



# IN touch



A bi-monthly newsletter from your local Council - Issue 10 - May/June 2013

## Annual Plan 2013-14 decisions made

Council received 165 submissions on its Draft Annual Plan 2013-14, covering 369 submission points. The biggest issues were the options around the South Waikato Investment Fund (the \$25million), economic development opportunities in the district and Lake Moana-nui.

The proposed plan was open for consultation for a month and then public hearings were held in late May where 27 people, some of whom represented organisations, made verbal submissions to Council. Council deliberated for a day and a half and made decisions outlined below. The final plan will go back to Council on 20 June for adoption.

### Lake Moana-nui

One of the top submission points this year was Lake Moana-nui, with some 50 people identifying it as a key priority for Council to action over the coming year. After much deliberation Council decided that a restoration plan, led by a Steering Group that will include local experts, will be developed for Lake Moana-nui and its surrounds. The restoration plan will include: the repair of the dam, how to deal with the silt that has accumulated in the lake over

the last 38 years and how to prevent silt from settling in the lake in the future. Once a plan has been established, a 'Friends of the Lake' group will be established by the Steering Group for tree and shrub care. Details of the proposed plan will be made available to local residents and interested parties before finalisation.

### SW Investment Fund

Given the supportive feedback received, Council has decided that the most benefit to the district in the long term from the \$25 million investment fund would be to use it to develop more jobs and to promote our district rather than subsidising rates.

Feedback indicated a strong desire from the community (83% of respondents) to establish an independent organisation that would safeguard the \$25 million, in case of amalgamation, for the use of economic and community development. Council will therefore develop the options for the future safeguarding of the \$25 million investment fund further. This includes obtaining legal and taxation advice on the best structure for the proposed organisation. 76% of people

also indicated that they would like some of the fund spent on district development projects, which will also be explored further by Council. Once the work is complete and Council has identified clear options (and has indicated a preferred course of action), we will again consult with the community. The fund will not be transferred to another organisation until this second round of consultation has been completed, which will also include an opportunity for people to speak to their submissions.

### Economic Development

80% of people supported the idea of forming a group of well-respected business people to help businesses grow in the District. This will be led by people who have demonstrated their success already in their business lives. 64% of people supported Council providing the group with \$1 million in the first year to be spent on establishing a standard method of operating and prioritising projects, identifying and establishing a few lead projects, and providing the group with administrative support. As of yet we don't know who these people are, but the focus will be on national, regional or locally

recognised people who are experienced, well-respected and effective business leaders, and who have national industry contacts. The group, without this monetary support, would be hamstrung to do any development work so the \$1million is important to get this going.

It is anticipated that this group will become a semi-independent organisation with clear ground rules and objectives, which it will have to meet. These will be set up in advance to ensure that accountability is rigorous and transparent. This will provide the group with the ability to act quickly in response to opportunities or to create new ones. The group will work with education providers, research organisations, Council and business to promote economic development in our district. It will develop the district's competitive advantages and look for investment opportunities, link investors and businesses together and look for district promotional opportunities to attract business to the district.

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### IN brief

- The rehabilitation projects for both rural and urban roads are close to 100% complete, with Coates Road nearing completion.
- The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) made \$64,000 available (including Council share) for improvements on the Pokaiwhenua Bridge on Wiltsdown Road this year.
- Council has notified NZTA regarding the illegal access onto State Highway 1 opposite Warratah Place. Work progresses to find a more permanent solution.

### IN side

- 2&3 Annual Plan feedback
- Emergency support
- 4&5 Air Quality, Burnwise, Heat Swap, and more
- 6&7 Function Rooms named
- Tamariki recycle efforts
- 8 Councillor columns
- Councillor contact

### IN house

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

Editorial: Kerry Fabrie, Communications Manager, 07 885 0720

Print: Chaucer

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**Involvement in Economic and Community Support**

70% of people indicated that Council should remain involved in the current economic and community support areas. Council will continue to look at ways to best support economic and community support within the boundaries of the changed Local Government Act 2002, even though the Act now requires councils to focus more on the provision of infrastructure and regulatory activities.

