

## Good work recognised

Taranaki environmental champions ranging from primary school pupils to a large corporate have been honoured in this year's Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards.

Farmers, businesses and a district council are also among this year's winners.

"It's great to be able to highlight some of the good environmental work going on in the community," says the Council Chairman, David MacLeod.

"The fact that Taranaki enjoys a generally excellent environment is not an accident – it is the result of hard work in the community. The awards are an opportunity for us to express our appreciation and support."

The Council has made nine awards for 2011, bringing the total to 177 since they were inaugurated in 1993.

The annual awards recognise Taranaki projects or activities that contribute to or raise awareness of sustainable resource management, that are economically viable, and that are current or nearing completion.

The awards are made in three categories – Business/Local Authority, Agricultural, and Individual/School/Community Group. This year's winners are:

### Business/Local Authority

- South Taranaki District Council
- Winstone Aggregates Wiremu Road Quarry
- Return 2 Earth

### Agricultural

- Neil and Jackie Whitehead
- Robert and Verna Bourke
- John and Elaine Sanderson

### Individual/School/Community Group

- Welbourn Primary School
- Oakura Primary School
- Hawera Intermediate School

For more information about this year's award winners, see pages 4 and 5.



The Council Chairman, David MacLeod (front centre) with some of this year's Environmental Awards winners. Back row: Tony Dowd and Tim Hazell (Winstone Aggregates). Middle row: Sam Heemi (Winstone Aggregates), Russell and Nerida How (Return 2 Earth) and Peter Cook (STDC). Front row: Robert and Verna Bourke.

## Stream scheme hits 2 million

Taranaki's streamside fencing and planting programme has passed a significant milestone – and one group of lucky farmers has even more reason to celebrate.

More than 300,000 plants have been distributed to farmers in the past month for planting under the Taranaki Regional Council's riparian management programme, taking the total to 2 million-plus since the scheme began in the 1990s.

"The figures show how this programme is really gathering momentum," the Council's Chairman, David MacLeod, told a ceremony in Lepperton rewarding four scheme members for their commitment to the work.

"Our prize winners are among a growing legion of Taranaki farmers who are committed to riparian protection."

Under the programme, water quality on the

Taranaki ring plain is being protected and enhanced with thousands of kilometres of riparian fencing and vegetation.

It is one of the largest water and soil conservation projects in New Zealand and landowners who were early with their plant orders went into the draw for \$10,000 worth of prizes sponsored by Fonterra, Revital Fertilisers and Spray It. Major winners and their prizes are:

- Michael and Robyn Schrader (Hurleyville) – 700 riparian plants, preparation, planting and maintenance valued at \$3,500 (sponsored by Fonterra).
- Nigel Bredin and Brenda Cash (Okato) – goods to the value of \$2,500 from RD1 (sponsored by Fonterra).
- Andrew and Maree Robertson (Hawera) – riparian plants worth \$1,000 and Revital

Continued on page 2

## From the Chair

Winter may be starting to make its presence felt but the good thing about this time of year is that it's when we make our annual Environmental Awards.



It's always a pleasure to meet the winners and talk to them about the efforts they are making to protect and enhance our Taranaki environment. Once again, it highlights the fact that Taranaki enjoys a generally high-quality environment not by accident, but because of the efforts of our award winners and many others like them.

This year we've made nine awards, and you'll find all the details in this edition of Recount.

You'll also find details about the winners in this year's riparian prize draw. These four famers have much to be excited about and so do the rest of us. The prize presentation was an opportunity for us to highlight a significant milestone in the riparian management programme – we've just passed the 2 million mark in the number of native plants distributed for planting alongside our rivers and streams.

And when you consider that this season's total is more than 300,000, you can see how momentum is really building as more and more landowners commit themselves to completing this work and ensure it's included in their budgeted annual work programmes.

When the project is completed, the length of Taranaki streambank protected with fencing and vegetation will be about the same as the length of the entire New Zealand coastline. It's a massive environmental project, and one the region can be proud of.

Finally, you may be aware that the Government recently issued a National Policy Statement (NPS) for Freshwater Management. An earlier draft NPS had indicated that crucial decision-making about freshwater quality and allocation may be taken out of the hands of regional councils and their communities, a matter that we had been concerned about. So it was pleasing that the NPS promulgated last month left most of these decision-making powers with the Regional Council and our Taranaki community. That's where they belong.

