

## Nitrate levels look better

Two recently released reports provide cause for some cautious and unanticipated optimism that nitrate levels in the region's ground and stream waters are generally reducing.

The first report, *State of environment monitoring 2001—02: Nitrates in shallow ground water*, was prepared by the Taranaki Regional Council as part of its comprehensive state of the environment monitoring programme. It outlines the results of the second five-yearly survey of nitrate levels in groundwater throughout the region. The results cover an 18-month long survey which involved analysing 384 groundwater samples from 65 wells across Taranaki. It also included results from ongoing monthly sampling of a number of South Taranaki wells.

Results show a significant general decrease in groundwater nitrate concentrations across the region from 1986 to 2002. These decreases occurred notwithstanding those years being a period of significant dairying intensification including increased use of nitrogenous fertilizers.

Council Chief Executive, Basil Chamberlain says that the cause and effect relationships between nitrates and groundwater are very complex and require careful analysis.

'Changes in pastoral farming have continued since 2002 which may have made some further changes to groundwater quality for better or worse, but nevertheless the results from the survey are encouraging.'

Most of the wells sampled in Taranaki have nitrate levels that comply with drinking water standards, but there are still some wells especially in South Taranaki where standards are periodically exceeded. The



Two recent reports show reassuring results for water quality in Taranaki rivers and streams such as the Huatoki Stream.

Council has agreed to continue with a regular groundwater nitrate monitoring programme.

The second study recently considered by the Council was a Ministry for the Environment-commissioned report, *Nation-wide and regional state of stream and river water quality 1996—02*, prepared by NIWA. This report is arguably the most comprehensive analysis of stream water quality ever undertaken for New Zealand. It summarises data from 618 sites across New Zealand and describes the state of the nation's rivers in groupings associated with climate class, land use cover, sources of flow and geology. Data from 386 sites was used to describe trends in water quality during the period 1996—02. Sites used by the Council for state of the environment monitoring were included in the NIWA analysis.

Interpretation of trend information in the report is limited and appropriately cautious but several of the findings are noteworthy, including:

- there has been a statistically significant

reduction in ammonia and nitrate levels across all classes in New Zealand over the seven-year study

- the reduction in ammonia levels is strongest in the 'pastoral' class whose sites also show a significant improvement in water clarity
- the reduction in ammonia in the 'pastoral' class may be attributed to improved waste management practices, but might also, or alternatively, be due to an increase in temperature over the study period and the consequent faster ammonia recycling in streams
- levels of dissolved reactive phosphorus and *E coli* are essentially unchanged across all classes
- of the six land use classes, 'urban' rivers have the worst water quality, with improving water quality across pastoral, exotic forest, scrub, indigenous forest and tussock
- the 'cool-extremely wet' climate class had the highest water quality, followed by the 'cool-wet' class—the two classes covering most Taranaki sites. The worst category was the 'warm-dry' class found in the Hauraki Plains and Hawke's Bay.

The full report is available on [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz)

The information from the Taranaki groundwater nitrate work and the nation-wide surface water analyses are very useful contributions to present discussions happening nation-wide on water quality issues. These results draw quite a different picture to that provided in last year's report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. The Commissioner's report paints a scenario of increases in excess nitrates in pasture, declining surface water

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## From the Chair

For any relatively isolated region, such as Taranaki, good transport links are vital. The Council, therefore, expends a great deal of energy and time on strengthening these links and encouraging new ones.



A good example is the current review of the *Regional Land Transport Strategy*. This is an important and far-reaching document for Taranaki. It not only considers regional industry and the economy but also social and environmental needs and traffic safety. It considers the roles of different transport modes, state highways, local road networks, rail freight, passenger transport, walking and cycling.

A preliminary stakeholder workshop has discussed some of the key factors that need to be addressed, and public submissions for a revised strategy will be invited for consideration in coming months.

However, all the ideas and discussions will remain just that if there is no funding to realise them. Right now, we need funds to upgrade our state highway network to accommodate our healthy regional economic growth and the accompanying growth in traffic.

On the plus side, the first of a new series of passing lanes between New Plymouth and Te Kuiti just south of Piopio was completed a few weeks ago with around six more being planned. It is vital that these are constructed in the near future to continue improvements on the key, strategic northern access route.

