of a cultural health framework for Kimihia which will involve mana whenua in the monitoring of lake health”.

Hauturu Clark from Ngaati Tiipaa, and his fledgling company Te Papatipu Planting Ltd is involved in the weed-releasing works at Lake Kimihia.

“It’s good to get Waikato-Tainui affiliated companies to do this mahi first to restore our sites of significance and give us a chance to prove ourselves,” says Hauturu.

The picturesque Lake Kimihia restoration project can also be appreciated by motorists on the Waikato Expressway where it bypasses Huntly.



WRC Senior Catchment Management Officer Megan Royal, WRA Funding Manager Michelle Hodges and WRC project manager Kate Ross at the weir built at Lake Kimihia.

# Authority seeks protection of Te Ture Whaimana

On behalf of the Authority, the principal policy advisor Julian Williams presented to the Environment Select Committee on the Natural and Built Environment Bill and Spatial Planning Bill (the Bills) on 6 March.



WRA Principal Policy Advisor and Engagement Julian Williams

The Bills represent the most comprehensive reform of resource management in Aotearoa since the Resource Management Act (RMA) was passed in 1991. The purpose of the NBE Bill updates the RMA’s focus on sustainable management from managing negative effects to promoting positive outcomes. More than 20,000 submissions were received.

While the Authority agrees with the Bills’ focus, the Bills do not provide certainty regarding the protection of Te Ture Whaimana o te Awa o Waikato and all provisions and tools that advance Te Ture Whaimana under the Waikato and Waipaa River Settlements.

The Authority’s submission sought the Government’s assurance that all provisions that enable the Authority to perform its functions and empower Te Ture Whaimana as the primary direction-setting document are protected.

We thank Waikato-Tainui and the River Iwi for sharing resources and taking the lead in preparing a collaborative submission.

## ● Burton raises \$3901 for Waikato Westpac Rescue Helicopter

Waikato River Authority communications adviser and avid cyclist, Philip Burton successfully cycled from Cape Reinga to Wellington to raise funds in memory of his friend Bruce Keighley, who died of a heart attack while cycling.

Philip was one of six Hamilton cyclists who set out from Cape Reinga on the 21st of February and cycled more than 1000 kilometres to Wellington over the next two weeks, arriving on the 7 March.

While the rest of the team continued to tackle the South Island and finish at Bluff as the culmination of their Tour Aotearoa trip, Philip chose to listen to his body after repeat rides of more than 130km each day over sand, gravel, and gruelling hills. He informed the WRA team via messenger that his tour had come to an end.

“Kia ora everyone, arrived in Wellington last night, unfortunately, it is the end stop for Tour Aotearoa for me. I still accomplished some tough rides and am happy with my decision.”

We are extremely proud of Philip’s accomplishment, as well as the fact that he surpassed his fundraising goal of \$3000, raising \$3901 for the Waikato Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

To donate <http://bit.ly/3mCImYr>



Philip Burton stopped to check on the WRA-funded mahi at Arapuni on tour.



Team HTFU at the start of their Tour Aotearoa campaign at Cape Reinga.

## ● Te Amorangi leaves WRA nest to put accounting degree into practice

WRA Funding Support Co-ordinator Te Amorangi Heremaia-Flavell has left the authority after 10 years of devoted service to take up an accounting role with a Māori consultancy firm.

Te Amorangi started with the organisation as a student intern in the early days and in the past year was managing 40 restoration projects across the Waikato and Waipā Rivers and their catchments.

“It has been my privilege and honour being a part of such an awesome team and being a part of the important mahi that the WRA do for our iwi and especially, our tuupuna awa,” says Te Amorangi.

“I have learnt and gained so many critical skills over the many years here at WRA that I will always be grateful for.”

Funding Manager Michelle Hodges says while Te Amorangi worked behind the scenes she kept the small funding team on track.

“She’s grown so much throughout her time here and started off as a part-time student and now is putting her university accounting degree into practice. I miss her already.”



Farewell lunch for long-serving WRA funding co-ordinator Te Amorangi Heremaia-Flavell pictured with Chief Executive Bob Penner.

The WRA is looking to fill the WRA Funding Support Co-Ordinator role, for all confidential enquiries, contact Michelle de Beer at 021 798 882.

For more information on the Waikato River Authority, visit [www.waikatoriver.org.nz](http://www.waikatoriver.org.nz)