

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Extraordinary interest in river clean-up funding

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY'S SEVENTH FUNDING ROUND HAS CLOSED WITH \$12.5 MILLION BEING SOUGHT FOR RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECTS. IT IS THE AUTHORITY'S STRONGEST FUNDING ROUND TO DATE.

A total of 65 applications have been received for projects throughout the 11-thousand square kilometre catchment for the Waikato and Waipaa rivers.

Authority co-chair Tukoroirangi Morgan says the value and calibre of funding applications this year is unprecedented.

"We have always been concerned at the capacity of the wider community to take on an increasing load of freshwater clean-up and restoration projects, but it is fairly clear from this year's applications that there is a ground swell of determination from people who want to see a better outcome for our rivers and lakes," he says.

Mr Morgan says there is a good number of applications from iwi groups this year, from larger trusts through to local hapuu and marae.

The Authority has this year allocated up to \$6 million for clean-up projects.

Deputy Crown Co-Chair, and Chair of the Authority's Investment Committee, Traci Houpapa, says there is now a formidable task ahead to evaluate and select the successful projects.

"We know this year will see some fantastic new restoration initiatives funded, and it is pleasing to see projects that deliver significant cash co-funding, sourced from within and outside the region, which will ensure maximum leverage of the Authority's funding dollar," she says.

The projects seeking funding will now undergo a technical evaluation process from an advisory panel with the final funding decisions made by the Authority announced by November.

In the past six years of funding, the Waikato River Authority has allocated \$30.4 million to 204 projects.

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

It is great to see the major political parties focus on the health of waterways in the run up to the general election, albeit with much attention on a water tax.

Since 2010 our focus has been applied in the catchment of the Waikato and Waipaa rivers, not to influence voters, but to restore and protect our waterways via the Vision & Strategy. This document sets the primary direction for our efforts, and is supported by substantial restoration funding administered by the Authority. Waikato-Tainui refer to "Mana o Te Awa" (the spiritual authority, protective power and prestige of the Waikato River), and the Vision & Strategy in part recognises this by seeking that no further degradation occurs to our waterways.

The debate about water pricing and water use will no doubt emerge during our current review process of the Vision & Strategy. We all rely on water to support living and livelihoods that in turn have an effect on our waterways. Washing our car, flushing toilets, and powering our homes with electricity from the many river changing dams and power stations are just a few examples.

The Vision & Strategy recognises that the strategic importance of the Waikato River to New Zealand's social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing requires the restoration and protection of the health and wellbeing of both the Waikato and Waipaa rivers. It would be beneficial to have the current debate about a new water tax consider all the wider issues, rather than a narrow focus on one sector.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

Wai ora education project underway

TE ARAWA RIVER IWI TRUST'S MATAURANGA WAI ORA ENVIRO EDUCATIONAL PROJECT FUNDED BY THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY IS NOW WELL UNDERWAY.

An outdoor classroom session was recently held at Kearoa Marae, Horohoro, on the Pokaitu Stream, and involved children from Whakarewarewa School and Horohoro School.

The project involves tamariki being educated on the Waikato River catchment ecosystems and how those ecosystems can be managed using cultural techniques as well as new technology.

Practical experience for the children will include restoration field work of riparian planting, wetland planting and weed control. The children will also help in three plant growing nurseries.

The educational project will also develop resource kits and brochures for distribution among river iwi and schools.

Right: Children from Whakarewarewa School at an education day at Kaaroa Marae at Horohoro as part of the Matauranga Wai Ora Enviro Education



Waikato projects receive government funding

TWO PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY RECEIVED \$1.64 MILLION IN FUNDING FROM THE GOVERNMENT LAST MONTH AS PART OF \$44 MILLION TOWARDS FRESHWATER IMPROVEMENT.

One of the Waikato projects, aimed at addressing water quality and enhancing the habitat at Lake Whangape, has received just over \$900,000. Overall this is a \$2.8 million project to address sedimentation, nutrient loading and alligator weed control. Other work will see fencing to exclude stock and revegetation of lake margins.

The other project to receive funding is work at the Puniu River which will get a boost of \$740,000 in Government funding. This project aims to improve water quality, the mauri of the awa and to help restore indigenous fish habitat and biodiversity. Activities include riparian fencing to exclude stock, erosion protection works and the planting of 160,000 native trees. It will also involve the creation of a bilingual guide for marae-based restoration to enable growth in the development of other new organisations undertaking similar activities.

Vision of power station worker gains momentum

PROGRESS IS GETTING UNDERWAY TO RESTORE A WEED INFESTED SWAMPLAND AT THE BASE OF THE MANGAKOWHIRIWHIRI STREAM WHERE IT ENTERS LAKE WHAKAMARU.

The idea to do something about the area came from the manager of the power station who also lived in Whakamaru village. His employer Mercury is supporting the project which has been funded by the Waikato River Authority and Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. The first stage of the five year project is to clear weeds and the second

stage is to carry out native planting. Ultimately a public pathway is planned to run through the area.

Upstream from the restoration area, the main part of the stream is in a gorge with vegetation that survived Maori fires that burned through the area. As a result there are old species of rimu, matai, kahikatea and some local totara.



Weeds have been sprayed at the Mangakowhiri wetland near Whakamaru power station ready for native planting.

Final details for river symposium put in place

FINAL DETAILS FOR A MAJOR RIVER SYMPOSIUM BEING HELD IN HAMILTON THIS NOVEMBER ARE NOW BEING PUT IN PLACE.

The 5th Biennial Symposium of the International Society for River Science (ISRS) has previously been held at locations all around the world (Europe, China and USA) and this will be the first for the conference in the southern hemisphere. The conference is being hosted by the University of Waikato with sponsorship from the Waikato River Authority. It will be held 19 - 24 November 2017.



A powhiri welcoming conference participants, including many from overseas, will be held at Turangawaewae Marae prior to the conference getting underway at Claudelands Events Centre. The Authority co-chairs have been invited to open the conference.

The conference theme is "Integrating Multiple Aquatic Values" and will provide a forum for sharing knowledge underpinning management of rivers for multiple goals.

Further information including registration details are available at www.isrs2017.com

Riverbank blessing

A RIVERBANK BLESSING WAS HELD AT TURANGAWAEWAE MARAE LAST MONTH FOR AN AUTHORITY FUNDED PROJECT WHICH WILL SEE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT OF THE MARAE RIVER EDGE.

Marae project members and Waikato River Authority staff gathered for the early morning blessing.

The project will see some earthworks and construction carried out on the riverbank to enable better waka berthing as well as significant native planting. Also included will be upgraded pathway access.

Pictured right (left to right) is Julian Williams from the Waikato River Authority, Kaumatua Pokaia Nepia and Authority Chief Executive Bob Penter.



Restoration Strategy milestone

THE TWO YEAR PROJECT TO DEVELOP A RESTORATION STRATEGY FOR THE WAIKATO AND WAIPAA RIVER CATCHMENTS HAS REACHED A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE WITH THE DRAFT STRATEGY NOW COMPLETED.

The strategy is now under peer review prior to publication later this year.

The project has been jointly led by the Waikato Regional Council, DairyNZ and the Waikato River Authority.

The strategy has identified more than 200 priority projects that once implemented will positively impact the catchment and help give effect to the Vision & Strategy. It is expected that the strategy will become a blueprint for

both project implementers and funding agencies wanting to undertake and fund work across the catchment.

The development of the strategy has seen widespread collaboration with iwi, community groups and stakeholders and involved significant input from recognised experts in areas including fresh water ecology, biodiversity, soils and lakes.

Iwi have taken the lead in the development of iwi priorities for the strategy.