

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Fifth funding round underway



THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS BEGUN THE PROCESS FOR ITS FIFTH FUNDING ROUND. APPLICATIONS FOR CLEAN-UP PROJECT FUNDING OPENED ON 15 JUNE 2015. APPLICATIONS WILL CLOSE ON 14 AUGUST 2015 WITH SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS NOTIFIED IN NOVEMBER.

Funding applications will again be managed online through the Waikato River Authority website www.waikatoriver.org.nz.

Up to \$6 million will be made available for clean-up projects.

As part of the funding process, the Waikato River Authority has also reviewed, and published its Funding Strategy 2015 which is also available online.

Waikato River Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan say funding priorities include the Waipa and lower Waikato River catchment, wetland restoration and projects that are focused on improving water quality.

"In order to provide certainty to groups and individuals looking to carry out river clean-up projects with Waikato River Authority funding,

our funding strategy is relatively unchanged from the previous year," says Mr Luxton.

"We know that many projects require multi year planning and delivery, so we are conscious that we need to give a consistency of approach in terms of signaling what is of importance. We believe this will ultimately give the best outcome long term for the river," he says.

This year's Funding Strategy also includes a policy position from the Waikato River Authority on the fencing standards required for restoration planting that has been funded by the Authority. This outlines the requirement for both sheep and cattle and for electric and standard fencing.

The Funding Strategy is also indicating that where project funding is invested in environmental land improvement

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

The Waikato River Restoration Forum has received its first briefing on the progress of the 5-15 year Waikato River and Waipa River Restoration Strategy. The Strategy seeks to objectively evaluate and determine the priority projects that could be funded over the next 5 to 15 years. This process may be challenging for some parties if they feel their priorities are not visible, but the process will ensure that funders, including the Authority, are spending money where it best supports fulfillment of the vision and strategy – and that is what should matter most to all of us.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

then legal protection of that land via covenant maybe required.

The Funding Strategy 2015 is available on-line at www.waikatoriver.org.nz/key-documents or from the Waikato River Authority at 21 Rostrevor Street, Hamilton.

To date the Waikato River Authority has distributed \$22 million to 141 projects over four funding rounds from 2011. A full list of projects and their individual status is published on the Authority website.

Pictured: A Waikato River Authority funded project has enabled the Trees for Survival Trust to expand a school programme of raising and planting native seedlings. See full story on page 4.

Waikato wetlands showcase



A wetland development on a south Waikato dairy farm is completing an environmental full circle.

The original wetland on the Baldwin family's 267 ha farm was drained and turned into grazing paddocks 60 years ago. Now the Baldwins are partnering in an environmental showcase study led by industry body DairyNZ to restore the area to its natural state as part of a large scale wetland development.

The aim of the study is to provide Waikato farmers with advice and knowledge on wetland design and performance through a practical case study to reduce agricultural nutrient loads on the farm.

"We want to raise awareness with farmers of the significance of wetlands as a potential tool for reducing nutrient leaching," says DairyNZ water quality specialist Dr David Burger.

"Our ultimate goal is for this project to increase the uptake of on-farm wetland management throughout the Waikato Region and nationally."

Farmer Gray Baldwin says it is hoped the work will help future-proof the farm against nutrient loss if and when regional environmental limit setting comes into force.

The farm is hilly and prone to having nutrients run off the faces and down the slopes to settle into the Ngutuwera Stream, which runs through the farm. This stream connects to the Pokaiwhenua Stream, a major tributary of the Waikato River.

The project is being carried out in partnership with the Waikato River Authority, DairyNZ, Baldwin Family Trust, Opus International Consultants, Hill Laboratories and Waikato Regional Council.

DairyNZ's David Burger with Gray Baldwin alongside the Ngutuwera Stream.

Photo from Gerald Piddock Waikato Times.

WAIKATO RIVER & WAIPA RIVER
**restoration
strategy**
DairyNZ
Waikato River Authority
Waikato Regional Council

Direction set for Restoration Strategy

The Waikato River and Waipa River Restoration Strategy is taking shape with the involvement of a number of different groups in the strategy development.

The project is a joint initiative between DairyNZ, Waikato Regional Council and the

Waikato River Authority. When complete, the strategy will be a five to 15 year master plan for restoration activity in the Waipa and Waikato River catchments. More information on the project is available on:

www.waikatoriver.org.nz/projects-and-tools.

