

LINK

WAIKATO DISTRICT NEWS

February – March 2016

Waikato
Downer
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera o Te Kaitiaki o Waikato

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Samuel Hape, Anaru Henry and Sione Tupa of the Waikato District Alliance.

Council partners with Downer on roads

Waikato District Council and Downer New Zealand have formed a roading alliance to create greater benefits for Waikato residents and ratepayers.

Whether you are making a service request to repair a pothole or you drive to and from work, projects completed by the Waikato District Alliance form part of your everyday life.

Alliance Manager Doug Carrasco says the partnership between Council and Downer began in July 2015 and put simply, is a sharing of the best resources, systems, process, procedures and policies from the two organisations, which are now one and the same.

Since the Alliance was formed, residents have seen quicker resolutions to their service requests, which range from requesting a pothole repair to maintaining and renewing signs, streetlights and traffic signals on the network.

With an extensive roading network to maintain and significant population growth in the Waikato district, Council soon realised an alliance would help with

cost consistency, flexibility and efficiency in maintaining and building roads.

Work through the Alliance to better coordinate projects and the mutual sharing of resources and knowledge has meant the district is already starting to see a range of benefits. The joint venture came about soon after a section of the former State Highway was transferred to Council management following the opening of the Waikato Expressway. There was also a need to complete work on Waikato's roads more efficiently and effectively.

Senior executives from both Council and Downer provide governance and strategy through a board of six. The Alliance is made up of technical and field staff from both Council and Downer.

The Alliance provides value for money and keeps the community front and centre. "Our existence is for the community," Doug says.

The Alliance's focus is on ensuring a quality, well maintained roading network to users at an affordable price.

Waikato District Council, and in turn the Alliance, looks after more than 2,400km of roads – the third largest network and one of the biggest rural roading networks in the country.

From fence post to fence post is what the Alliance cares for when it comes to our roads. This includes everything from routine road maintenance and assessment through to the construction of new roads and drainage.

In the Waikato district we have:

- 2,422km of roads
- 1,816km of sealed roads
- 606km of unsealed roads
- 200km of footpaths.

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Mayor's Message



Coming into a new year we tend to reflect on goals and achievements. This is no different at Council. 2015 was definitely a busy year with a number of key results and achievements.

Through the Long Term Plan (LTP) process, and with the help of you, our communities, we set our course for the next 10 years, and we are working hard to deliver on the goals for the first year before 30 June.

Previous work in the economic development space bore fruit with the opening of Yashili's \$220 million infant milk formula plant at Pokeno last November, and the Huntly, Rangiriri and Cambridge sections of the Waikato Expressway have begun, are advancing well or have been completed.

Each of these bring local benefits whether it's direct wages and employment, supply and support opportunities for local businesses, or the lifestyle choices such connectivity and enterprises offer. Council's strong collaboration with developers and customers provides a platform for future activity – so watch this space.

Ratepayers and residents are already commenting favourably on the Waikato District Alliance's work (see page 1). Our roads are quite simply in a better state. Alongside significant work by staff reviewing, improving and simplifying the overall Service Request system, ratepayers are seeing regular maintenance and good workmanship, as well as experiencing faster Service Request resolutions. That we are almost 40% through our capital programme is another key outcome.



Through feedback you've asked us to look at ways to make it simpler and easier for you to interact with Council, and we continue to do that. We are refining processes, simplifying policies and bylaws, and redeveloping our website to provide you with better, more accessible information. Continuous improvement is a journey. Your input, feedback and support continue to be important to shaping its path.

Allan Sanson

Mayor, Waikato District Council



School's back so please remember to watch out for kids.

Watch out for kids

'Watch out, kids about' is the message for drivers from Waikato District Road Safety Co-ordinator Megan Jolly.

"Increased traffic and pedestrian volumes around schools means drivers must be vigilant. Children returning to school can easily be distracted by new surroundings or meeting up with friends.

"They may also have difficulty judging distances and could step out onto a crossing without warning, giving drivers little time to react," she said.

"Please be a good role model and use approved crossings."

Ms Jolly says parents dropping children at school also have an important role to play.

"Please be a good role model and use approved crossings when they're available and always get the children to exit the car from the left onto the footpath."

Police will be patrolling around schools to ensure motorists keep their speeds down.

"The faster you drive, the harder the impact. A person hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 kilometres per hour (kph) has a 95 per cent chance of surviving, whereas the survival rate for someone hit by a vehicle travelling at 50kph is only 55 per cent and at 70kph is only about five per cent," she said.

