



# IN touch

South Waikato District Council

A bi-monthly newsletter from your local Council - Issue 27 - March/April 2016

Council's doing WHAT!!??

Got something to say about it? Got a great idea?

Now is the time to...

# HAVE YOUR SAY

## ANNUAL PLAN 2016-17

Do you have something to say about...

**Leith Place concept designs?**

**Putaruru concept plan?**

**Te Waihou & the Blue Spring**

**Traffic & parking in Tirau?**

**We want your feedback on these topics and more... make a submission between Wednesday 16 March and Friday 15 April**  
[www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz) - Our Council - Consultation

... or fees and charges, economic development, rates, changes for metered water supplies, water quality, public transport, Tokoroa skatepark, roading, pensioner housing project, asset replacement reserves... or anything else Council does...

### IN brief

- Council received 149 objections to the district revaluations, equating to 1.49% of all revaluations carried out, which is lower than the 2% national average. All objections are with the Valuers to process.
- A total of 2,850 people have used the Tokoroa Circuit of the Urban Connector in the first quarter of this year - pleasing results. 309 have used the District Circuit. For more information on this project, see page 6.

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### IN house

Produced in-house for the South Waikato community by the South Waikato District Council.

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# Council initiates local solution for Driver Training

The Logistics and Driver Training initiative in Tokoroa has opened in Anchor Place and courses are in full swing with more starting in July.

The initiative is thanks to a drive by South Waikato District Council and partner Bay of Plenty Polytechnic to answer the shortage of both truck drivers and distribution warehousing personnel.

In 2015, Council identified that the shortage of drivers and distribution staff was a significant issue impacting local logistics and distribution companies. Working through existing partnerships with logistics and road transport industry leaders, Council kicked off an investigation into the possibility of expanding the Tokoroa Trade Training centre into logistics and commercial road transport.

"After some investigation to find a suitable education provider that could locally train in the areas of distribution, logistics and commercial road transport, a relationship was formed with Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP) and its already successful logistics training centre," said Alison Flett, Council's Acting Community Group Manager.

Last year, information sessions were held with industry leaders, visits to the existing BOPP facility were conducted, course provision began and talks with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development started.

Council has committed \$85,000 to the commercial road transport, distribution and logistics training course delivered locally in the South Waikato. The course is a further extension of the already successful Trade Training Centre which was initiated by Council in 2008 to address an engineering skills gap affecting local industries.

"It is encouraging to see that a number of businesses and individuals have put their hands up to be part of the steering group for the project - Sheldrake Transport, Alan Forbes Transport, RJ Lincoln, Downer, Log Transport Safety Council and Road Masters," continued Mrs Flett. "Having an industry led steering group is a proven successful driver for the other courses - engineering, automotive, welding and fabrication - already running at the Tokoroa Trade Training Centre."

The project progressed rapidly early this year with a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) being signed between Council and BOPP, a commitment of \$85,000 being made by Council to ensure the project's success, a lease secured on a site in Anchor Lane and a dedicated tutor appointed.

This latest venture in the South Waikato further builds on this with courses including Distribution Level 2 for Secondary School students one-day-a-week, a full time Distribution Level 2 course

for the community and the Certificate in Commercial Road Transport Level 3 with a focus on truck driving and specialised driving licences.

"The MoU between the South Waikato District Council, the South Waikato Road Transport and Logistics Industry Group and BOPP is the perfect example of industry, council and provider meeting both the logistics and driver shortage needs in the region while also helping address the national shortage at the same time," said Malcolm Hardy, Head of School - School of Applied Technology.







## Balloons vist South Waikato

The South Waikato was treated to a spectacular night out with the Balloons again this year.

Six balloonists from all over the world made their way down to the Tokoroa Memorial Sportsground on Friday 18 March to show our community a fantastic evening.

The six balloons included two special shapes, Race Car and Baby Dino, and the Lion's walkthrough envelope.

Council has secured this event for our district for the next two years.

"A huge thank you to everyone who came together and made this event possible, especially Balloons Over Waikato and the balloonists. Our community had a fantastic night and we can't wait for next year," commented Craig Hobbs, Council's CE.