**Investment Policy**

69% of people supported Council changing the Investment Policy to reflect the recommendations from our investment advisor (BNZ Private Bank) to change the allocation of funds between investment classes for our investment funds. Council therefore decided to proceed with this change. The aim of the change is to get the best return on our investments, with an acceptable level of risk. To minimise the risk of fluctuations and losses in the value and earnings of these

investments, it is necessary to invest across a range of different investments and in different parts of the world. Council has decided to increase the amount invested in New Zealand with investments now planned for New Zealand shares and property.

**Glenshea Park**

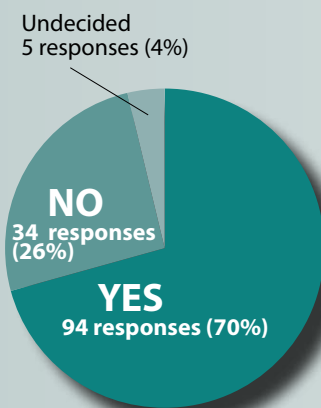
65% of people who responded to the survey supported cutting and staggering the funding for the Glenshea Park improvements, with only 35% suggesting that the full amount should be put back in the

budget. Council will therefore continue with the proposed approach, which means that in 2012-13, Council will repair the toilets and replace the grandstand roof at a cost of \$75,000. In the 2013-14 year, Council will replace the floodlights (\$16,125), and repair the showers, changing rooms and kitchen (\$80,000).

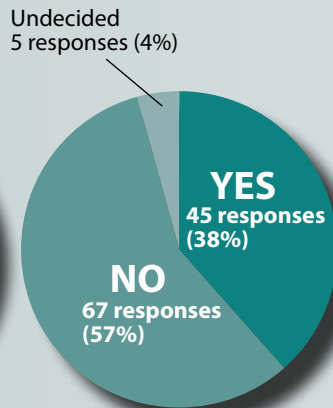
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**In its Draft Annual Plan 2013-14 consultation process last month Council asked the community a number of specific questions relating to various things from funding, focus and capital projects. This is a summary of what you told us:**

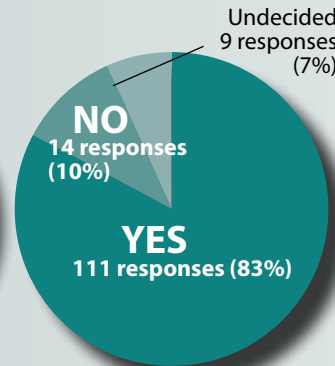
**Question: Do you agree that Council remains involved in economic and community support areas?**



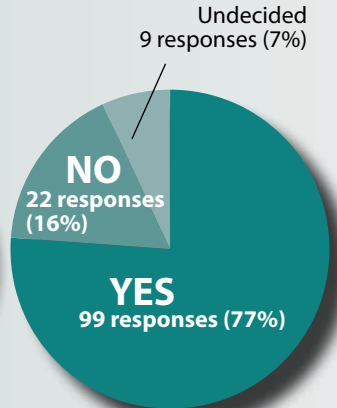
**Question: Should we retain investment funds in Council for economic and community development? OPTION A**



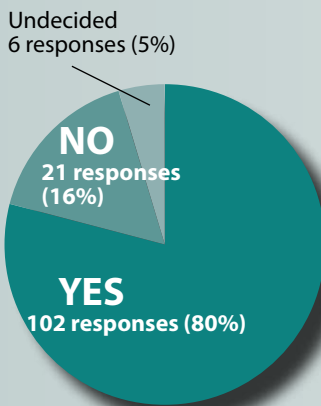
**Question: Should we establish an independent organisation that would safeguard the \$25 million, in the case of amalgamation, for the use of economic and community development? OPTION B**



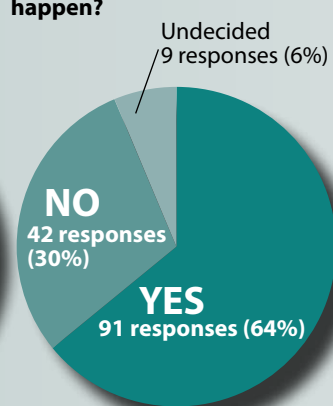
**Question: Should we spend some/all of the money on district development projects? OPTION C**



