

Regional Report

Northland news and updates from your regional council



Learning about free-range egg production at Te Rata Family Farm.



Lee Holder of Otaika Valley Primary School meets some other kids at Kokopu's Goat Farm.



Kaitiāia students Skylah Robson and Evan Murray hold snapper with Apatu Aqua worker Vinnie Davis.

Ngā whakaaturanga o Te Kura Taiao 2017

Enviroschools Expos 2017

Dozens of students, teachers, family and community members hit the road around Northland recently to learn about environmentally sustainable local businesses at this year's Enviroschools regional expos.

The three Enviroschools Enterprise Expos for Year Five to Year 10 students began at Kaitiāia's Te Ahu Centre, Kaipara's Matakoho War Memorial Hall and Whangārei's Kiwi North during late October and early November.

Kaipara-based regional councillor Penny Smart, who officially opened the Kaipara tour, says expos have been held yearly for about a decade and always provide a wealth of exciting and enjoyable 'hands-on' learning experiences.

Each tour featured visits to four local employers who typically share a common passion for operating sustainably in a way that benefits their local communities, environmentally and socially.

In the Far North, the tour included trips to Whanau Meats (a family-owned butcher shop and home kill processor); Mana Kai Honey (honey, beekeeping and pollination); Due North (handcrafted preserves); and Apatu Aqua, which catches and sells fresh and smoked fish.

Kaipara's tour included Chapel Olive Oil (infused olive oils); Organic Dairy Hub (milk supplier); Zephyr Oysters (growing, harvesting and processing oysters); and Te Rata Family Farm, whose operations include a large-scale, free-range chicken enterprise.

The final tour in Whangārei took in Maungatapere Berries (a berry and kiwifruit producer); Tamco (which sells tamarillo-based vinaigrette and relish for local and export markets); The Good Eggs, a free-range chicken farm/egg producer; and the Goat Farm, which produces goat milk for infant formula.

The regional council introduced Enviroschools to Northland more than a decade ago. There are now more than 90 schools and kindergartens in the popular programme region-wide.

Penny says the expos teach young people that it's possible to use the environment for economic gain in a sustainable manner, as well as showing them future career opportunities. The annual events also provide an exciting platform as schools plan for the coming year.

More on the Enviroschools programme is available online at the council's website:
www.nrc.govt.nz/enviroschools

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LONG TERM PLAN 2018-28

*Te whakamahere
o Te Tai Tokerau*

**Planning for a
thriving Northland**

What are the regional council's priorities for the next decade? What will it actually deliver for Northland's communities – and where does the money come from?

Over the coming months the council is building its Long Term Plan 2018-28, which will set out its direction and ambitions for the next decade, and how it will be paid for.

Chairman Bill Shepherd says the council has heard the community's views about wanting more done, particularly around fresh water and pest management.

This should be reflected in the new Long Term Plan.

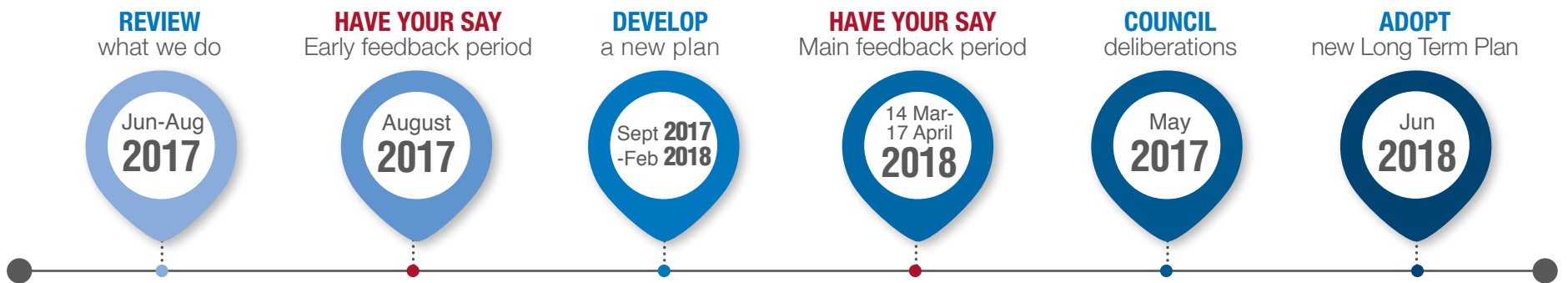
"We're proposing some ambitious programmes that will contribute towards improving our fresh and coastal waters, and Northland becoming predator-free so our native flora and fauna can flourish," says Bill.

"We've also worked out what it will take to get there – like more work on the ground to improve

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Long Term Plan **timeline**



Te whakamahere o Te Tai Tokerau

Planning for a thriving Northland: Long Term Plan 2018-2028

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water quality and manage this precious resource – and more support for local communities to manage pests."

"Naturally, doing more comes at a cost, so the question for our community will be whether they support us striving for these targets, or alternatively, do they want us to do more or do less?"

Bill says the tricky part is getting the balance right, and that's where feedback

from the community is essential.

"We have to prioritise our work across the wide range of activities we do, to make sure we deliver on a number of long term outcomes for the region, while striking the right balance of affordability.

"A vital part of this process is asking you, the community, to tell us what you think of our proposed plan and whether you support the targets we set and the work that needs to be done to get us there."

New approach for face-to-face feedback

In a shift away from traditional hearings, people will instead be able to provide face-to-face feedback on the Long Term Plan at a series of 'have your say' events.

"The Local Government Act has loosened up requirements around consultation and no longer requires councils to hold formal hearings on their Long Term Plans," says chairman Bill Shepherd.

"We are keen to try something new, shift away from the really formal process, and enable more people to have their say in different ways."

He says the series of 'have your say' events will be held during the feedback period, with both councillors and staff available to answer questions and capture feedback.

"People will still get a chance to come along and provide feedback directly to councillors, but it's also an opportunity for real discussions which, hopefully, are more useful for both council and the community."

Details of the 'have your say' events will be available from mid-February 2018 at: www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2018

Early feedback – what you told us

From mid-August to early September, councillors and staff headed out around the region to ask people what they think are the top priorities for council over the coming decade.

Through 'pop-up' stalls at local markets in Whangārei, Ngunguru, Paparoa, Kerikeri, Kaitiāia and Waipū, plus an online survey, nearly 140 people provided feedback.

"We wanted to give people an opportunity to share what's important to them, so we could take that on board as we develop our Long Term Plan," says Bill.

Fresh water was the most-mentioned priority right across the region, reflecting how hugely important this precious resource is to our region and our people.

Pest management, biodiversity, economic opportunities and

community wellbeing were among other frequently-mentioned priorities.

The feedback was collated for council to consider as part of its detailed discussions about the Long Term Plan.

"Clean waterways for kai moana and kaitiakitanga"

"Focus on pests as number one priority"

"The feedback has been really valuable and I believe we're on track to produce a plan that reflects the wider community's desires in terms of those big priority areas," says Bill.

"I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to have a chat with us, do our survey and tell us what's important to them."



Councillor Joce Yeoman and staff member Robyn Broadhurst at the Kerikeri 'pop-up'.



Participants from a number of agencies, including Northland Regional Council, ACC, Sport Northland, WaterSafe and Maritime NZ took the plunge during Safe Boating Week to highlight the importance of wearing a lifejacket.

Kia noho haumaru i te moana

Be a safe boatie, mate!

As the busy summer boating season gets underway, the regional council is encouraging boaties to be safe when they head out on the water.

Now in its second year, the council's 'Be a safe boatie, mate' campaign is all about encouraging boaties to be prepared and organised when going boating in Northland. The campaign kicked off during Maritime NZ's Safe Boating Week in October with Whangārei's

first 'pontoon plunge', held to highlight the importance of wearing a lifejacket. Participants from a number of agencies took the plunge at Parua Bay, including Northland Regional Council, ACC, Sport Northland, WaterSafe and Maritime NZ.

A \$20,000 grant from Maritime NZ, aimed at supporting community programmes that help boaties to be safe, is helping to fund the campaign.

One focus will be on use of lifejackets. Under the region's latest Navigation Safety Bylaw, if you're on a boat that's six metres or less and is underway, everyone on board must wear a lifejacket (unless you're tendering within 200m of shore).

'Be a safe boatie, mate' will continue throughout the summer. To find out more about safe boating, go online to: www.nrc.govt.nz/safeboating

Prep. Check. Know.

Keep it safe on the water this summer – before you head out, make sure you:

- **Prep your boat** – service the engine, check and change fuel, check the battery and give it a good 'once over'.
- **Check your gear** – check your lifejackets are still fit for purpose and you have enough of them, and have two reliable forms of communication equipment.
- **Know the rules** – ensure you know the 'rules of the road' on the water, and check the Northland bylaws to make sure you understand the requirements here: www.nrc.govt.nz/safeboating



Wanna win a GoPro, mate?

Simply make a 30-60 second video showing what it means to be a safe boatie, and be in to win!

It could be encouraging whanau to wear a lifejacket, prepping your boat before heading out, or flying a dive flag – the only requirement is that you use the catchphrase 'Be a safe boatie, mate' somewhere in your video.

If you're a school, you could win an iPad for your classroom. If you're a community group or individual, you could take home a GoPro action camera to capture your adventures.