# WHAT'S HOT

Collaboration with Raukawa on many topics of joint interest like the Leith Place development, Te Waihou Walkway and the Blue Spring, district cultural signage and many other topics. Our Council's strong relationship with our local iwi Raukawa is the envy of many other councils.



**Leith Place development concept plans are looking for YOUR feedback - visit the Tokoroa i-SITE or Council's website.**



**Continued road safety improvements at the Leslie Road end of Te Waihou Walkway access point.**



**Super cool co-branding of Downer vehicles - makes it easier for our community to understand the partnership between Council and Downer who is our roading contractor.**

Forming a safe walkway along Sloss Road to Lion Drive as it has become popular with walkers.

Putāruru's own bestselling author, Julie Thomas, talking about her new novel *Rachel's Legacy* at the Putāruru Library on Wednesday 13 April at 6pm. Come along and have a listen. The Library team will be putting on refreshments.

KiwiRail's go-ahead for the crossing as part of the Tirau walkway.

New (replacement) playground in Arapuni at Pioneer Reserve.

Opening round of the Waikato-Bay of Plenty Rugby League season that will see all of the first round matches played in Tokoroa on Saturday 2 April. Great to see players from all around the region playing here!

# WHAT'S NOT

Late payments from a number of food premises and liquor licensees!

Slippery cobble footpaths in Tokoroa - Council is continuing to work through options to address the situation.



**People who think it's okay to have their dinner at the Blue Spring and leave their mess behind!**

## Pensioner Housing Update

Late last year Council decided to build six to seven pensioner houses at the Kindergarten Street Reserve, leaving a significant part of the reserve as open public space.

This decision followed its proposal to convert the entire reserve space into a pensioner housing complex being met with some concern from the public about losing the entire reserve. Taking these concerns into account Council opted to use only a portion of the space for the units, leaving a significant portion for recreational use.

Once the basic site details were identified we removed some of the trees. Over the coming weeks the permanent fence separating the complex space

from the recreational reserve will be installed, leaving the temporary fencing in place on the road sides, making it easier for truck and equipment movement in and out of the site as the project progresses.

"Council is very supportive of using as much local labour and local contractors as possible," said Project Manager Ben Rankin. "This is an important part of the project and ensures that the construction of the units has a positive economic impact on local tradespeople and local business."

By the time this issue of In Touch comes out, the building consent will hopefully have been approved and we are looking forward to starting

construction in late April.

The surveying of the site has been completed. Contractors will soon be removing the necessary top soil, backfilling where necessary to prepare the ground for the sub-ground services and unit foundations. Over the coming weeks the site will become busier and we ask

that people adhere to cautionary signage and stay out of the construction site for their own safety.

The Pensioner Housing project is one of Council's \$5 million economic and community development projects aimed at providing housing for our elderly.



## What are you? Uninformed, uninterested, forgetful, too busy or are you a voter?

Local election turnout in New Zealand has been declining since the 1980s.

Did you know that only 42% of New Zealanders voted in the 2013 Council elections?

- 31% felt they didn't know enough about the candidates
- 14% were not interested in voting
- 24% forgot to vote or left it too late to vote
- 14% felt they were too busy to vote

If you live in the South Waikato and you love the South Waikato, get involved by casting your...



Remember you need to be enrolled to VOTE. To **ENROL** or to check your enrolment details visit [www.elections.org.nz/voters/enrol-check-or-update-now](http://www.elections.org.nz/voters/enrol-check-or-update-now).

**If you're not ENROLLED you won't receive VOTING papers in the post!**

## What's **O**

Mark your calendar

**ANZAC Day,  
25 April**

Civic Ceremonies are scheduled to be held in the following locations and times:

- Tokoroa - assemble outside the Court in Bridge Street at 8.30am for a march to the Council building in Torphin Crescent; the Civic service starts at 9am.
- Putaruru - assemble outside Van Dyks in Kensington Street at 9am for a march to the Plaza Theatre; Civic service starts at 9am.
- Tirau - assemble outside the Tirau War Memorial Hall, Main Street at 10am.