See p6 of this edition of Recount for more discussion about the Freshwater NPS, and a Draft NPS for Biodiversity that has been out for public consultation.

- David MacLeod, CHAIRMAN



**WINNERS ARE GRINNERS:** Celebrating the riparian milestone are, from left: John Hutchings of Fonterra, with prize winners Andrew Robertson, Michael (holding Nicolaas) and Robyn Schrader, Marlene Busby and Nigel Bredin, along with Kerry O'Neill of Revital Fertilisers and the Chairman of the Taranaki Regional Council, David MacLeod.

## Stream scheme hits 2 million

Continued from page 1

fertiliser worth \$2000 (sponsored by Revital Fertilisers).

- Marlene Busby (Egmont Village) – lime and slurry spreading worth \$1,000 (sponsored by Spray It).

"It's good to be able to reward some of those who order plants early and ensure that the fencing and planting is in their budgeted annual work programmes," says Mr MacLeod. "We tender out the plant supply and with plant numbers increasing rapidly, ordering a year in advance is essential for us to arrange supply at wholesale rates."

The Council prepared a riparian management plan for the Schrader property in 2008 and the couple have since been working to complete it, retiring and planting large gullies bordering the farm. They plan to plant 800 m of streambank this year.

Nigel Bredin and Brenda Cash have almost completed the planting required at their Morris Hill Farms, with 1,170 plants in the ground and another 700 ordered this year. They have also completed 65% of the 2,205 km of fencing required.

Andrew and Maree Robertson are working to complete fencing and planting of the 6.6 km of the Tawhiti Stream that flows through their property, with 1.2 km to be protected this season.

Marlene Busby has had 14,887 plants planted over three properties, with another 3,000 going in this season. Most of the required fencing has also been completed.

Mr MacLeod says the four prize-winners are good examples of the riparian programme in action. "This sort of work is happening all over the ring plain, and the prize presentation is a fitting way to highlight it."

Fonterra's Manager of Sustainability John Hutchings, says the prize-draw partnership with the Council is one of the ways the co-operative can help encourage their farmers to adopt their own riparian planting programmes.

"Riparian planting is strongly supported by Fonterra as an effective way to enhance water quality. We're pleased that our contribution to the riparian prizes goes towards helping our farmers do what's right for the environment. In Taranaki, over 95% of local dairy farms now have riparian plans. And as farmers work to physically put the plans in place, the results are both obvious and encouraging.

"Working with local councils and getting in behind programmes that encourage riparian planting and other water quality enhancement schemes are key priorities for the co-op and we're seeing progress from these partnerships. Through the Dairying and Clean Stream Accord, some 85% of dairy cattle nationwide are now excluded from waterways, with a goal of 90% by 2012."

Taranaki's goal is 90% by 2015.

All Blacks coach amongst it – p7

# More saying 'let's go on the bus'

Passenger numbers are growing on New Plymouth Citylink bus services.

Total patronage on New Plymouth, Bell Block-Waitara and Oakura commuter services in March was 57,046, the highest ever recorded and 19% above March 2010.

In the nine months from 1 July 2010 to 31 March 2011, total patronage was 347,763, up 10% on the same period in the previous financial year.

Citylink services are operated by Tranzit Coachlines under contract to the Taranaki Regional Council. The Council's Director-Operations, Rob Phillips, welcomes the increased patronage, which follows a major revamp of routes and services in May 2010.

"We made some further tweaks in May this year, including extra coverage on some routes, and we expect this will help to further boost patronage," he says.

The most recent changes were introduced on 9 May and included:



- New peak-time services for Riversdale Drive in New Plymouth and for Glen Avon, both previously served only in off-peak hours.
- Greater coverage of Waitara East on outbound Waitara services from New Plymouth.
- Extensions to Jans Tce, Oakura, and Holloway Rd, Omata, on the Oakura service.

- Extra coverage on the Saturday New Plymouth West service.
- Adjustments, generally of one to 10 minutes, in departure times from many of the timed waypoints on most of the circular routes within New Plymouth, and on the services to and from Bell Block-Waitara, and Oakura.

"It's timely to offer more options just as rising petrol prices are prompting many people to look seriously at transport alternatives," says Mr Phillips.

However, the adage of "use it or lose it" still applies. The service is jointly funded by the Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency and "we must ensure that the usage justifies the money spent", he says.

The CityLink service has been aligned with the New Plymouth District Council's 'Let's Go' programme, which promotes alternatives to car travel including cycling, walking and buses.

## Heritage, tradition hand-in-hand

A new tradition is taking shape at Tupare, the New Plymouth heritage property under the stewardship of the Taranaki Regional Council.

For the third year, a series of High Teas is being held at Tupare's Chapman-Taylor homestead, with participants encouraged to dress in their finest for the occasion. This year's High Teas take place from 2pm to 4pm on the first Sunday of July, August, September and October and proceeds from the \$15-a-head entry fee go to Mangorei School PTA, which caters the events. The afternoon is rounded off with a guided tour of the homestead.

The Council's Regional Gardens Manager, Greg Rine, says the events are an opportunity to experience life as it was in Tupare in the middle of last century, when Sir Russell Matthews and his family hosted lively social occasions that often featured visiting British nobility, American oil tycoons and prominent entertainers of the day.

"Sir Russell was himself a traditionalist, so we can be sure he'd approve of what we're doing today," he says. "And the architect James Chapman-Taylor was a devotee of the Arts and Crafts movement, which was based on a reverence for traditional craftsmanship



TEA TIME: Tupare's stately homestead is hosting a series of High Teas this winter.

– so tradition is a big part of Tupare."

Mr Rine says Tupare and its people are an important part of the story of New Plymouth and Taranaki. "It has immense heritage value and events like the High Teas allow us to share this, keep the stories alive, and give us a taste of tradition. We can understand more about ourselves as a result."

The Sunday High Teas run from 2pm to 4pm on 3 July, 7 August, 4 September and 2 October. Bookings and pre-payment are essential and can be made at the Raised Eyebrow Art and Coffee House, 501 Mangorei Road (opp. Mangorei School), phone 759 8955.

As well as Tupare, the Council owns and administers Pukeiti and Hollard Gardens on

behalf of the people of the region. Winter events at these properties include:

Pukeiti, Sunday August 7, 10.30am-2pm: Explorer Club fun day – fun for the young and the young at heart. More details will be available at [www.pukeiti.org.nz](http://www.pukeiti.org.nz) closer to the event.

Hollard Gardens, Sunday 14 August, 2pm-4pm: Free workshop – home garden design. Get hints on designing your home garden and where to start. Bring excess plants and seeds for the Swap Stall.

Tupare, Pukeiti and Hollard Gardens, 29 October-7 November: Powerco Taranaki Garden Spectacular (formerly Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival). Festival events will take place at all three gardens.

# Initiative, inclusiveness and leadership



## Welbourn Primary School

– for environmental education and action

Environmental initiatives at Welbourn School since 2009 have included:

- Becoming a partner with Forest and Bird in a project to plant and enhance the Te Henui Walkway. Pupils are involved in planning as well as physical work, and also monitor water quality in the Te Henui Stream.
- Establishing a waste minimisation programme and running contests and other promotions to support it.
- Establishing a gardening club (pictured left).
- Promoting walking school buses, “walk to school Wednesdays” and other alternatives to the use of cars to get to and from school



## Going the extra mile pays off

This year's three Environmental Awards winners in the Business/Local Authority category are:

### South Taranaki District Council

– for enhanced stream habitat at the Kapuni Water Supply Intake

As part of a \$3 million project to install a new intake structure and associated pipelines to supply water to Hawera, the Vector Gas Treatment Plant and surrounding rural areas, the South Taranaki District Council included:

- Construction of a side channel for the water intake, leaving the main channel clear for fish passage.
- Removal of an old weir and other structures that impeded fish passage, and remediation of the river banks.
- Purchase of adjoining land so that riparian planting and weed control could be undertaken.

The Council also ensured that there was minimal environmental impact during the construction phase of the project.

The Council's Water Supply Manager, Peter Cook, welcomed the award, saying it vindicates the considerable environmental effort that went into the project, and the decision to buy the adjoining land and provide riparian protection. “There used to be quite a lot of stock getting to the river there.”

He says there was excellent collaboration between the Councils, Vector, consultants and contractors during the project. “Vector, who made a capital contribution to the project, is providing valuable ongoing assistance, and

Taranaki Regional Council staff provided important advice and help with both design and installation during the project.”

### Winstone Aggregates Wiremu Road Quarry

– for sustainable management and sound environmental performance

Winstone Aggregates has adopted an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System at the Wiremu Road site.

The company works with the landowner to progressively rehabilitate extraction and overburden areas as they are completed. Refilled areas are returned to pasture and one extraction area will form a lake. There are plans for further riparian management and wetland restoration. The entrance to the site has been enhanced with native planting.

The ‘best practice’ operation and design of the site controls and mitigates any off-site effects of noise and dust. And a high standard of water quality is maintained through sediment and erosion control procedures.

The quarry is managed by Tony Dowd, with four staff – Sam Heemi, Gary Ratahi, Fred Ratahi and John James. They say the award is “awesome”, especially as the site is a small one. Winstone Aggregates General Manager Bernie Chote says the company is proud to be able supply its Taranaki customers in a sustainable manner, and to have this effort recognised.

### Return 2 Earth

– for composting of organic waste

Return 2 Earth is based at the New Plymouth Colson Road landfill and each year processes

large volumes of green waste, wood shavings and animal shed bedding into high-quality compost for a range of markets.

This operation provides a sustainable use for material that, in most cases, would otherwise have been landfilled. All of the green waste from the New Plymouth and Waitara transfer stations is processed by Return 2 Earth.

Outdoor windrows are used with mechanical agitation to optimize the compost process, based on the temperature and moisture content of the windrows.

Use of the company's products by farmers and gardeners benefits the environment as it is likely to be associated with reduced use of chemical fertilizers, reduced leaching of nutrients, improved soil structure and increased soil carbon sequestration.

Company founder Russell How says he and his wife Nerida are honoured to receive the award and hope it encourages others to put hard work and effort into sustainability. Describing himself as an entrepreneur, Mr How got the idea for Return 2 Earth at a sustainability field day at Ruakura in 2008. “I met Gerry Gillespie, of Zero Waste Australia, who talked about what had been achieved in Australia, and I could see an opportunity to make something happen here.”

Mr How says the Taranaki Regional Council, New Plymouth District Council and Envirowaste Ltd have provided valuable encouragement and assistance, and the company's product is now used by farmers, local gardeners and the NPDC Parks Department.

# recognised in awards for three schools

## Oakura Primary School

– for environmental education and action

Oakura Primary School's environmental activities include:

- An Oakura Beach clean-up, held annually since 1972 and involving the whole school.
- Growing native plants for planting within the school and reserve areas in the Oakura area. The school also assists New Plymouth District Council and Trees for Survival in coastal and reserve plantings
- Involving senior students in making penguin boxes for the little blue penguins that live along the local beach.
- Running a well-established and sustainable waste minimisation programme.
- Using local natural resources – rock pools and the river – in regular study cycles (pictured left).



## Hawera Intermediate School

– for environmental education and action

Pupils from Hawera Intermediate have taken part in planting at Nowells Lakes near Hawera and in 2010 ran a swan plant propagation programme to grow thousands of seedlings for the Nowells Lakes Walkway. In conjunction with this programme, herb patches, mini worm farms and vegetable gardens have been developed, with produce sold to raise funds for the school.

An 'enviro garden group' (pictured left) has proved popular at the school, with more than 80 pupils applying to join this year.

The school also has a well-established waste minimisation and recycling programme.

The school's Education Outside the Classroom programme includes a study of the Kaupokonui River.

# Farmers rise to the challenge

This year's three Environmental Awards winners in the Agricultural category are:

## Neil and Jackie Whitehead

– for biodiversity and native bush enhancement

The Whiteheads, whose 128 ha Tikorangi dairy farm's bush blocks are recognised by the Taranaki Regional Council as a Key Native Ecosystem, plunged into an intensive environmental programme after two kiwi were sighted on the property in 2008.

The Whiteheads and their helpers have:

- Laid more than 100 traps and bait stations, most of them sponsored by community groups, businesses and friends and family, and eliminated more than 1330 predators.
- Targeted pest plants and undertaken riparian and bush-enhancement planting.
- Formed tracks through two of the three larger bush blocks, including bridges and hundreds of steps.
- Started installing discreet interpretative signage at significant points in the bush.
- Extended the area under QEII covenant (the first covenants were made in 2005).
- Established a website ([www.kererukeep.org.nz](http://www.kererukeep.org.nz)) to keep supporters up-to-date.

