



Hikairo Paki and Harley Raihe at the 130 Years of Te Wharekura o Raakaumanga celebrations

TOITUU PAANUI

TE PUTANGA TUAWARU #8
OCTOBER 2026

Featuring

- Marae Resilience Fund
- Mayoral update
- Executive update
- 130 Years of Te Wharekura o Raakaumanga
- Stories and updates

LEADING OUR DISTRICT WITH MAYOR AKSEL BECH

Every three years, every council in New Zealand must produce a Long Term Plan. This is a ten year road map that sets out priorities, the projects we'll deliver, the budget behind them, and the financial strategy for how we pay for it all. I have been out and about recently, supporting councillor-led Long Term Plan discussions on services and infrastructure that matter most to our communities across the district, including the recent Toituu Marae Forum where many whakaaro were shared.

While the law requires us to hear from our people about what we fund, and how, it has been even more important to consider the views of our communities as we grapple with the challenge of the rates cap, and the costs associated with 'keeping the lights on'.

We have kept amalgamation in the back of our minds through this early engagement, while waiting for central government's decision around the Head Start proposal we submitted in early August. Our Long Term Plan priorities and how we will fund them, could prove useful when hashing out priorities and agreeing on work as part of a larger council.

Central government's recent announcement on amalgamation was...no announcement until after the general election. To say I am disappointed by this delay is an understatement. We worked hard to an extremely challenging timeline, and we put forward a detailed proposal that we believe would see benefits for our communities.

We are now in a wait-and-see Head Start holding pattern while MPs are out campaigning, but we'll continue working with our communities to ensure we are ready to go when central government comes back to the table.



Maa te huruhuru ka rere te manu.
With feathers, the bird can fly.

Craig, our Chief Executive will step down at the end of this month. I commend Craig's commitment to his work, in challenging and complex times with a 'reform tsunami' from central government adding more weight to the already demanding role of a Chief Executive. Craig has achieved several important milestones, taken great care of our council whaanau, and our communities. I wish him well in his future endeavours.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE CRAIG HOBBS

In this rapidly evolving and complex legislated environment that Council operates in, we are having to balance our business-as-usual activity with adjusting to new obligations as mandated by government legislation. Managing this and equally important issues are top of mind for me and particularly where there is impact on tangata whenua.

The first is resource management reform and iwi participation. One of the most significant current concerns is central government's reform of the Resource Management Act (RMA), including proposed changes to iwi participation arrangements.

Many iwi are concerned about the removal or narrowing of Mana Whakahono ā Rohe arrangements, which provide formal mechanisms for councils and iwi to work together on planning and resource management matters. There is concern that reforms could weaken existing Treaty settlement commitments and reduce opportunities for mana whenua influence in environmental decision-making.

It is critical that we as council maintain our local relationships with mana whenua, ensuring they are strong and open. As reforms bring about changes to legislation, our connection will become even more important. In the past weeks we have heard from central government that there will be no formal decision on Head Start proposals until after the general election on 7 November.

Frustrating as this is, I take this opportunity to thank our iwi Maaori, mana whenua, hapuu and Toituu Marae Forum partners for your considered whakaaro in shaping what remains a strong proposal, despite the current state of indecision.

If we do progress amalgamation in the new parliamentary term, freshwater, rivers, and environmental stewardship must be matters of key consideration.



Tumu Whakarae Craig Hobbs signing the Toituu Marae Kii Tapu

Protection of rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater and coastal environments, sit mainly with regional councils. With these being disestablished in 2028, Council, along with other territorial authorities must give thought to how we transition these functions and ensure that we continue to partner to deliver our Joint Management Agreement (JMA) obligations. I believe stronger recognition of mana whenua kaitiakitanga, improved water quality, protection of culturally significant sites, and active involvement in environmental planning and restoration initiatives are equally important considerations for the future.

The health of the Waikato and Waipā river systems must remain a long-term strategic focus for Council, linked to Waikato-Tainui and Te Nehenehenui Treaty settlements, our JMAs and co-governance arrangements.

Ko te wai te ora o ngaa mea katoa. Water is the life-giver of all things.

As many of you know, my time at WDC ends on 30 October. I've had a very busy 18 months, during which the council has made hard decisions and transformed in ways I believe that set it up for a sustainable and successful future — whatever the policies, personalities and priorities of the next government. I wish you all the best and thank you for the support, input and energy you've given me in my time here.

FROM THE FRONTLINE

TAI RARO MAAORI WARD COUNCILLOR

ENDINE DIXON-HARRIS

Kia ora koutou katoa

Ko te wehi ki a Ihoa naanaa nei te timata me te whakamutunga o te whakaaro nui, kia tau iho oona manaakitanga ki runga ki too maatou arikinui a Nga wai hono I te po. Kei ngaa mate nui o te waa, hoki atu raa koutou ki a Hine nuitepo. Kia tatou te hunga ora paimaarie ki a taatou.

Spring is finally here and whilst still a little chilly, it brings the sign of a much-welcomed summer warmth.

Joint Management Planning

The Quarterly August meeting was held with Waikato-Tainui members and councillors to discuss the up-and-coming event namely Te Matatini. Both parties want to make sure the event is a success and that communities feel the positive impacts and less of the negatives. Communication will come out in due course.

The strategic programme is broken into three 3 pou as follows.

JMA Focus Area: Wai - Water

- Local Water Done Well - IAWAI
- Joint Management Agreement (JMA) Schedule Review

JMA Focus Area: Tangata - People

- Local Government Reforms – Head Start Pathway
- Toituu Marae Forum
- Te Matatini

JMA Focus Area: Whenua - Land

- Hopuhopu Development
- Whenua Maaori Development
- Marae Resilience Delivery

Long Term Plan (LTP)

The Long Term Plan is the 10-year plan reviewed every three years. Councillors and staff started community engagement in late September to gather feedback on what is important for our district, wards and sectors. The timeframe to provide your whakaaro is by 23 October 2026.