Motorists also need to remember the speed limit is 20kph when passing a school bus that has stopped to pick up or let down children.

Don't be a drip! Help spread the water-saving message

As water restrictions ramped up across the region over the summer period, the Smart Water team has been out and about explaining water-saving tips and offering residents the chance to win water-themed prizes.

Hundreds of people have signed up to the Smart Water website to receive updates on water alert levels and water saving tips, as well as taking part in family competitions to identify which appliances can offer the biggest water savings in the home.

“Every minute less in the shower saves around 14 litres of heated water.”

Regional Smart Water Co-ordinator Sally Fraser says the initiative has been well received.

“Everyone knows someone who takes too long in the shower, and many people don't realise that shorter showers don't just save water, they also save money.” “Every minute less in the shower saves around 14 litres of heated water, and for a family of three that can mean an additional saving of \$90 per year on your power bill,” Sally says. smartwater.org.nz



Staff from the regional Smart Water initiative say the water-saving message has been well-received at markets and community events this summer.

Are you eligible for a rates rebate?

If you are a low income earner, you may be able to get a reduction on your rates.

The Rates Rebate Scheme provides a rebate of up to \$610 for paying rates for the home in which you were living on 1 July 2015.

Your rebate will be calculated based on your income, rates and the number of dependents living with you.

You can find out if you're eligible by using the rates rebates calculator on

our website: waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Services/Rates/Rates-rebates

To apply, you'll need to provide information about your income (and that of any spouse/partner and /or joint home owner who lives with you) for the tax year ended 31 March 2015. You'll also need to provide your rates notices.

Applications are available from Council offices, or you can download a form from www.dia.govt.nz/ratesrebates

For more information, phone Council on **0800-492-452**.

Applications close on 30 June 2016.

Submission Process

Can you tell me how to make a submission?

Ever wondered how to have your say? Here's a summary of how the submission process works. Still got questions? Email info@waidc.govt.nz

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION 1

A draft proposal is developed and adopted by Council. To find out what the community thinks, the proposal is opened for public consultation, usually for one month.



DO YOU WANT TO BE HEARD? 3

Some submissions processes have a **hearing**. You can choose whether or not you would like to speak in support of your submissions at the relevant Council meeting. There is usually a 10 minute time-frame for each speaker.

HAVE YOUR SAY & MAKE A SUBMISSION 2

You can make a submission online, in writing or by email. Make sure it reaches Council before the deadline.

ONLINE

Click on **"Say it"** on our website



OR

ON PAPER

Print out a **submission form** from our website or pick one up from Council offices or the local library



OR

EMAIL

Send us an email to consult@waidc.govt.nz make sure you include the project name in the subject



WHEN ARE DECISIONS MADE 4

Elected Members make decisions, based on the submissions and research, during what is called **Deliberations**. These are open meetings, so you can come and listen!



FINAL PROPOSAL 5

Any changes are made, the proposal is finalised and adopted by Council.



Dealing with noise

There has been an increase in the number of noise complaints and 'repeat noise offenders' over the past few months. Environmental Health Team Leader Alan Parkes said complaints often increase as summer weather arrives.

"There's always a certain level of noise that can be reasonably expected in any neighbourhood, such as lawn mowers or power tools. But Council takes a hard line with those repeatedly making excessive noise from activities such as noisy parties and unreasonably interfering with the peace and comfort of their neighbours."

When does noise become too noisy?

It's important to note that noise is not excessive simply because you can hear it.

Before action can be taken, a Waikato District Council Enforcement Officer must visit and assess the noise. They'll consider the noise level and type of noise, location of neighbours, the presence of sound barriers and the time of day. The same noise levels during the day may not be acceptable at night.

What's the best way to deal with a noisy neighbour?

If the amount of noise coming from your neighbours' place is bothering you, it's best to start by talking to them about it. You may be able to reach an agreement. For example, agreeing on timings for construction work or turning down the volume on their stereo.

"A number of noise concerns can be resolved between neighbours if they are made aware of the concerns rather than directly ringing noise control," Mr Parkes said.

"Many complaints relate to the sound of the bass from music at parties and other gatherings."

"People need to be considerate of their neighbours. The general advice is that if it can be clearly heard at the boundary of your property then it's likely to be disturbing others. Many complaints relate to the sound of the bass from music at parties and other gatherings."

How to make a complaint

Anyone wishing to make a complaint can call 0800 492 452, any time of the day or night. As the volume will have to be assessed, it's important to call when the noise is occurring.

