

So how is Council doing?

Every three years Council conducts a Community Satisfaction Survey by telephone through an external research provider. The most recent survey took place in February this year and involved 400 telephone interviews over a cross section of the community to ensure we captured information from young, old, families, couples, business people, and cultural groups.

The results are used by Council to identify the areas where the community would like to see an increased level of service, a decrease in level of service, and helps Council identify problem areas, eg, does our community want a five star library service or would they be happy with that service being delivered at a three star level?

This information is used by Council to establish how much funding goes into each service or activity; as quite obviously delivering a five star service costs more than delivering a three star service. The data is used in conjunction with data from previous surveys so that we can track long term trends.

We also have access to comparison data with other similar councils (Taupo, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako and Waipa).

Interpreting the results

Respondents are asked if they are 'very satisfied', 'fairly satisfied' or 'dissatisfied' with each service. To interpret the results accurately it should also be noted that some respondents indicated they 'don't know'. These respondents

are treated as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

In other words, our worst performing activity is public toilets which indicates a 45% satisfied rating; which implies that 55% or respondents are dissatisfied. This is **not** correct. Only 15% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied and a significantly large 40% indicated they 'don't know'.

Similarly if you look at playgrounds, there is a 60% satisfaction rating which implies that 40% of respondents are dissatisfied. Again this is not correct. Only 6% are dissatisfied and 34% 'don't know'.

With that in mind, our survey results are detailed here and on pages 2 and 3.

On the up side

- 89% of respondents are fairly satisfied or very satisfied with Council's overall performance (9% dissatisfied, 2% don't know).
- 70% of respondents are satisfied with the value for money from rates paid to Council (30% are dissatisfied). No one indicated 'don't know'.

- The South Waikato Sport and Events Centre is the highest performing activity with 99% of respondents stating that they are fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities. 1% indicated dissatisfied. Again, no one indicated 'don't know's'.

On the down side

- Public toilets are the lowest performing activity, with only 45% of respondents satisfied and 15% are dissatisfied (40% 'don't know'). Judging by the verbatim comments it is likely that this can be attributed to the Leith Place toilets and the public toilets in Tirau. Council has refurbished the Tirau toilets and is currently looking at the Leith Place block as part of the Leith Place Development.
- The activities that have had the highest decrease in satisfaction since 2011 are household recycling service, animal control and cemeteries. All three activities have decreased by 11%.

Council would like to thank all residents who participated in the survey.

... continued on pages 2 & 3

The five Rs of smart water use

Reduce

Look for ways to use less water.

Repair

Fix leaks fast.

Retrofit

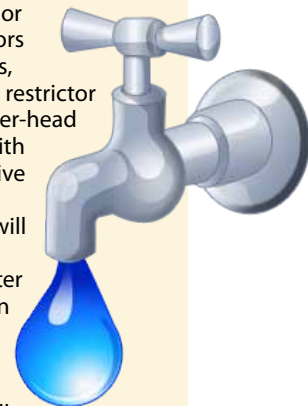
Put aerators or flow restrictors on older taps, install a flow restrictor on the shower-head or replace with an inexpensive low-flow model, this will also reduce your hot water consumption saving you money on your electricity bill.

Replace

When upgrading or building, choose a water efficient toilet and appliances.

Reuse

Catch rainwater or use water from sinks and the shower to irrigate the garden.



IN brief

- The community is invited to make a submission on several documents that Council is currently consulting on. These are the Open Fires in the Urban Area Bylaw, Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy. Documents are available at the Council offices, libraries and on line: www.southwaikato.govt.nz.
- Thank you to those people who submitted on Council's Annual Plan. We received 77 submissions and 58 enquiries through counters and our 0800 DRAFTS number. Council held five public meetings that were attended by the community.

IN side

- 2&3 Council customer satisfaction results
- 4&5 Introducing our new Community Group
- 6&7 Air quality issue Council winning paper
- 8 Councillor columns Councillor contacts

IN house

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

Editorial: Communications staff, Kerry Fabrie and Sina Tolovae, 07 885 0340

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Besides the specific service activities of Council, several other areas were surveyed:

- 83% of respondents were satisfied with the amount of information that is provided by Council. 10% were dissatisfied and 7% don't know. The most preferred methods of receiving information were: newspapers (37%), In Touch (31%), pamphlets (24%) and unaddressed mail (21%).
- 61% of respondents were satisfied with their ability to have a say in Council decision-making and planning. 16% dissatisfied and 24% don't know.
- 83% of respondents believe the reason for our poor air quality in winter is due to woodburners, while 21% believe that it is due to industry. 5% indicated climatic conditions and 5% believed other factors were involved. See pg 6 for more on this issue.
- 49% believe they are prepared for a Civil Defence emergency (51% not prepared), with 73% believing they are adequately informed about how to cope during an emergency and 27% not. With both of these questions there were no 'don't know' responses.
- 66% of respondents are satisfied with the decision making, planning and leadership of Councillors, which is 5% better than our peers. 21% indicated 'don't know' and only 12% were dissatisfied.