The roll-on, roll-off ferry system linking Onehunga, New Plymouth and Nelson that is now being progressed by Port Taranaki also has the potential to bring many benefits to the region and to New Zealand's economy generally.

Another very important link with potential development is the Stratford to Okahukura railway line that must be retained and upgraded to ensure future access to Port Taranaki and the region. This is a unique line with 24 tunnels and a wide variety of scenery from verdant dairy pastures to rugged bush-clad, steep hill country. It is also an untapped tourism resource that received enthusiastic endorsement from Marcus Lush on his recent television series *Off The Rails*.

Transport is a vital ingredient in the progress of any region, but particularly in Taranaki. It is, therefore, very frustrating to have our plans buffeted this way and that by changes in Land Transport New Zealand funding, as reported on page three of this edition.

We have in this region one of New Zealand's leading dairy industries, we have oil and gas fields and large-scale energy and hydrocarbon industries, and a steadily expanding tourism industry. We deserve – and will continue to work towards – a reliable land transport system and efficient road network.

David Walter - CHAIRMAN

## Minister meets with iwi and Council

A post-Treaty settlement visit by the Minister for the Environment Marian Hobbs recently brought Ngati Ruanui iwi and local authorities together to discuss environmental issues.



Minister for the Environment Marian Hobbs and Ngati Ruanui Chairman Sid Kahukuranui discuss environmental issues at a post-Treaty meeting.

Under the settlement deed, the Minister is obliged to monitor the nature and scope of relationships between iwi, who have settled their Treaty claims, and their local authorities. This was the first post-settlement meeting for Ngati Ruanui. Member of Parliament Jill Pettis and representatives of South Taranaki and Stratford district councils and the Taranaki Regional Council attended the meeting.

The Council and Ngati Ruanui Tahua Iwi Authority were the first in New Zealand to have a joint compliance monitoring programme in place for a coastal discharge following a resource consent hearing for the Kiwi Co-operative Dairies outfall.

Ngati Ruanui Tahua Iwi Authority and Te Runanga O Ngati Ruanui are currently submitters on a number of resource consent applications concerning Fonterra site discharges to air or through the outfall. They are also involved in the South Taranaki District application to increase its discharge to accommodate the treated wastewater from Eltham. The Runanga has recently joined Nga Ruahine iwi in the Todd Energy appeal on the Council's Hearing Committee decision on the Fonterra dual fuel, resource consent applications.

The local authorities and Te Runanga O Ngati Ruanui expressed their interest in further developing their relationships while acknowledging that there may be differences of opinion. Marian Hobbs noted that the relationship between Ngati Ruanui and local authorities was developing and was generally positive, and said she was keen to maintain regular dialogue with iwi and to discuss relevant issues with local authorities.

## Nitrate levels look better (cont)

quality and compromised surface water quality, and points an accusatory finger at pastoral farming as having the greatest impact on water quality in the country.

Basil Chamberlain says that information from the latest reports is more reassuring for the Taranaki region.

‘They come from good quality scientific investigation and provide some vindication of the environmental work and very significant investments that Taranaki people are making to maintain and enhance water quality. They certainly challenge some of the very generalized, subjective and in too many instances, simply incorrect comments that have been made about the quality of New Zealand's ground and surface waters. Undoubtedly there are water quality issues to be addressed in Taranaki and elsewhere but they are not all the same. There are also a number of very good examples of progress and improvements in addressing issues in Taranaki and elsewhere.

It is important when discussions on water quality are occurring that sound information is used to inform those discussions, that differences between regions and parts of regions are acknowledged, and that people are specific and precise about where the problems are and what they are. Being accurate and specific about problems provides the opportunity to move forward and fix them.”

# Taranaki roading plans face hurdles

Another hitch in funding for Taranaki's roads has frustrated Council plans.

Under Land Transport New Zealand's Regional Funding scheme, Taranaki was allocated \$4 million a year for a 10-year period beginning 2005/06, based on the population and the fuel used within the region. As requested, the Council prepared a list of proposed projects and indicated their priorities.

In the meantime, Transit NZ revised its 10-year state highway roading programme. It estimated that, as the regional work was not ready to proceed immediately, around 80% of the total funds available for regional funding for 2005/06 could be diverted to state highway projects anywhere in New Zealand. Consequently, it appears that a number of Taranaki projects are once again on hold.