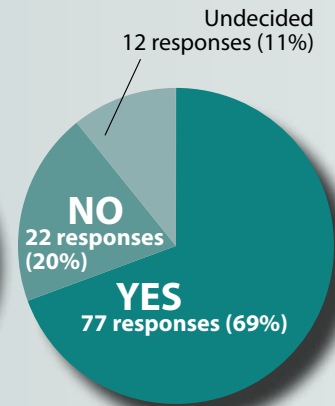
**Question: Do you think we should form a group of well-respected business people to help businesses grow in the South Waikato?**



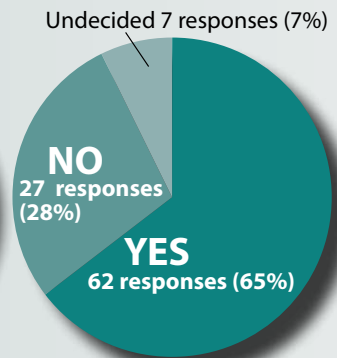
**Question: Do you think we should fund this group with \$1 million from the \$25 million (no increases in rates) to enable this work to happen?**



**Question: Should Council change its Investment Policy so that it includes more investment classes as recommended by BNZ?**



**Question: To make savings and reduce the rate increase, Council is proposing to cut and stagger funding committed in the LTP for improvements to Glenshea Park. Is this acceptable?**



### Additional items

Following here are some projects that Council hadn't initially included in the draft plan, but that we have now added as a result of submissions:

- Staff are to investigate the cost to make the first 500 - 600m of Te Waihou Walkway from the Whites Road end accessible to wheelchair users.
- Council will install road safety signs to make road users aware of Waikato River Trails cyclists using the roads around Arapuni and Waotu. This will be accommodated through the existing roading budget.
- Improved lighting will be installed in the Leith Place toilets at a cost of \$6,000. The toilets will also receive a facelift while the plans for the redevelopment of Leith Place are being scoped. The lighting and facelift will be accommodated through existing budgets.
- The use of the grass verge on Powerhouse Road at Arapuni has increased significantly due to use of the Waikato River Trails. This is currently mowed once a year and will be increased to six times per year to make it safer and easier to use.

**Council would like to thank everyone from the community who made submissions; great feedback.**



Te Waihou walkway

## Supporting Emergency Services

Council works with many service groups in the district, from information centres and community organisations to health and emergency services. Our role is often not to deliver these services, but to facilitate these organisations so that they can continue to do a fine job for our community.

Council meets regularly with emergency services Fire, Police and Ambulance. These service organisations are an integral part of our community and do an excellent job at helping people throughout the district in an emergency. Recent feedback indicates that sometimes this is not without struggle.

These organisations have highlighted two key issues they have experienced lately that make responding to emergencies difficult:

### 1. Hidden rural address numbers:

Often rural address numbers are hidden by overgrown vegetation which means emergency services are unable to read them. Imagine you need help, hear the sirens

and they drive right on by! Ideally rural address numbers should be on both sides of the property access way too so they are visible regardless of the direction of approach. Rural address numbers are available from Council for \$37.50 incl GST.

### 2. Overgrown, narrow driveways and access:

Police cars, ambulances and fire engines are not four wheel drive vehicles and access to some rural properties is difficult to navigate, along narrow driveways, rutted tracks and under overhanging trees. An avenue of trees makes for an attractive entranceway, but can cause issues for fire trucks or ambulances trying to gain access to your property. The Fire Service asks that the driveway/access width should not be less than four metres with a height clearance of at least four metres, free from trees, hanging cables and overhanging eaves from buildings.

When you call for an ambulance or need a fire engine, access to your property needs to be easy.



*Above: Emergency service vehicles like ambulances and fire trucks need at least a four metre clearance in terms of width of driveway (fence/gate posts and vegetation) and height (vegetation and overhanging trees).*

*Below: Obscured rural address numbers can mean that in an emergency, the people who are coming to assist you may drive right on by!*



Start is a coordinated approach to careers. It is a comprehensive programme that touches everyone in the community from business people to youth and adults looking at a career development or change.

