

envirocare

YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS UPDATE FROM ENVIRONMENT WAIKATO

INSIDE **THIS**
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2 GET SMART –
SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY

FUTURE FORECASTING

Who would have predicted 50 years ago that so many of our sleepy seaside settlements would grow into high-value holiday havens? Or even 10 years ago that large areas of pine forest would be converted to dairying?

Forecasting the environmental, economic and social impact of our actions has proved to be an inexact science but now Environment Waikato is leading a groundbreaking four-year project aimed at giving more certainty to exploring and planning our region's future.

Creating Futures – funded by a \$1.6 million grant from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology – involves developing sophisticated techniques to model alternative scenarios, including computer-based tools that create pictures, maps and data of what those imagined futures look like.

These tools take account of the complex interactions that exist between the economy, the environment and people's health and wellbeing and will help in regional planning projects such as Environment Waikato's Long-Term Council Community Plan, and

a variety of sub-regional growth and economic development plans.

The work has clear potential to help the Waikato – and eventually other regions – take a more considered path towards fulfilling outcomes the community wants. Strong population growth pressures, climate change, economic concerns and other key issues will be analysed to explore possible futures for the Waikato.

"Creating Futures is developing the tools for producing much more specific forecasts of what will happen under different scenarios so that our planners, policy developers and decision-makers have the clearest foresight possible," said Dr Beat Huser, the Environment Waikato scientist leading Creating Futures.

"Our models, for example, could help us determine more exactly how much Hamilton and other centres can grow before people's quality of life is significantly affected. We need to openly debate our future and, where necessary, make trade-offs and decisions about where to from here."

What do you want your Waikato to look like in 10 years' time? Tell us at www.yourwaikato.co.nz.
For more information about the Creating Futures project visit www.creatingfutures.org.nz.



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
www.ew.govt.nz

Environment
Waikato

REGIONAL COUNCIL

smartwateruse



Councils and farmers are keeping a close eye on the weather this summer, particularly with last year's drought still fresh in everyone's minds. To help our communities save water, Environment Waikato and 10 other councils in the region have teamed up to run the Smart Water Use campaign.

Water is a limited and precious resource, and every litre saved cuts treatment costs and reduces the amount of chemicals entering the environment. On these pages you can check out smart water use tips, read about what your local council is doing and clip vouchers for fantastic discounts on water-saving products.

TAUPO

Taupo is fortunate to have the great lake at its doorstep; however, this does not mean an unlimited water supply and attitudes need to change!

Over the next 10 years, council will carry out significant upgrades to water treatment plants around the district to comply with national drinking water standards. If residents can reduce their water usage in line with the national average, there will be significant cost savings, as well as environmental and sustainability benefits. 'Water costs' is a message that we will be running alongside the 'water is precious' campaign and workshops will be run with local garden centres, architects and schools to educate the community.



WAITOMO

Last year the prolonged dry spell saw a big surge in water usage in Waitomo. As residents looked to preserve their gardens over summer, the council water supply ran very low.

This summer, council has been encouraging the people of Waitomo district to actively conserve water, as long-term weather forecasts suggest the district could again experience a prolonged dry spell. By using the Smart Water Use tips in the Waitomo News and on the WDC website, local residents will make a big difference and may prevent the need for water restrictions if the forecast weather conditions eventuate.



HAMILTON

Last summer's dry conditions saw a total ban on domestic garden sprinklers in Hamilton - the first time in over 20 years such a measure was taken. To avoid the need for similar restrictions this summer Smart Water Use encourages residents to proactively conserve water now.

A new water alert system has been launched to replace the alternate day sprinkler ban used in previous years. Consisting of four alert levels and corresponding restrictions, the system is a more comprehensive water conservation approach.

Other initiatives include educational resources and a focus group, where households are fitted with water meters and provided with tool kits to help conserve water throughout summer.



WAIPA

In the Waipa district, we're looking to manage peak demand to ensure appropriate capacity for emergency situations, and generate an understanding that water conservation assists in protecting the environment and reducing the cost of treatment, and despite having resources such as Lake Karapiro, the water supply is not unlimited.