There are three ways to provide feedback:

- Attend a community hui
- Fill out a form
- Use the QR Code or visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/ltp

Koroneihana

The Mayor, a few Councillors and staff attended the Koroneihana alongside the Political parties on Friday 4 September. This provides council an insight of what it means to be part of the manuwhiri and the importance of tribal expectations of political parties and the Maaori vote. The speech of the day – Ombudsmen. E te Rangatira pono to koorero!

Toituu Marae

A hui was held two weeks ago with 13 of the 22 marae attending. E mihi ana ki a koutou. IAWAI, CDEM, the Mayor and CFO provided updates on current programmes and initiatives. For more information, please see the Toituu Marae update.

As your Maaori Ward Councillors, we continue to attend Community Board and Committee hui across our district and remain committed to ensuring Maaori voices are heard and represented in the Council whare.

We encourage you to check that your Whenua Maaori Land rates are correct. If you need any support, don't forget to reach out. Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui.

Pai maarire.

HE MIHI KI NGAA MARAE

MAAORI WARD COUNCILLOR TILLY TURNER

E tuku ano i ngaa mihi aroha ki a koutou ngaa rangatira o tatou marae maha, ngaa whaanaunga o ngaa maataawaka, me a tatou whaanaunga o nga moutere o Pacifica, koutou e noho ana iroto i a tatou haapori, tena koutou, tena koutou tena tatou katoa.

The Koroneihana prompted me to reflect on Te Arikinui's leadership Kuini Nga Wai Hono I Te Po's call for us to move beyond historical grievances and focus on self-determination, health, and economic renewal "from Raupatu to Rauora".

Having launched our Tainui 75th Anniversary of our Waahine Maori Toko i Te Ora – Maori Women's Welfare League Exhibition at the Hamilton Artpost. We are reminded of the leadership of Princess Te Puea Herangi who was challenged with the inherent task of lifting our people during a tougher time of pohara – destitution that a whole tribe was experiencing as a result of Raupatu – confiscation. As the Patron, her lifetime tasks became the foundation model of the Maori Women's Welfare League, talking with the selected leadership of Maori Women throughout Aotearoa in 1951 and passing away in 1952.

These examples of our kaahui ariki leadership are timely to remind us of how this moment in the Waikato District Council is so important for us of Waikato iwi and especially of the relationship we are building with Toituu Marae must continue. We all know that Marae have been our sanctuary of growth in wellbeing, culture and security throughout a tumultuous history, imagine sharing these values with our communities not only during civil defence but for anything to benefit our wider community.

Your commitment to continue to turn up and plan for the future of Toituu Marae is inspiring. We have two years to embed processes giving us access into the systems of the Waikato District Council operations. So, I encourage you to work collectively to get your aspirations into how you



Tai Runga Takiwaa Maaori Ward Councillor Tilly Turner

want the relationship to progress and who you want to lead you as your chairs between our Marae and Council. The presentations delivered to you over the last two meetings have been huge for yourselves to take back to Marae. Toituu Paaanui, the webpage in Council and workshops with your executive will make things easier to understand in time. Council is responsible for the services that we get in each of our communities, so I encourage you that Toituu Marae gives you access and time to have a voice for your community.

Using the example of Raupatu and how our tuupuna Princess Te Puea Herangi, brought our people from destitution to hope and acknowledging how her legacy is still successfully, sustainably happening at our annual koroneihana in this generation for and by her mokopuna in Te Arikinui, Kuini Nga Wai Hono I Te Po calling us to bring our future generations into Rauora.

Noo reira, tukuna te aroha kirunga i a koutou katoa Pai maarire.





TOITUU MARAE FORUM

SEPTEMBER UPDATE

THE MAHI BEGINS...



Toituu Marae Forum brings marae together to strengthen resilience and wellbeing.

Representatives from marae across the Waikato District gathered on 28 September for the latest Toituu Marae Forum, a chance for marae, Council and partner organisations to come together, share whakaaro, and discuss kaupapa supporting marae aspirations and priorities.

A key focus was on initiatives that strengthen marae resilience, visibility and community wellbeing including an update on the **marae road signage programme**, which will improve safety, increase the visibility of marae, and make it easier for visitors and emergency services to find them when needed.

Marae also heard about the **Marae Resilience Fund**, which has allocated \$13,000 to each Waikato District marae to support civil defence readiness and event preparedness. The fund will help marae build capability and continue their important role as community hubs during times of need and celebration.



An inspirational case study was shared by Pauline Herangi of Ngaa Tai e Rua Paa on their journey to self sufficiency and resilience using their Marae Resilience Fund with other funding for solar panels and batteries (read their story in this paanui).

Mayor Aksel Bech shared frustrations on the pause central government has placed on local government reform (the Head Start programme), Everyone, including councils will have to wait until after the election to see what these changes could mean for local communities in the future.

Looking ahead, Council offered insights into how it is supporting the the preparations the community to host Te Matatini and opportunities for marae and communities to have their say on priorities for the next Long Term Plan (LTP). Feedback gathered through this process will help shape Council investment and services over the next 10 years.

The Forum also provided an opportunity for whakawhanaungatanga with representatives from IAWAI, helping build relationships and understanding around future water infrastructure and service delivery across the rohe.

As always, the Forum featured open and constructive koorero, with attendees sharing experiences, asking questions and exploring ways to work together to support the wellbeing and resilience of marae and their communities.

The **Toituu Marae Forum** continues to be a valuable space for connection, collaboration and collective action on the kaupapa that matter most to marae across the Waikato District.



TOITUU MARAE PRIORITY KAUPAPA 2026 - 2028



MARAE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Carpark and entranceways upgrades;
- Ablution facilities;
- Tuupuna whare rebuilds;
- Papakaainga development.

MARAE RESILIENCE

- Water infrastructure and flood management, including regular drain and waterway maintenance, improved water capability.
- Reduction of flood risks;
- Emergency resilience and preparation.