Start is designed to align a range of projects so that the district can work together to streamline career pathways and connect potential employees with local businesses in simple ways.

Constraints around time and finances are considered when putting together Start projects, like the Start Careers Expo 2013, at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre from 20-22 June being free and open to everyone.

There are simple ways for local businesses to be involved, if they choose to be. This expo has been designed by South Waikato Life Long Learning Group (SWLLL) specifically to meet the needs and requirements of our local people.

SWLLL is a group of key representatives from South Waikato schools, tertiary providers, health, Council, and a range of other interested parties who meet specifically to brainstorm life-long learning opportunities in our community.

Details of the projects under Start can be found at: [www.southwaikato.com](http://www.southwaikato.com) under Start.

*"Start is for the whole district as we all need to work. Local businesses are recognised as the key to career pathways for the various Start projects. There will be more Start projects for you to be involved in, in whichever ways work for your business. Promotions are coordinated through Council so let us know if you have any ideas. Your suggestions are welcome," said Cindy Kent, Council's Acting Community Development Manager.*

# BURNWISE for better burning

Council launched its community Burnwise Scheme last month following successful signing of a contract by four wood suppliers.

At the launch last month, Mayor Neil Sinclair was quick to thank the suppliers who have signed up to the scheme. "We have an air quality problem and we need to do something about it. Burning dry wood is one answer and the commitment shown by these wood suppliers to ensuring that our community has a supply of good wood is tremendous."

The scheme was developed by Council as an outcome following the Clean Air Bylaw consultation and hearings held earlier this year. Tokoroa has air quality issues. We have too many exceedences\* each year and we need to get these under control. For the past eight years, Council has delivered both education campaigns and made incentive schemes available, however there is still significant improvement that needs to be made.

We drafted a proposed Clean Air Bylaw that would require the community to remove old woodburners and replace with new energy efficient products; however the community spoke out against the introduction of the bylaw at this time. A key message that came through from the community is that it is not just about the age of the woodburners we are using, but it is also about what we burn.

The Council initiated Burnwise scheme is an outcome of this public sentiment. Council encourages its community to use the Burnwise suppliers and burn **only** dry wood this winter.

Another outcome of Council not introducing the Bylaw is that it is now up to the community to improve our air quality. The Air Quality Standards\* have not changed and we still need to reduce our exceedences.

... part of the solution to our air quality problem...  
Mayor Neil Sinclair

"Council is very concerned about the continued air quality issues in Tokoroa during the winter months," said Sharon Robinson, Council's Group Manager Environment. "Poor air quality is caused by small particles in the air that are too small to see with the naked eye but large enough to enter our lungs. Woodburners contribute 93% of these harmful particles, with 5% from outdoor burning and 1% for both vehicle emissions and industry."

"The quality of wood you burn affects the air your neighbours breathe," said Mrs Robinson. "Improving our air quality is everyone's responsibility. Cleaner air will have a positive impact on our health."

"The Burnwise wood suppliers are part of the solution to our air quality problem," concluded Mayor Sinclair.



Look for this logo:

**Dry it. Stack it. Cover it.**

## What can the community expect from the Burnwise suppliers?

- Dry firewood available for immediate use OR unseasoned or wet wood delivered far enough in advance for it to season before it is needed.
- Information is provided on proper wood storage and better burning tips.
- The supplier has a moisture meter available to measure the dryness of the wood supplied. A good moisture test result is 25%.
- You will be given a written description of the wood you are purchasing, including the recommended storage time before use.
- Treated or painted timber is never supplied.

## How can you tell if wood is dry or wet?

- Dry wood has cracks in the end; it weighs less than wet wood. When two dry pieces of wood are hit together there is a loud hollow sound. If you place a very small piece of wood on hot embers, dry wood will catch fire in less than a minute.
- If the wood has been cut within two months of you receiving it, it will be wet and unsuitable for burning. Wet wood is difficult to light and it produces a great deal of smoke and hisses or sizzles when lit.
- Contact Council, make an appointment and bring your wood to us for testing.