How to read the activity blocks

The series of blocks show each individual activity. Please read this block first, it will help you interpret the activities.

The first part is the pie chart, which shows the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (or don't know):

- 'very satisfied' (dark green)
- 'fairly satisfied' (light green)
- 'not satisfied' (red) or
- 'don't know' (white).

The percentages are indicated in the pieces of pie.

The second section is the comparison to the 2011 survey results. We have added the 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' percentages together to get an overall 'satisfied' rating and compared that to the 'satisfied'

rating from the 2011 results. The face icons mean:

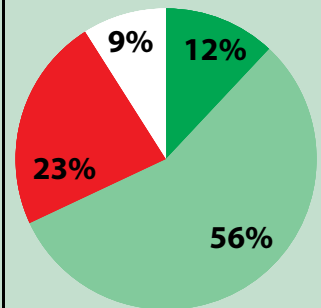
- BETTER: at least 1% higher than 2011
- SIMILAR: same as 2011 or up to 2% lower
- WORSE: more than 2% lower than 2011

The third section is the comparison between ourselves and our peer councils, by averaging their scores. The dot icons mean:

- BETTER: at least 1% higher than peers
- SIMILAR: same as or up to 2% lower than peers
- WORSE: more than 2% lower than 2011

FOOTPATHS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

WORSE
9% down on satisfaction



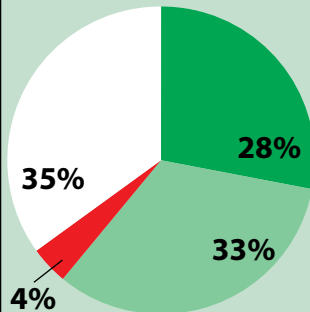
Compared to peers

WORSE
7% below average



CEMETERIES

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

WORSE
11% down on satisfaction

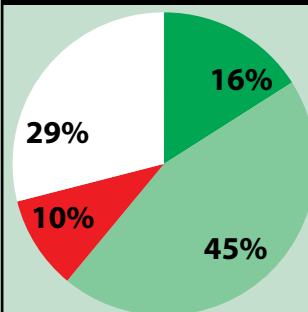


Compared to peers

WORSE
24% below average



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

BETTER
1% up on satisfaction

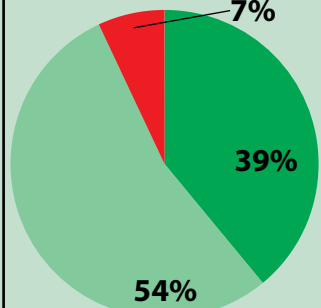


Compared to peers

Not available. Peers don't specifically survey.

LANDFILL

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

BETTER
33% up on satisfaction



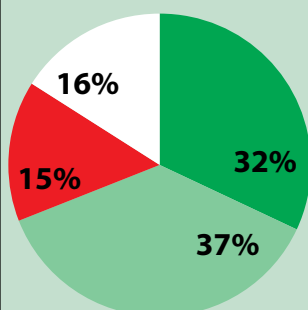
Compared to peers

BETTER
11% above average



ANIMAL CONTROL

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

WORSE
11% down on satisfaction



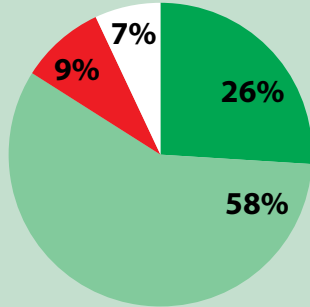
Compared to peers

WORSE
14% below average



COMMUNICATION (WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, AMOUNT OF INFO)

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

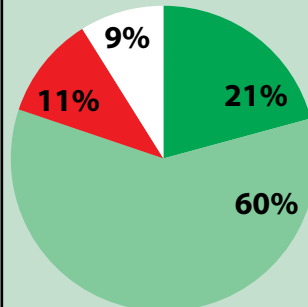
Not available. First year for social media involvement.

Compared to peers

Not available. Peers don't specifically survey.

FOOD PREMISES CLEANLINESS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

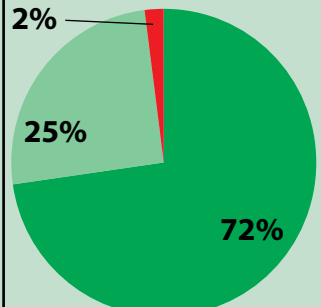
Not available. First year surveyed.

Compared to peers

Not available. Peers don't specifically survey.

LIBRARIES

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied, don't know

Compared to 2011

BETTER
15% up on satisfaction



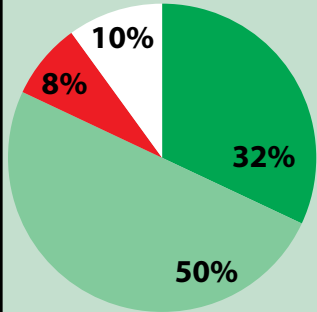
Compared to peers

BETTER
10% above average



PARKS & RESERVES

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
WORSE
6% down on satisfaction

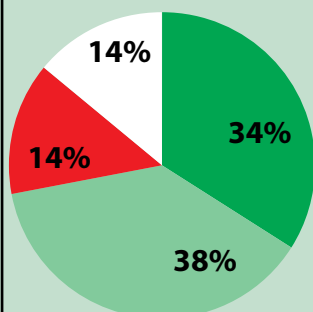


Compared to peers
WORSE
10% below average



RECYCLING

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
WORSE
11% down on satisfaction

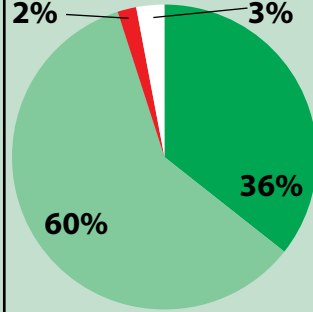


Compared to peers
WORSE
10% below average



SEWERAGE

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

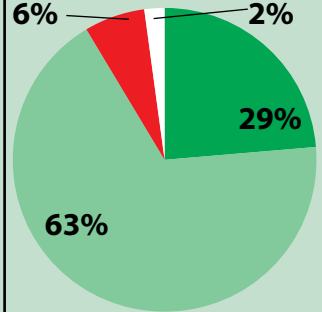
Compared to 2011
Not available. New question.

Compared to peers
BETTER
10% above average



STORMWATER

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

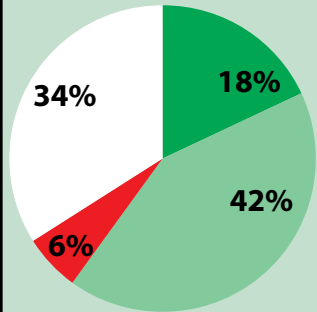
Compared to 2011
Not available. New question.

Compared to peers
BETTER
22% above average



PLAYGROUNDS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

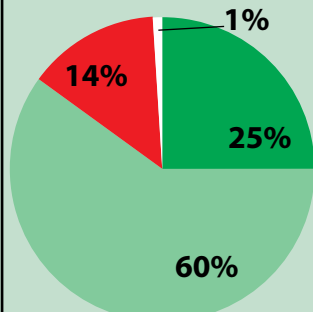
Compared to 2011
Not available. In the past, sportsgrounds and playgrounds were surveyed together.

Compared to peers
WORSE
21% below average



ROADING

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
SIMILAR
1% down on satisfaction

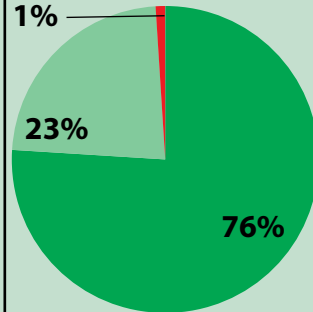


Compared to peers
BETTER
3% above average



SW SPORT & EVENTS CENTRE

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

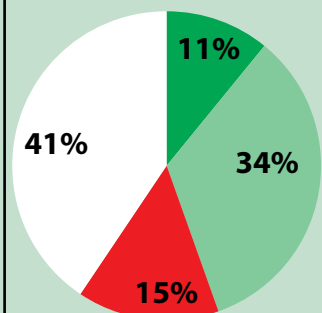
Compared to 2011
Not available. New facility, first year surveyed.

