

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Minister praises Authority at Five Year Report and Report Card launch



(L to R) Co-chair Tukoroirangi Morgan, CE Bob Penter, Minister for the Environment Hon Dr Nick Smith, Co-Chair Hon John Luxton at the launch of the Authority's first Five Year Report.

The Waikato River Authority received high praise from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Dr Nick Smith, during the launch of the first Five Year Report by the Authority to the Crown and Waikato River iwi at the end of March.

Dr Smith said freshwater issues in New Zealand are very challenging and he congratulated the Authority on its work.

"Tremendous progress has been made and I say take a bow Waikato River Authority," said the Minister. Dr Smith said from a relationship point of view with stakeholders there was nervousness when the Authority started five years ago but there had been great progress and this is no longer the case.

The Five Year Report was presented to the Crown and river iwi by Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan including the first ever whole of catchment Report Card for the Waikato and Waipa rivers.

The Report Card was produced by NIWA, Diffuse Sources Ltd and the Waikato Raupatu River Trust on behalf of the Authority.

The whole of catchment Report Card grade is a C+ and scores across eight different indicators; Water Quality, Water Security, Economy, Kai, Ecological Integrity, Experience, Effort and Sites of Significance. The Report Card score is not a pass with a C grade regarded as a low rating, meaning overall the standard of river catchment falls short of the expectations of the vision and strategy for a healthy Waikato River.

Co-chairs of the Waikato River Authority, Tukoroirangi Morgan and Hon John Luxton say the Report Card is the first comprehensive assessment of the catchment that produces a summarised score and sets the benchmark for future improvement.

"We've always known there is a big task ahead to clean-up the rivers and

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

The recent release of the first Five Year Report by the Authority to river iwi and the Crown was an important milestone. The report noted the effort and initiatives of the Authority since its establishment late in 2010. The amount of interest generated in this report tells us that the task of restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipa rivers continues to be hugely important. This undertaking is not expected to become easier in the foreseeable future, but the community expectation that we must succeed has continually grown. Our message from day one has been that we can only get there by all stakeholders working together, and that message will hold true throughout this important journey.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

the Report Card gives a picture of where the most improvement is needed," says Mr Luxton.

Mr Morgan says there is definitely more work to be done. "My iwi, Waikato-Tainui, has for many years felt the river was in poor shape as it moves through our tribal area. The Report Card acknowledges this, but it is also concerning to see areas in the upper catchment, thought to be pristine, also reflecting a drop in their quality," he says. Mr Morgan says the work of the Authority is critical in bringing together the many groups required to turn around and restore the health and wellbeing of the catchment for all its communities.

The Report Card grades in the upper catchment are not finalised and subject to further discussions with river iwi in those areas. Iwi chairs Vanessa Eparaima (Raukawa), Roger Pikia (Te Arawa River Iwi Trust) and John Bishara (Tuwharetoa) say while the scores are not finalised they continue to support the important mahi and the work of those further downstream.

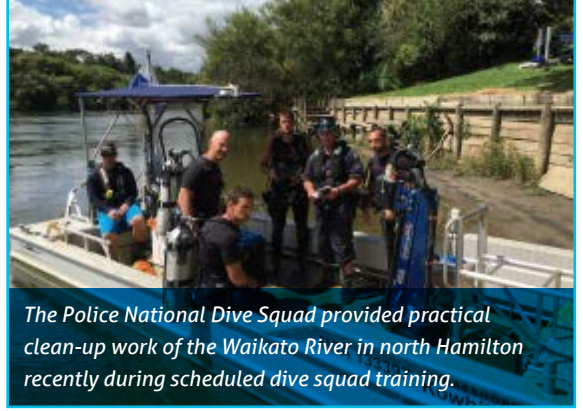
Waikato-Tainui CEO Parekawhia McLean says the Report Card builds upon the co-management approach of the Waikato River Settlement by getting iwi and the community involved in contributing their experiences and information alongside science.

"We are pleased to see the Report Card capture the collective wisdom and aspirations of iwi and the entire region to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for now and into the future," she says

Policy Manager – Tuwharetoa

The Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board is currently recruiting for a Natural Resources and Policy Manager. The role would suit someone with a strong interest in iwi development, and with experience in senior management roles, resource management, environmental law and policy.

Further details about the position can be found at www.seek.co.nz.



The Police National Dive Squad provided practical clean-up work of the Waikato River in north Hamilton recently during scheduled dive squad training.

Police Dive Squad find 'fleet of submerged cars' in clean-up operation

Ten members of the squad pulled nine cars and other dumped material from a 50 metre stretch of the river near the Pukete boat ramp. Senior Sergeant Bruce Adams says it appeared some of vehicles had been in the river for more than a decade.

The Dive Squad has an on-going relationship with the Authority, having previously removed vehicles from the Waikato River at Broadlands as part of a Waikato River Authority funded project.

River Trails story captures international attention

The Waikato River Trails project between Atiamuri and Lake Karapiro has been a key beneficiary of funding from the Waikato River Authority in recent years. The river trails project has enabled significant riparian management with 42,000 native trees being planted. The project continues to provide river access for many thousands of people every year and involve a large range of volunteer and community groups in trail maintenance.