Waipa District Council holds regular dialogue with major water users to encourage lower consumption, plus we have a programme of continuous improvement in leak reduction and pipe replacement. Uncontrolled access to water supplies has been limited, and we are currently investigating further user pays options for peak summertime users. It's about ensuring everyone plays a role in taking care of this precious resource.



HAURAKI

The drought last summer created problems never experienced before. Low flows at the water intakes meant that production was limited. Drying out of the land in the plains created an increased number of water leaks which added more demand on our production. Water restrictions were in place from January to May. The Ohinemuri River reached its lowest level in 52 years.

Initiatives include lots of public notices using traditional information and the Smart Water Use campaign information. Council also has universal metering which helps consumers monitor their water use.

More information regarding water conservation can be found on our Smart Water Use page at www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz.



VOUCHER **20% off**



NYLEX SOAKER HOSE

This voucher entitles the bearer to 20 per cent off the normal retail price of the Nylex soaker hose, ideal for efficient watering of narrow garden beds, lawns and nature strips.

Terms and conditions: Available from Mitre 10, Mitre 10 Mega, Hammer Hardware and Palmers stores throughout the Waikato region. Original vouchers only (no photocopies). Offer expires 30 April 2009.

VOUCHER **20% off**



NYLEX ECO-SEEP HOSE

This voucher entitles the bearer to 20 per cent off the normal retail price of the Nylex eco-seep hose, a weeping watering system that releases water at the rate soil can absorb it.

Terms and conditions: Available from Mitre 10, Mitre 10 Mega, Hammer Hardware and Palmers stores throughout the Waikato region. Original vouchers only (no photocopies). Offer expires 30 April 2009.

VOUCHER **20% off**



NYLEX PREMIER ERGO TRIGGER GUN

This voucher entitles the bearer to 20 per cent off the normal retail price of the Nylex premier ergo trigger gun, which offers hard jet to fine mist spray selection.

Terms and conditions: Available from Mitre 10, Mitre 10 Mega, Hammer Hardware and Palmers stores throughout the Waikato region. Original vouchers only (no photocopies). Offer expires 30 April 2009.

smartwateruse at home

Indoors

- Plug the sink when washing vegetables, and turn the tap off when brushing your teeth or shaving. A running tap can waste 5-10 litres a minute.
- Do full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.
- Take shorter showers and shallower baths. Reducing your shower time from eight minutes to four will cut at least \$80 per year off your power bill - more than \$300 for a family of four.
- Install inexpensive flow restrictors on taps and showers - this can save the average household 1000 litres of water a week and save energy costs, too.
- If you have a leaky toilet or dripping tap, fix it straight away. A regular drip could waste 100 litres of water a week - and if it's a hot water tap, this will add \$50 to \$60 a year to your power bill.

Outdoors

- Use a broom to clean paths and driveways. Hosing them down for 10 minutes can use as much as 200 litres.
- When washing the car, use a bucket. If you can, wash the car on a lawn to soak up the run-off water.
- Go for smart water use in the garden - use a trigger gun on the garden hose to shut off water when you don't need it. A hose left running can waste up to 15 litres a minute. Also, water the garden in the evening or early morning to reduce evaporation.
- Use lots of mulch on the garden. It can reduce evaporation by as much as 70 per cent.
- Check taps, pipes and connections regularly for possible leaks.

For farmers

- Farmers adversely affected by dry weather conditions can turn to a number of support agencies for advice, such as the Rural Support Trust, DairyNZ and Federated Farmers.

MATAMATA-PIAKO

During last year's drought the water levels in the Morrinsville supply dam were the lowest ever recorded, and a total hose and sprinkler ban was imposed. Graphs showing the water levels dropping were displayed in the Morrinsville Public Library to illustrate just how bad the situation was. Sprinkler restrictions were also set in Matamata and Te Aroha.

Matamata-Piako District Council is taking a proactive approach to encourage residents to conserve water now, before it's too late. Water watch signs have been put up in Morrinsville to show the current water situation, and articles, adverts and water saving tips remind residents to be smart about their water use. Hosing and sprinkler bans may once again be actioned if water levels drop too far.



THAMES-COROMANDEL

As most people probably know, the Coromandel Peninsula is a really popular holiday spot. Nowhere in New Zealand do the population numbers rise as dramatically as here in summer - from a usual population of 26,000 to 137,000 at Christmas and New Year's Eve!