If the noise is found to be excessive, formal notice will be given to reduce the noise. Failure to comply can lead to removal of the equipment responsible for the noise or a \$500 infringement fine. Owners can apply for the return of equipment, but must pay all costs incurred in enforcement visits and seizures. If not claimed within six months, the equipment is disposed of.

Council responds to approximately 1200 noise complaints a year. This does not include barking dogs, which are dealt with under the Dog Control Act.



Good luck to everyone training for the Huntly Half Marathon on 20 March.



Greenspace



Exciting new recreation reserve planned for Tamahere

Work has started on the new Tamahere Recreation Reserve.

Tamahere is continuing to grow and the reserve has been designed to form a new community hub.

The site is adjacent to the new Wiremu Tamihana Driveway, on a section of land used for housing and grazing paddocks.

Designed in consultation with the Tamahere Community Committee, the reserve will incorporate sports fields, a carpark, playgrounds, a skate park, walkway and fitness trail.

Development will be staged over a number of years. The first phase involves clearing and levelling the site to produce a grassed surface in preparation for the construction of the other features in later years.



Young people – we want your ideas!

We have heaps of cool youth projects planned for the year, including the Waikato Youth Awards in May. If you are aged between 12 and 24, we want you to be involved!

What this means:

- We want to know what you think! We want to hear your thoughts on some of these events and ideas.
- There will be some really awesome opportunities, like setting up and running Youth Action Groups in your area and planning events.
- You can give as much – or as little – time as you can. You can be involved as much – or as little – as you want.

“We’re looking for young people to work in groups with a co-ordinator, and other young people, to get these cool projects off the ground,” says Shannon Kelly, Youth Engagement Advisor.

“You’ll get the chance to have your say about what’s going on in your community and will learn some great skills, including leadership and project management. You’ll get the opportunity to connect with like-minded young leaders and have a great time, while making a difference for your community.”

If this sounds like something you’d be interested in, please email Shannon Kelly, Youth Engagement Advisor:

Shannon.kelly@waidc.govt.nz

We’re looking for great role models like these: Students from Fraser High School’s senior council wanted to give something back to the Raglan community after staying at the Kopua Holiday Park so they worked collaboratively with Reserves Team Leader Noel Barber to undertake a beach clean-up on 28 January.



Civil Defence Centre signs are being taken down

You may have noticed that the Civil Defence signs are being removed. There is no need to worry though because we will still have centres open in your community if there is a disaster.

Why are the signs being removed?

These signs were part of an historical understanding between schools, marare, hall committees and Civil Defence. But some of the buildings they are pointing to would no longer be used in an emergency.

Depending on the type and location of an emergency, Civil Defence has identified a number of buildings that could be used as a centre to look after the community.

So, to avoid confusion, we are going to take all these historical signs down and use portable signs that will be displayed

outside a civil Defence Centre in an emergency. The signs will feature the Civil Defence logo.

During an emergency

Tune in to your local radio station or check out the Civil Defence Facebook page or website to find out where these are. You can also call Council.

To know more about Civil Defence centres and how to be ready for a disaster, visit waikatocivildefence.govt.nz or get in touch with your local Civil Defence staff at Waikato District Council.



Just briefly



New year, new Link

We've refreshed the look of Link to make it brighter and more engaging. We hope you enjoy our first issue with its new look.

Council meetings

Did you know we have meeting calendars available online so you can check out what the year ahead holds?

The calendars include committee/community board meetings, mayoral workshops, Annual Plan hearings, Long Term Plan hearings and Extraordinary meetings.

[www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Your-Council/Meetings-\(1\).aspx](http://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Your-Council/Meetings-(1).aspx)

WDC is now on Twitter

Follow us on Twitter to stay up-to-date with the latest news, consultations, service updates, events, jobs and information from Waikato District Council.

We also want to hear from you. Send us a tweet and let us know what is happening in your area. Visit www.twitter.com/waikatodistrict



Fire restrictions

Council is encouraging residents to be careful about fires as we enjoy summer.

Council is encouraging residents to be careful about fires as we enjoy summer. Make sure your property is well maintained as long grass and rubbish can become a fire hazard.

If you're considering lighting a fire, make sure you check the fire status and whether you need a permit at www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/Services/Rural-fires.aspx



Dates for the next Link

Our next edition of Link will be distributed 9 – 13 May 2016.

If you don't receive your Link by 18 May please email communications@waidc.govt.nz with your address details so we can look into the non-delivery. Please note if you have 'No Junk Mail' on your mailbox we can't deliver the newsletter.

Got a question about Council business

[/WaikatoDistrictCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/WaikatoDistrictCouncil) 

twitter.com/WaikatoDistrict 

www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz 

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