**START careers expo**  
20 June, South Waikato Sport and Events Centre

## Get your dry wood from a Burnwise supplier near you

It's time to say goodbye to summer and hello to autumn! For our woodburner owners this should mean that your wood is collected, stacked and drying out ready to use this winter.

If you haven't collected your wood yet you can purchase dry wood, ready to burn straight away from our Burnwise suppliers. Find their contact details at the bottom of this column.

It's so important for the quality of our air and the health of our community that we burn only dry wood. The burning of wet wood and other products such as rubbish releases high levels of Particle Matter 10 (PM10) into the air. These particles are small enough to get into your lungs and can cause serious health problems.

If you have a woodburner that is older than 10 years old it is no longer considered compliant. Now is a great time to look into Council's Warm Homes Clean Air Schemes - On the House, Split the Bill and Buy Now Pay Later.

These three schemes can help you replace your old woodburner with a compliant heating appliance at different levels of assistance depending on what you are eligible for.

For more information regarding our air quality and what Council is doing to help our community visit [www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz) - Our Services - Air Quality/ Heating.

# BURN WISE

**GOOD WOOD**  
from GREAT SUPPLIERS

- Tokoroa Firewood Ltd  
0508 367 9663
- Balmoral Firewood Supplies  
07 886 7550
- Central Bay Firewood  
07 886 6387
- South Waikato Achievement Centre  
07 886 8941

## Our Neighbourhood Series another series of success

The 2015/16 Neighbourhood Series events have been a hit in our local neighbourhoods.

Council's Community Team brought some changes to the Our Neighbourhood Series this time round, giving each individual event its own flavour.

"We wanted to highlight topics that were important to each neighbourhood, and bring them an event that was fun for the whole family but also gave them new information that they could take away and benefit from once the event was over," commented Community Resources Co-ordinator, Amanda West.

The Neighbourhood Series were hosted in Tokoroa at Kindergarten Street Reserve, Papa o Te Aroha marae, Lake Moana Nui, and Elizabeth Drive Reserve. In Putaruru, they were held at Barnett Street Reserve, AL Mason Reserve and Glenshea Park, and in Tirau at the Tirau Village Green.

Topics such as health and well-being, the new pensioner housing units, Warm Homes

Clean Air, vegetation and environmental care, and more were highlighted at individual events.

"We had great responses from those who attended. The Neighbourhood Series is a great opportunity for us to engage with our communities and talk to them about issues important to them," Mrs West said.

Our Community Team would love to hear your thoughts on the Neighbourhood Series and what you might like to see from them in the future. These events are for our community so your thoughts are important to us.

A special thanks to our community individuals, groups and organisations who helped out at the events - we couldn't have done it without you!



Kiorahi at Papa o Te Aroha



Kids getting involved in Tai Chi at Lake Moana Nui.



Councillor Adrienne Bell mixes up a smoothy on a smoothy bike at Glenshea Park.



Tug-o-war in the Tirau Village Green



# Urban CONNECTOR

The trial period for the Urban Connector has been extended for a further six months to help build the business case that will hopefully see this service become a permanent fixture in our district.

Patronage for the Tokoroa Circuit is good and Council continues to feel positive about the future of this part of the service. We are also seeing usage for the District Circuit climb, and the Steering Committee hopes the extension of the trial will encourage more people to get on board and use this part of the service.

## Changes

There have been two changes to the Urban Connector service recently:

### *New circuits for the Tokoroa Circuit*

The early morning and afternoon trips on the Tokoroa Circuit have been reintroduced to support our Waiariki students. These added circuits are at 7.45am and 3pm, Monday to Friday and will now be a permanent part of the trial. Anyone can board the Urban Connector on these extra circuits - just remember that it travels a slightly different route to include the Waiariki and Te Wananga campuses on Braeburn.

*Background:* Last year we trialled these extra circuits to help our local Waiariki students get to and from their classes. Waiariki helped to sponsor the funding for this added service and at the time the added circuits only ran Monday to Thursday. The trial ended in November of last year once classes had ended.

### *Time Changes for the District Circuit*

There has been a five minute time change to the District Circuit service to help secondary students get to and from schools via connecting transport services.

The District Circuit now departs and arrives at each destination **five minutes earlier**.