The announcement sent shocks of surprise through regions throughout New Zealand and strong protests were voiced. Land Transport New Zealand (formerly Transfund) have since indicated that they will ensure that all regions will have their full entitlement as projects are ready and the funds become available.

This latest announcement was equally perplexing and attracted further strong reactions from regional councils and road controlling authorities, Council Director – Operations Dex Knowles says. Not only does it mean that each year the Council will have to go through the arduous process of reviewing projects, but it will have to also face a major hurdle of timing.

For example, if a district council proposes a roading project on a local road, the difference between the subsidy available from Land Transport New Zealand and the total cost will need to be found out of district council rates. The project, therefore, will have to make its way through the annual estimates and rating processes to make sure its local share is in place. The funding is available at the beginning of June, which means it will be announced after the district council has set its rating provisions in concrete for the incoming year.

At this stage, it is not clear whether the remaining 20% of the total funds available for national funding for 2005/06 will be distributed evenly throughout the country or allocated to areas with special needs. In the meantime, the Taranaki Regional Council has submitted its regional funding applications and expects to hear the approved programme at the end of this month.

The Council's priorities for regional funding allocations that were submitted to Land Transport New Zealand are:



Changes to roads funding for Taranaki have brought more challenges for Council plans.

- a feasibility study to see if a number of local roading projects can be justified. Projects include realignment of approaches or replacement of single lane bridges, stock underpasses and seal extensions on significant routes
- realignment of SH3 north of the Awakino Hotel
- Normanby overbridge replacement and road realignment
- Rugby Road underpass realignment and new rail bridge
- passing lanes on SH3 between New Plymouth and Otorohanga
- investigation of improvements such as tunnel widening and realignment in the Awakino Gorge
- four-laning of Northgate, New Plymouth
- improvement works to the Mt Messenger route
- Tangahoe Bridge widening
- completion of seal, SH43 Tangarakau Gorge

Interestingly, a number of Taranaki's priorities were for work on SH3 in the Waikato region. Environment Waikato has recently supported the Taranaki Regional Council's priorities.

## Treescaping Taranaki field day attracts hardy crowd

The weather may have been rough in the days before, but about 70 people rugged up and turned out for a Treescaping Taranaki field day at Neil and Denise Phillips' Stratford property.

The field day was part of the Treescaping Taranaki Project promoted by the Taranaki Tree Trust and the Council.

Members of the field day group discussed the benefits of tree planting, picked up tips for planning and planting trees on their own properties and observed examples of planting for beautification, shelter, wetlands and riparian management on the Phillips farm.



The field day group at Stratford discusses wetland and riparian planting techniques.

# Guide to surface water availability

The Taranaki Regional Council has recently published *A Guide to Surface Water Availability and Allocation in Taranaki* to help water users understand the requirements of the *Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki* and to get quick general information about where in the region stream water might be available for consumptive use.

Until recently it has been taken for granted that there will always be enough fresh water to meet all the needs in the region. However, this is not always the case. There is increasing pressure on our freshwater resources from people wanting to take large quantities of water. And in some cases rivers and streams may be near to or already fully allocated.



This map illustrates the Mangaoraka catchment and consented surface water takes.

The booklet provides guidance for those planning to take or use surface water in the Taranaki region. It shows at a general level how much and from where in our region, water can be taken from our rivers and streams under the Regional Fresh Water Plan.

An overview of water allocation issues in Taranaki is provided and an explanation of the policies, rules and conditions that might apply if you wish to take or use water. Case studies that demonstrate “good practice” and techniques for water conservation are also included.

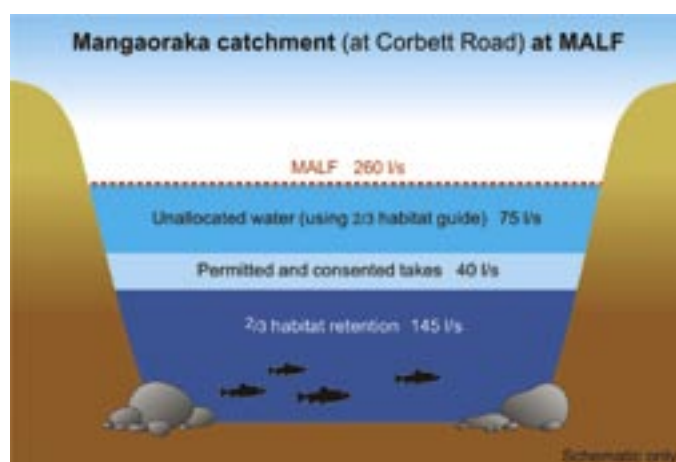
Specific information is provided for people planning to take water for 38 catchments that include Taranaki’s largest rivers and streams, or those under high demand.

The Guide contains easy-to-read summaries of the characteristics, current consumptive uses and pressures for each catchment. The information is also presented in tables, maps and diagrams.

The accompanying diagram and map illustrate the information provided, in this case for the Mangaoraka catchment. The Mangaoraka Stream and its tributaries (a sub-catchment of the Waiongana River) have a catchment area of 55 km<sup>2</sup>.

Of the water that is potentially available for consumptive use in the Mangaoraka catchment at Corbett Road, 40 l/s has been allocated (15% of mean annual low flow). This means that up to 75 l/s (29% of MALF) of water is unallocated and potentially available for further consumptive uses.

For a copy of the guide, call the Council offices or visit [www.trc.govt.nz](http://www.trc.govt.nz).



This diagram shows water allocation information in the Mangaoraka catchment at natural mean annual low flow (MALF).

## Riparian plants head for home



South Taranaki farmers at the Hawera depot load their share of the more than 136,000 native plants to be planted along the region’s rivers and streams as part of the Council’s ongoing riparian planting scheme. Over the last ten years, Council staff and farmers have prepared 1139 riparian management plans, involving fencing and planting, for over 4000 kilometres.

# Busy year for resource consents

The numbers of resource consents processed by the Council this year may top last year's record tally.

In past years, Council staff could expect to process between 350 and 400 consents annually, however, last year the number increased to a record total of 568. This year is expected to be equally busy or busier. The increase reflects both the high level of energy exploration and development and the present buoyant economy. In addition, a number of dairy discharge consents initiated around 20 years ago are due for renewal.

The recent Ministry for the Environment's annual survey of all local authorities for 2003/04 notes a national increase of 11% in the number of consent decisions nationally over 2001/02 with an increase of 19% for the Taranaki Regional Council.

Director – Resource Management Fred McLay says that the Council's performance compares well with the national figures. One significant difference between national and local figures relates to the way breaches of consent conditions are dealt with. Nationally, 81% of breaches of consent conditions are dealt with informally. Breaches of Taranaki Regional Council consent conditions, in comparison, are usually the subject of formal enforcement processes such as the issuing of abatement notices.

Further comparisons of interest between Taranaki figures and

national figures (in brackets where applicable) include:

- Consent applications publicly notified, 1% (nationally 4.8%) reflecting the high number of dairy shed renewal applications processed on a non-notified basis.
- Pre-hearing meetings for all notified consent applications (nationally 25%).
- Council officers' decisions on 99% of resource consent applications (nationally 87%).
- Consents for controlled activities 62% – demonstrating that regional plans are working well – (nationally 24%).
- Further information requested from applicant, 10% (one of the lowest in the country).
- No appeals outstanding and none lodged with the Court during the year.
- No decisions made using limited notification provisions (nationally 0.7%).
- Consents processed within statutory time limits 100% (nationally 77%).
- Median discharge consent charge \$350 (nationally \$598).

## Set up of plastics recovery scheme makes progress

Work on establishing a national scheme for recovering farm plastics is proceeding and gathering support from farmers, regional councils and manufacturers.

The scheme, which focuses on collecting used agrichemical containers and feedstock conservation plastic wrap (farm wrap), is being prepared by private consultant firm, Responsible Resource Recovery Ltd.

Under the proposed recovery system, a levy on associated farm products will be used to fund the pick up and recycling of the unwanted plastics. Business and operational plans have been prepared, and negotiations with manufacturers for buy-in for the voluntary levy are under way. One key to the success of the venture will be unanimous support by all manufacturers



Silage wrap is one farm waste that may be accounted for by the long-awaited scheme for recovering farm plastics.

to ensure that the levy is spread across all similar products. Another important factor will be the ease with which farmers can deliver and recyclers can recover the products. Seven pick-up points have been proposed for Taranaki.

Director – Environment Quality Gary Bedford says that the Council has supported the valuable and long-awaited programme for the region since its inception and remains confident that it will eventuate.