*Below: Mayor Neil Sinclair and Council staff met with Burnwise suppliers last month to sign the agreements and celebrate the initiative. The Burnwise suppliers were give moisture meters.*

## Who are the Burnwise suppliers?

**Tokoroa Firewood Ltd**  
0508 FOR WOOD  
0508 367 9663

**Balmoral Firewood Supplies**  
07 886 7550

**Tokoroa City Lions**  
www.tokoroalions.com  
Lions wood by referral only for pensioners and for people wishing to collect their own wood from the forest from September to April.

**Central Bay Firewood**  
07 886 6387



### \* What is an exceedence?

First we have to understand what causes poor air quality. Woodburners release tiny particles into the air; these particles are too small to see with the naked eye and small enough to enter our lungs. These tiny particles are called PM<sub>10</sub>; this stands for Particulate Matter and the 10 refers to the diameter (ie, size). We breathe these particles in and they are dangerous to our lungs; and have a negative impact on our health.

An air quality monitoring station records PM<sub>10</sub> every 10 minutes and then averages that out over a 24 hour period to get a figure. If this figure is over 50, it is an exceedence.

### # What are the National Air Quality Standards?

Under the Air Quality Standards, central Government has stated that Tokoroa is permitted a maximum of three exceedences by the year 2016 and one by 2020. Last year we had 15 exceedences during winter. We have already had one exceedence in Tokoroa this year, on 13 May (a PM<sub>10</sub> of 53).

In addition, as at 21 May 2013 the Standards prohibit the use of domestic open fires in the Tokoroa urban area.

We need to improve. And that is in the hands of the community.

### Better burning HOT tips

- Start the fire with newspaper and kindling (pine cones work well as well) (and firefighters are good too).
- Keep air vent open so that your fire burns brightly.
- Split wood to around 15cm thick.
- Only use larger pieces once the fire is well established.
- Don't overload your woodburner.
- Before winter have your flue/chimney cleaned.
- Avoid turning down your burner overnight; some people call this 'banking' or 'damping'; a slow smouldering fire creates more air pollution and clogs your flue. Burning dry wood also reduces the number of times you need to clean your chimney or flue.

### And the HOTTEST tip!

## Only burn seasoned dry wood!

## There is help!

We introduced a rates incentive scheme several years ago called Heat Swap. This involves replacing existing, non-compliant heating appliances with compliant clean heat ones. Costs are covered by Council and repaid, with interest, over nine years in conjunction with the home owners rate payments. EECA subsidies may be available to reduce costs to the property owner.

Heat Swap can assist with insulation costs, but only as part of a qualifying heating upgrade. The scheme cannot be used for an insulation upgrade only. The existing old heating appliance is removed as part of the process. Do not remove the old appliance yourself or you will not be eligible. The Clean Heat appliance, existing fire removal and insulation installation (if required) must be carried out by a Council contracted provider. You must be the ratepayer for the property and all rates for all properties owned by the ratepayer(s) must be up to date at the time of application and prior to any work being undertaken.

The Warm Homes Clean Air (WHCA) project allows homeowners who meet certain criteria to get wood burners that are 10 years or older replaced for free. Non-compliant (old) wood burners are replaced with an approved clean heat appliance.

To be eligible you must occupy the home you are applying for; you must have a Community Services Card; the home must have been built before the year 2000 and have an open fire or non-compliant wood burner (over 10 years old). In addition the home must have approved dry wood storage (for homes wanting new wood burners, this is checked at the time of assessment) and be located within the Tokoroa airshed.