MARAE ROAD SAFETY

- Speed limits near marae and associated Koohunga Reo standardised;
- Improved signage and lighting;
- Road maintenance.

TE TAI AO & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Waterways, forestry, fisheries, foreshore areas, and erosion control.
- Environmental restoration projects;
- An intergenerational approach to decision making.

WHENUA DEVELOPMENT

- Return of culturally significant whenua;
- Ratings;
- Papakaainga.

GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS

- With Council , IAWAI, and other partners.



NEXT TOITUU MARAE FORUM
6PM, MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, NGAARUAWAAHIA

Learn more at the Toituu Marae webpage [HERE](#)



Ngaati Aamaru Katoa Trust Two-Year Work Plan

Marae Capability and Readiness Programme

June 2026 – June 2028

 Working in partnership with Toituu Marae, Waikato District Council and key partners for the benefit of our people, marae, hapuu and iwi.

1. PROGRAMME PURPOSE

-  Strengthen the capability, readiness, compliance, and leadership of marae across the Waikato District.
-  Support up to 40 marae through engagement, readiness assessments, governance support, compliance planning, hosting readiness, waananga participation, and stronger pathways into Council and funding processes.
-  Build a coordinated, capable, safe, and future-ready marae network across the district.

2. HOW THIS ROLE WORKS WITH WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL

-  Connect marae aspirations with Council planning and opportunities.
-  Support access to information, funding pathways, and practical advice.
-  Strengthen communication between marae, hapuu, iwi, Council and partners.
-  Help create locally led solutions that improve resilience, readiness and long-term wellbeing.

3. FIVE PROGRAMME WORKSTREAMS

-  **Compliance and Safety Readiness**
Assessments, templates, practical planning for safe and compliant marae.
-  **Governance and Capability Uplift**
Waananga, planning, systems, financial and risk support.
-  **Hosting Readiness**
Training, role cards, skills and systems for high-visitor events.
-  **Equity and Participation Support**
Prioritised support for higher-need marae using an equity approach.
-  **Whānau and Community Engagement**
Intergenerational activities, cultural activation and stronger participation.

4. ROLE FOCUS

-  **Programme Coordination and Delivery**
Lead implementation, maintain timelines and deliverables.
-  **Relationship Building and Engagement**
Build strong, respectful relationships and partnerships.
-  **Marae Capability and Readiness Support**
Provide tools, guidance and practical support.
-  **Governance and Community Development**
Strengthen governance, leadership and capability.
-  **Reporting and Accountability**
Track progress, evaluate outcomes and report regularly.

5. TWO-YEAR DELIVERY PATHWAY

- | YEAR 1
June 2026 – June 2027 | YEAR 2
June 2027 – June 2028 |
|--|--|
|  Build relationships and trust |  Deepen support and follow through on plans |
|  Complete marae assessments and identify priorities |  Strengthen systems, capability and readiness |
|  Develop action plans, tools and templates |  Grow whānau participation and community engagement |
|  Begin governance support and early waananga |  Support stronger links to Council and funding processes |
|  Establish reporting systems and programme tracking |  Deliver final reporting, outcomes and future recommendations |

6. KEY OUTCOMES

-  Improved capability, confidence and readiness across 40 marae
-  Stronger governance, systems and processes
-  Improved compliance and safety planning
-  Increased hosting readiness and operational preparedness
-  Fair and practical support for higher-need marae
-  Stronger whānau and community participation
-  Sustainable tools and resources and systems for future use

MARAE RESILIENCE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

E ngaa mana, e ngaa reo, e ngaa karangatanga maha, teenaa koutou katoa.

Waikato District Council is pleased to be launching the Marae Resilience Programme, providing **up to \$13,000** for each marae across the district to support initiatives that strengthen marae preparedness, response and recovery capability.

Click on this [link](#) or scan the QR code to complete the expression of interest form. Must be completed by the Marae Chairperson

WHAT CAN FUNDING BE USED FOR

- ✓ Emergency response plans and procedures
- ✓ Water storage and backup power
- ✓ Communication systems
- ✓ Emergency equipment and supplies
- ✓ Emergency accommodation readiness
- ✓ Recovery planning and community support
- ✓ First aid and emergency management training
- ✓ Community preparedness initiatives



TIMEFRAME

Applications can be submitted anytime between **August 2026** and **August 2027**. Approved projects must be completed by August 2027

READY TO GET STARTED?

Complete the Registration of Interest form.
Identify your resilience project.
Enter into a funding agreement.
Share simple progress updates through Toituu Marae



COMMUNITIES ENCOURAGED TO PREPARE FOR TE MATATINI O NGAA TANIWHA 2027

With just months to go until Te Matatini o Ngaa Taniwha 2027, Waikato District Mayor Aksel Bech is encouraging residents, businesses, marae and community organisations to start preparing for what will be the largest event ever hosted in the Waikato district.

From 22-28 February 2027, thousands of performers, supporters and visitors from across Aotearoa will travel to the Waikato for the event, hosted by Te Whare Haka o Tainui and Waikato-Tainui. "Te Matatini is one of the most significant cultural events in Aotearoa. It brings together the very best of kapa haka, celebrates te reo Maaori, and showcases the richness and diversity of our communities," said Mayor Aksel.

In 2025, Te Matatini generated an estimated \$23 million for New Plymouth's economy. With Ngaaruawaahia's central location and proximity to both Hamilton and Auckland, the economic benefits for the Waikato could be even greater.

The week-long programme will begin with a poowhiri at Tuurangawaewae Marae before moving to Hopuhopu Sports Park, where kapa haka groups from across the country will compete over five days. More than 100,000 visitors are expected throughout the festival, creating increased demand on roads, accommodation, businesses, marae and community facilities. "Our message is simple: be informed, be prepared and be excited," said Mayor Aksel. "While the event will bring increased activity across the district, it also presents a unique opportunity to showcase the hospitality, generosity and spirit that Waikato is known for."