Compared to peers
BETTER
26% above average



TOILETS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
WORSE
7% down on satisfaction

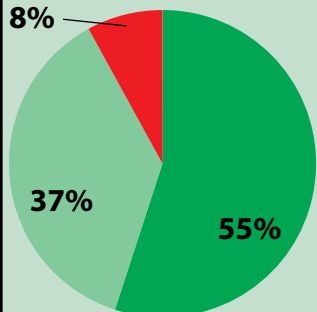


Compared to peers
WORSE
35% below average



POOLS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
BETTER
17% up on satisfaction

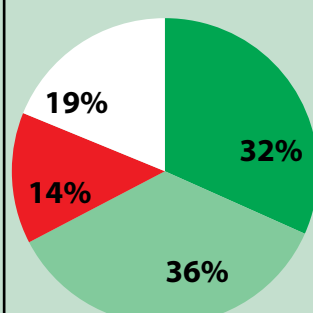


Compared to peers
BETTER
24% above average



RUBBISH COLLECTION

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
WORSE
10% down on satisfaction

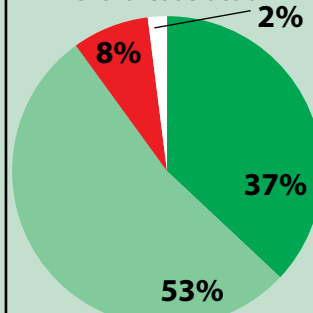


Compared to peers
WORSE
14% below average



SPORTSGROUNDS

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

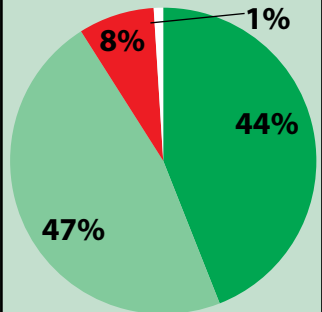
Compared to 2011
Not available. In the past, sportsgrounds and playgrounds were surveyed together.

Compared to peers
BETTER
1% above average



WATER SUPPLY

Level of satisfaction



very satisfied fairly satisfied
not satisfied don't know

Compared to 2011
Not available. New question.

Compared to peers
BETTER
16% above average



Council shuffle puts focus on community

An organisational restructure at Council at the beginning of this year has resulted in existing teams being combined into a new team called the Community Group.

The new streamlined team consists of four sections:

- **Library Services** which is the Tokoroa Library;
- **Community Services** incorporating the previous customer services team in Tokoroa and the community development team;
- **Leisure Services** consisting of all three district pool facilities and the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre (SWSEC); and
- the **Putāruru Service Centre** which provides the Putāruru community with both customer services and library services in both Putāruru and Tirau.

The new team is headed by Group Manager Community Amanda Hema, who has worked for Council as the Community Development Manager for the past eight years.

South Waikato District Council's economic development focus sits with Amanda and Chief Executive Craig Hobbs. They will have a close working relationship with the independent DRIVE economic development trust that Council has recently established along with the South Waikato Investment Fund Trust.

When Craig Hobbs joined Council a little over a year ago now, he saw the opportunity for improved levels of community liaison by restructuring parts of Council to introduce a Community Group that could focus on meeting customer needs and improving community relationships over a focus on just managing infrastructure and assets.

"In other words I wanted the Council team to focus on delivering quality community service rather than solely looking at building maintenance and other 'asset management' areas," explained Craig.

"We've had a few early wins like developing a new library strategy with a focus on seeing the libraries become a community hub not simply a service that delivers books," said Amanda. "With that we will be providing free Wifi and internet access in the libraries to further enhance that community connectivity."

Other early changes include a refocus of the Leisure Services Board that will now primarily have a strategic focus at how best we can deliver leisure services to our community as opposed to focussing on the operation of the pools.

Combining the roles of Pools Manager and Events Centre Manager into one role of Leisure Services Manager (a position filled by Heather Gaby) has integrated recreation facilities and streamlined their procedures and services. Lalita Sudhakar continues to lead the Library Services team in Tokoroa and Pam Reed continues to manage the Putāruru Service Centre and Tirau Library.

Merging Customer Service and Community Development into one team under one new Manager, Tim Bryant, has enabled Council to improve community focus. This team

includes a new position of community liaison officer, now held by Richard Gaby. Community projects like Warm Homes Clean Air and Heat Swap are now a focus for Moetu Togia, among other project based initiatives. And Amanda White's focus is on

grants, event coordination and community support. Customer service officers continue to provide front line guidance and assistance. These job redesigns

have been created within existing budgets and staff numbers.

It is through this new structure that Council can spend more time listening to our community and taking action to strengthen and promote the district.

"Importantly, better certainly doesn't mean

more," continued Amanda. "By streamlining staff roles we have actually reduced the number of staff while growing our capacity to accommodate community needs and better serve our people."

And what does the Community Group do:

- **Leisure Services** includes the operation of the South Waikato Sport and Events Centre and the pools, including programme delivery like Woggles, Learn to Swim and Swim Academy (at the



Amanda Hema



Above: The **Leisure Team (Pools)**, from left, back, Carol Ngatai, Joanna Tautari, Sharon Morgan, Cathrine Tioriori, Lionel Kemp, Heather Gaby and Nathan Christie. In front, Melita Zammit. Absent from photo: Aaron Dean, Bronwyn Tautari, Doreen Steiner, Mathew Tautari, Tammy Tautari, Tania Trego, Atai Daniela, Stephanie Bryant, Jonathon Shannon, Ira Pascoe and Western Wilson.

Below: The **Library Team (Tokoroa)**, from left, back, Bettina Kinchant, Maria Johnston, Peggy Brown, Lisa Thompson. Front, Stephanie Julian, Lalita Sudhakar and Trish Martin. Absent from photo: Jan Glover, Amy Abernethy and Maria Cirinainima.



Craig Hobbs

pools), running leagues for various sports and managing functions and events at the SWSEC.

- **Library Services** includes the operation of the Tokoroa Library as well as programme delivery like school holiday programmes, the Odyssey programme,
- **Community Services** includes the Tokoroa customer services delivery (ie, the front line staff) that covers all Council queries; and community

development functions like grants, community advocacy, capacity building and liaison, events, general promotion, community contracts, project management (air quality schemes) and youth development.

- **Putāruru Service Centre** includes the operation of council customer service activities (such as rubbish bags, dog registrations, rates queries etc) as well as the Putāruru Library function and the operation of the Tirau Library.



The **Putaruru Service Centre Team**, from left, Ebony Curtin, Pam Reed, Diana Bennett, Sharlene Prichard and Margaret Fisher. Absent from photo: Mary Tidbury and Tiffanie-Rose Black.



Above: The **Leisure Team (SW Sport and Events Centre)**, from left, Louise Ruru, Leleina Tolovae, Aubrey Stothers, Heather Gaby, Rima Tunupopo and Cathrine Tioriori. Absent from photo: Sharon Neho, Patrice Teao, Bryce McMullen and Aaron Dean.

Below: The **Community Team**, from left, back, Tim Bryant, Desiree Morunga, Amanda White, Doreen Steiner and Richard Gaby. Front, Jeannie Apps, Rachael Beale, Trudy Meszaros and Moetu Togia. Absent from photo: Shelley Rugg and Daphne McClure.



Talking safety with our Police



With Winter fast approaching we have enjoyed a rather mild Autumn period, but the days are drawing shorter and the nights are getting cooler. With the change in weather, we look at road safety and the merits of driving to the conditions and being responsible drivers.

The South Waikato will continue to enjoy having State Highway One running through our district for decades to come, but with the huge increase in vehicles on the road and change in weather conditions, the previously easy entry onto the arterial is becoming longer and longer.

This has brought about some serious misjudgements from some drivers and downright arrogance from others. In all parts of our district there are posted speed limits on State Highway One which attempt to lessen the risks, but if drivers do not heed the Give Way and Stop signs, or simply merge into the highway travelling well below the posted speed limit they are putting other drivers at serious risk.

The most recent examples have been those entering State Highway One from Maraetai Road, SH32 and Balmoral Drive, Tokoroa, failing to give way, and travelling at 30 - 50km per hour in an 80km per hour zone. Be aware of your surroundings and if in doubt wait it out, don't become another statistic on our roads.

On another note, driving during winter can be hazardous. Black ice is a thin sheet of ice on the road that is extremely difficult for drivers to see. It is commonly found around waterways and lakes, more often in shady or cooler areas. Black ice can cause drivers to lose control, so it's important to drive carefully. A couple of tips include avoiding sudden braking and sudden direction changes, driving slowly, leaving large following distances and being mindful of shiny looking patches.

What's on at The Plaza?

It has been yet another busy few weeks for the Plaza with a variety of functions to look forward to.

Friday 13 June at 6pm: Central Kids Glenshea Kindergarten will hold its annual Wearable Arts Extravaganza. Tickets are \$5 (pre-schoolers are free). Call 883 8503 to pre-order or purchase on the night.

Sunday 22 June at 2pm: MOVIE screening - Salmon Fishing In The Yemen. Salmon Fishing in the Yemen is a 2011 British romantic comedy-drama film, directed by Lasse Hallström (also directed Chocolat). When Britain's leading fisheries expert (Ewen McGregor) is approached by a consultant (Emily Blunt) to help realize a sheikh's (Amr Waked) vision of bringing the sport of fly-fishing to the desert, he thinks the project is both absurd and unachievable. But when the Prime Minister's overzealous press secretary (Kristin Scott Thomas) latches on to it as a "good will" story, the unlikely team embark on an upstream journey of faith and fish to achieve the impossible.

Sunday 29 June at 2.30pm: The South Waikato Music Society Concert featuring the amazing cello talents of Santiago Canon Valencia from Colombia. Santi has played for us before while he was studying at the University of Waikato, and is an international cello competition winner.