### The BIGGER picture

Council and the Steering Committee have four key objectives for the public transport trial. The first two - providing a transport service that links our towns, and providing a service that assists our residents getting to and from the Tokoroa CBD - are on track thanks to the Urban Connector.

The Steering Committee is now turning its focus towards achieving our next objectives - providing a health service to help residents get to and from appointments at Waikato Hospital, and providing an information service that holds all information on any and all transport services that are available in the South Waikato.

The information service is already partially in place. Residents can contact the i-SITE on 0800 798 722 and get information on the Urban Connector and other transport options in our district. The next step is to build awareness for this service and make sure all information is readily available and up to date.

Council is currently working with St John, various other community groups and PHOs to get a health service off the ground. Though only in the very early stages, it's looking positive so watch this space!

## Have you applied for your Rates Rebate?

The Rates Rebate Scheme was established in 1973 to provide a subsidy to low-income homeowners on the cost of their rates. The scheme was revised in 2006 when the government increased the rates rebate thresholds significantly, making more people than ever eligible for the rebate.

These thresholds are reviewed regularly and for the 2015-16 rating year, have again increased slightly. The maximum rebate has increased from \$605 to \$610 and the household income threshold increased from \$24,250 to \$24,440. The additional income allowance for dependants remains at \$500 per dependant.

This means the household income threshold to guarantee a full rates rebate for the 2015-16 year is \$24,440 plus \$500 for each dependant in the household. However many ratepayers earning a little more than this can still qualify for a full or partial rebate depending on how much their rates are.

***YOU need to apply for the rebate for the current rating year (2015-16) before 30 June 2016 or you will dip out!***

Rates Rebates can only be claimed for owner occupied homes and the owner must have been residing in the

house on 1 July 2015. Rental and business properties do not qualify.

To find out if you are eligible you can access the electronic calculator and example tables on the Department of Internal Affairs website. The link is below.

Council administers the Rates Rebates on behalf of the government so once you have looked into IF you are possibly eligible, pop in to the Council office in either Tokoroa or Putāruru and complete a form. You will need to bring:

- information about your income (before tax) for the tax year ended 31 March 2015
- information about your partner or joint homeowner's income, if applicable.

If you are granted a Rates Rebate we will reduce your rates by the amount of the rebate or reimburse you if you have already paid your rates.

We have provided a few of the more common threshold limits for our district in the table below as examples. This table is **NOT** complete.

***Eg, household incomes as high as \$42,000 that pay \$3,500 in rates are eligible for a rebate, albeit small!***

Household income	Level of rates				
	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,400	\$2,800
\$24,000	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610
\$25,000	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610
\$26,000	\$498.33	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610
\$27,000	\$373.33	\$610	\$610	\$610	\$610
\$28,000	\$248.33	\$515	\$610	\$610	\$610
\$29,000	\$123.33	\$390	\$610	\$610	610
\$30,000	no rebate	\$265	\$531.67	\$610	\$610
\$31,000	no rebate	\$140	\$406.67	\$610	\$610
... etc					
\$36,000	no rebate	no rebate	no rebate	\$48.33	\$315
... etc					

Visit: [www.dia.govt.nz/ratesrebates](http://www.dia.govt.nz/ratesrebates)



## Blocked drains

A reminder to our community that the only thing that should go down your drains is dirty water and toilet paper. Council has recently dealt with a number of drain blockages caused primarily by baby wipes and oils. Drain blockages are expensive to fix, unpleasant to deal with and usually avoidable.

Many people are under the impression that wipes are safe to flush down the toilet, this is wrong! Unlike toilet paper, wipes do not break down fast enough to be processed by drains. These need to be thrown in the bin, along with nappies and other sanitary products.

It can be easy to think once something disappears down your drain that's the end of it. But our sewer pipes are only meant to deal with certain waste and anything foreign going down your drain could result in a blockage.

Over flowing sewers can flow into Stormwater drains and end up in streams and rivers.

Help keep our drains free of blockages by remembering to bin it and not block it!

### What can't go down the drain?

- No oils, fats or grease!
- No nappies, wipes or sanitary products!
- No paint, varnishes, paint thinners, weed killers and chemicals!
- Keep trees clear of the sewer lines so their roots don't grow into the pipes.