Plans showing the way

Three Waikato River iwi Environmental Management Plans have been in the spotlight recently with Raukawa and Te Arawa River Trust completing plans while Waikato-Tainui has been recognised for its plan which was launched in 2013.

The Waikato-Tainui plan – known as Tai Tumu, Tai Pari, Tai Ao – won the New Zealand Planning Institute Best Practice Award for Excellence in Strategic Planning and Guidance.

The plan received funding from the Waikato River Authority in the first year of project support.

The New Zealand Planning Institute was full of praise for the plan at its awards function in April. It described the environmental plan as inclusive and innovative, and a document that crosses cultural, linguistic and legislative divides. It said the plan has the potential to create transformation for Waikato-Tainui and the Waikato region.

Richard Douch, chairman of the Waikato branch of NZPI, nominated the plan for the award and says it provides clear high-level guidance for resource managers and regulators.

Meanwhile two other Environmental Management Plans, those for Raukawa and Te Arawa River Iwi Trust (TARIT) have been completed and published. TARIT has also published its Fisheries Management Plan.

The Waikato River Authority gives special weight to the priorities in the iwi Environmental Management Plans when making funding decisions for clean-up projects.



Rahui Papa of Waikato-Tainui receives the Excellence in Strategic Planning and Guidance Award from Andrew Willis, Deputy Chair of the NZPI and the Chair of the Awards Committee.

Buckleys win Catchment Improvement Award

The Waikato Ballance Farm Environment Awards has seen Te Kauwhata dairy farmers Peter and Judi Buckley win the catchment improvement award sponsored by the Waikato River Authority.

The Buckleys won the award along with their sharemilkers Stuart and Lichelle Morgan.

The farmers also won the PGG Wrightson Land and Life Award.

The Buckleys' property borders the Whangamarino Wetland and in making the awards, the judges praised the way in which the farming operation was managed in a sensitive environmental area. Eight years ago a 4.5 hectare wetland was created on the farm in conjunction with a neighbouring quarry. About 30,000 native plants have been put into the wetland, which as well as attracting extensive wildlife acts as a natural solution to improving water quality by capturing nutrient runoff.

Peter Buckley is a past chair of the Waikato Regional Council and a current councillor. He is also a board member of the Waikato River Authority.



Sharemilker Stu Morgan and farm owner Peter Buckley regard the wetland as an integral part of the dairy farm.

Managing project information

As part of a move to further improve its internal systems, the Waikato River Authority has transferred all paper-based project records from the first three years of funding to an on-line project database.

As part of this information transfer, the Authority will be contacting all project owners to let them know how they can update projects with milestones that will also be linked to project payments.

On-line applications

The upcoming 5th Waikato River Authority funding round will be the second year the funding process has been managed electronically.

Funding applications are only accepted online, through the funding portal at www.waikatoriver.org.nz, which enables crucial information to be captured for decision-making and ongoing project management.

Trees for Survival flourishing

A project funded by the Waikato River Authority in 2012 to enable school children to participate in an environmental project to ultimately support the river, is now paying big dividends.

The Trees for Survival Trust now has a waiting list of schools wanting to grow seedlings and plant natives in gullies and riparian margins as a result of recent success.



Dylan Peek plants one of the many hundreds of seedlings prepared and cared for by Rototuna Primary School.



Andrea Soanes from the Trees for Survival Trust and Joie-Boi Korako planting the grown seedlings.

Waikato regional co-ordinator for the Trust Andrea Soanes says from an initial six schools taking part there are now 30 schools involved, including the 15 the Waikato River Authority funded, "we have many other schools wanting to join as soon as possible and sponsors are required to make that happen."

The project involves school children raising native seedlings that they ultimately plant out as part of riparian or gully restoration.

One of the schools involved, Rototuna Primary School, has recently planted-out more than a 1000 seedlings that have been nurtured at the school as part of the Trees for Survival project.

"There is no doubt that the Waikato River Authority funding has been a catalyst for the expansion of our programme which has also encouraged other sponsors to join. We are of course hoping to attract more sponsors so we can continue to grow," says Andrea Soanes.