Wednesday 2 July at 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm): Rangiora Rest Home Ladies Fashion Parade Fundraiser. Tickets will be available from Tuscany Road, Marjories, BNZ, Heslop Pharmacy and Rangiora Home. An innovative raffle via a Wishing Well will take place. All welcome.



Clean Air Bylaw still a possibility

Tokoroa has an air quality problem during our winter months that just isn't going away.

During winter the **PM10** levels in our **airshed** are very high and on average Tokoroa has around 15 **exceedances** per year. If we don't reduce this to three per year by 2016 and again down to one per year by 2020, industries that are looking at setting up in Tokoroa will have to **offset** their air emissions.

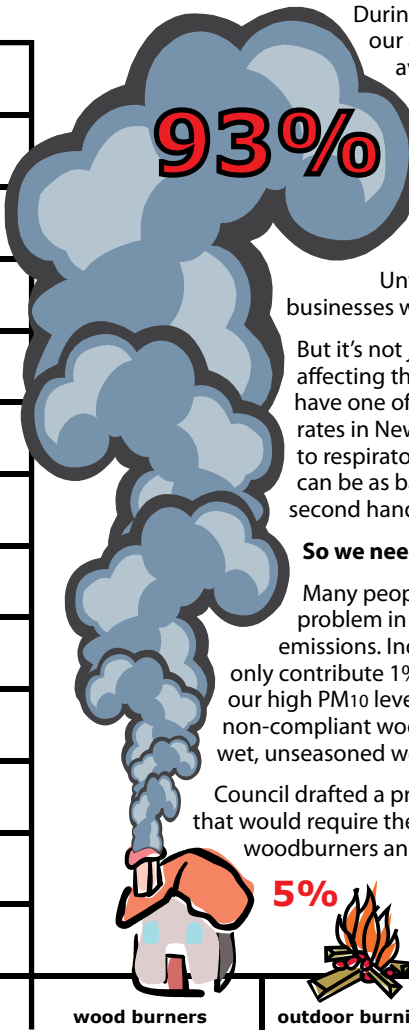
Unfortunately this may mean that businesses will look elsewhere.

But it's not just this - our bad air quality is affecting the health of our community! We have one of the highest infant mortality rates in New Zealand, with very strong links to respiratory conditions. Breathing in PM10 can be as bad for your child as breathing in second hand smoke.

So we need to make a change.

Many people still believe that the air quality problem in Tokoroa has to do with industry emissions. Industry and vehicle emissions only contribute 1% each to the problem. 93% of our high PM10 levels in the air are caused by old non-compliant woodburners and the burning of wet, unseasoned wood.

Council drafted a proposed Clean Air Bylaw that would require the community to remove old woodburners and replace them with new energy



efficient products; however the community spoke out against this at the time and Council decided to target the issue through existing and new air quality schemes instead.

If things don't improve soon, Council will need to look at introducing the bylaw again.

PM10

Smoke contains tiny particles you cannot see. These particles are called Particulate Matter 10, or PM10 for short. These particles are small enough to enter our lungs.

Airshed

An airshed is a geographic area used for measuring air quality standards. This area is used by regulators for managing air quality.

Exceedance

The National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NESAQ) set a limit for the level of PM10s allowed in the air; this limit is 50. Everytime we go over this limit, it is called an exceedance.

Offset

If a new industry has an air discharge, in order to receive a resource consent, it will need to fund a corresponding number of new compliant woodburners to 'offset' its proposed air discharge so there is no overall increase in the airshed. This could have a negative effect on future economic development.

**This graph shows the relative contributions of sources to emissions. Air Emission Inventory for Tokoroa, 2012.*

Council has several schemes to assist our community with smarter burning...

Warm homes clean air

The Warm Homes Clean Air Scheme is aimed at lower income households and installs energy efficient clean heating appliances into homes. Fully funded, jointly by Council and the Waikato Regional Council.

HEAT swap

This scheme assists ratepayers (including landlords) to replace non-compliant fires in residential properties by adding the cost to rates over 9 to 10 years. As part of a heating upgrade, insulation may need to be installed or upgraded.

burnwise

This scheme endorses wood suppliers who commit to providing good wood in the community.

Central Bay Firewood
07 886 6387

Tokoroa City Lions
www.tokoroalions.com Tokoroa

Firewood Ltd
0508 FOR WOOD (0508 367 9663)

Balmoral Firewood Supplies
07 886 7550

South Waikato Achievement Centre
07 886 8941



St Andrews Drive open drain after a peak rainfall event; here the detention dam is holding back the water and will begin to slowly release it to prevent flooding in urban areas.