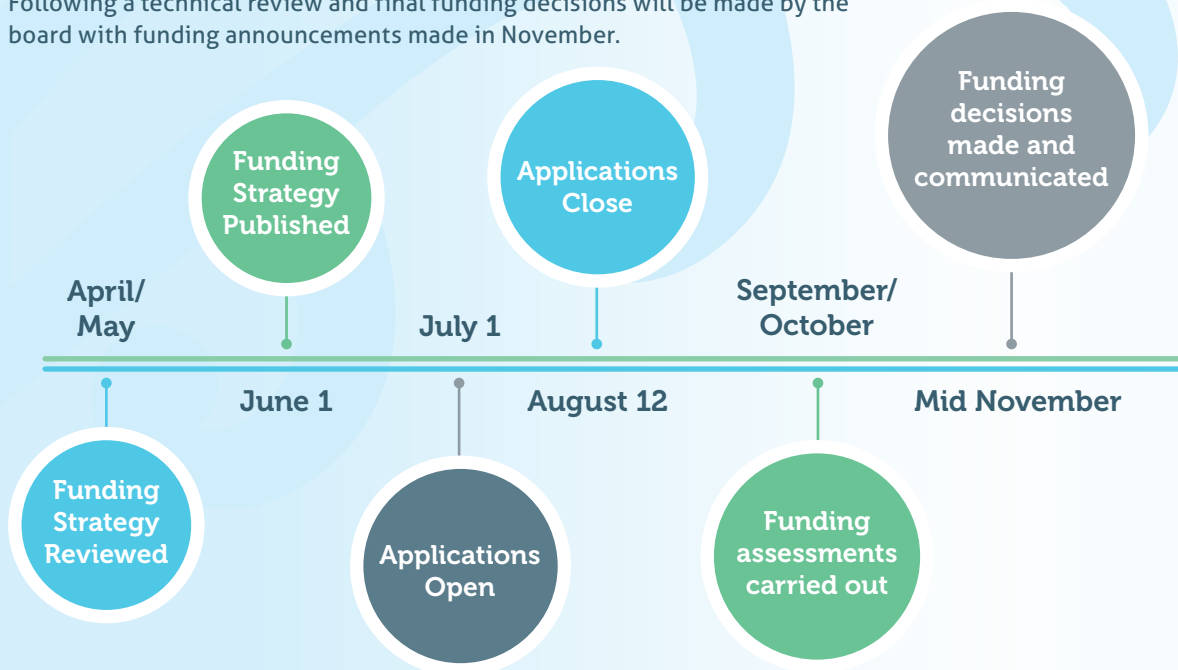
Students from Hong Kong's Victoria Shanghai Academy who carried out volunteer work on the Waikato River Trails recently.

Funding Process

and time-line for 2016

THE **WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY** WILL OPEN APPLICATIONS FOR CLEAN-UP PROJECT FUNDING AT THE BEGINNING OF JULY THIS YEAR. THIS YEAR'S FUNDING STRATEGY WILL BE PUBLISHED IN JUNE FOLLOWING SIGN-OFF FROM THE AUTHORITY BOARD.

Following a technical review and final funding decisions will be made by the board with funding announcements made in November.



Rotopiko Restoration gets results

Funding of \$600,000 from the Waikato River Authority has seen a remarkable transformation of the Rotopiko peat lake reserve off SH3, just south of Ohaupo.

Over the three year life of the grant, the National Wetland Trust has led a community project to build a pest-proof fence, eradicate all mammalian pests, and substantially restore an ancient kahikatea semi-swamp forest and the margins of one of the Waikato's best peat lakes. The restoration is phase one of the Trust's plan to create a show-case wetland and Wetland Discovery Centre, with research and educational facilities, wetland gardens, heritage trails and a pest-free wildlife haven.

With the help of the Authority grant, the Trust has established a solid volunteer base and put in place regular surveillance for pests and monitoring of native plants and animals. They have confirmed the presence of long-tailed bats, spotless crane, Australasian bittern, North Island fernbirds and copper skinks inside the pest fence.

Volunteers including locals, Dairy NZ, Wintec, Mangaiti Gully Group, Tamahere Community Nursery, and Te Awamutu Intermediate School, have contributed over 1000 hours of time towards the project. They have planted almost 3000 native plants from 62 species at the site, and undertaken regular weed management.



Volunteers from Wintec clear pest plants from the Rotopiko peat lake reserve.

The launch of the inaugural Waikato River Authority Five Year Report to the Crown and Waikato River iwi at the Waikato-Tainui College on 22 March.



Waikato River Authority board members R to L: Peter Buckley, Weo Maag, Jenni Vernon, Alan Livingston, Vanessa Eparaima and Heemi Biddle.



Minister for the Environment Hon Dr Nick Smith with a set of limited edition prints commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Authority.



Report Card authors NIWA's Dr John Quinn and Diffuse Sources Bruce Williamson (seated) with NIWA General Manager Strategy Bryce Cooper.



Waikato Regional Council chair Paula Southgate with Chief Executive Vaughan Payne (left) and Parliamentary Secretary (Environment) Neil Deans.



Five Year Report launch at Waikato-Tainui College, Hopuhopu.



Vanessa Eparaima (Chair of Raukawa – WRA Board Member) with Minister for the Environment Hon Dr Nick Smith.