In the meantime, farmers are advised to prepare their unwanted plastics for recycling. Agrichemical containers should be rinsed three times and farm wrap should be kept clean and dry.

For farm wrap it's a case of shake, rattle and roll.

**Shake** – all plastic free of dirt

**Rattle** – it again to keep it clean and dry

**Roll** – it up into a ball and secure it with twine.

## Waiokura field day promotes best management practices

A field day in the South Taranaki Waiokura Stream catchment last month was part of a national promotion of best management practices to improve water quality.

The project is an initiative of Fonterra Research in association with the New Zealand Dairy Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and MAF's Sustainable Farming Fund, along with AgResearch, NIWA and regional councils.

Farmers in the Waiokura Stream catchment watch a demonstration and receive information on riparian management aimed to encourage more planting this winter.



# Awards benefit environment

A bar and restaurant, a landfill, a power station and two schools might seem unlikely bedfellows – until you examine their environmental policies. Along with a backpackers', a scenic reserve trust and a number of Taranaki landowners they are among the 11 recipients of this year's Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards.

This year's award winners are:

## The Mill Bar and Restaurant

Two years ago, the Mill Bar and Restaurant investigated improved energy efficiency and waste minimisation and worked with staff to introduce a number of changes.

As a result, the business has reduced its annual power consumption by over \$2,500 and, through a waste minimisation exercise, has reduced overall operating costs by approximately 3%. Draught beer wastage is down by 33%, glass and cardboard are now recycled and organic waste is reused as animal feed.

Further waste minimisation initiatives are planned by the business that now boasts a very positive environmental image.

## Contact Energy Ltd Taranaki Combined Cycle Power Station

Throughout its six years of operation, the Stratford Power Station has safeguarded the environment through process improvements, hazardous chemicals and waste management, and environmental accreditation for site and system management.

## New Plymouth District Council – Colson Road landfill

The Colson Road landfill is considered to be one of the top 11 landfills in New Zealand and represents the future of solid waste management in Taranaki – as it graduates towards becoming the region's single solid waste disposal facility.

The landfill has been designed to meet all best practice standards for construction, and carries out environmentally excellent operation policies.

## Stratford High School

Stratford High School recycles 35% of the waste generated, including glass and approximately 120 litres of paper each week that would previously have gone to landfill. The school has a 'switch off' policy for each unoccupied room, office

equipment is turned off at nights and computers unattended for 30 minutes are switched off. Fluorescent lighting and a tightly controlled gas system ensure energy efficiency.

## Annual Great Urenui School Possum Hunt

Between 1000 and 1200 possums are collected each year in the fund raising competition organised by the Urenui Home and School Committee. The event raises awareness of the problems that pest animals pose in Taranaki and encourages the control of possums.

## Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust

The Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust is well on the way with the extensive pest control programme essential to establish the reserve as a 'mainland island' and has benefited from voluntary in-kind contributions of \$42,750. The Trust is now working towards establishing a pest-proof fence sanctuary.



Building a mainland island - Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust

## Shoestring Backpackers

Shoestring Backpackers provides accommodation for 15 motel guests and 26 backpackers – many of whom recycle as a matter of course.

The business reviewed its waste generation and established and manages recycling in the backpacker kitchen, composting and reuse of food scraps for farm animal feed. As a result, the waste has been halved.

A replacement policy has introduced energy efficient lighting. Hot and cold water systems are maintained to ensure

there is no leakage, and gas usage is kept to a minimum. The business is committed to energy efficiency and overall reduction of waste.

## Ian and Theresa Strachan

The Strachans began fencing and planting the riparian margins of their 79-hectare farm east of Inglewood when they took over the property in 1989. The natural habitat and water quality of the Makara Stream have benefited from their work.

## Rex and Janice Carroll

A number of small tributaries of the Te Popo Stream and the Manganui River flow through Rex and Janice Carroll's 177-hectare dairy farm in Midhirst. The Carrolls have fenced and planted almost all of the 13.6 kilometres of stream, and fenced two bush blocks and a wetland.

## Rod Pearce

Rod Pearce's Waitotara hill country farm is an outstanding example of commitment to sustainable agriculture. He has carried out extensive soil conservation and sustainable land management work over the past ten years, helped initiate the *Green Tick (Farmsure)* quality assurance programme, is a core member of the Wanganui Sustainability Group and a member of the New Zealand Sustainability Council.