Council is working alongside Waikato-Tainui, emergency services, transport providers and other partners to support community readiness and ensure residents are kept informed. Over the coming months, regular updates will be shared on transport planning, visitor information, community preparedness and opportunities to get involved.

"This is our chance to share the stories, culture and manaakitanga of our district with visitors," said Mayor Aksel. "Together, we can help ensure everyone who comes here experiences the very best of Waikato."

Waikato District Council is proud to support its iwi partners and work alongside communities to help welcome the world to the heart of the Waikato.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Monday 22 February

POWHIRI | TUURANGAWAEWAE



Around **10,000 people** are expected in Ngaaruawaahia for the powhiri. Expect **busy roads, crowded local businesses and vibrant arrival of culture.**

Tuesday 23 – Friday 26 February
COMPETITION | HOPUHOPU



57 kapa haka will compete across four days. Expect **increased traffic and visitors** moving between Hopuhopu, accommodation, marae and surrounding towns.

Saturday 27 February
FINALS DAY | HOPUHOPU



Te Matangirua – Finals Day. This is expected to be the **busiest day**, with increased traffic and visitors across the area.

Sunday 28 February
DEPARTURES & RECOVERY



Visitors, kaihaka and support crews begin heading home. Expect **continued traffic and activity** as the area returns to normal.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WAIKATO DISTRICT BUSINESSES

Te Matatini o Ngaa Taniwha will bring thousands of manuwhiri to our district and presents a unique opportunity for local businesses. We're seeking to connect with businesses interested in staying informed, shaping visitor experiences, exploring opportunities, and being part of the wider district response.

Interested?

REGISTER HERE

PLANNED WORKS AND OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

With up to 100,000 visitors expected for Te Matatini o Ngaa Taniwha, organisations across the Waikato are encouraged to start considering how planned works, maintenance, utility, development and operational activities may intersect with the event period.

The powhiri will be held at Tuurangawaewae Marae on 22 February 2027, with the festival taking place at Hopuhopu from 23 to 27 February 2027.

Increased activity is expected across Ngaaruawaahia, Hopuhopu, Huntly, Taupiri, Whatawhata, Hamilton and key transport routes connecting these areas.

COUNCILS ROLE

Te Matatini Society Incorporated is responsible for the national festival. Waikato-Tainui and Te Whare Haka o Tainui are the local hosts.

Waikato District Council is supporting the event through its Joint Management Agreement partnership with Waikato-Tainui, with a focus on planning, infrastructure, regulatory services, transport and community readiness.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH WAIKATO-TAINUI

Waikato-Tainui and Waikato District Council have a longstanding partnership through the Joint Management Agreement (JMA).

Built on a shared commitment to the wellbeing of the Waikato River and its communities, the partnership provides a strong foundation for working together on kaupapa that have significance for the district.

FIND OUT MORE

Here

If your organisation has works or activities planned during February 2027, now is a good time to review timing, coordinate with partners where appropriate, and consider opportunities to minimise disruption.

Planned works can also be registered and viewed through the National Forward Works Viewer.

Here

For more information or to discuss planned activities, contact: tematatinienquiries@waikatodc.govt.nz.



OUR DISTRICT OUR STORIES

The people, the places and the
things that connect us to them

COUNCILLOR PROFILE

WESTERN DISTRICTS GENERAL WARD

COUNCILLOR CAROLYN EYRE

Teenaa koutou.

It is my privilege to serve a third term as General Ward Councillor for the Western District Ward.

I was born in Raahui Pookeka, Huntly, the youngest of Doug and Hilary Gillings' three children, with English and Welsh roots. My father's family came from County Durham, Newcastle bringing their miners' tools, a banjo shovel and pit light, with them. My great-grandfather and grandfather worked at Rotowaro. Dad fondly remembers swimming and fishing for kai in the awa and forming lifelong connections in Raahui Pookeka. Interestingly, while my great-grandparents lived nearby in Newcastle and traveled on separate maiden voyages, they did not meet until attending a dance at Ruawaro Hall - the rest they say is history. My mother came from Liverpool as a teenager and settled in Raahui Pookeka.

Our family moved to Kirikiriroa Hamilton when I was young. I later studied law, psychology, and education at the University of Otago, completed postgraduate study and worked as an educational facilitator. Strong whaanau ties drew me north, where I became a social worker and enjoyed working with community, people and place.

I'm married to Stuart, a sheep and beef farmer in Pepepe Valley, and our three adult children live in the mighty Waikato. While raising our family, I became a certified dispute resolution practitioner, served on school boards of trustees and chaired local playgroups. Alongside Council, I chair Community Waikato, serve on the Anexa Vet Services board and sit on the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

What drives my work

Living in an isolated part of our district, I stood for council to give rural residents a stronger voice. More than 60% of our residents and ratepayers live rurally, and many marae are in isolated areas. I was concerned that the needs, aspirations and views of these whaanau were too often overlooked. Rural communities have deep connections to the whenua and a strong commitment to connectivity and environmental



Western Districts General Ward Councillor Carolyn Eyre

care; however Council processes often felt like obstacles to their goals.

The most rewarding part of my role is building relationships grounded in trust, integrity and shared purpose. Through local iwi-led emergency responses, COVID lockdowns and Cyclone Gabrielle, I have seen how Maaori and non-Maaori working together achieve better outcomes.

Strong relationships with mana whenua remain essential, and I continue seeking opportunities to strengthen them.

Last triennium, I helped establish the Rural Engagement Advisory Panel (REAP). It brings together dedicated volunteers, including mana whenua and people from across the rural sector, whose expertise and strategic insight help council shape policy and direction. Together, we aim to keep rural communities resilient, connected and thriving places to live, play and work.

