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Waikato



REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

waikatoregion.govt.nz

0800 800 401

# YOUR WAIKATO

YOUR REGIONAL NEWS UPDATE FROM WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL



Coastal scientist Hannah Jones testing water quality in the Raglan estuary.

## Testing the waters *He whakamātau wai*

A year-long project which will give Waikato Regional Council a snapshot of coastal water quality has just begun on the region's west and east coasts and will ramp up over summer.

Water samples are being collected from 21 coastal and estuarine locations across the region until the end of September 2016.

The samples will be collected weekly until the end of February, and then monthly at a reduced number of locations until the project's end. To help with the work, our coastal science team is being bolstered through the council's student holiday employment programme.

"Our coastal and estuarine environments are highly valued for their recreation, food gathering, conservation and commercial opportunities," says coastal scientist, Dr Hilke Giles.

"That's why it's important that we understand the quality of the water in these popular environments so we can make good decisions on managing our coastal and marine area."

Dr Giles says the dynamic coastal environment means the water quality can vary greatly over short periods of time. Water quality also changes between seasons and is affected by events such as heavy rainfall or storms.

"For these reasons, it's important we consider the entire year's results when assessing the water quality at a particular location, rather than draw conclusions based on individual samples," says Dr Giles.

The water quality samples will be analysed to obtain data on the concentrations of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus),

suspended sediment, algae (phytoplankton) and bacteria (*E. coli*, enterococci and faecal coliforms). We will then examine what the overall water quality was at the time of sampling and to what extent water quality differs among estuaries throughout the year.

This will provide a snapshot of water quality to inform our review of the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan, which is also kicking off.

The sampling results will be publicly available by late 2016 once our council's coastal science team has quality assured, interpreted and presented the data in a way that is meaningful for our communities.

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# Top tips to make kids road safe

## Ko tā 'Rūpene te Pea' kia haumaru ai ō tamariki

The holiday season is a great time to teach preschoolers and primary children how to be safe around roads – and Ruben the Road Safety Bear has some top tips for kids to help you!

Ruben is the mascot for our council's young road user safety programme and each year teaches more than 23,000 children aged up to about seven years old about road safety.

His website – [www.ruben.govt.nz](http://www.ruben.govt.nz) – has lots of great messages for kids and information to help parents and caregivers.

"We strongly encourage parents to role model safe road behaviour when out and about with their children," says transport project administrator, Jenny Davis.

"If a pedestrian crossing or traffic lights are nearby, use them instead of dodging traffic to cross a road. And when you get into the car, make sure it's not just your children who are buckled in tight."

1. When preparing your children to walk to school, walk the route they'll use with them.
2. Take time to crouch down to their height to see if they can see and be seen clearly.
3. Talk with them about hazards along the way, such as "sneaky driveways", bus stops and rail crossings.
4. Walk along the safest route and cross any roads at the safest place. It will help reinforce the safest route if you and your child are able to walk the route both to and from school several times before they take the trip alone.

**"Never sacrifice safety for convenience."**

- Jenny Davis, Waikato Regional Council

[www.ruben.govt.nz](http://www.ruben.govt.nz)



### Check out Ruben's new stuff

Ruben the Road Safety Bear has a new website at [www.ruben.govt.nz](http://www.ruben.govt.nz) – and it looks good no matter what device you're using.

There are lots of new activities and some of the old favourites too. There is content for children and adults plus the opportunity for children under 7 years old to join Ruben's Kids Club.

Ruben also has Apple and Android smartphone applications to download for free with games, and colouring and interactive storybooks.

## Waikato's walking adventures Ngā ara whīkoi ā-whenua o Waikato

The longer days of summer bring the opportunity for some fantastic walking adventures in our region.

There's ample walks that are easy and fun for the family and include the opportunity to enjoy some of New Zealand's stunning native flora and fauna, including stands of kauri. Here's a just a few.

**Pukemokemoke** is a beautiful 40ha bush reserve 20 minutes north of Hamilton on Whitiakahu Road and there are options galore. There are nine sites of interest along the 90 minute circuit, including a kauri grove and stunning views of the region from the track's summit. There's also easy access from the carpark to a clearing ideal for picnics, and the opportunity to explore other tracks.

**Waiorongomai Valley** in Te Aroha offers numerous walking trails of differing lengths that take in key historic gold mining sites. The low level loop is a delightful two hour walk which is suitable for older kids and takes in key sites in the lower goldfields. The kauri grove route is a more challenging track featuring regenerating kauri forest and access to the old Bendigo Battery site.

The **Waiomu Valley** will take you through a diverse

forest featuring some mining remnants. You will also find what are arguably the Coromandel Peninsula's best remaining stands of kauri, the girth of the largest measuring more than 7 metres! On the 2.5 hour return trip you'll have to cross shallow fords and creeks – or use the swing bridges to avoid getting your feet wet.