## Steve and Daphne Tarrant

In early 1999 the Tarrants worked with the Council to prepare a comprehensive farm plan for their 335-hectare sheep and beef farm on the Strathmore Saddle. Plantings have softened the effects of several flood events in recent years and benefited animal health and welfare. Land improvements have allowed the number of stock units to be increased by 400 since the farm plan was prepared.

The projects suitable for the annual award selection must make a practical contribution to the sustainable management of the natural resources of the region or promote community awareness of the need for sustainable management of natural and physical resources through a promotional or educational programme. All the projects must be sustainable over time and not dependent on a continuing subsidy larger than the benefit to the community. They must be current, ongoing or nearing completion and be carried out in Taranaki.

# Annual monitoring reports keep tabs on performance

Monitoring and reporting on the performance of major consent holders accounts for a large proportion of Council work.

Each report summarises ongoing and comprehensive work that may include many diverse inspections, water sample collections, freshwater and marine biosurveys and air samples, and monitoring of any environmental impacts caused by activities with consents.

Three recently released 2003-2004 reports of particular interest to the community illustrate how well the consent holders are performing.

## Mangati Stream Catchment

This report deals with industrial discharges to the Mangati Stream in Bell Block. In the past, the disposal of stormwater and wastewaters – often inadequately treated or managed – into the Mangati catchment from a large number of industrial sites had badly affected the water quality and aquatic ecosystems in the stream. These days, every industrial site with potential for contamination is obliged by the Council to have a discharge consent. These amount to 14 non-agricultural water discharge, five air discharge and one discharge to air consents.

Overall, a good level of environmental performance was achieved by the consent holders. The macroinvertebrate communities in the stream were healthier and more numerous, and the discharges from the wetlands at the bottom of Connett Road were of higher quality than previous years.

Clark and Rogers Limited and Corrocoat Engineering Services Limited achieved a high level of environmental performance. ABB Limited, Greymouth Petroleum Acquisitions Company Limited, MCK Metals (Pacific) Limited, Paraita Properties Limited and Schulmerger Seaco Limited achieved a good level of environmental performance. New Plymouth District Council, Olex Cables Limited and Tegel Foods Limited's feed site all achieved a good level of environmental performance, although in each case the discharge management could be improved. Improvement was also desirable in the environmental performance of Mainland Products Limited, Tasman Oil Tools Limited and Tegel Foods Limited's poultry processing plant.

## Inglewood Engineering Limited

The Company operates an abrasive blasting operation in Brown Street, Inglewood, and a mobile operation within Taranaki, and holds a resource consent for air emissions. The installation of treatment equipment has meant that the treated emissions have had little or no impact on neighbouring Brown Street properties. Screening has been installed for mobile operations and management and equipment upgrades have successfully contained spray painting fumes at Brown Street.

The monitoring report says that Inglewood Engineering has demonstrated a commitment to improving environmental performance and has achieved a good level of environmental performance during the year.

## Westgate Transport Limited

Westgate Transport Limited achieved a good level of environmental performance during the 2003-2004 year. The company services shipping at Port Taranaki and holds two resource consents that allow it to discharge stormwater and treated washwater into the Tasman Sea.

While there was one unauthorised incident at the Port when oil was discharged to the Tasman Sea, the contingency plan for the Port area was successfully applied to deal with the incident.

## Taranaki Regional Council Facts File

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Address:        | Private Bag 713<br>Stratford                         |
| Street Address: | 47 Cloten Road<br>Stratford                          |
| Telephone:      | 0-6-765 7127   |
| Facsimile:      | 0-6-765 5097   |
| Email:          | info@trc.govt.nz                                     |
| Web site:       | <a href="http://www.trc.govt.nz">www.trc.govt.nz</a> |

### AFTER HOURS CONTACT NUMBERS

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| After Hours Contact:               | 0-6-765 7127 |
| Environmental Hotline:             | 0800 736 222 |
| Civil Defence Emergency Management | 0800 736 222 |

### REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

#### New Plymouth Constituency:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Tom Cloke    | 0-6-753 5586 |
| Moira Irving | 0-6-753 3063 |
| David Lean   | 0-6-753 3325 |
| Barry Marsh  | 0-6-758 2252 |

#### North Taranaki Constituency:

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Roger Maxwell   | 0-6-752 3622 |
| Donald McIntyre | 0-6-762 4701 |

#### South Taranaki Constituency:

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Bruce Cudby   | 0-6-278 5573 |
| David MacLeod | 0-6-278 5577 |
| Neil Walker   | 0-6-278 7541 |

#### Stratford Constituency:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| David Walter (Chairman) | 0-6-762 7822 |
|-------------------------|--------------|

### MEETING SCHEDULE:

The Taranaki Regional Council operates to a six-weekly committee and Council meeting schedule.