Ngaa mihi,
Councilor Carolyn Eyre



Nga Tai E Rua Paa

COMMUNITY ENERGY HUB CASE STUDY

POWERING A STRONGER FUTURE AT NGAA TAI E RUA PAA

Rising power bills and more frequent outages are putting pressure on marae across the rohe. Trustee Treasurer Pauline Herangi shares with us how Ngaa Tai E Rua Paa is taking practical steps to meet that challenge by investing in solar panels and battery storage.

The paa is a place where whaanau come together, connect, learn and support one another. It is also a registered community-led centre that can help during an emergency. Having a reliable source of power means the paa can keep supporting people when it matters most.

More than lower power bills

The new solar and battery system will generate clean energy for everyday use and store power for outages. It will help lower electricity costs, give the paa more control over its energy supply and provide backup power during emergencies.

The project reflects kaitiakitanga, mana motuhake and a shared commitment to looking after the paa, the environment and future generations.

A shared investment

Ngaa Tai E Rua Paa has worked with Supa and community partners to bring the project together. Support has come from Foundation North, Waikato-Tainui and the Waikato District Council Marae Resilience Fund.

Savings that can go back into the paa

The system is expected to deliver about \$150,000 in benefits over 10 years, with an estimated net benefit of around \$1,250 a month and forecast fixed energy savings of \$4,357 a year. That is money that can be put back into maintenance, cultural kaupapa, learning programmes and activities that support community wellbeing.

Ready when whaanau need support

During a power cut or severe weather event, the battery will help the paa keep essential services running. This could include shelter, communications and practical support for whaanau while the wider community is affected.

Benefits beyond the Paa gates

The project is also intended to improve energy security for the five kaumaatua flats across the road from the paa. It will strengthen local emergency networks, create learning opportunities for rangatahi and show how renewable energy can support whaanau, hapuu, iwi and the wider community.

Looking ahead

For Ngaa Tai E Rua Paa, this is about much more than generating electricity. It is about building a paa that is more self-reliant, more sustainable and better prepared to care for its people. The result will be lower costs, stronger emergency readiness and a lasting benefit for generations to come.





TE WHAREKURA O RAAKAUMANGA CELEBRATES 130 YEARS

**Author Harley Raihe - Pou Tikanga, Waikato
District Council**

The celebration was held at the original school site, which is now a small farm block located beside the Huntly Power Station. The school was relocated to its current site on McDiarmid Crescent in Huntly West as a result of the power station development.

A Pou Mahara (memorial carving) was unveiled at the original school site to begin the celebrations. The Pou Mahara acknowledges and honours the history of the school and those who attended the kura who are no longer with us. I would like to acknowledge and thank Matthew Crispe and Kevin Briggs, who worked alongside kura principal Barna Heremia to ensure the placement of the Pou Mahara met all council requirements and regulations.

The celebration was well attended by both past and present students. Many stories, memories, and experiences were shared, along with a beautiful breakfast enjoyed together. One hundred and thirty years ago, children living on the western side of Raahui Pookeka had to cross the Waikato River each morning and afternoon to attend school. Concerns for their safety grew among local rangatira, who requested that a school be established on the western side of the river for their tamariki.

That request was granted, and guest speaker Hone Tarawhiti shared a historical koorero about how the land was gifted to the Crown by Ngaati Whawhakia rangatira Karaka Tarawhiti for the school to be built upon. His account provided valuable insight into the vision and generosity of those tupuna who prioritised education for future generations. (continues over the page)





Barna Heremia spoke about where the school stands today in terms of maatauranga Māori education. He acknowledged the elders and former students in attendance who experienced a schooling system in which their language and culture were suppressed and forbidden. He thanked them for their courage, resilience, and unwavering belief in ensuring their mokopuna would have the opportunity to be educated in their reo and tikanga.



He spoke of the importance of creating a future where young Māori can stand confidently in the world, grounded in their identity and proud of who they are. Their sacrifices and determination helped pave the way for language revitalisation and the preservation of a language and culture that came dangerously close to being lost.

Te Arataura Chairperson and former student Tuku Morgan also shared his experiences growing up at Waahi Paa Marae and attending Raakaumanga School at the original site as a young child. Reflecting on his time there, he spoke warmly of the values, lessons, and lifelong connections that shaped his journey.



He also shared what some may consider a biased opinion: that Raakaumanga is the best school in the world. To be honest, after hearing the stories, witnessing the pride of its people, and reflecting on its remarkable history and being a former student myself, I would have to agree with him.





PROUD OF OUR PEOPLE: *WORKING TOWARDS DEMENTIA FRIENDLY LIBRARIES*

Our Customer Delivery staff are at the heart of creating welcoming spaces for everyone, and they've recently taken an important step in making our libraries more dementia friendly.

About a year ago, Ngaaruawaahia Library Coordinator Cheryl Maskell noticed that some regular visitors were finding things tricky and wanted to see how the library could better support them.

Cheryl got in touch with Dementia Waikato to learn more. That's when she found out about the pathway to becoming recognised as Working to be Dementia Friendly.

Alzheimers New Zealand supports people living with dementia, as well as their whaanau and communities. Its Dementia Friendly Programme helps organisations across Aotearoa better understand dementia, train their people and make practical changes that can make a real difference.

Cheryl said, "Working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Library is something I feel very passionate about, both professionally and personally. Our libraries are more than just places to borrow books. They are welcoming community spaces where people connect, learn, share stories, and feel a sense of belonging.

"As part of the process, our Customer Delivery Team Leaders signed a commitment letter on behalf of their teams. All Customer Delivery staff also completed an online dementia awareness course.

"What began as a way to meet a growing need has become a really positive journey for our library service; in learning more about how to support people living with dementia, and ensuring our libraries are welcoming and inclusive for everyone."



**Dementia
Friendly
Recognition
Programme**

NGĀ TOHU POU WHIRINAKI MATE WAREWARE



RURAL WARD FUNDING

POWERING LOCAL RESTORATION

Whangapē Catchment Society is leading local, sustainable catchment management in the Lake Whangapē area. The farmer-led group aims to strengthen rural communities while restoring and protecting the environment.

