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Sunset Beach lifeguards Sam Dwen (left) and Shane Edwards (right), gold medal winners at the North Island IRB Championship 2013.
Photo source: Glennys Smith.

Summer & surf go hand in hand

Every year when summer comes around, hundreds of people flock to Waikato beaches to swim, surf or boogie board under the watchful eyes of surf lifesavers.

At Sunset Beach in Port Waikato, the Trust Waikato Sunset Beach Lifeguard Service is hard at work.

With record crowds and huge numbers in the water, Sunset Beach lifeguards are kept on their toes, as people come from all over to enjoy this west coast beach.

"On New Year's day there were up to two thousand people on the beach and in the water, Club President, Malcolm Beattie said.

"Dealing with so many people in the ocean at one time really stretched our volunteer lifeguards' experience. But it's up to us to ensure the public's safety and it's a responsibility we don't take lightly."

Over 1000 ocean rescues have been carried out at Sunset Beach since the lifeguard service began in 1953.

"The most recent large-scale rescue was of 10 fishermen off the rocks at Morgan's Point during Easter weekend last year. The rescue required a large patrol of 14 lifeguards and took four hours from the first observation of the fishermen to the completion of the mission.

"Had it not been a patrol day, the outcome could have been very different with potentially 10 people drowning," Mr Beattie said.

The great skills demonstrated by Sunset Beach lifeguards during that mass rescue have been recognised and the rescue was named the 2013 BP Surf Rescue of the Year.

As a volunteer organisation, Sunset Beach lifeguards play a big part in the community from Labour Weekend to Easter each year.

With a strong focus on youth training, their Junior Guard Program has proved extremely popular among 7 – 13 year olds, who want to do their bit to make their beach safe.

"Parents and families also have an opportunity to get involved by becoming an Associate or Family member of the club and assisting with our beach safety education programs.

"We operate on very lean funding so we always need support with resources and equipment to ensure we provide the very best lifeguard service that we can," Mr Beattie said.

The club's membership is currently 55 per cent female, with most of the volunteer lifeguards coming from Pukekohe and Auckland.

"It would be great to see more interest from our fellow Waikato district residents. Get in contact; we would love to hear from you!"

www.sunsetbeach.org.nz ■

Mayor's message

Welcome to a new, and for Council, another very busy year as we enter the third year of the current Long Term Plan (LTP).

A series of Councillor workshops early in February have been an important part of the LTP process. This is where your Councillors review how plans are tracking against predictions, discuss projects, prioritise budgets and refine our strategic direction and the work of the 2014-2015 year. Council staff then prepare a Draft Annual Plan outlining proposed directions to be put to consultation in the April – May period.

Just as we are keen for greater input from community boards and committees, we are also keen to hear your views on your community's development.

Whether it's about future growth and development in Ngaruawahia or Tuakau in those towns' upcoming Structure Plans, or district-wide issues such as our response to the Psychoactive Substances Act 2013 which allows for the sale of legal highs*, we want to hear your views.

Consultation and public submission processes are part of your voice and are important to us.

“It's your voice that helps us develop and position the Waikato district's capacity as a key national economic player.”



Operationally recent staff appointments provide further expertise, while continuing to build our capacity to meet the district's growth.

I am supportive of that and of a Council that is in good heart. Despite the attractions of the summer weather, I am looking forward to being back in harness.

Allan Sanson
Mayor
mayor@waidc.govt.nz

*Submissions on Waikato district's Draft Psychoactive Substances (Legal Highs) Policy 2014 closed prior to printing of this publication.

Co-management creates partnership framework



On March 21, as part of the Turangawaewae Regatta, Waikato District Council and Waikato-Tainui will acknowledge the fourth anniversary of the Joint Management Agreement signing.

With an overarching function of guiding the restoration and protection of Waikato River's future health and wellbeing, the partnership encouraged Council and Waikato-Tainui to enter a new era of co-management.

“A positive step towards opening the lines of communication between Council and iwi.”

That's what Waikato District Council's Iwi and Community Partnerships Manager, Marae Tukere believes is a key outcome from the signing of the Joint Management Agreement.

“The Joint Management Agreement Schedules include a list of actions which both parties agreed to implement and when the agreement was signed, we made a commitment to meet these objectives.