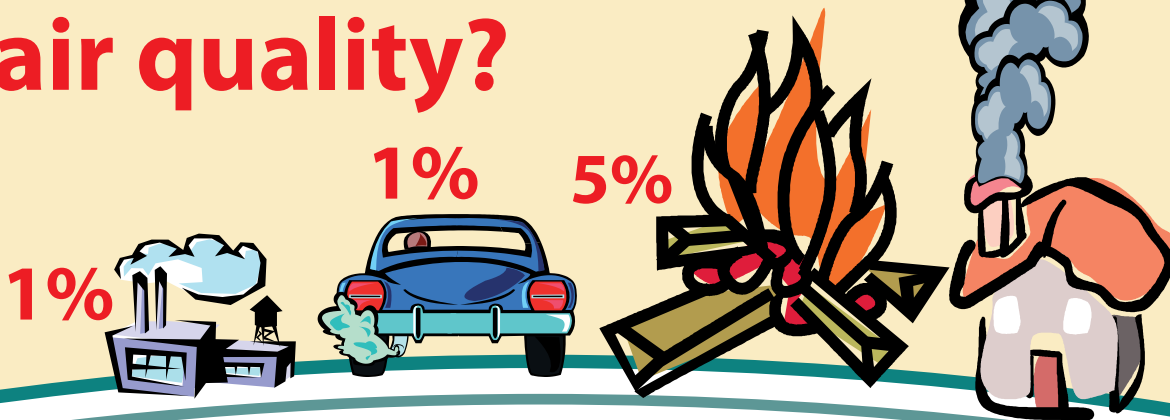
## warm homes clean air

A South Waikato Clean Heat Initiative

# HEAT swap



## What contributes to our poor air quality?



Source: Waikato Regional Council, 2012

# Function Rooms take on a Good Name

## The two function rooms at the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre now proudly sport the names of the Rotary Club of Tokoroa and Tokoroa Host Lions.

The Tokoroa Host Lions has donated \$50,000 to the facility, but it's not only money they have given, they also volunteered many hours of physical labour.

Club members built the outdoor terraced seating, concrete paths and surrounds at the centre; a project that was managed on behalf of the club by Murray Scarlett, who personally gave 350 hours of his own time.

"We saw it benefiting the youth of our community and just as importantly the general population of the South Waikato," Tokoroa Host Lions President Pieter Ebeling said of the facility.

"Having participated in its completions, we know we did the right thing, as it is a facility we can all feel proud of."

*Top (from left to right): Chris Bailey (1st VP & Secretary), John Wadey, Rod Nicholas (Sport & Leisure Board), Alan Wilson, Pieter Ebeling (President) Murray Scarlett (Event Centre Project Manager), and Phil Shattock (Treasurer).*

Tokoroa Rotary has also donated \$50,000 to the facility as it believes the new centre is a worthwhile investment for our community.

"The inaugural Taniwha event and Waikato River Trails brought several hundred people from around the country into the South Waikato and Tokoroa," said Rotary President Brenda Watkins. "We felt that the centre showed Tokoroa in a very good light and visitors during this event certainly left with a different impression of our District.

*Right: Community fundraising for the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre sparked Rotary to make the substantial donation. Pictured is President Brenda Watkins and past-President Jenny Shattock.*



### About Lions

The Tokoroa Host Lions was chartered in August 1962, and the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre (concreting and seating) project was in recognition of the clubs 50<sup>th</sup> year contributing to the Tokoroa community.

The motto of Lions International is "We Serve"; a motto that the Tokoroa Host Lions members live by, having served our community in many ways over the years, such as monetary donations to organisations, schools, clubs, charities and individuals, donations to international aid efforts, donations to National charities and provision of man power for community projects. With a particular interest in helping the Youth of Tokoroa, especially those who are willing to also help themselves.

### About Rotary

Rotary is a global network of 1.2 million community volunteers.

The Tokoroa Branch was started in 1955 and is a strong community based organisation. In the 1970s the Rotary Club built two residential units on Balmoral Drive as an investment opportunity. The organisation later sold the units and uses the interest from that capital investment to assist community projects.

Tokoroa Rotary is involved in supporting young people through international exchange programmes, outward bound courses, summer science school, youth leadership awards among many other initiatives like university study assistance, Stroke Foundation and community medical needs. The commitment of Rotary to Tokoroa stands proud on State Highway 1 in the form of the Rotary commissioned and donated iconic Pine Man (or Chainsaw Man).

The Tokoroa branch welcomes new members. If you are interested contact the President on 886 5969 or email [b.b.watkins@xtra.co.nz](mailto:b.b.watkins@xtra.co.nz).



## St Lukes kids tackle recycling

### St Lukes Punanga Reo teach their kids about the importance of recycling

In early April the St Lukes Mokopuna and Tamariki Api Punanga Reo received a visit from Council's Littler Officer who brought with him two recycling bins, in response to their request to start recycling with the children. Poko Natua, one of the teachers at the Reo said they wanted to teach their children the importance of recycling.

"We've been wanting to do this for some time now; we know recycling is really important and we want our kids to be aware for their future. Now that we have these recycling bins we can tell them that we are doing our bit to help save the environment."

Council supports kerbside recycling with separate contracts for collections and processing of recyclables

from urban residential and commercial properties on a fortnightly basis.

Since receiving the recycling bins the children at St Lukes have learnt all about what can be recycled and what bins to put them in.

"It's been really great," says Poko Natua, "the kids have really enjoyed it. We've even made a mural about recycling."

Well done to everyone at St Lukes Punanga for taking the initiative and setting their kids on the right path to a cleaner future.

Make the right decision. Please help reduce waste in our landfills by using the recycling crates provided by Council. We must all do what we can to manage our waste better.

## Community invitation: Warm Homes Clean Air EXPO

- Did you know that we have an air quality problem in winter?
- Did you know the problem is caused by woodburners?
- Did you know that what you burn makes smoke your neighbours breathe?

Come along to the Warm Homes Clean Air EXPO...

**Saturday 10 August, 10am to 4pm,  
South Waikato Sport & Events Centre**

**warm homes clean**

## Talking safety with our Police



Synthetic Cannabis in our district is a growing problem.

These dangerous products are often marketed as 'herbal' or 'legal highs' but there is nothing natural or safe about them. In fact the potency or addictive potential can be many times higher than cannabis. They are sold under several brand names with two of the more infamous ones being 'K2' and 'Kronic'. The active contents in these products are not contained in the plant material but come from synthetic substances sprayed onto plant material.

Synthetic cannabinoid use may lead to increased risk of harm with potentially serious health effects such as increased heart rate and seizures. Police are finding that they are becoming an increasingly concerning factor in a number of crimes including violent offending. This is driven by people either committing crime to get their hands on these drugs or committing crime while on them.

Police will continue to work under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and with other agencies to proactively enforce the law and educate the community about the impact of these drugs.

These drugs are available in our community and recent national media attention has brought the issue to the fore. One latest crime spree on the local front saw 11 burglaries committed in a two week period by a young offender who was using the drugs at the time of the incidents. The dangers of this drug and the inherent danger of progressing to using more hardened drugs are very real.

More information and support can be found by calling the Alcohol Drug Helpline 0800 787 797 or by visiting [www.drughelp.org.nz](http://www.drughelp.org.nz).

## What's on at The Plaza?

... by Plaza (Interim) Manager, Don Hughes

The Plaza provides a focal point for arts and community activities in Putaruru. The Plaza hosts a number of regular users including over 50s, indoor bowls, women's Institute events, mah-jong, Sanctuary of Grace Church, South Waikato Country Music and Grey Power.

The Plaza is a great facility with a full size stage, fly tower, lighting, sound, curtains and screen. The Arthur Fountain studio behind the stage has changing and make up areas. There is an auditorium with a large flat floor area in front of the stage for bowls or seating. The total seating capacity is 500 and ¾ of the seating has recently been upgraded.

Alongside the foyer is a Pavilion which has seating for 40 to 60 and is ideal for conferences and meetings. There is also a well equipped kitchen for catering.

The Plaza has an electronic outside display board for advertising events. This facility is available to local organisations to advertise .

An aspect that would greatly improve the function of The Plaza would be an early response to shows when advertised. We have just lost two shows, The Mods and Haggis Sandwich. The promoters cancelled one and the second was cancelled as it would have been a financial loss The Plaza couldn't afford. Our thanks to those who bought tickets early and our apologies to the many who wanted to come.