Despite the huge increase in numbers there are still the same limits on water supply. Our ratepayers have told us there's a limit to the amount of money they can afford to build storage and upgrade the nine water treatment plants needed to service the peninsula's townships. We're hoping holidaymakers will get into the spirit of water conservation to save money, help the environment and have fun in the process. Save water, shower with a friend!



OTOROHANGA

Otorohanga District Council is pleased to be part of the "Smart Water Use" initiative and both the Otorohanga and Kawhia community boards are supporting promotion and education efforts to encourage water conservation.

Last summer's drought conditions left Otorohanga district's source water at extremely low levels and showed how vulnerable we can be. Water restrictions were imposed in both communities.

Over the Christmas period the population of Kawhia increases significantly, putting pressure on the water supply. For several years we've had a large water situation indicator sign at the township's entrance.

The board is now looking into initiatives such as peak season metered water charges and freshwater boat wash facilities to help conserve water.



SOUTH WAIKATO

Last year drought conditions in the South Waikato left some of our reservoirs at critically low levels. This had an effect on some household pressure. In our smallest community of Arapuni, we enforced water restrictions for a week.

Since the drought, the South Waikato District Council has constructed a new bore in the Putaruru township to secure supply and will soon be building a new reservoir for Arapuni residents. Council's 10-year plan includes continued improvements to our water supply system. Encouraging smart water use is an important step towards preserving our current supplies. There are a wide range of initiatives residents can use in their homes to reduce their water usage; and an added bonus is that reducing water use often brings significant cost savings. Reducing our water usage ties in well with our sustainability principles.



WAIKATO

When the hot weather arrives, the fact is that people use more water.

Water shortages were definitely an issue during last year's drought, and we had to put in place a number of hosing and garden watering bans. People in general responded well to these, but our message this year is that with careful use of water throughout the summer, these should not be necessary.

This year we are working with communities to look at specific water saving techniques. For example, we're exploring how to save water at the seaside with the Raglan community. We are also promoting Smart Water Use in our district offices and in collaboration with our local newspapers.



VOUCHER

20% off



NYLEX PREMIER AQUA PRACTICAL WATER TIMER

This voucher entitles the bearer to 20 per cent off the normal retail price of the Nylex premier aqua practical water timer, which reduces water consumption with targeted watering intervals.

Terms and conditions: Available from Mitre 10, Mitre 10 Mega, Hammer Hardware and Palmers stores throughout the Waikato region. Original vouchers only (no photocopies). Offer expires 30 April 2009.

VOUCHER

20% off



NYLEX MICROSPRAY IRRIGATION STARTER KIT

This voucher entitles the bearer to 20 per cent off the normal retail price of the Nylex microspray irrigation starter kit, an easy and efficient way to irrigate a garden.

Terms and conditions: Available from Mitre 10, Mitre 10 Mega, Hammer Hardware and Palmers stores throughout the Waikato region. Original vouchers only (no photocopies). Offer expires 30 April 2009.

Thanks to the following businesses for offering these great discounts to our readers:



smartwateruse™

HAVING YOUR SAY A CLICK AWAY

Having your say is just a click away when it comes to contributing your views on the development of Environment Waikato's Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

The LTCCP is the 10-year strategic plan describing the activities Environment Waikato will fund and provide to achieve the goals the community considers important for its wellbeing.

To help develop the plan, we want to hear what residents' priorities are for our environment, economy, and cultural and social wellbeing.

All you have to do is go to www.yourwaikato.co.nz, where you'll be asked to create a Google account and then you're away.

The forum's establishment follows a survey of approximately 600 Waikato residents late last year. The survey showed people's top five priorities for the region were protecting waterways, road safety, emergency management, safeguarding the productivity of land and soil, and controlling pests.

Environment Waikato's council will adopt the draft plan on 12 March 2009, with a month-long formal consultation period starting on 20 March 2009. Hearings are scheduled to start 11 May 2009, with deliberations and the final plan due to be adopted in June 2009.

Keep an eye out for a special publication, Your Waikato, delivered next month to your letterbox.

