



## NOT A SECOND TO WASTE WHEN PROTECTING WATERWAYS

It might not be everybody's cup of tea, but being a wastewater treatment plant operator is Whenu Pohatu's calling.

The 62-year-old Turangi resident has been working with the wastewater team since 1987. His job is to help run the district's wastewater treatment plants so all wastewater can be recycled and used for good.

"For me, it's about protecting the lake and our waterways from harm. Any process we can do to assist that and keep that water quality is really important to me," he said. "I love the job. It's different and it's something new every day."

His working life in the district began working at the wastewater plants in Turangi, but since 2013 he has been based in Taupō. He still lives in Turangi however as he can't tear himself away from the great life he has at the southern end of the lake.

"Turangi is home for me – it's the people really, they make a place, don't they?" he said.

Whenu works at the Taupō wastewater treatment plant on Rickett Street most of the time, but also gets around to the other plants in Mangakino, Turangi and beyond.

It's not all smooth sailing, of course – there are some hard jobs he has to deal with. "You've got to be pretty tough – you can't be precious when you're getting a load of rags out of the machinery when it's all blocked up," he said.

He said the people he worked with helped make the hard jobs easier. "If you need assistance, the guys are just a call away," he said. "We put on the gloves and gumboots and just get in there and do what needs to be done."



## IT'S ANNUAL PLAN TIME



Consultation on the 2016/17 Annual Plan starts on Monday. The average rate increase has reduced from a planned 2.42 per cent to 1.1 per cent. The leading factor being the national and global economy, with interest rates impacting on costs for council. It's a positive result to see rate increases tracking at less than projected but a sage reminder that we need to keep our eye on the ball and build resilience in our local economy.

Rates are made up of general and targeted rates. Targeted rate increases are less than proposed in the Long-term Plan but general rate increases are slightly ahead of what was planned, at nearly a three per cent increase.

During consultation, we will be seeking your feedback on a proposal to extend the Taupō water supply to Waitahanui. Legislation requires us to take all "practical steps" to ensure everyone has access to water that meets the New Zealand Drinking-water Standards. "Practical steps" is a combination of two key factors, affordability and risk of harm.

There is a subsidy from the Ministry of Health on offer but there is still a substantial shortfall to meet the costs to build and connect. Waitahanui residents have already indicated that the costs are too high for their community to bear and some residents want to retain their own bore water.

The question being asked is whether the wider community supports funding the shortfall in costs for the Waitahanui connection. How we fund water schemes for smaller communities is a challenge that is not going to go away. We need to develop a strategy on how we tackle this issue. Subsidies are not always going to be there and they don't address the issue of affordability. Please let us know your thoughts..

It was brought to councillors' attention late last week that Waikato Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and Tbfree are jointly seeking a 35-year consent to aerially discharge 1080 to water and land when current consents expire. The decision on whether this consent will be publicly notified has been placed in the hands of regional council staff and an independent commissioner. The scope and extent of tenure for this consent is significant and I believe is a one that requires input from all stakeholders. Come on WRC, make sure you give everyone a chance to have a say on this one.

*Rosanne*

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## MANGAKINO TOWN CENTRE LOOKING GOOD



Have you seen what's been going on in Mangakino lately?

We are hard at work on the redevelopment of the town centre. This includes a new playground, seating and shaded areas.

Contractor TR Construction is currently working on the new timber decking and digging holes for new trees around the skate park area. This will be followed by the installation of a drinking fountain early next month.

Contractors will then work on the footing for the shade structures, the repainting of the planter boxes and the laying of artificial grass at the playground area.

The town centre redevelopment was designed in consultation with the community and is expected to be completed by the end of April.

If you're in Mangakino's town centre, be sure to check out how it's shaping up!

## GET SOME DIRECTION IN YOUR TEEN'S DRIVING

Time is running out to sign up for a course that could protect your teen's life!

Driver Directions is a course for parents and their teens and young adults aged 16-24 who want to attend a practical driving programme. The course has been designed to support safe driving behaviours and practices and covers things like car maintenance, hazard detection, reversing and parking.

The course is one full day, so sign up to take part on April 20.

For more information visit [www.taupo.govt.nz](http://www.taupo.govt.nz) or email [dd@taupo.govt.nz](mailto:dd@taupo.govt.nz) to register.



## What's on?

- April 1-3** Taupō Home and Garden Show, Great Lake Centre
- April 2** Taupō Locals Bungy Day, Taupō Bungy
- April 2-3** Historic Racing, Bruce McLaren Motorsport Park
- April 3** Wairakei Tourist Park Local's Day, Wairakei Tourist Park
- April 12** Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand South Waikato Regionals, Taupō-nui-a-tia College
- April 16** Great Lake Cat Show, Great Lake Centre

For more information on Taupō District events visit [www.GreatLakeTaupo.com](http://www.GreatLakeTaupo.com)

Email your elected members at [councillors@taupo.govt.nz](mailto:councillors@taupo.govt.nz)

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