Detention dams just doing their job

The South Waikato has experienced a fair amount of rainfall over the past few months and you may have noticed that our open drains, such as the one on St Andrews Drive, will fill up with water and form a temporary river of sorts during this time. When this happens, Council will often receive calls from the public concerned about flooding - but this is just our detention dams working as they should.

Tokoroa and Putāruru used to experience frequent flooding in certain areas after heavy rainfall. To prevent this from happening, Council installed detention dams in these affected areas. These systems are designed to retain water until the rainfall has ceased, and then the detention

dam will quietly release the water at a slower rate to allow for a modest flow downstream. Sometimes this can take half a day or more.

Because of our flat topography, without detention dams we would have major problems with surface flooding and property damage. Due to the increase in peak rainfall events we have been experiencing, from time to time they will spill over. The majority of our open drains are surrounded by Council owned public land and little to no damage is caused.

All of our detention dams have steel screens on the inlets to prevent blockages and also to protect children from entering them. Maintenance is

carried out on the detention dams twice a year, or when necessary. They are checked frequently, especially when we are aware of impending heavy rainfall. The drains can and do get blocked from time to time, and the main cause is usually household refuse. Dumping into open drains is not only bad for the environment, it's also illegal and carries a fine of up to \$400.



A close look at a detention dam in action.

Lake Moananui update

Project costs for the Lake Moananui reconstruction increased after the volume of accumulated silt was accurately assessed pushing the start date out to April.

The project went back to Council for further discussion, and we looked into three options:

- Doing the job properly with the increased price tag of \$980,000.
- Not doing the lake restoration project. Instead return the area to a grass reserve with a stream. This would have cost \$700,000.
- Doing only part of the work to remain within the initial cost estimate (\$630,000). However, due to the volume of silt needing to be removed this would not have given a substantial improvement.

Council decided that the best decision was to get the job done properly with the increased cost.

“Council agrees with the community about the importance of Lake Moananui and we acknowledge the community’s support and patience,” said Council’s Chief Executive, Craig Hobbs. “We too are looking forward to seeing Lake Moananui return to its former glory!”

The project has been underway for over a month now, and work is progressing as planned.

Dam Remediation

The formation of the coffer dam across the face of the dam is complete and the preparation of the dam face to lay the liner is underway.

Further truck movements will be required from Arawa Crescent to bring in materials. The public using the road and the walkway should watch out for earthmoving machinery and truck movement. There will

be times when the walkway needs to be closed off for safety reasons.

Orange security fences have been erected around the Construction Zones and unauthorised persons must keep out of these Zones. Contractors are concerned that children have been entering the construction site outside of work hours. Please warn your children that this is not permitted and is a risk to their safety.

Silt Removal

Downer Ltd has completed the removal of silt from the southern end of the lake and the island of excavated silt is in place.

The excavation for a silt trap “Forebay” where the Matarawa Stream enters the lake has also started.

Please be aware of heavy traffic movements between Arawa Crescent and Maraetai Rd (SH 32) to the disposal site on the western side of the reserve. The trucks will track silt onto the road which will be a bit messy for a while. The contractor will put silt filters around the road sumps to minimise silt getting into the stormwater. The road will be swept when required, but at least once a week to remove the silt and keep the road as clean as possible.

Walkway

The walkway is being kept open as much as possible by the contractors but there will be times when sections near the construction sites will have to be closed. These will become more frequent as the work progresses so please take care!

A win for Council’s wastewater



South Waikato District Council’s Watermark Manager John Beale (who manages both our wastewater and water supply treatment plants) was given a top accolade - Winning Operator Paper - at the Water Industry Operators Group (WIOG) conference held in Taupo recently.

Mr Beale wrote and presented a paper entitled ‘Centrifuge - 30 years of waiting, was it worth it?’ to industry leaders and colleagues and earned the top prize, which means he is off to a similar conference of wastewater and water industry leaders in Australia in September, fully paid by the WIOG.

The paper was based on improvements to Council’s own wastewater treatment plant in Tokoroa installed about 18 months ago. Previously Council used drying beds to remove moisture from wastewater sludge prior to disposal. The centrifuge that we installed for \$870,000 is a mechanical dewatering system. The improvements and cost savings are impressive.

“The old system used to produce 10% of dry solid matter; the centrifuge system aimed to increase that to 20%,” explained Mr Beale. “In reality, after operating the new system for 18 months, we are actually achieving more than that at 25% dry solids.”

“We used to transfer around 1,000 tonnes of sludge to

the landfill and this has been significantly reduced by half to 500 tonnes, which means that less product goes to landfill, extending its life,” continued Mr Beale. “The process also involves fewer steps and less transportation of material further reducing operating costs.”