Your Waikato will detail the key issues affecting our region and Environment Waikato's proposals for funding and providing services that you've told us are important for the community's wellbeing. Your Waikato will include a feedback form inviting you to indicate your preferred options for the levels of service and associated funding across Environment Waikato's groups of activities - Community Partnerships, Safe and Resilient Communities, Regional Development and Environmental Management.

WATER EVENTS

To help you avoid congested areas and stay safe on the water this summer, you can find information about big events happening on our region's popular lakes, rivers and harbours on our website, www.ew.govt.nz/navevents. Zone closure information for Lake Karapiro is included.

LAKE TAUPO PROGRESS

The Lake Taupo Protection Trust has been making solid progress on buying land so that it can be turned to uses that leach less nitrogen to the lake. In an update on a week's activity just before Christmas, the trust reported the purchase of a further three farms, making a total of five properties that had been bought which were contributing around 15 tonnes of nitrogen a year to the lake.

PEST STRATEGY

The council's new five-year plan for controlling pest plants and animals in the region is now available. There are new rules for troublesome weeds like privet and a greater emphasis on protecting native birds by controlling predators like rats and possums. See www.ew.govt.nz.

MORE DIRECT BUSES

Two new bus services - between the CBD and Silverdale, and the CBD and Te Rapa - have started in Hamilton this month. The Silverdale Direct (limited stops only) covers Hamilton East, Hillcrest and Silverdale, while the City Express service travels to Te Rapa and the Base. More details: www.busit.co.nz or 0800 4 BUSLINE.

SMOKE CAN CHOKE

Environment Waikato is urging people to be considerate when lighting outdoor fires this summer as smoke can quickly become a major nuisance, especially when people are outdoors enjoying the good weather. Under EW rules, fires are allowed in the open, but they must not create a nuisance or contravene any bans introduced on fires, and materials such as tyres, treated timber, PVC or plastic wire coating cannot be burned in the open. More advice on 0800 800 401 or www.ew.govt.nz.

EARTH HOUR

Environment Waikato and other regional partners are supporting the global Earth Hour power-saving event on 28 March 2009, which aims to raise awareness about the small changes we can make to live more sustainably. In Hamilton, Earth Hour will be between 8.30pm and 9.30pm, and will coincide with the Balloons Over Waikato Night Glow event at The University of Waikato. See www.earthhour.org.

DAIRY CONVERSIONS

Environment Waikato is offering advice to the significant number of Waikato farmers planning to convert their properties to dairy farming. The advice will be aimed at helping minimise the environmental impacts of the conversions. Contact Colin Ferguson on 0800 800 401.

WAIKATO-TAINUI

Under the Waikato River deal between the Crown and Waikato-Tainui, a Statutory Board Establishment Committee is considering what statutory powers may be exercised by a iwi-local government statutory board or the tribe's Waikato Raupatu River Trust. The committee is due to report to the Government by 1 March. The report will be publicly available. More information about the committee's work can be directed to its secretariat manager Tuti Cooper at tuti.cooper@river.org.nz.

PEST CONTROL

Environment Waikato is working closely with other regional councils to improve the national biosecurity and pest management system. Go to www.ew.govt.nz/projects/futurepests to see the regional councils' report on the Future of Pest Management and to learn about the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's plans for a public consultation in this issue in autumn 2009.

LIFE JACKETS TO BE COMPULSORY

From 1 July 2009, it is proposed all boat users in the Waikato region will have to wear lifejackets in vessels less than six metres, unless the boat skipper determines it is not necessary.

This change is being proposed by Maritime New Zealand as a change to Part 91 of the Maritime Rules, with which our bylaw must be consistent.

It would put more positive pressure on the wearing of flotation devices in small vessels.

Under the current navigation safety bylaw, it is only necessary to wear a lifejacket in situations of heightened risk, for example when crossing a bar or in adverse weather.

A number of other changes to the bylaw have been proposed, many resulting from a series of public meetings. Feedback from the meetings has been incorporated into a draft bylaw, which will be available for public comment until 27 February 2009. Copies are available at www.ew.govt.nz/navbylaw or by calling Shelley Monrad on 0800 800 401.

The proposed changes to the current bylaw include:

- a kayaking visibility guideline
- naming of vessels
- having an appropriate means of communication on board the craft
- emergency contact details on smaller vessels.

COUNCILLORS' CONTACTS

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