



Nestled along the serene Waikato River, Jones' Landing is a designated campsite in South Waikato, offering a picturesque escape. Its spacious grassy area by the river's edge is framed by towering rocky bluffs, making it a favored destination for outdoor enthusiasts. With amenities like a playground, boat ramp and jetty, it's the perfect spot for families and boaters alike to unwind and enjoy nature's tranquility.

Photo credit: Life on The Road - Carl Rapson

Council approves Waikato Water Done Well as preferred Water Delivery Option



Council has approved Waikato Water Done Well, a Council controlled organisation involving up to six other councils, as its preferred option for the future management of water services, in response to the Government's Local Water Done Well reform. This decision was taken at a Council meeting on Wednesday 26 March 2025.

"Council has investigated the options available to us thoroughly. The one which makes the most sense, both financially and in terms of quality service delivery for our communities, is Waikato Water Done Well," Mayor Gary Petley said.

"This option is quite different from the previous Government's 3 Waters proposals which Council opposed. Waikato Water Done Well allows us to retain the equity of our assets through our shareholding and retain influence on what work occurs in the District through the statement of expectations to the Board."

While analysis to date suggests that maintaining the status quo is not considered to be a financially sustainable option, Council is required by central Government to present information about other options considered.

The preferred water services delivery model will be consulted on with the public between **14 April-5 May 2025.**

It will be consulted on alongside the current approach (running water services delivery out of an internal business unit or division).

See pages 4 & 5 for more on this.

IN HOUSE

Produced in-house for South Waikato residents by the SWDC Communications Team.

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Celebrating New Beginnings - Largest Citizenship Ceremony Yet!

On Friday 21 March we had the pleasure of hosting 49 new citizens and their whānau at a Citizenship Ceremony at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre - the District's largest citizenship event so far! Here are some photos from the ceremony. Nau mai (welcome) new citizens. We're delighted you've chosen to make New Zealand, and South Waikato, your home!



Citizenship photos continued...



Councillor Garner Stands Down



Tokoroa Ward Councillor Rebekah Garner has resigned from the South Waikato District Council. She told her fellow elected members that she had weighed up personal priorities and had come to the decision to step down immediately from her Council role.

“I have chosen to put my health and family first and I just can’t give Council the dedication it requires,” she said.

“I’ve really enjoyed my two years on Council and learnt a lot from other Councillors and the CE Susan [Law] and I 100% support the work and excellent job they are doing in getting our District back on track.”

Mayor Gary Petley said he understood the tough decision she had made and totally respected her for making the call after two years of community service with the Council.

“Rebekah has been a hugely supportive Councillor who understood the direction of Council and the delivery of our services,” he said. “I want to personally thank her for support to me in my role as Mayor and wish her all the best for the future.”

At the Council meeting on 26 March, Council took a decision not to fill the vacancy due to the relatively short timeframe to the next election.

Garner was in her first term as a Councillor, and secured 1795 votes at the 2022 election.

Balloons visit South Waikato

South Waikato District Council partnered with the Balloons over Waikato Trust to organise Balloons Visit South Waikato on 20 March 2025. The event received over 10,000 visitors.

Many thanks to Rebekah Garner and her team from The Event Girl for organising the event, and to our generous sponsors Ultimate Builders NZ and donors: Sheldrake Haulage Limited, Tokoroa Warehouse, Tokoroa McDonalds and Better Eggs. Thank you - this event would not have been possible without your generous support.



In Brief

The South Waikato District Council has approved **Waikato Water Done Well** as its preferred option for the future management of water services, in response to the Government’s Local Water Done Well reform.

The community are now invited to provide feedback on the preferred option, which is a multi-Council approach involving Waipā, Matamata-Piako, Waitomo, South Waikato, Ōtorohanga, Hauraki, and Taupō District Councils.

Council has investigated the options available thoroughly and deemed that a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) makes the most sense, both financially and in terms of quality service delivery for our communities, but need feedback from our community before making any final decisions.

Waikato Water Done Well allows Council to retain the equity of our assets through our shareholding and retain influence on what work occurs in the District through the statement of expectations to the Board.