"It's such a great release from farming's day-to-day stresses and pressures, to be able to go up to one of the bush blocks to do some different sort of work, or to just soak up the

atmosphere," says Mrs Whitehead. "That's a reward in itself. And you can see the native trees are now flowering and fruiting much more heavily, and the birds are fantastic."

## Robert and Verna Bourke

– for riparian management and sustainable farming

Robert and Verna Bourke have enjoyed a multitude of rewards from planting out their 75 ha Patea dairy farm, which has been in their family for more than 100 years. Starting off in the 1990s by planting pines in a rough gully at the back of the farm, they then turned their attention to the farm's other riparian strips, which are now fully fenced and planted.

They have also planted poplars for shelter, and native trees. In total, more than 15 ha of farmland has been retired for planting.

Robert says it's been a lot of work over the years, but worth it, and he and Verna are proud to receive the award. It's been a family effort, with their children Vickilee, Andrew, Conna and Bruno and their future daughter-in-law Terri helping with the planting.

Robert says in the early days they drew a lot of inspiration from farm forestry field days, where they saw what other property owners were planting. "Fencing off the gullies keeps animals out and makes life easier. While the pines will bring us revenue, we're also really enjoying the attractiveness of the riparian planting, and the birdlife it's bringing."

## John and Elaine Sanderson

– for riparian management and sustainable farming

John and Elaine Sanderson have fenced the entire 7.5 kilometres of streambank on their 200-hectare dairy farm near Manaia and planted 10,000 native plants to protect the Kaupokonui and Otakeho Rivers and other waterways within the property. They began the work before joining the Taranaki Regional Council's riparian management programme in 2001.

More recently, they have become part-owners of two hillcountry blocks at Huiroa, where they are working to implement farm plans with support from the Taranaki Regional Council.

They have already planted more than 150 hectares of forestry on erosion-prone areas for timber harvest and/or carbon credit. A further 20 hectares of forestry will be planted this year, with further planting planned for subsequent years. They have placed a QEII covenant on a 3.2 hectare wetland and 62 hectares of surrounding bush and scrub.

Mrs Sanderson says the couple believed from the start that riparian margins should be protected, and the planting has also provided shelter for stock, which is important near the coast. "It's been a lot of work but once you get started, it snowballs."

She says the couple's more recent hillcountry projects have deepened their appreciation of the need to take a sustainable approach to hillcountry farming.

# Water decisions stay where they should

Most decisions on water quality standards and water allocation in Taranaki will continue to be made locally under the Government's new National Policy Statement (NPS) for Freshwater Management.

When the Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith, unveiled the NPS last month, some commentators said it should have included national water quality standards. But the Council's Chief Executive, Basil Chamberlain, says it makes much more sense to leave such decisions in the hands of regional councils and communities, working to achieve the purpose and national objectives of the NPS and the Resource Management Act.

"We were concerned that the Draft NPS released last year sought to impose a 'one size fits all' approach to freshwater management, and we are pleased that Dr Smith and his colleagues have listened to the arguments put forward by ourselves and others, and have allowed detailed decision-making to stay in local hands," says Mr Chamberlain.

"Because of the geography of New Zealand, water quantity and water quality issues vary enormously across the country. The factors we



must deal with here are vastly different from those that must be dealt with in Canterbury or Southland, for example.

"Weighing up competing values is at the heart of resource management, and is normally best done at regional or local level."

However, Mr Chamberlain says that while the fine detail of the new NPS is still being analysed, a first reading suggests it may hold significant implications for operators of wastewater treatment systems in Taranaki – in particular dairy farmers.

"It indicates that the Government is requiring 'the best practicable option' for wastewater treatment – our current rules are focused on 'bottom-line' treatment requirements, although we encourage best practice in addition to minimum requirements," he says. "This is an issue we will need to work through with the community, but on the face of it, significant changes will be required."

The Draft NPS was produced after a Board of Inquiry heard submissions in 2009, and was released in its final form after Dr Smith received a report from last year's Land and Water Forum, which brought together many stakeholders in freshwater management. Among other recommendations, the Forum also called for a National Policy Statement that included national environmental standards.

"Water management is very complex and requires much more than sloganeering," says Mr Chamberlain. "We think the Minister has made the right decision to leave it largely in the hands of regional and unitary councils, which have been making these decisions for more than 20 years and are in touch with local environmental issues and the local community's needs."