Other improvements include a finished product that is far better for the environment and now actually produces topsoil as the final cover for landfill, and wastewater sludge from all of the towns in the district can now be processed by the centrifuge in Tokoroa.

“We have retained some of the old drying beds that can be used in an emergency such as plant failure,” said Mr Beale, “However in the 18 months since the new system came on line, we haven’t had to use them at all.”

An Australian delegation visited wastewater and water plants across the middle of the North Island during the week prior to the conference, including Council’s fairly recent UV and microfiltration installation at the Blue Spring.

Mr Beale is looking forward to his trip to Melbourne/Victoria in September to attend the trade expo and conference there. “It is a huge opportunity to see wastewater and water supply plants and systems in Australia, new emerging technologies and listen to other experts in the field.”



IN brief continued...

- In addition we received 43 applications for the \$5 million fund towards economic and community development projects. The applications totalled more than \$13 million. The timing of In Touch means that hearings have yet to be held. Decisions will be made in June.
- The Creative Community Scheme had three successful applications using the full available amount of \$15,000. The Community Development Grant had 15 successful applications using the full available amount of \$40,000.
- While good progress is being made with the SH1/5 intersection improvement, Council was recently notified by NZTA that the project will not be completed within the timeframe initially provided. The site will be shut as of the end of May and work will start again in September due to the wet season approaching.
- The Speed Indication Device was deployed on MacKenzie Street in Putaruru. The average speed recorded was 33kph. Over 98% of the drivers recorded were travelling below the 50kph speed limit. The highest recorded speed in the two week period was 75kph recorded at 12.30am on a Thursday.

IN the know

You can keep up to date with Council information via:
website:
www.southwaikato.govt.nz
facebook: www.facebook.com/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil
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This column features a snippet about Council. Got a question, drop an email to 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.

Councillor Column Marin Glucina

Council is now well into its three year term with the bulk of Council business being routine prescribed work that Councils are bound by legislation to do.

At the time of going to print, the current Council was poised to look at selecting a number of projects which can be started by using part of the \$5 million fund (which is being made available for the purpose of economic and community development). By the time this issue comes out, submissions will have been made to Council and decisions will need to be made as to which projects will receive funds.

Trees appear to be the most common issue raised by the public, with Council owned trees being the main complaint. Many of the trees planted both on roads and reserves are more suited to forests rather than the urban areas of our towns. The problem is growing faster than the aging trees.

I believe Council has an obligation to see that the trees growing on its land are not a nuisance and don't do damage to the people and property of the district. A programme of tree replacement will need to be accelerated to deal with the old dangerous trees.

Another point that was raised during the recent Annual Plan hearings was trees and the shade they produce when full grown. I would appeal to all landowners to be considerate when planting trees on their property. Trees are great for urban gardens, but everyone should be mindful that trees create shade and this shade can sometimes mean that your neighbour's property becomes dark and damp, especially in winter. The shade from your trees may be perfect for your garden, but it might have a significantly negative effect on your neighbour's home and ultimately health. It's about being considerate.

Councillor Column Herman van Rooijen

Recently I attended an open day on the farm that won this year's Farm Environment Award. The farm is in the Tihoi area between Western Bays Road and Lake Taupo; in the area where farming has limits as to the amount of nitrogen allowed to leach to water and ultimately to the lake.

The farm is outside our district's boundaries, but the issues there are very relevant to us because higher standards of water quality are the future reality for all farmers, due to Central Government mandated rules.

Mike and Sharon Barton bought the farm in 2004, fully aware of the changes under way. Their challenge is to farm profitably while not able to increase nitrogen losses. As Mike (a good recordkeeper) says: returns between 2004 and 2014 have not increased but costs have gone up by 45%, so the challenge is how to improve returns.

They have formed a partnership with two neighbouring farms and created Taupo Beef, an effort to grow the value of the beef through excellent processing and marketing. On the open day we tasted beef prepared by the Huka Lodge chef - to die for! Their own research shows people are prepared to pay extra for produce made with the environment in mind if it is well explained and the product of high quality.

The speakers explained the research undertaken on the farm and elsewhere and informed us that so far science has not been able to find ways to decrease leaching other than capping stocking rates.

We all know of the need to be environmentally responsible and the pressures that brings. Mike advised all farmers to take part in the process, as he says: if you are not around the table, you are on the menu!

It is heartening to see the calibre of people involved in the discussions. It gives me confidence we will find solutions and come out stronger. Farmers always have.

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IN value

In Touch costs 50 cents per copy per resident per issue. The cost of six issues per year is \$3 per ratepayer. For this cost our community receives 48 pages of information about Council and the district.

*approximates, overruns not included.