The group received an \$1,800 grant from the 2026 Rural Ward Fund, which supports projects outside Community Board and Community Committee catchments.

Chairperson Tim Orlando-Reep says the society brings together landowners, mana whenua, and local groups to better understand and care for the land and waterways that shape the Lake Whangapē environment. The goal is to build freshwater knowledge, support practical action, and empower the community to improve water quality and ecosystem health.

The group conducts monthly freshwater testing in streams surrounding the lake using Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment (SHMAK) kits. These tests measure factors such as E. coli, nitrate, and phosphate levels, helping identify whether land-use practices are affecting stream health.

“Regular monitoring shows whether water quality is improving, declining, or remaining stable over time,”

Tim said. The Rural Ward Fund grant will help cover the cost of SHMAK testing kits and ongoing monitoring.

Long-term restoration of Lake Whangapē will help restore a multitude of ecological benefits and community volunteers are supporting this by collecting and reporting the water quality data. The group encourage local schools and community groups to use the information for education and environmental engagement.

More information about the group’s activities can be found on the [Whangapē Catchment \(WCS\) Facebook page](#).

If you have a rural project that could benefit from support, visit the Rural Ward Funding page on the [Waikato District Council](#) website to learn more and apply.

Long-term restoration of Lake Whangapē will help restore a multitude of ecological benefits and community volunteers are supporting this by collecting and reporting the water quality data. The group encourage local schools and community groups to use the information for education and environmental engagement.

PUUTEA TAUTOKO FUNDING

If you have a project or an event and are seeking financial assistance, there are a number of funding opportunities available from Council to help make it happen - click [here](#) to learn more on Council’s funding page.

As well as the Council funding opportunities outlined below, there are also many funds available from various providers throughout our community for example, Trust Waikato, Lotteries.

Council is looking at new opportunities to help with funding advice and we will be advertising this when it becomes ready for publication.



WORLD SURF LEAGUE SET TO RETURN TO RAGLAN 2027

Raglan's world-class waves will once again take centre stage as the World Surf League (WSL) confirmed the New Zealand Pro will return as a stop on the Championship Tour for the 2027 season.

Following a strong, must-watch debut event in May 2026, Manu Bay has been recognised by the WSL as a place with deep surfing heritage, and an incredibly passionate local community.

Mayor Aksel welcomed the World Surf League's return to Raglan following the success of this year's event.

"The 2026 World Surf League event created a real buzz in Raglan. Drawing visitors from across New Zealand and the globe, we were pleased to see local businesses bustling, the town and surrounds making use of every opportunity to showcase all that Raglan has to offer.

Receiving confirmation of the league's return in 2027 is a strong endorsement of the event's success, the local community, and Raglan's place on the global surfing stage."

Waikato District Council is excited to again support delivery of the event, working with event organisers, partners, and relevant agencies. Key learnings taken from the 2026 WSL community impact report, points to areas where in 2027,

this event could deliver greater value, through earlier communication, stronger partnerships with mana whenua and community organisations, greater environmental leadership, and more opportunities for local businesses and residents to participate, which Council supports.

Council is duty-bound to deliver on its regulatory responsibilities and does not run or fund the event.

The 2027 WSL stop dates will be announced later this year. Keep an eye on the WSL website for more information.

Further details will be shared as they become available.



BEHIND THE SCENES @WDC

KAIMAHI PROFILE

THERESA HORAN

RATES ADMINISTRATION

Ko Theresa Horan ahau,
Kahuraanaki tooku maunga,
Tuutaekurii tookuu awa,
Ngaati Kahungunu tooku iwi,
Whatuiaapiti tooku hapuu,
Pukehou tooku marae.

My whakapapa and cultural identity are important foundations of who I am and guide the way I engage with people, communities, and organisations. These connections give me a strong sense of belonging, responsibility, and commitment to supporting the wellbeing and aspirations of our people.

I am passionate about building meaningful relationships and strengthening connections between communities, organisations, and stakeholders through collaboration, respect, and open communication. Guided by the values of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and kotahitanga, I strive to create genuine partnerships that support positive outcomes for whaanau, hapuu, iwi, and the wider community.

In my role as a Rates Administrator, I am committed to ensuring that information is accessible, clear, and relevant. I recognise the importance of keeping whaanau informed about the mahi and kaupapa taking place within this space. Through effective communication and engagement, I help ensure people have the information they need to engage, contribute, and make informed decisions.

Throughout my career, I have developed strong skills in relationship building, stakeholder engagement, administration, and communication. I take pride in supporting initiatives that strengthen connections and raise awareness of opportunities and services that benefit whaanau and communities.

My passion lies in sharing stories of highlighting important kaupapa, and promoting positive outcomes that contribute to the growth and wellbeing of Maaori communities.

I believe that when communities are informed, connected, and empowered, they are better positioned to achieve their aspirations and create lasting benefits for future generations.



What I Value

- Whanaungatanga (building and maintaining meaningful relationships)
- Manaakitanga (showing care, respect, and support for others)
- Kotahitanga (working together towards shared goals)
- Integrity, transparency, and accountability
- Lifelong learning and personal growth
- Strengthening Maaori community and organisational connections

Maa te mahi tahi, ka whakatutuki i ngaa wawata moo ngaa whakatipuranga kei te heke mai. Through working together, we can achieve the aspirations of present and future generations.

GOT PAATAI ABOUT RATES?

If you're looking for information about rates, water charges, whenua Maaori rates, rates rebates and remissions - Theresa and the team are here to help.

Waikato District Council has information and support available.

Visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/rates or call 07 824 8633 for assistance

STANDING AMONG TRADITION

A WDC KAIMAHI'S FIRST KORONEIHANA EXPERIENCE

Koroneihana is a time when iwi, hapuu, and whaanau gather at Tuurangawaewae to honour te Kiingitanga, celebrate our connections, and reflect on the legacy that continues to guide us.