## Council airs concerns on biodiversity

The Government's move to establish a National Policy Statement (NPS) on Biodiversity has been welcomed by the Taranaki Regional Council, but it has raised concerns about some of the proposed details.

A Draft NPS was released earlier this year and submissions closed in May. The Ministry for the Environment is now summarizing submissions and preparing recommendations for the Minister, Nick Smith.

The NPS focuses on biodiversity on private land and under its draft provisions, Councils would be required to ensure that use of resources resulted in "no net loss" of biodiversity values in areas containing significant native vegetation or habitats for threatened wildlife species.

In its submission, the Taranaki Regional Council expresses support for the aims of the NPS but stresses that it must add value to existing biodiversity efforts and not set back the gains already made.

It calls for the Draft NPS to be amended to ensure that it does not undermine community support, or result in perverse outcomes.

For example, the Council says that under the Draft provisions, local authorities

would be required to map areas containing significant vegetation or habitats – potentially costing councils and ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars for no net gain in the protection of these areas.

The Council is also concerned that the Draft NPS imposes biodiversity requirements that appear to go beyond what can be reasonably expected of local authorities. It says that given its expertise and wildlife responsibilities, the Department of Conservation is more appropriately placed to take the lead in identifying habitats.

The Council points to the success of its own largely voluntary programmes, including the Key Native Ecosystems Programme, the Riparian Management Programme and the Self-Help Possum Control Programme.

"They support and add value to landowner efforts to maintain and enhance biodiversity on their land," the Council's submission says. "Controls on the use and development of natural and physical resources, by themselves, are unlikely to protect biodiversity. Protecting biodiversity largely depends upon the ongoing goodwill of landowners to actively manage threats to biodiversity ...

"There is a serious risk, therefore, that the imposition of onerous or overly prescriptive national policy could undermine community goodwill and support and set back the gains already being made." This makes it vital for the Government to support the NPS with an implementation package that includes financial and technical support for councils and landowners.

The Council's other concerns include the fact that the Draft NPS is intended to cover only private land and excludes the conservation estate, and that no submissions will be heard and tested by a Board of Inquiry, and instead will be considered by the Minister only.

Noting that the continuing decline of New Zealand's biodiversity is well-documented, the Council says it believes that all New Zealanders must "raise the bar" to better protect native fauna and flora. "Therefore, (the Council) gives qualified support for the promulgation of an NPS that sets a minimum standard of what local authorities should be doing to protect biodiversity."

However, such support is subject to the NPS clearly adding value, and to the Government addressing the issues raised in the Council's submission.



## All Blacks coach at grassroots level

All Blacks coach Graham Henry (right) gets a briefing from Taranaki Community Rugby Trust farm adviser Michael Joyce (left) during an open day at the Trust's farm at Inaha earlier this year. With them are Origin Energy Resources operations manager Gary Rooks and Trust Chairman Ray Barron.

The group is pictured near one of the planted riparian (streamside) strips on the farm, which the Trust leases from Origin Energy Resources.

Like almost every other farm on the ring plain, the "rugby farm" has a riparian management plan and more than 6,000 native plants have so far been planted along its

streambanks as part of the Taranaki Regional Council's large-scale voluntary programme to protect thousands of kilometres of waterways with fencing and planting.

Fences prevent stock from fouling streams and rivers, while vegetation provides shade and shelter, and enhances water quality by filtering agricultural run-off.

Mr Joyce says riparian management is an accepted and important part of the farm business and budget.

The Council supplies bulk-ordered plants for the programme and is still taking orders from riparian plan-holders for this year's planting season.

## Business as usual for Council in 2011/2012

The Taranaki Regional Council has adopted a "steady as she goes" budget and work plan for the 2011/2012 financial year.

The Chairman, David MacLeod, says there are only minor adjustments to programmes that were outlined for 2011/2012 in the Long-Term Council Community Plan 2009/2019, which was adopted after wide community consultation.

He says the Council will continue its successful programmes covering its roles in resource management, hazard management, transport planning and services, the stewardship of premier heritage gardens, and 100% ownership of Port Taranaki.

Particular areas of focus during 2011/2012 will include:



- Improving flood protection along the lower Waiwhakaiho River ("The Valley"). By the time this three-stage project is completed in 2012/2013, the protection level will be raised from a one-in-50-year flood to a one-in-100-year flood, with additional capacity to allow for climate change.
- Further enhancements to and promotion of the New Plymouth urban bus service, aimed at increasing patronage.
- Planning the long-term development of Pukeiti now that it is in public ownership, having been transferred from the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust to the Council on 1 July 2010.
- Adjustments to dairy effluent monitoring, including increased water sampling and greater cost recovery from those found not complying with consent conditions.

## Taranaki Regional Council Facts File

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Brian Jeffares	0-6-765 7773
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### MEETING SCHEDULE:

The Taranaki Regional Council and its committees meet on a six-week cycle. Meetings are held at the Council chamber, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, unless otherwise stated.

#### Tuesday, 19 July, 10.30am:

Consents and Regulatory Committee

#### Thursday, 21 July, 10.30am:

Policy and Planning Committee

#### Monday, 1 August, 10am:

Executive Committee

#### Thursday 4 August, 10.30am:

Taranaki Solid Waste Management Committee

#### Tuesday 9 August, 10.30am:

Ordinary Council meeting

For up-to-date information on meeting dates and times, and access to agendas and minutes, go to [www.trc.govt.nz/meetings-calendar/](http://www.trc.govt.nz/meetings-calendar/)



The raised stopbanks along Rifle Range Road.

# Big audience for flood project

The popularity of a recently developed New Plymouth retail precinct has given the latest Taranaki Regional Council flood protection project a high profile.

As thousands of shoppers came and went, contractors have raised stopbanks along the south-western edge of The Valley retail centre by a half to 1.5 metres. This all but completes Stage 1 of a \$1.5 million, three-stage project to upgrade the Council's Lower Waiwhakaiho Flood Protection Scheme.

Preparatory work for Stage 2 is well under way. This involves an upgrade of flood protection along the Mangaone Stream, a tributary of the main Waiwhakaiho River, and work is expected to begin later this year. Stage 3 – construction of up to three detention dams in the upper Mangaone

Stream catchment to further limit the flow of floodwater into the Waiwhakaiho basin – is scheduled for 2012-13.

The upgrade project will increase the level of protection from a one-in-50-year flood to a one-in-100-year flood, while also taking into account the impact of climate change over the next 50 years.

A recent development on land formerly occupied by industry, The Valley retail area features large-format retailers such as Mitre 10 Mega, Harvey Norman and Briscoes, as well as a Countdown supermarket and a variety of specialty shops.

The Council's Rivers Manager, John Philpott, says the upgrade will offer greater protection to these new assets as well as the industrial and commercial operations that remain in

the Lower Waiwhakaiho catchment.

"Stage 1 went fairly smoothly – there is just some work to be completed on gabion (rock-filled) baskets at the southern end, and the New Plymouth District Council is working on plans to raise their pipe bridge at the end of Vickers Road," he says.

"Surveying and hydraulic modelling for Stage 2 has been completed and we are now talking to landowners about the work we need to do."

He says that while Stage 3 is not scheduled until 2012-13, some preparatory work has taken place with the help of Corrections Department periodic detention workers, who have cleared much of the self-seeded weeds in the riparian vegetation strips along the upper Mangaone Stream.

## Wildlife focus in spill exercise

Wildlife recovery was among the key areas tested in a Taranaki oil spill response exercise near Oakura on 12 May.

Staff from the Taranaki Regional Council, the National Oiled Wildlife Response Team and other organisations were involved in both planning and operational response during the one-day exercise.

More than 30 people took part in the exercise which was based on a scenario of 600 litres of crude oil coming ashore along 2km of coastline between Oakura and the Tapuae Marine Reserve, near New Plymouth.

In the scenario, oiled birds were reported offshore and along the affected coastline.



Two wildlife teams made up of people from Massey University, Taranaki Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Ornithological Society, Forest and Bird and New Plymouth District Council were

briefed by Helen McConnell from the Massey Wildlife Response Team. They captured the 'oiled birds' on the beach and took them to the mobile wildlife centre to be stabilised for transport to a treatment centre.

Helen McConnell says working in the same area as the oil responders doing the beach clean-up was good experience for the team and allowed the wildlife response to be fully integrated with other response actions.

Regional On-Scene Commander Bruce Pope, who is the Taranaki Regional Council's Compliance Manager, says the Massey wildlife team added another dimension to the exercise.

"We often exercise with specialised staff from sectors such as the oil industry, but it's important to involve all of the key players in our response training."