Financial modelling also suggests that Waikato Water Done Well will present a reduced burden on ratepayers compared to other options.

You can find out more about Waikato Water Done Well in this document and by visiting www.waikatowaters.co.nz.

As the Government requires councils to present information about other options considered, the preferred option is being presented to the community alongside the current approach (running water services delivery out of an internal business unit or division), although analysis to date suggests that maintaining the status quo is not considered to be a financially sustainable option.

WWDW Timeline





WWDW

Potential pros

- Legal compliance** - meets legal requirements.
- Community affordability** - most affordable of all options, including status quo.
- Scale** - achieving efficiencies of scale is a key objective of the CCO. This includes opportunities for service and delivery improvements through the consolidation of operations and maintenance, procurement, workforce optimisation and enhanced relationships.
- Climate change mitigation** - with enhanced efficiencies and increased borrowing capacity, there is greater potential to improve our response to climate change.
- Debt capacity** - the CCO has the greatest debt capacity of all options, including status quo.
- Workforce** - attraction and retention of staff across the broader region are expected to improve, particularly in rural and provincial councils.

Potential cons

Perception of a loss of control - ratepayers as consumers will still have the ability to influence the Council as shareholders through its planning processes, and also directly with the CCO. All consumers will also have rights under the Commerce Commission.

Status Quo

Potential pros

- Council will be responsible for day-to-day decision making.
- Community input will be through the Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan budget consultation processes.
- Is a familiar model that people understand.

Potential cons

- Legal compliance. The status quo is unlikely to meet new financial requirements.
- Community affordability. This will cost more each year than the preferred option.
- Financial challenges. There are potential investment challenges relating to environmental regulatory standards, increasing in the future. There is also Potential challenge to long-term investment for growth.
- Workforce. It is anticipated that keeping staff will become difficult as other regional CCOs are formed.
- Environmental outcomes. There will be less ability to achieve enhanced environmental outcomes through lack of scale and catchment-based approach.

Council is now seeking your feedback.

To have your say visit southwaikato.govt.nz/our-services/water-services/local-water-done-well or scan the QR code here.

Consultation documents are also available at Council facilities around the District.



What motivates you or stops you being active? Tell us and be in to WIN!

Sport Waikato and South Waikato District Council are partnering on a survey aimed at finding out how active we are – or aren't, and where we go to be active!

We need to hear from anyone aged 18+ or those who have left school, whether you spend your days running marathons or chilling on the couch.

The data will help build a picture of our District and help Sport Waikato and South Waikato District Council to ensure play, active recreation and sport is more accessible, exciting and inclusive!



WIN!
5x \$100
GROCERY
GIFT CARDS

Take 5 minutes to tell us:
how you keep active
(or what stops you)
and be in to WIN!

*Prizes drawn at the end of every month during 2025

Take the survey



(use your phone camera to scan)

- The survey and prize draw is open to residents of the Waikato region – from Thames-Coromandel to Taupo and everywhere in between.
- The survey is completely anonymous – any contact details will only be used for the purposes of the prize draw.
- Prizes will be drawn every month, from February-December throughout 2025. Winners can choose vouchers from their local grocery store/supermarket.

GROWING CONNECTIONS THROUGH NATURE

As South Waikato locals, we all know about our beautiful natural spaces, with many whānau having visited them for generations.

Some spots were once secret gems and now are well-known to the world, thanks to the internet. So, we have seen just how protecting nature can help contribute to the local economy and ensure beauty, biodiversity and kai for future generations.

This is the kaupapa (cause) that local conservation groups hold close to our hearts, volunteering and working with tangata whenua to give nature a

voice and help protect what we have left.

Recently, our South Waikato conservation groups have been working together to reach out to the local community to grow support, educate and celebrate our unique ecosystems, natural spaces and the volunteer efforts that go in to maintaining them.

Forest & Bird, Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group, Mokaihaha Kōkako Trust and GoEco recently combined forces, much like Captain Planet, to chat to people and give away fun nature resources at the Hodderville Country Fair on 2 March – Children's Day! It was a great way to launch our

South Waikato Ecohub collective.

This collaboration is supported by GoEco - the Waikato regional conservation and sustainability organisation - so we can see our beautiful District thrive and adapt in the face of climate change.