**Wednesday 29 June, 10.30 am,**  
Ordinary Meeting

**Tuesday 12 July, 10.30 am,** Civil Defence  
Emergency Management Group

**Thursday 14 July, 10.30 am,**  
Regional Land Transport Committee

**Wednesday 20 July, 10.30 am,**  
Consents and Regulatory Committee

**Thursday 21 July, 10.30 am,**  
Policy and Planning Committee

**Monday 1 August, 10.00 am,**  
Executive Committee

**Wednesday 10 August, 10.30 am,**  
Ordinary Meeting.

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# Annual Plan is finalised and adopted

Implementation of the newly adopted Annual Plan will get under way on July 1. Seventeen submissions to the Draft Annual Plan were received and considered during the finalisation of the Plan.

Main points from the Annual Report include:

- action on the development of the two regional gardens Tupare and Hollard Gardens, remains dependent on the finalisation and adoption of the gardens' asset management plans.
- additional resources have been included in the estimates to allow the Council to be more responsive to river control and flood protection across the whole region. This action is necessary as a result of changes to the nature of Taranaki's rivers arising from weather and flood events in February 2004. In the first instance there will be provision to lift the level of service in the Waitotara catchment.
- additional staff resources have been

provided for to allow the Council to implement programmes to deal with the Council's role in biodiversity.

- provision has been made for a possible small increase in the level of subsidised passenger transport services which may arise from the current review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.
- the Council's Long-Term Council Community Plan budgeted dividends from Westgate Transport Ltd to be \$3.1m in 2005/2006. The ongoing change to Westgate's business, arising from the decline in Maui gas, has impacted upon dividend streams. Consequently, the Council now anticipates only \$2.4m in dividends in 2005/2006. This shortfall in revenue has been addressed partly by means of transfer from the Dividend Equalisation Reserve (\$450,000) with the balance needing to be funded from rates.
- the Council will introduce a relatively modest uniform annual general charge

(UAGC) of \$23.80 (GST exclusive). This is a move away from the Council's rates being based solely upon the capital value of a ratepayer's property and reflects a core level of services that all ratepayers receive from the Council regardless of the value of their property. The move to a UAGC will result in some small change to the incidence of rates, but the effect on both high and low value properties is minor in nature. District councils have charged UAGCs for a number of years and increasingly regional councils are matching that trend now that they have the statutory authority to do so. The Council has in past years, received submissions seeking the introduction of a UAGC.

- general rates income based on capital value is proposed to decrease by 1.5% and income from targeted rates will also substantially reduce next year, being replaced by revenue from uniform annual general charges.

## Landfill comes under scrutiny

A survey and analysis of New Plymouth's Colson Road landfill in April turned up some useful results for future planning, including the high proportion of organic waste in roadside collections and the high proportion of timber sent to the transfer station and discharged to the landfill.

The survey, carried out jointly by the Council and the New Plymouth District Council, aimed primarily to measure construction and demolition waste being discharged to the landfill to meet the waste reduction and recycling targets set out in the *Regional Waste Strategy for the Taranaki Region* and the *New Zealand Waste Strategy*.

The information is important to any consideration of the life of the landfill and opportunities for diverting waste for recycling. Both the organic waste and the timber are potential recycling resources.

The Colson landfill currently handles 37-40,000 tonnes of solid waste each year. During the week of the survey, 2 tonnes of solid waste from 16 loads were sampled, sorted and analysed. Timber, rubble and concrete, putrescibles and cardboard were measured and analysed to identify their sources.

The survey information will provide a useful benchmark if plans go ahead for the landfill to take all solid waste from all districts in the region.



Photocap: Two tonnes of solid waste were sampled, sorted and analysed in a recent survey at the Colson Road landfill in New Plymouth.