“As a result, Council staff are more aware of the need to work closely with Waikato-Tainui particularly if their project could have an impact on the health and well-being of the river.

“That commitment also drives us to monitor closely the valuable mahi taking place in the community to protect and restore the health of our river, whether supported by or driven by Council, to ensure it's on track and meets our obligations under the JMA.”

Although the partnership is in the early stages, Marae says it has not only enhanced communication between the two parties in respect of Waikato River activity, it is also guiding engagement strategies in other areas of the business.

“This partnership is an example of how Council and iwi should be working together and is having a flow on effect across the organisation.” ■

SPOTLIGHT ON COUNCIL



Our Environmental Health team is responsible for inspecting or auditing food premises in the district.



Our Environmental Health team is on the case

Dealing with food and noise complaints, reports of vermin, and carrying out site visits are all in a day's work for our Environmental Health team at Council.

The team includes four Environmental Health Officers, an Environmental Technical Specialist and a Team Leader whose duty it is to ensure businesses and the public in the Waikato district comply with legislative requirements.

This legislation includes the Food Act, Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act, National Environmental Standard for assessment and management of contaminated soil, Health Act and Resource Management Act.

The team is required to carry out regular inspections or audits on businesses such as food premises, alcohol outlets, camping grounds and hair salons and respond to complaints around noise, vermin and odour, as well as interviewing those applying for manager's certificates for licensed premises.

Environmental Health Officers also work with the police and property owners when a P lab has been discovered, issuing a Cleansing Notice if the premises have found to be contaminated.

Environmental Health Officer Cindy Norris says her role requires her to spend about a third of her time out of the office, an aspect which she enjoys.

"I enjoy getting out and building a rapport with the people I work with, whether it is a chef or someone who's had a complaint made about something on their property."

Cindy says she finds a lot of satisfaction when a solution can be found to a problem, and believes compromise is often the answer.

"It's much easier to work with people when you can get them on board and most people actually want to do things legally. Much of our role is regulatory, however there's also an educational component to the job which I like and often problems can be pre-empted with a bit of education."

After eight years with Council, Cindy has seen her fair share of interesting sights, but says one moment stands out for her.

"We had received a complaint about fleas in a motel so I went to check it out. Fleas are attracted to carbon dioxide, warmth and vibration so I can remember wearing the white protective suit, with only my face visible and literally stomping around the room trying to attract them – I can only imagine how I must have looked."

Despite her efforts Cindy says the fleas never showed! ■

- **Our Environmental Health Officers have around 270 food premises to inspect or audit**
- **These range from dairies, takeaways, cafes, restaurants, market stalls, mobile shops and some work canteens, through to manufacturing businesses**
- **Most food premises receive two inspections per year**
- **Lower risk type businesses (eg premises that only sell pre-packaged foods) have one inspection per year**
- **Over 400 alcohol licensing applications for licences and manager's certificates are processed annually**



Fire Season reminder

Waikato district is in a restricted fire season which means permits are required for fires in the open air in rural areas. With the current dry weather property owners are urged to ensure sections, especially vacant properties, are maintained to reduce potential fire hazards. Long grass and rubbish pose a potential fire hazard. Visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Services/Rural-fires.aspx for more information.



Have input into Tuakau's future

We're interested in your feedback on our new concept plan for Tuakau. This plan was put together following last year's community workshop with residents, iwi and key stakeholders. During March, you have an opportunity to comment on the concept plan which will be used in preparing the draft Tuakau Structure Plan. The structure plan will outline land uses, key infrastructure, transport links and provide a thirty year planning framework for the future growth of Tuakau.



WANT TO KNOW which areas in the Waikato district come under which ward?

We can show you. Simply visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Your-Council/Waikato-district-ward-maps.aspx to access our Waikato district ward maps which give a breakdown of exactly what each ward is made up of and where the boundaries lie.

Wanted - your feedback on proposed amendments to the Waikato District Council Speed Limit Bylaw 2011.

Plans showing the proposed changes to existing speed limits, along with a submission form, are available on our website but you'll need to be quick with your feedback as the 20-working day public consultation period closes on 21 March. Feedback is only required on the proposed areas indicated on the index page and supporting maps. All submissions will be presented at April's Policy and Regulatory committee hearing.

Our next edition of Link will be published in June. Got a question you'd like answered or information to share with the community, email communications@waiddc.govt.nz



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