While many have grown up with Koroneihana as a familiar and cherished part of life, for others the journey begins with a first visit. This year, one of our kaimahi attended Koroneihana for the first time. Her reflections offer a personal glimpse into the mana, kaupapa and atmosphere of the occasion through new eyes.

Helen Jansen shares her story.

The mesmerising harmonies of waiata radiated from the marae as I waited to be called forward. It was a dreary, cold, wet day, but the energy and enthusiasm of those gathered more than made up for the weather. The significance of the occasion was also hard to miss, thanks to the number of earpiece-wearing security personnel standing nearby with unmistakable "don't mess with me" expressions.

Entering the marae felt a little like boarding a train on the London Underground at rush hour. The entranceway was surprisingly small for a large number of people, all trying to get through it in a timely and orderly fashion.

The passion behind the speakers was unmistakable. I was fortunate to be sitting beside a friendly kaumaatua who translated key points, explained the proceedings, and shared his own views on the speakers with me.

The waiata performances were uplifting interludes throughout the day. As much as I may have been quite cold, one thing was very clear to me — the profound respect, support, and love for the Maaori Queen. The strong collective sense of belief in her leadership was evident in every aspect of the day.

It was a memorable and humbling experience.





GOT THOUGHTS ON DOGS?

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR THEM

Dog control affects everyone in our district. It's important that the rules balance the needs of dog owners, non-dog owners and the wider community.

We're reviewing our Dog Control Bylaw and Policy and want to hear what matters most to you.

We're asking for feedback early in the process so we can better understand what's working well, what could be improved, and what challenges and opportunities people see before any changes are considered. Your feedback will help shape the next steps and the options we explore.

Later, if changes are proposed, there will be a formal consultation period where the community can review and provide feedback on those specific proposals.

Whether you're a dog owner, regularly use parks and public spaces, or simply live in the district, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

The survey is open from Thursday 15 October to 5pm on Monday 16 November 2026.

Visit www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/sayit from 15 October to learn more and take part in the survey.



WINTER SPORTS BY THE NUMBERS

A big shout out to all the clubs, teams and community sports groups who booked our sports fields and open spaces this winter.

Together, you clocked up an incredible 11,809 hours across the district. That's a whole lot of sport!

Planning ahead for summer?

Book your reserve, sports park or facility now:
<https://waikatodistrict.bookable.co.nz/>



VOTE



VOTE



VOTE



VOTE



MAA TAATOU, MOO TATOU

Decisions made in Wellington affect you.

Our tupuna fought for our voices to be heard. Voting is one way we honour that legacy and influence decisions for the whaanau, marae, whenua, and future generations. Have your say, encourage your whaanau to enrol, and make a plan to vote.

New rules come into play this year - **people not enrolled to vote by October 25 won't be able to do so**, and people who are enrolled in the wrong electorate will only be able to cast a party vote.

450,000 people enrolled to vote or updated their details during the early voting period or on election day last time - don't be caught out and miss out! Scan the QR code on the next page.

Key dates for the 2026 General Election:

25 October:

Last day to enrol to vote

26 October:

Advance voting begins

7 November:

Election Day

**Your voice matters.
Your vote counts.**

TE PŌTITANGA WHĀNUI

2026 GENERAL ELECTION



**Rēhita ki te pōti
i mua i te
25 o Oketopa
ki vote.nz**

Enrol to vote by 25 October at vote.nz



**ELECTORAL
COMMISSION**
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI



0800 36 76 56



He paatai aau moo ngaa utu IAWAI?

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR IAWAI CHARGES?

Noticed something different on your rates invoice? Since water services moved to IAWAI, some charges are now shown separately. Below are some paatai we've heard from whaanau, and you can also find out more [here](#), on IAWAI's webpage or call the helpful team at Waikato District Council on [0800 492 452](tel:0800492452).

Q: What is the "extra" charge and how does it compare to previous bills?

There are no new water charges for Waikato District Council residents. The charges on your bill are the same as before when the Council managed them.

The difference is that water charges are now listed separately and shown as an IAWAI charge. Water charges and rates have gone up a little this year, but the increase is less than what the Council had expected.

Q: What is the difference between water infrastructure charges and water usage charges?

In Waikato district, water and wastewater costs are made up of two parts:

- Network charges help pay for things like pipes, treatment plants, water testing, repair crews, and staff who keep the system running all day, every day.
- Usage charges depend on how much water you use. These costs cover getting water to homes, moving wastewater away, and treating it so it is safe.

Waikato District Council sends rates invoices three times a year: August (paid in September), December (paid in January), and April (paid in May).

Q: Why am I being charged water rates if I'm not connected to the system?

Part of the charge is an availability charge. This means that if your property can be connected to the water or wastewater network, you still contribute to the cost of providing that service.

IAWAI

Phone: 0800 928 377

Email: info@iawai.co.nz

Website: www.iawai.co.nz

ROADS **AND** **PROJECT** *UPDATES*

A photograph of a road construction site. In the foreground, a speed limit sign with a red border and the number '30' is visible. Below it is a yellow rectangular sign with the word 'TEMPORARY' in black letters. The road is paved and has orange traffic cones lined up along its edge. In the background, there are trees and a clear sky.

ROADING UPDATES

Road slip repair programme nears halfway mark

Our district-wide road slip repair programme reached 45% completion, with work underway to repair more than 80 sites damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle and other severe weather events. Funded through a partnership between NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and Waikato District Council, the programme includes slip repairs, drainage improvements, road reinstatement and slope stabilisation. Once completed, the upgrades will improve resilience and help protect key transport routes from future weather-related damage.

Pookeno Urban Road upgrades set to begin

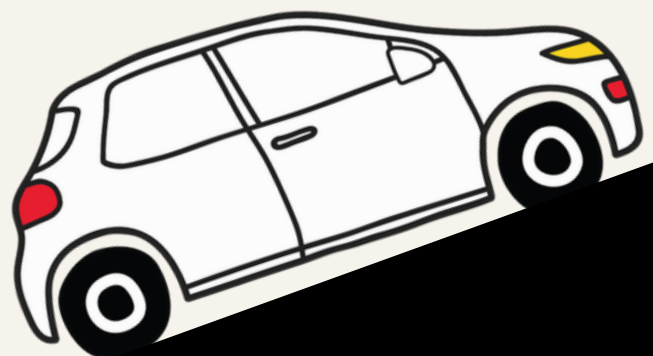
Major road upgrades in Pookeno are set to get underway, with construction on the Munro Road and Pookeno Road urban upgrade projects scheduled to begin in late 2026. The projects will deliver improvements to road infrastructure, drainage and culverts, helping support the area's continued growth. With detailed design complete and procurement underway, the upgrades will enhance safety, resilience and connectivity for residents and road users.

State Highway 1 upgrade programme to support road transfer

A major programme of NZTA-funded improvements is planned for sections of State Highway 1 through Huntly and Taupiri ahead of the road's transfer to Waikato District Council in 2028. Staged across the 2026/27 and 2027/28 construction seasons, the work includes pavement and surfacing repairs, kerb and channel renewals, streetlight upgrades, and a range of safety improvements for motorists, pedestrians and local communities.

Harrisville Road Bridge replacement underway

Work has started on the replacement and upgrade of the Harrisville Road Bridge and intersection in Tuakau, improving safety and resilience for the community's connection to the town centre. To minimise disruption during construction, a temporary vehicle and pedestrian bridge will be installed while the new bridge is built. The project will deliver long-term infrastructure improvements that support safer and more reliable travel for residents and visitors.





PROJECT UPDATES

Paterson Park, Ngaaruawaahia

Ngaaruawaahia's Paterson Park community facilities have been upgraded, including dedicated female changing rooms with showers for the first time. The project also delivered refurbished toilets and changing areas, improved lighting, fresh paint, a new roof, and hot water upgrades. Supported by local volunteers and a \$100,000 contribution from WEL Energy, the renovated facility will better serve sports clubs and the wider community for years to come.

District-wide CCTV network now operational

After years of planning, Waikato District Council's district-wide CCTV network is now complete and operational, helping improve community safety and support Police investigations. Funded in part through Better Off Funding, the network includes 15 cameras across eight communities, with number plate recognition technology already assisting Police enquiries. The secure system is designed to deter crime, support investigations, and expand as future funding becomes available.

Papahua Pump Track, Raglan

Raglan's popular Papahua Pump Track at Raglan Domain is back open following major renewal works to address long-standing cracking and ground subsidence. The upgrade included ground stabilisation, drainage improvements, perimeter repairs and a new concrete riding surface. By tackling the root cause of the damage, the project protects Council's investment and ensures the much-loved facility can continue to be enjoyed by riders of all ages for years to come.

Greenslade Playground, Raglan

We officially kicked off spring with a fun celebration at the opening of Greenslade Playground! The project has delivered a new boardwalk, playground equipment, a flying

fox, drainage and stabilisation works, plus environmental improvements to help protect the surrounding stream and landscape. It's fantastic to see this space come to life, creating more opportunities for play, connection, and enjoying the outdoors.

Huntly Gymnastics building

The Huntly Gymnastics Group building has been refreshed with new Coloursteel cladding, giving the facility a fresh new look and improved protection from the elements. The upgrade will also help reduce vandalism-related damage, supporting the long-term maintenance of this valued community space. Waikato District Council will continue working alongside tenants to ensure the facility remains in great shape for gymnasts and the wider community.

Dr John Lightbody Reserve, Tuakau

The toilets at Dr John Lightbody Reserve are back open following a recent upgrade that included a new roof, doors and lighting, along with improvements to the accessible toilet and a new access ramp. The project has enhanced accessibility, safety and comfort for visitors, helping ensure the reserve remains a welcoming and well-maintained community space for everyone to enjoy.

Reynolds Reserve and Piipinui Playground, Tuakau

Reynolds Reserve and Piipinui Playground in Tuakau are officially open. Gifted by mana whenua, the name Piipinui honours local waterways and reflects the connection between people and place. The project has created new opportunities for play, recreation and community connection, with the reserve and playground already proving popular with local families and visitors.

2026 PROPERTY REVALUATION NOTICES *ARE ON THEIR WAY*

Every three years, we are required by law to assess the rating value of every property in the Waikato district. We use these valuations as a guide for setting your rates.

The current rating valuation are a reflection of what a seller might have expected to receive if they sold their property at the time of their last valuation which was in 2024, excluding chattels (eg, furniture, personal item).

The next valuation will take place in 2026. Letters will be sent mid-November 2026 and you will have 30 working days from this date to object to the revaluation

We encourage trustees, incorporations, and owners of whenua Maaori to contact us if they would like assistance understanding their valuation letter or rates obligations.



TŌKU WAKA

Tōku Waka is a free, Maaori-led directory of funding, scholarships and opportunities for Maaori across Aotearoa.

Search by rohe, Kaupapa or closing date to find grants for marae, hapuu, whaanau, businesses and students, from iwi and council funds to national schemes. There is no cost or sign-up required to browse.

tokuwaka.co.nz · Waikato options: tokuwaka.co.nz/browse-rohe-tainui



A FREE FUNDING DIRECTORY FOR MĀORI

Find the funding that is **already there** for you.

Search by rohe, kaupapa or closing date. Every listing links to the funder's own page.

tokuwaka.co.nz

FREE · NO SIGN-UP

TOITUU PAANUI

He koorero. He kaupapa. He whai waahitanga.

Keep up to date with the stories, kaupapa, events and opportunities shaping our communities.

Every three months we'll send a paanui straight to your inbox, featuring:

- Community stories
- Opportunities to get involved
- Important updates
- Upcoming events
- Celebrating local successes

Scan the QR code and view the latest paanui and join our mailing list



Nau mai, haere mai.
Be part of the koorero.
Stay connected with Toituu Paanui.