This journey will involve things like educating the community on how to mitigate climate events like flooding and droughts by using Nature Based Solutions (NBS) such as planting native trees, trapping pests and restoring wetlands.

The South Waikato Ecohub team are excited to share all the good stuff going on in our own backyards and we encourage you to stay curious, keep learning and take action to help us protect what special natural spaces and taonga species, like the kōkako and pekapeka we have left.

Keep an eye out in the next publication for our story on a passionate family who have done some awesome mahi (work) to improve our shared environment!

Elvisa van der Leden
Forest & Bird Waikato Conservation Manager –
Tokoroa based



Elections 2025 | Te kōwhiringa pōti 2025

Local Elections for the South Waikato District are held every three years. The Elections determine who will become the Mayor of the District, Councillors for each of the three Wards and local Community Board Members for Tīrau. Elected Members make decisions on behalf of all in the South Waikato. Four key things for now:

1

Election Day is 11 October 2025.

If you are an enrolled voter, you'll get a voting information pack in the mail. Check or update your postal address to make sure you receive your voting papers.

<https://enrol.vote.nz/app/enrol/#/enrol-online>

2

If you are not enrolled, please enrol at the link below:

<https://enrol.vote.nz/app/enrol/#/enrol-online>

You have to be enrolled to cast your vote.

3

Voting papers will be sent to all eligible voters from 9 September 2025.

Voting will close at 12 noon on 11 October 2025.

Special votes will be possible.

4

www.southwaikato.govt.nz
ELECTIONS 2025
(just under the search bar)

Key dates:

- 30 May 2025 - Candidate Handbook available on southwaikato.govt.nz
- 4 Jul - Candidate nominations open
- 9 Jul - Candidate Information Evening
- 1 Aug - Candidate nominations close at 12pm
- 6 Aug - Public notice of candidates' names
- 9-22 Sep - Voting documents delivered
- 9 Sep - 11 Oct - Voting period
- 7 Oct - Last day for posting via mail
- 11 Oct - Election day
- 16 Oct - Declaration of results

Stay tuned for more details. If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to reach out via email at: governance@southwaikato.govt.nz

PLAN TO
VOTE.
STEP 1:
REGISTER.

NEWS FROM THE PLAZA



Rangiura Resthome fundraising Quiz Night:
9 May from 6.30pm

SWPICS Vaccination pop up clinic:
15 May from 1pm to 3pm

Tirau Lions Club fundraising fashion parade: 16 May from 6.30pm - tickets \$30 - \$40

Sunday Movie: I'll be right there - Sunday 18 May at 2pm \$10 Entry

Elton John and Billy Idol Tribute concert:

Saturday 24 May

Elton John vs Billy Joel are coming in May 2025 for a night of legendary hit songs and banter. Two grand pianos in black and white, epic costumes and tunes makes this an award-winning tribute show not to be missed!



Waotu Puketurua Garden Club Fundraising Movie: Love in Bloom - 26 May at 10am - \$10 entry cash only - includes morning tea

Sunday Movie at The Plaza: 15 June at 2pm - \$10 entry

SWPICS Vaccination pop up clinic: 19 June 2pm to 4pm

Pride in Putāruru: Matariki free community movie: Mufasa - 20 June at 10am - sponsored by Kbeez Putāruru

School Holiday movie: Sonic the Hedgehog 3. 2 July at 10am and 12.30pm - \$5 entry

Bluelight NZ Free community movie: TBA - 3 July at 10am - Sponsored by Kbeez Putāruru

School holiday movie: Paddington in Peru - 9 July at 10am and 12.30pm - \$5 entry

South Waikato Country Music Awards: 12 July

CONTACT THE PLAZA

Phone: 07 883 8596/0276 559 715
Web: www.plaza.org.nz
Email: theplaza@plaza.org.nz
Facebook: [theplazaputaruru](https://www.facebook.com/theplazaputaruru)



Getting Ready for Winter



With winter fast approaching it is time to start thinking about getting your vehicle ready for the colder weather.

Here are a few simple things you can do to reduce your chances of a breakdown over winter.