Coming soon:

- 9 August - Kids for Kids
- 21 September - Cultural Festival
- 28 September - The Blue Doo
- 26 October - Dance Fest
- 5 November - NZ Ballet
- 7 & 8 December - Aspire



## IN brief *continued...*

- Footpath repairs are on-going and capital upgrades have started and will be complete mid-June. Street Ahead will once again be engaged by Council to undertake the anti-slip treatment within the Tokoroa CBD prior to winter.
- There have been two fatalities reported within the South Waikato for the current calendar year, both occurring on state highways and involving heavy vehicles. At this time last year there had been seven serious crashes in the South Waikato.
- A teen driver expo will be held in June at the SW Sport and Events Centre. The expo will target young drivers and those just starting to drive. It will be run with the support of police, fire and ambulance staff.
- AgRecovery are organising a controlled free reception drop off site for agricultural containers at the Putaruru recycling drop off area.
- After a hot dry summer on our Rural Reserves, Council has arranged a wash down to remove a build-up of dust and grime over all of the facilities surfaces.
- In the recent grants round \$27,000 was given to community projects under the Creative Communities scheme and a further \$27,000 for other Council community grants.

## IN the know

Council's vision is to have:  
Healthy people thriving in a safe, vibrant and sustainable community.

This column features a snippet about Council. Got a question, drop an email to [kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz](mailto:kerry.fabrie@southwaikato.govt.nz).

## 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).

If you are a ratepayer, you will still receive a hard copy.

## Councillor Column

### Mike Gubb

It has been a hard and very hot summer and I know there has been considerable concern in the rural areas. It is great to see that undersowing and the good weather towards the end of the summer has helped replenish the grass and recover our pasturelands.

The CBD in Tokoroa is starting to look up; it is good to see a few new businesses establish and take up residency in vacant shops. This creates a more vibrant and busy environment for locals and visitors alike. The activity at our information centre and toilets have certainly created more foot traffic and Leith Place is tending to be busier than ever.

Council is always looking at ways to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. And we have some promising options regarding the management of one of our largest assets, our roading network. Collaboration and partnerships aren't just buzzwords at our Council; we act on building relationships with our neighbouring councils and actively seek improving efficiencies. We work collaboratively with five other councils on recruitment; and another five on the Regional Policy Statement. And we are currently working on additional projects like governance, planning and wastewater/water supply through the Waikato Mayors' Forum.

Council has to balance what people want with what we can afford, sort through the projects and initiatives and prioritise accordingly. It is frustrating at times, sometimes things go too slow; but it is also interesting, enlightening and above all exciting to be involved in decisions that affect our community, our towns and our district.



## Councillor Column

### Anne Edmeades

Many an hour has been spent in Council over the last few months, as stated by Councillor Shattock. It has been a hard year and the work load has been heavy and the decisions difficult states Councillor Watkins. And it's been the worst drought for many years from Councillor van Rooijen (In Touch, Issue 9); so it was a pleasure to spend a morning in the beautiful Autumn sun at the Dairy Push farm on the edge of Tokoroa at Adolph and Marianne Mathis' and to be part of the crowd, along with students and tutors from Taratahi, Councillors Bell, van Rooijen and Blair.

The remaining Councillors and Mayor Sinclair were at the Sport and Events Centre, at one of Tokoroa's long stalwarts funeral, Peter Graham.

I can only agree with the sentiments of my colleagues about the work load and hours spent attending to our duty as Elected Members.

It is Local Government elections in October and I hope you all took my lead from my last column in In Touch and some of you are thinking long and hard about standing for Local Government. It is not all hard work and there is plenty of robust debate and considered decisions.

Thank you to the submitters who came in and spoke to their submissions on the proposed Clean Air Bylaw. We sat and listened to many common themes for two full days before deliberating and deciding to let the proposed Bylaw lie on the table for the new council. This winter is going to be a telling year regarding exceedences. We hope you have had your wood drying in the long hot summer we enjoyed and that it is now under cover and ready to burn efficiently.



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### TIRAU

Council is saddened by the recent passing of Councillor Warren Lee.

The position will remain vacant until the elections in October.