### Home to the mighty kauri Kia mauriora te kauri

A number of our native forest tracks are home to kauri, but they're at risk of attack from a disease known as kauri dieback.

The disease is passed on in soil and is incurable, so it's really important we work together to protect the old trees and prevent the disease from spreading.

You can help by cleaning soil completely from shoes and other gear you take in and out of bush areas, and ensuring you don't stand on the roots of kauri trees.

[kauridieback.co.nz](http://kauridieback.co.nz)



## Graham's Creek works begin Ko te ārai i ngā waipuke i Tairua

If you're travelling out of Tairua over the summer holidays, you might notice earthworks in the area of the floodplain. It's part of our council's floodway improvement works which kicked off in October.

Our first job was to put in bunds, sediment traps and retention ponds to protect aquatic animals and plants downstream in the wetland and harbour, particularly when it rains.

We then moved straight into digging the new channels and enlarging the old ones, as well as building the new stopbank and recontouring the floodway. We plan to have this work completed by Christmas. Works will then stop for about six weeks – so there's no disruption for holidaymakers – and will resume in February.

The flood mitigation and restoration works are due to be completed in June 2016.

### The community will benefit from:

- protection against annual to 50-year flood events
- less flood damage and disruption to infrastructure
- continued two-lane traffic access to Paku Bay during flood events
- improved access to the coastal area from Manaia Road
- riparian planting and fencing, which will help improve water quality and provide an ecological corridor for fish and birds
- the ability to extend the new stopbank in the future, if needed.



Newly dug channel at Graham's Creek.

### People part of the solution Ko ngāi tātou te rongōā

Recent community and stakeholder feedback is helping the group that is due to recommend solutions to help restore and protect the Waikato and Waipā rivers.

As part of the Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/ Wai Ora: He Rautaki Whakapaipai project, over 1000 people provided feedback at six workshops and in an online survey in October and November.

The project's Collaborative Stakeholder Group, representing the community and a range of sectors, asked for feedback on a staged approach to improving water quality in the rivers and their catchments over 80 years, and on their thinking on how to do this.

The Vision and Strategy for the rivers requires them, and their tributaries, to be swimmable and safe for food collection.

[waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyrivers](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyrivers)

# Buses roll into Hamilton's north

## Ka tae ngā pahi ki te raki o Kirikiriroa

A timetable has been finalised for interim bus services covering Hamilton's Flagstaff North and Rototuna North areas from mid-January 2016.

Waikato Regional Council has been looking at how to accommodate a rollout of interim services to these suburbs in response to a large number of requests from residents in these growth areas of Hamilton.

"We signalled new services would begin in 2018, but we recognised more needed to be done sooner, so we've been working hard on interim options for residents," says public transport operations manager, Andrew Wilson.

A new trial bus service – 4N Flagstaff North – begins on Monday, 18 January, travelling from Woodridge, via Cumberland and Thomas Road to Westfield Chartwell. A bus will also travel through to Sacred Heart Girls' College, via St Paul's College, Southwell School, Peachgrove Intermediate and Hamilton Boys' High School during school times.

The RDW Rototuna Direct West service will also change in January, with the route being extended to Moonlight Drive and Borman Road.

Both of these bus services will operate in the morning and afternoon peaks, Monday to Friday only.

More comprehensive bus services will roll out to the northern suburbs in early 2018. These services were confirmed through the 2015-2025 Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan and will operate seven days a week and around every half an hour.



[www.busit.co.nz](http://www.busit.co.nz)



## Getting fresh ideas on water

### He kohinga whakaaro mō te wai

Water is our most precious resource and throughout the world is increasingly threatened by pollution and over-allocation.

In the Waikato, our fresh water is nearing its allocable limits and its quality is being impacted by such things as land use, discharges of various types and a changing climate.

This summer an El Niño weather pattern is predicted to deliver drought conditions to parts of our region, and the demands on water are expected to grow.

It's clear more needs to be done, so we've kicked off a project looking at ways to ensure water in the Waikato region is managed sustainably, equitably and profitably over the next 30 to 50 years.

"Drought conditions like those expected this summer place a huge demand on our waterways," says project manager, Blair Dickie. "So we're taking a close look at how to increase the amount of water available during times of

low flow and discourage the taking of water during times of scarcity.

"As well as considering policy changes, we'll be considering how to incentivise people to use water in a more efficient way," he says.

"We're already talking to stakeholders, but it's really important to us that our communities are involved. We'll be releasing a draft discussion document in February next year and will be seeking feedback from the public on it."

Among other things, Mr Dickie says the Waikato Regional Freshwater Strategy will:

- help to develop a future framework for the most efficient allocation of water
- identify gaps in the knowledge required to successfully manage freshwater for the region
- identify possible legislation changes, data collection and management, and technology options for the most efficient management of water.



[waikatoregion.govt.nz/freshwater-discussion](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/freshwater-discussion)



*Congratulations*  
Ngā mihi matakuikui

to Mr and Mrs Gilbert  
of Hamilton.