Prepare a winter breakdown kit

Ensure it includes a torch, blanket hi-visibility vest, scraper and snacks. Always ensure your phone is fully charged before leaving on your journey, remember your vehicle battery may go flat leaving you to spend the night in your vehicle.

Check your battery

During the winter months your battery will work extra hard with cold starts and the constant use of your car's heater, lights and A/C which all add extra strain. If your car is already having problems starting now is the time to get it checked. As a backup ensure you have a pair of jumper cables in your boot or even an emergency jump pack.

Check the condition of your tyres

Your vehicles tyres are the only contact you have with the road. Ensure your tyres have at least the legal minimum of 1.5 depth of tread (more is definitely better) and are inflated to the correct pressure. Don't forget to also check the spare.

Clean and check your lights

Check that all your lights, indicators and rear reflectors are clean. Look for blown bulbs or cracked lenses. Also remember to check your lights on full beam as well as any fog lights that may be fitted. Driving with your lights on during the day also makes you much more visible in wet and foggy weather.

Wash your windscreen and wipers

Give your windscreen a thorough clean both inside and out and remember to top up your windscreen washer fluid. Check your wiper blades. Check for any chips in the windscreen. Remember it's not a good idea to put hot water on a frozen windscreen.

TOKOROA AIRFIELD UPCOMING EVENTS



MAY 2025

- 3 May: Tokoroa Aero Club Training Day
- 10 & 11 May: Tokoroa Kart Club Race Weekend
- 11 May: South Waikato Motocross Club Round 2 Winter Series
- 16-18 May: NZ Jet Model Association Jet Unmanned Aircraft Operating SFC to 1000ft AGL
- 31 May - 1 June: South Waikato Motocross Club Kings Cup

JUNE 2025

- 4 June: Drive New Zealand Driver Training
- 7 June: Tokoroa Aero Club Training Day
- 13-14 June: NZ Jet Model Association Jet Unmanned Aircraft Operating SFC to 1000ft AGL

JULY 2025

- 5 July: Tokoroa Aero Club Training Day
- 6 July: South Waikato Motocross Club Round 3 Winter Series
- 8 July: Drive New Zealand Driver Training
- 18 July & 19 July: South Waikato Motocross Club Schools MX Challenge

CLUB DETAILS FOR ENQUIRIES

New Zealand Jet Model Association
Website: www.nzjma.com
Email: secretary@nzjma.com

Tokoroa Kart Club
Email: president@kartsporttokoroa.co.nz

Tokoroa Street Rodders
Call Matt on 0275223883

Tokoroa Aero Club
Aero Club Facebook page
Call Luke on 021 190 7151

Auckland Motorcycle Club
Email: David.Diprose@diproses.com

South Waikato Motorcycle Club
Email: swmcc-sec@hotmail.com



Tokoroa Street Rodders Drag Race event - 1 March at the Tokoroa Airfield

READ IN TOUCH? PROVE IT...

... and be in to win a lucky dip \$50 supermarket voucher.

We will be running this competition every issue. The answers to the five questions below are in this issue – April 2025. You have to get them all correct to be in the draw.

Text your answers and your name to 027 287 5980 or private message our Facebook page by 25 May 2025.

1. What is Council's preferred option for the future management of water services?
2. What is the age range for the Sport Waikato survey?
3. What is the name of the South Waikato collective that was launched at the Hodderville Country Fair in March?
4. When will voting papers be sent to all eligible voters?
5. When is Election Day?

Congratulations to Dianne from Tirau who was drawn as the lucky winner for the March 2025 In Touch competition. Thank you to all those who entered. Try again this issue!

The correct answers were:

1. Dec 2024, 2. 26 - 27 January, 3. Clive Sommerville, 4. Strathmore Park, 5. Non-slip flooring, sauna, family-friendly changing rooms, plunge pools, splash pad.



Antenno is a mobile phone app that is FREE for users to download from Google Play or the App Store.

Install the app. Input your specific address(es) - home, work, play, and we send you messages relevant to your address. Users can also use the app to report issues or ideas to us.



Mayor Gary Petley

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TOKOROA ward



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TĪRAU ward



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CONTACT YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE