

SWDC farewells Ben Smit

South Waikato District Council farewells Chief Executive Ben Smit, who has moved over to Waitomo District Council to take up the same role.

Ben has been at the helm here for three years. Prior to that he was Deputy CE for five years while holding his existing Corporate Group Manager portfolio. Ben has been with SWDC for almost 12 years.

During this time he has been instrumental in a number of

successful projects including the establishment of the SWIF Trust, feasibility and development of the Tokoroa Road Rail Terminal, iwi engagement and planning on the district's \$30 million wastewater treatment plant upgrades, Putāruru concept plan and growth planning, the public transport service (known to users as the Urban Connector), more effective community engagement, developing integrated planning and a risk/quality framework,

and most recently Ben's diligence in understanding and analysing the three waters reform project has been critical.

"I am pleased that I am staying on in the local government sector, taking on the Chief Executive role at Waitomo District Council," said Ben. "I am looking forward to working with the Council team and Elected Members at Waitomo and helping develop their community in the future.

"I have a real passion for rural New Zealand and I am looking forward to the challenge."

"When I spoke with the Mayor of Waitomo, I assured him that they were getting someone with great knowledge of the sector and council operations, someone who can steer Waitomo DC through the many changes facing all of local government and someone who is utterly committed to the job, his staff and his community," said Mayor Jenny Shattock.

"Ben has provided Councillors and me with well-thought through guidance and advice over the past decade. We may not have always agreed, but Ben's advice was always valuable and considered. I will miss him and wish him every success going forward."



Interim CE welcomed

Miriam Taris has taken over the CE reigns as interim Chief Executive for a three-month period, while the recruitment process for a new permanent CE is underway.

Miriam recently left Bay of Plenty District Council after 14 years in local government, seven years as CE and prior to that role, seven years as Corporate Group Manager, responsible for corporate services and planning.

Miriam has a background as a scientist and accountant; and has previously worked for the Office of the Auditor General as an auditor for public entities, including local councils.

Miriam's experience with local government and her understanding of the sector will be valuable over the coming months.



IN the know

DID YOU KNOW... Council funds its activities from five different sources. The largest funding source is from **rates**, at 72%. We collect 11% from **subsidies and grants** (such as Waka Kotahi funding), and another 11% from **fees and charges** (such as pool entry, library charges, dog registrations, building consent fees). Two smaller sources of income are from **other sources** (such as investments, rates penalties) at 5% and **development contributions** at 1%.

* as per the LTP 2021-31

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IN house

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

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Bridge Street Oak trees in Tokoroa felled for public safety

Back in December 2020 Council resolved to remove the large 70-year old Oak trees in Bridge Street due to safety concerns related to an incident when a tree fell in high winds.

It was also decided that the trees in adjoining streets – Campbell and Logan will be removed in the 2022-23 financial year.

“Following the incident back in November, it was evident that the root ball was extremely small for the height and weight of the trees. The root ball was also very flat which indicates that the roots had hit a hard layer, likely rhyolite,” said Phil Parker, Council’s Parks and Reserves Manager.

“Tree health inspections we conduct every two years would not reveal this. Given it is likely that the rhyolite band extends the full length of Bridge Street, coupled with the height and weight of the trees, leaving the Oaks in place is not the right thing to do.”

Council is aware that some in the community are disappointed by this decision, but we now know, given the flattened root system and the weight it is carrying, that the trees need to be removed for public safety. Council will replant with more suitable street trees for the built CBD environment.

There was the suggestion that we don’t fell the entire tree and instead leave an elongated stump that could be carved into talking

poles. Unfortunately, the wood is highly unlikely to be suitable for carving. Quercis (Oak) is native to the Northern Hemisphere, and in those colder climates naturally grows slowly and produces dense heartwood as a result.

Oaks growing in New Zealand’s temperate climate grow faster, but produce less durable heartwood. Oak trees have good natural ability to compartmentalise. Compartmentalisation is the process whereby when a tree is wounded it begins to protect itself by slowing or preventing the spread of disease and decay by forming walls around the wounded area.

Given the age of the trees, it was unknown while they are standing as to what degree they have had to compartmentalise over the years given their being situated within a built environment.

Council staff looked at options regarding the felled trees. The Bridge Street trees have gone to a local wood supplier that had the room to store this volume of wood. When we remove the remaining Oak trees, we will again look at other options with community groups.

Now the trees have been felled, stump grinding and remedial work is underway and may be complete by the time you read this.



WHAT'S HOT

The weather.

The sun.

Summer.

South Waikato.



WHAT'S NOT

Below: people who disregard the fences across the new Dumfries/Pellikan link road. This road is not complete and should not be used, hence the fencing. Once the traffic calming measures are in place the road will be opened.



Below: the people who damaged the playground area at the Tokoroa Memorial Sportsground may think they are hot, but they are not. The damage needs fixing at ratepayer expense and hopefully the CCTV camera caught you in action! Staff will be looking at fences or bollards to stop this behaviour from happening again.



Dog barking? Dog roaming?

Council's Animal Control and Compliance team attend to both barking and roaming complaints but not 24/7. It's worthwhile understanding the process, so when you are faced with a roaming dog or a neighbourhood dog is barking, you know how the call out is treated.

The AC&C team's day-time hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to 4.30pm and 8am to 7.30pm (during daylight saving). The team is on call 24/7 for urgent incidents only – stock on roads, dog rushing, dog attacks and dog impounding of secured dogs. The team operate a revolving shift roster.

Barking issues

We know a dog barking incessantly can be really annoying. Our team responds to barking complaints during day-time hours. An Officer visits the property in question and provides education and advice to the owner. The Officer never reveals who complained. That is confidential.

Barking complaints that come in at night are not attended in person. Staff won't enter properties after hours if the situation is non-urgent; and barking is not considered urgent; annoying yes, urgent no. The complaint will be followed up in person the next day.

The team encourages people to report barking dogs during the day, before 4.30pm, seven days a week; even on weekends. We also encourage people not to wait for hours before reporting a dog's continual barking.

Roaming issues

Roaming dogs can be elusive, during the day and especially at night.

During the day, roaming complaints are dealt with as soon as possible. If the on-duty Officer is at the scene of a dog attack, rushing or a stock on road issue, that will take priority.

If the dog is found, the Officer attempts to catch it and if successful, takes it to the pound in Tokoroa for impounding. The dog is scanned and the owner contacted. An impound

fee and any daily sustenance charges that may be applicable are charged. Sometimes the dog may run away and quite often runs back home. If the Officer is able to follow it, and the owner is home, a chat about their roaming dog, open gate or possible insecure property follows. An infringement may be considered. If no one is home, the dog is uplifted and taken to the pound because there is no one at home to keep an eye on the dog to prevent it running off again.

Our Officers used to respond to roaming complaints all hours, but in the dark, roaming dogs are incredibly difficult to find. This resulted in a waste of staff time and fuel costs, with no dog to show for it, or impound fee to recoup the call-out cost; so this was changed several years ago.

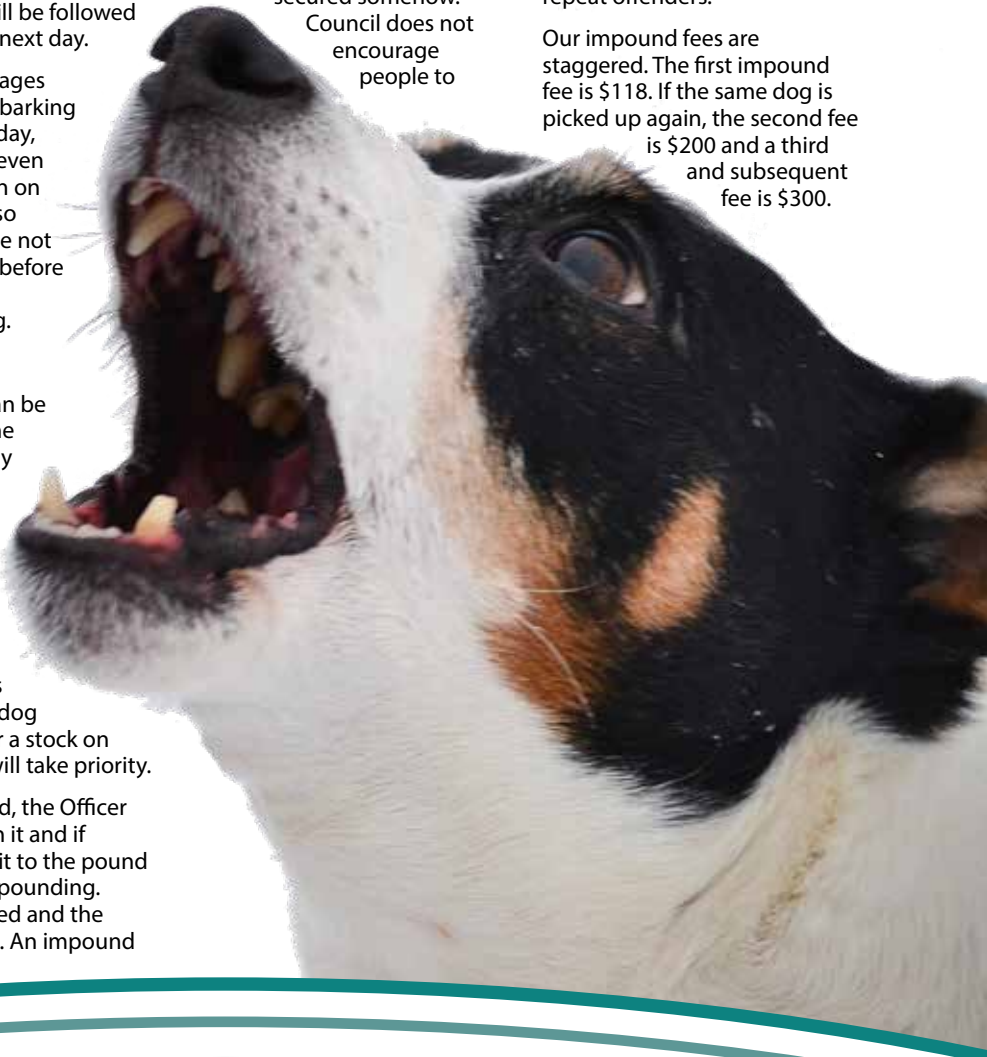
Officers will only attend roaming dog complaints at night if the dog has been secured somehow. Council does not encourage people to

actively approach a roaming dog under any circumstances, however some dogs are decidedly friendly and approach people in a friendly manner; and can be easily secured. If that is the case, securing the dog on a leash, rope or behind a gate is ideal. An Officer will come out to pick the dog up as soon as possible. Again the dog will be scanned and the owner contacted.

The team also do random night patrols across the district for roaming dogs, particularly if they have been called out to another incident. The team can focus patrols on problem areas.

The team puts a lot of effort on education within the community. Owners of dogs that roam are provided with advice about exercise and fencing; and advised that Council can legally impose de-sexing. The team also discuss handovers and rehoming with repeat offenders.

Our impound fees are staggered. The first impound fee is \$118. If the same dog is picked up again, the second fee is \$200 and a third and subsequent fee is \$300.





Mayoral Scholarships



Mayor Jenny Shattock was proud to announce the recipients of the two Mayoral Scholarships at the schools' respective prizegiving ceremonies held late last year. Congratulations to Shirley Ginns of Forest View High School and Daley O'Rourke of Putāruru College who were both awarded a \$10,000 scholarship, payable at \$2,500 per year for a maximum of four years, during their course of study.

"We received numerous applications this year from exceptional students of South Waikato families," said Mayor Shattock. "Every year I say the same thing - deciding which students to award these scholarships too is one of the toughest jobs I have to do as Mayor."

Applicants indicated interest in a range of degrees such as medicine, surveying, management, engineering, law, science, nursing and the arts. Students were shortlisted and interviewed by Mayor Shattock and a panel of selected professionals.

Shirley is studying towards a Bachelor of Applied Science - Forensic Analytical Science (Criminology) at Otago University.

Daley will be studying towards a Bachelor of Arts - double major - Te Reo Māori and Māori Indigenous Studies at Waikato University.

"If the calibre of these young people is anything to go by, we can all rest easy that our future is in extremely capable hands," concluded Mayor Shattock.

"It is always one of the best days at the office when we get to interview such fantastic young people," said Mayor Shattock. "The students all displayed such confidence, determination and ability."

And a bit more on the Mayoral Scholarships: Since the Mayoral Scholarship was established in 2006, over 200 applications have been received, and over 18 scholarships awarded. A testament to the dreams and aspirations of our community.



Pictured is a very happy Shirley (third from right) with whanau and friends. Unfortunately we were unable to obtain a photo of Daley before In Touch sign off.

Mayoral scholarships started in 2006

Over 200 applications

Over 18 scholarships awarded

Success for South Waikato wastewater consents

South Waikato District Council was recently granted four resource consents from Waikato Regional Council for the discharge of treated wastewater from our district's four wastewater treatment plants without any hearings or appeals

The four treatment plants serve the Tokoroa, Arapuni, Putāruru and Tirau communities. Resource consents have been issued for the maximum term of 35 years under the Resource Management Act 1991. This is an exceptional result, thanks to the robust partnership and collaboration, between South Waikato District Council and Raukawa Charitable Trust. A combined vision and approach was instrumental for the project outcomes achieved and the best possible solution for all parties involved.

Freshwater Management was first released 10 years ago, as the Government's first step in improving the way fresh water is managed. The concept of Te Mana o Te Wai, which refers to the vital importance of water, is now central to



freshwater management in New Zealand. It ensures the health and wellbeing of the water is protected first, then human health needs are provided for, before enabling other uses of water. Tokoroa and Arapuni treatment plants are within the Waikato River catchment, which is the subject of Waikato River Iwi Treaty Settlements and associated settlement legislation.

The importance of engaging early and thoroughly with Raukawa iwi, hapū and whānau via the Raukawa Charitable

Trust was a key objective of the project team. The aim was to work together, in the spirit of partnership, to explore a wide range of treatment and disposal options for all four treatment plants.

As well as positively impacting the Tokoroa, Arapuni, Putāruru and Tirau communities, this project represents another chapter in the decades-long relationship between Council, Harrison Grierson (HG) and Raukawa. It has been a professionally stimulating and ultimately rewarding experience

for all involved and we are delighted to have achieved the following key outcomes for Council:

- All four resource consents issued for the maximum term possible under the RMA (35 years).
- No hearings, no appeals.
- Robust, practical conditions including Matauranga Māori monitoring conditions.
- Staged investments underway to achieve significant nutrient reduction.

Tirau Domain project update

Downer continues to make progress on the Tirau Domain and Walkway project.

The site is still closed to the public but progress can be seen from the road.

The carpark has been constructed. This involved pouring the kerb and channel, building the pavement and laying a membrane seal with an asphalt surface on top – the icing on the cake. The team continued working on the limestone footpath and enabling works for the bridging components.

Prior to Christmas Downer teamed up with the Tirau Primary Year 6 students to do some planting of the area.



Water leaks explained

One of the main calls Council gets is reports of water leaks. We thought we'd explain a few things about water leaks.

How are houses supplied with water?

In most streets there are two pipes that deliver water to your house. The fire main (between 100mm to 375mm in diameter) on one side of the street and the rider main (between 25mm and 50mm) on the other side of the street. These are connected by a ring main. Water is fed to the toby* (a tap located outside your property) and then into your property.

** Some of the older housing stock, mostly in Tokoroa, have their toby under the house which Council can't access. If that is the case, then the team install a new toby at the property boundary to ensure leaks can be isolated for plumbers to repair within the property.*

What are the most common causes of leaks?

The most common type of water pipe leak is when the collars that join sections of pipe together corrode or become damaged. Once the technician is on site, these jobs can take anywhere between three to four hours to repair, depending

on the situation. For instance, if concrete needs to be removed to access the leak, repairs can take a little longer than if the leak is under grass and ground.

Leaks can also occur with the toby. The most common is when the gland nut on the toby needs replacing. This kind of job usually takes half an hour from when the technician gets on site.

Who's responsible for leaks?

Not all water leaks are Council's responsibility. Basically water pipes along the road up to, and including the toby are Council's responsibility to repair. Anything beyond the toby towards and on to the property is the property owners' responsibility.

What happens when a water leak is reported to Council?

Our Customer Service Officer will take the details and based on the information provided will log a Service Request for the Water Services team. Major leaks are allocated a one hour resolution time frame. Minor leaks are five working days.

The water technician will attend the job and make a further assessment. If the leak is Council's responsibility then

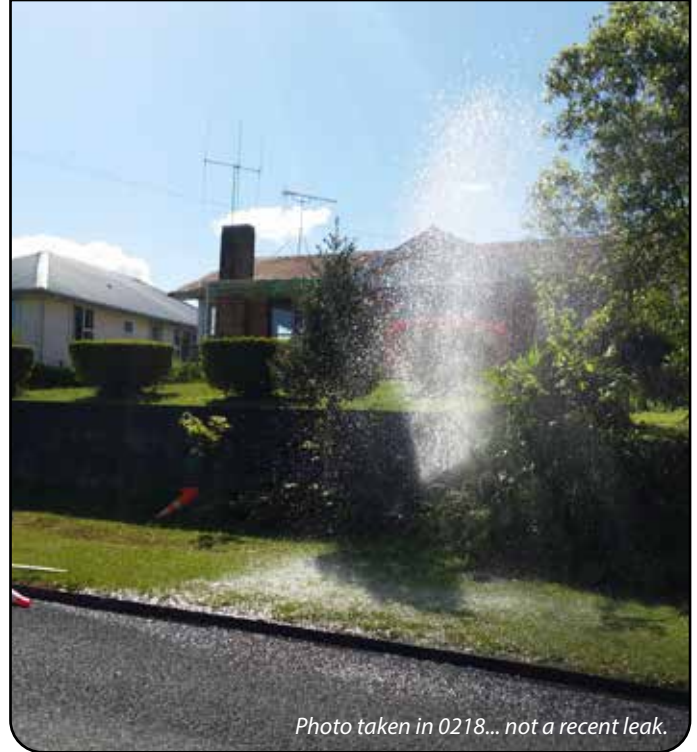


Photo taken in 0218... not a recent leak.

it is repaired. If the work site is easy to reinstate, then the team do that themselves, ie, small holes, bit of grass seed, small sections of concrete. If the work site is larger, the reinstatement is contracted out and there can be a delay.

If it is not Council's leak, ie if the leak is on the property side of the toby, then the team do one of two things:

- If the property owner or tenant is home, the technician will chat with them about the leak and request it be repaired. This is noted on the Service Request and a letter is sent to

the property owner as follow up.

- If the property owner or tenant is not home, the technician leaves a calling card advising there is a water leak on the property that is not Council's to repair. Again this is noted on the SR and a letter sent.

Most private leaks are repaired by property owners within a few days. Some take a little longer if the property owner does not live in the district or when there is disagreement over who should repair the leak.



TALKING ROAD SAFETY

Summer is the main season for road works on both the district highways and the local roads within the South Waikato District because dry weather is needed. Unfortunately it is also the time when people are more likely to be travelling on our roads.

Just a few tips:

- Check the Waka Kotahi website for any information on roadworks that may be on your route - look for the 'Traffic and Travel' button located in the middle of the home page.

- Local roadwork information is put on Council's Facebook page or Antenna.
- If you encounter roadworks on your journey, remain patient and calm. The roading crew is working to improve the road and make future driving safer and better.
- Pay attention to what is happening on the road. Read the signs and understand what is expected of you.
- Obey the signs in regard to speed and where your vehicle

should be on the road.

- When travelling through the worksite ensure you travel at the speed posted. Too fast can rip up new seal and send stone chips flying. Too slow and you may end up with the road sticking to your tyres!
- Allow extra distance between vehicles and watch for the brake lights of the vehicle in front of you.

- Give your full attention to driving through the worksite. Your speed may be slow, but it is not the time to send that text, change the song on the playlist or grab a snack off the backseat.
- Don't speed up before the 'Works End' sign.
- Remember that roadworkers like yourself at the end of the day want to go home safe and sound to their family.



Gambling Policy is open for consultation

Council has reviewed its Gambling Class 4 and TAB Venue Policy (Gambling Policy) and a draft is open for public consultation from Wednesday 2 February to Friday 4 March.

The review includes no major changes.

"Council's Gambling Policy already has a Sinking Lid regime and we are proposing to continue with this approach," said Lavinia Laaiva, Council's Environmental Health Technical Officer. "A Sinking Lid regime ensures that both numbers of venues and numbers of machines reduces over time.

"Since the last review in 2017 there has been a decrease of two venues and 18 machines in the district."

The relocation of venue clause and merger clauses remain unchanged.

The objectives of the Policy are to control the growth of gambling, minimise harm caused by gambling, limit the number of venues and machines, avoid concentrations of venues, enable people to participate in gambling practices should they wish and enable funding and grants for South Waikato groups and organisations.

As part of its review of this Policy, Council has conducted an independent Social Impact Assessment.

Want to make a submission?

Visit our website: www.southwaikato.govt.nz. Click on Community Engagement (under the search bar).



Life at RED



The country is at RED under the traffic light system (COVID-19 Protection Framework). This includes the South Waikato.

Life at RED is not lockdown. Council facilities are all open. The South Waikato Sport and Events Centre and the South Waikato Indoor Heated Pools are our only two vaccination passport facilities.

A reminder about the basic rules:

- Please wear a mask.
- Use your contact tracing app.
- Maintain one and two metre distancing depending on the situation (indoor, outdoor, size of space).
- Sanitise and/or wash your hands frequently.
- If you feel ill and/or display any COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home, get a test and isolate until you get the result back.

Two long term testing stations are available in the district:

- Tokoroa - Dreghorn Place carpark, Monday to Friday, 10am to 12 noon.
- Putaruru - Glenshea Park carpark, Monday to Friday, 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

Not yet vaccinated?

Vaccination centres are on our website: www.southwaikato.govt.nz. Click on COVID-19 (under the search bar on the home page).

**Unite
against
COVID-19**

Councillor column - Thomas Lee

Happy New Year everyone. Hopefully you've all had some holiday time with whanau and friends and that you are well rested and ready for a healthy and prosperous new year.

Most mornings I walk past the old Hutt Timber site and it is so heartening to see the new dairy factory starting to progress. There is still site preparation happening, but the tower crane base and the first section of the crane has gone up. The large assembly crane is being put together to help erect the tower. If you have time swing past for a look.

If you are thinking about applying for any of the upcoming vacancies at the dairy factory now is a good time to think about training to help you secure that opportunity.

The Oak trees along Bridge Street are now gone, and as much as we will miss their beauty and the shade they provide on those sunny days, it will be safer for the community, businesses and buildings within the CBD. The rest of the Oak trees will be also coming down in the near future.

The cemetery extension is complete and the road and footpaths linking Dumfries Road and Pellikan Place will be finished soon, including traffic calming measures. Our cemetery is quickly filling so the extension has arrived at the right time. Well done to everyone involved in the project.

I am looking forward to the Public Forums starting again under the traffic light system at Orange. If there is something you would like to talk to Councillors and staff about, this is the ideal opportunity. There is a maximum of six speakers with five minutes each to raise issues or ideas.

I hope you all got out to enjoy the Waitangi celebrations in the district.



The Plaza hopes everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Years!

Our February movie is THEN CAME YOU (2020): A lonely widow plans a trip around the world with her husband's ashes, to visit the places they loved in the movies. The first stop on the journey changes her life forever. SUNDAY, 27th February at 2pm

Our March movie is JOE BELL (2021): The story of an Oregonian father who pays tribute to his gay teenage son, Jadin, embarking on a self-reflective walk across America to speak to heartland citizens about the real and terrifying costs of bullying.



Looking for a venue to hire? The Putaruru Plaza has a range of space options that is available to hire for a variety of large and small events, concerts, conferences, performances, presentations, workshops, private functions, weddings, celebrations... pretty much any community or group venue hire.

KEEP AN EYE!

Potential KICKBOXING EVENT!
- Check out our website to stay up to date with upcoming events here at The Plaza.



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Facebook: [theplazaputaruru](https://www.facebook.com/theplazaputaruru)

IN brief

- Water restrictions are in place for Arapuni and Tirau (Level 1). Monitoring of water consumption will continue during February 2022.
- The roading reseals started in November, with a crew coming up from Higgins Taupo to complete six sites (one on Ngatira Road, two on Old Taupo South and three on Baird Road).
- The team is working through tree removal at several sites along rural roads, at the request of people in the community.
- The yearly UV service was completed at all water supply headworks along with six-monthly instrument calibrations.
- Construction has started on the Scotia Glen residential housing development. This is a 19-lot subdivision.
- Library staff have been busy supporting community members with getting vaccine passes - a whopping 2,066 passes through December last year.
- Staff have produced a map showing clean heat installs in Tokoroa for the last ten years to inform a targeted education campaign.

IN touch

You can keep up to date with Council information via:
www.southwaikato.govt.nz
[www.facebook/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SouthWaikatoDistrictCouncil)
Download Antenna FREE
info@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 - Hans Nelis

We leave a fast moving and turbulent year behind us, and Council and staff are ready for an exciting 2022. This New Year will see the appointment of a new CE, planning strategy discussions around the building of a new library and a much-needed mechanical upgrade of the South Waikato Indoor Heated Pools.

The Government is reframing the Resource Management Act and that will have an impact in our regulatory and planning space. As citizens we will be all affected by the new laws.

The drama around the Three Waters has only just started. We all wait with anticipation as to how this will unfold.

Nanaia Mahuta has also directed a reform of Local Government. I am much interested in which direction this will take us. We have a district with specific needs and identity, and I will defend our local self-determination and control of our own assets.

Don't get me wrong, a review process has a lot of good points. It will open areas that are perhaps overlooked, has deficiencies, excessive expenditure. However, on the flipside, it can highlight areas that need extra care, better governance, better scrutiny, reduce expenditure, etc. I am open for a debate on all these matters, which means staff and Councillors will spend copious time debating these topics.

This year there will be local government elections in October. The future for our district will be exciting, so come on for the ride and put your name forward as a Councillor for your Ward.

At the end, I wish our CE Ben Smit well in his new job. Under his visionary leadership, much has been delivered in our district.

Councillor column - Arama Ngapo

He rangi tā Matawhāiti, he rangi tā Matawhānui .

This Maori whakatauki says that we need to think big to achieve big things. Let's take this vision into 2022 and beyond and create a successful and thriving South Waikato this year.

I am grateful to have this platform to share my goals and aspirations for the coming year and the opportunity to reflect on the work we did in 2021. I continue to advocate for a safe community especially with COVID-19 impacts. I appreciate how our community came together in 2021 to support each other. A huge acknowledgement to SWIPICS, Raukawa Trust Board, SWYMCA and other organisations that are always willing to help.

Waitangi celebrations and the Festival of Cultures events are always fun and bring important parts of our history together in a positive way. We farewell Mr Ben Smit as CE and I wish him well in his new position. I look forward to public forums starting again at Orange under the traffic light system. Public forums give our community the opportunity to speak to Councillors and for Councillors it's an excellent source of information.

On a personal note, I want to thank the community and Council for their support recently. For those of you who knew my mother, Gaynor Ngapo she was a wonderful and supportive mother who along with my father, Lloyd Ngapo were proud to live in Tokoroa.



I am sure we will have challenges before us, but I am equally certain together we can overcome these.



Mayor Jenny Shattock

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