They won \$500 after  
signing up to pay  
their rates by direct debit.

Visit our website  
to sign up too.



[waikatoregion.govt.nz/payrates](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/payrates)

#### From page 1: Testing the waters

##### He whakamātau wai

It's important our region's environmental resources are protected for people now and into the future.

To do this, we have a Waikato Regional Plan and Waikato Coastal Plan, which set out objectives, policies and implementation methods, including rules.

A project is now underway to review these plans. We're not starting from scratch. We'll be looking at the two plans we already have, and considering scientific and other data, as well as feedback we've received over the

years on ways the plans could be improved.

It's a big job, so the work is being staged. Ultimately, the two plans will be combined to be replaced by one: the Waikato Regional Plan.

The findings of the year-long coastal water quality sampling project are really important in the review of the regional coastal plan. They'll be used to help develop coastal water quality standards and support the development of policies on managing the coastal and marine area.



[waikatoregion.govt.nz/planreview](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/planreview)

*Merry Christmas*  
Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete

From the staff at Waikato Regional Council, we'd like to wish you a happy and safe festive season.

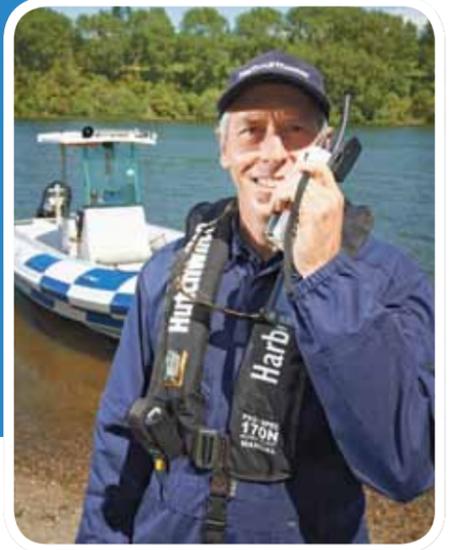
All our offices will be closed from 3pm on Thursday, 24 December 2015 and will reopen at 8am on Tuesday, 5 January 2016.

While our offices are closed, you can call our freephone 0800 800 401 any time to:

- report air or water pollution
- report unsafe water activities in or on a river, lake or harbour
- make a general enquiry or information request.

# Enjoying our region's waterways safely

Kia haumarū ngā korikoringa i ō tātou wai



A bolstered maritime services team will be working every day through the summer holiday season to keep our region's waterways safe. Find out what you can do.

## Lifejackets for life

### Ngā tiakete-rauora

Growing numbers of people own an inflatable lifejacket. But did you know they require regular servicing to ensure they'll do their job in an emergency?

If you answered no, you're not alone.

In fact, research we carried out with support from Water Safety NZ in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taupō and Canterbury last summer found that 60 per cent of skippers were unaware of the servicing requirements for inflatable lifejackets.

In addition, some skippers and passengers struggled with how to put an inflatable on. This, and the lack of knowledge of how to use it in an emergency situation, was also highlighted in the research.

So, what should you do to ensure your lifejacket inflates when it's needed?

Inflatable lifejackets should be regularly checked before wearing, and self-serviced annually.

Before you head out onto the water, always check the canister is well screwed in and isn't pierced, and look for visible signs of fraying on the jacket.



[waikatoregion.govt.nz/lifejacket](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/lifejacket)

## Waterproof radio saves lives

### Ko te rērio pūrewa te kaiwhakaora

In January, a trio clung to their capsized boat on the Kawhia Bar for two hours, waiting to be rescued.

They had done everything right beforehand – the 14-year-old boy and two men in their 30s were wearing lifejackets and they'd logged a crossing report with Coastguard.

But they were only able to raise the alarm after a floating handheld VHF radio popped up from under the boat.

Bar crossings are a high risk activity for even the most experienced boatie. To help you, Waikato Regional Council paired up with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to produce five bar crossing films with advice from our harbourmasters on how to do it safely.

[waikatoregion.govt.nz/barcrossing](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/barcrossing)

## Strapped for safety

### Me here ki tō papa-hoetū



Stand up paddle boarding is a fast-growing sport and a fun way to get fit and enjoy the region's magnificent waterways.

To keep safe, our harbourmasters strongly recommend wearing a leash at the knee while on your board. If you're on a river, a quick release leash is a must to minimise the risk of getting trapped by a rock or branch.

Stand up paddle boarders will travel long distances, often alone and well off-shore. We know from the Marine Rescue Centre of a number of instances where paddle boarders have had to be rescued from the water by boaties. We've also heard from other boat users of instances when they've rescued stand up paddle boarders.

So, for your safety, you must wear a lifejacket at all times while on a stand up paddle board, unless you're in surf.

It's also important you carry a cellphone or radio in a waterproof bag so you can call for help if you need it.

[waikatoregion.govt.nz/sup](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/sup)

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