The only thing that should be going down your drain is dirty water.

Remember  
**BIN IT,  
DON'T  
BLOCK IT**

## Civil Defence Update

### Urban Fires

Urban fires have been causing an increasing number of call outs for fire brigades in the Waikato recently, many of which have been unnecessary and easily prevented had the right steps been taken.

Remember, if you want to light an open air fire in an urban area a fire permit from Council is required at all times. A fire permit can be quick and easy to obtain and if the fire does not pose an unacceptable fire risk it is most likely to be approved.

If you are burning an open air fire remember to be courteous to people in the surrounding area, notify your neighbours of when and where you will be burning and if the fire is causing a nuisance, put it out.

Be respectful and think about our volunteer fire brigade. If you hear the siren go up while you are burning, do not put out your fire. Wait for the fire brigade to arrive so they can inspect the fire - you may be allowed to continue to burn if it is not causing an unacceptable fire risk or nuisance.

Please do not burn greenwaste. Greenwaste is very smoky and contributes to high PM<sub>10</sub> levels in our air (see WHCA column, pg 5). Greenwaste is accepted at discounted rates at disposal sites in our district and is mulched for beneficial reuse.

Please also do not burn large rubbish materials such as couches or other furniture. These can easily get out of hand and can be a serious fire risk.

Under the Waikato Regional Council's Region Plan it is prohibited to burn the following materials:

- halogenated organic chemicals
- materials containing heavy metals
- pitch, paint and paint residues and surface coatings
- asbestos
- pathological waste (excluding animal carcasses on production land)
- agrichemicals and agrichemical containers containing residues

- polyvinylchloride (PVC) plastic and plastics containing halogenated material
- copper-chrome-arsenic (CCA) treated timber or timber treated with organochlorine (PCP)
- rubber and tyres
- waste oil and other waste petroleum products including sludge
- sludge from industrial processes
- hazardous materials from contaminated sites
- materials associated with the recovery of metals from cables
- components of motor vehicles
- tar and bitumen
- any material within a landfill or a refuse transfer station.

Burning these materials increases their capacity to produce harmful contaminants that may cause serious health effects in people and animals, such as cancers, respiratory disease and birth defects.

### Civil Defence Centre Project

The Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group is currently in the process of identifying current, historic and potential Civil Defence Centres (CDC) in the Waikato area.

A CDC is a facility that is established and managed by CDEM Groups during an emergency to support individuals, whanau (families), and the community. CDCs are open to the public and may be used for any purpose including public information, evacuation, welfare or recovery depending on the needs of the community.

The purpose of identifying these centres is to establish a Waikato wide process for identification and management of our CDCs and contacts.

Rather than identifying CDC locations by way of 'signs', we want to encourage the public to listen to their radio, visit Council's website, Facebook page or Twitter to receive official information and to find out what centres are open and where to go for support.



The Putaruru Plaza has started the year with a bang and has already had two great shows and plenty more to come:

Beatrice Hofer and Encore present '**Ladies and Gentlemen**' – Sunday 17 April, 2pm, tickets \$15. An afternoon of song from opera to musical theatre.

**Into The East** (Country/ Folk Music) – Wednesday 18 May, tickets \$20. This is an emotionally cohesive batch of songs that serve as internalised meditations on the ups and downs of life and love.

**Mr and Mrs Alexander** (original theatre and comedy magic) – Tuesday 14 June, suitable for ages 8+, tickets \$20. It is 1888 in Lyttelton NZ - Mr Alexander makes objects disappear and Mrs Alexander reads minds - a wildly watchable bag of tricks!

**The NZ Creedence Clearwater Revival Tribute Show** – Saturday 9 July 2016, 7.30pm.

**The North Shore Male Choir** – Sunday 11 September, 2pm.

**The Topp Twins** – Date to be confirmed

Tickets for our shows can be purchased from The Plaza, i-SITES in Tokoroa and Putaruru, The Storyteller in Matamata and Eventfinda.

Other exciting news is that we are awaiting the installation of a new projector and we have sourced a Cinema quality projector for movie screenings. They will be starting up again soon and will feature a number of Youth and Family screenings. Keep an eye on our website [www.plaza.org.nz](http://www.plaza.org.nz) and the local newspaper for movie screening dates and times.



## IN brief continued...

- Most of the Tokoroa CCTV cameras will be up and running by mid-April. Council is working with building owners on final placement of the cameras.
- During the first quarter of this year, 21 resource consent applications were received; 12 consents are being processed, and nine have been completed.
- Council has held several meetings with Raukawa to discuss a strategy going forward for Te Waihou and the Blue Spring and associated infrastructure.
- 164 noise control call outs were attended in January and February of this year.
- 309 building consents have been issued for the first eight months of this financial year, valued at \$60,214,229; compared to 255 consents valued at \$19,039,123 for the same period last year. This is a 17.9% rise in numbers and a rise of 316% in value.
- 88 dogs were impounded during the first quarter of the year; 56 were claimed by owners, three were rehomed, 19 were euthanised with ten dogs remaining in the pound at the time of writing.
- Since October last year, the community has reported 38 locations with long grass that pose a fire risk.

## IN the know

You can keep up to date with Council information via website:

www.southwaikato.govt.nz  
facebook: www.facebook/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil  
twitter: @SouthWaikatoDC

## IN view

If you would like to receive this newsletter in electronic format please email [kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz).

## Councillor Column Adrienne Bell

Well it's hard to believe that it's March already and by the time this comes out it will be well into the time for everyone to be writing submissions to this year's Annual Plan.

Those who have missed the big advertisements in the local newspaper can find all of the consultation material at [www.southwaikato.govt.nz](http://www.southwaikato.govt.nz) or you can pick up a hard copy at the Putaruru and Tokoroa offices or The Dog in Tirau.

One topic Council will be debating is the huge and sudden increase in visitor numbers at Te Waihou Walkway and the Blue Spring. This has raised a number of issues that will require funding that has not been budgeted for in our long term plans. Talks are underway between the many stakeholder groups, including Council, local iwi and neighbours, in regards to how the site and visitor numbers should be managed and how the ongoing maintenance and management of the site should be funded. If you have any thoughts or ideas in this regard then please have your say by making a submission.

Meanwhile I've attended the Cambridge launch of Putaruru author Julie Thomas's latest book *Rachel's Legacy* – a sequel to the top selling *Keeper of Secrets* and the subject of a glowing review in the NZ Listener this week. On the entertainment front – the Okoroire Hot Springs Hotel has again hosted its popular Annual Blues Festival which features musicians from Blues Clubs in Rotorua, Tauranga and Hamilton, attracting audiences from far and wide. And the Putaruru Plaza has hosted a hugely popular evening featuring gourmet traveller Peta Mathias who shared a feast of delightful stories and slides from her culinary tour of India and - surprise - delighted us with her wonderful singing voice! It's great to see so much happening in the District and wonderful to see so many taking part.

## Councillor Column Bill Machen

Seems yesterday was New Year but already we are three months into 2016 and we have a busy year ahead of us, which will culminate in Local Body (Council) elections in October at which a new Mayor (and possibly new Councillors) for the South Waikato will emerge.

Meanwhile your Council still has a large programme of work ahead of it. Not the least of which is finalising the details of the Leith Place development in Tokoroa and other revamp plans for Tirau and Putaruru. I urge all ratepayers and interested parties to view the proposals and submit their ideas and objections if they have concerns about any of these projects being consulted on under the Annual Plan.

The new pensioner housing units in Kindergarten Street will soon be started and although there has been some disagreement about the placing of these units I think that in time it will be seen as a good decision.

Over the next few years more pensioner units will be needed with our aging population and I hope that Council can buy up some of the abandoned and derelict buildings within Tokoroa and slowly change the face of some streets for the better. Many people have spoken to me on this subject and it is not always easy or feasible to purchase these properties – but I think we should be doing more in this regard.

Having had my annual holiday I am now back into Council mode and looking forward to the next nine months.

All are welcome to contact me at home if they have any Council issues - see the strap alongside for details.

Happy New Year to all.

## IN touch

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