Find out more at: www.nrc.govt.nz/safeboatiemate



Introducing ... Laurence Walkinshaw

Our new Deputy Harbourmaster, Laurence Walkinshaw began his career 10 years ago as a cadet with Singapore-based Tanker Pacific Ltd. More recently he has worked around the NZ coast as a navigator and cargo operator on oil/product tankers and self-discharging bulk carriers.

The 29-year-old, who lives at Ruakaka with his partner and their young son, is currently training to pilot large cruise liners into the Bay of Islands. His new role will also have a large navigational safety component. Laurence replaces former Deputy Harbourmaster Tony Browne of Kerikeri.

Laurence and three other members of the maritime team are based at Northland Regional Council's Whangārei headquarters, while the remaining six maritime staff – including Regional Harbourmaster Jim Lyle – work from our base at Ōpua.

Haumaru i muri i te ture a ngā roto o Kai Iwi

Safety drives new Kai Iwi Lakes bylaw

A new regional council bylaw is in place at iconic Kai Iwi Lakes to keep people safe in and on the water.

The Navigation Safety Bylaw for Kai Iwi Lakes – available online at www.nrc.govt.nz/lakesbylaw – is designed to support and enable the implementation of Kaipara District Council's Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain) Reserve Management Plan.

The regional council bylaw aims to enable the many different water-based uses of Kai Iwi Lakes (things like swimming, boating, waterskiing, jetskiing, kayaking and board sports) in as safe and sustainable a way as possible. (Kaipara District Council is still considering how best to manage land-based activities.)

We consulted widely on our bylaw (including informally last summer), before a public hearing in September.

A panel of three regional councillors – Penny Smart, Paul Dimery and Rick Stolwerk – subsequently considered submissions and made a suite of recommendations which were formally adopted by our full council recently.

During the submission and hearings process, our staff modified a map of the lakes setting out access lanes for water skiing, swimming areas, and for 5-knot restrictions.

Many submissions had touched on points outside of both the bylaw and our control as a regional council, including fishing, the launch ramps provided, and limits of access to Lakes Waikare and Kai Iwi for powered vessels.

In fact, these matters are all decided by the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee, which has set the strategic direction for the development of the Taharoa

Domain for many years, alongside tangata whenua, lake users and the community.

Kaipara District Council administers and co-governs the Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain) Recreation Reserve with Te Roroa and Te Kuihi through this committee.

The three main discussion points dealt with by our hearings panel were around proposed permit charges for power-driven vessels, the safe distance from shore where the 5-knot speed limit should apply, and the number of ski access lanes being provided.

The panel and full council accepted staff recommendations to drop the charges and increase the number of access lanes to four. However, debate over appropriate speed limits at the lakes has triggered another round of public consultation, expected to take place this summer.

This is because many submitters suggested a 5-knot speed limit be reduced to 100 metres from shore right around the lakes (instead of the usual 200m). However, legally a reduction like this requires formal approval from the Director of Maritime NZ.

Northland Regional Councillors have agreed there should be further public consultation on the reduced 100m 5-knot proposal, which is required before an application to the Director can be made. In the meantime, it's important to note existing rules restricting vessel speeds to 5 knots within 200 metres of shore at the lakes remain in place.

Further consultation on the 5-knot speed limit area is scheduled to start 2 December 2017.
Find out more at: www.nrc.govt.nz/lakesbylaw

The new bylaw at Kai Iwi Lakes aims to keep people safe in and on the water.



Tiakina to tātou wai tai Keep our waters clean

Boaties are being urged to help keep Northland's beautiful harbours clean by disposing of their sewage properly.

"Even very small amounts of boat sewage can contaminate shellfish and make water unsafe for swimming," says regional councillor Rick Stolwerk.

"Boaties can really help keep Northland's harbours clean for people to swim in and collect kai moana from, by simply sticking to the rules."

Under marine pollution rules, untreated sewage from boats must be discharged well outside of Northland harbours or at a pump-out facility.

Additionally, to stay overnight, the boat needs to have a holding tank or sewage treatment system.

If you suspect a boat is illegally discharging sewage, or someone is staying on a boat without a proper way of containing or treating their sewage, report it to the council's 24/7 Environmental Hotline on 0800 504 639.

For more detail on the rules, go online to: www.nrc.govt.nz/marinepollution

24/7 ENVIRONMENTAL HOTLINE

**Report pollution or
marine incidents to
0800 504 639**

Northland
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Hore kau ngā rawaho kino i te moana

Unwanted ... Marine pest hitchhikers in Northland

Council is urging Northland boaties to be extra vigilant as we head into summer and is reminding all launch and yacht owners to check their hulls carefully for marine pests.

"We strongly suggest double-checking 'niche' areas – places like the base of the keel, behind anodes, live bait tanks and the bow thrusters – before vessels go back in the water," council Biosecurity Manager Don McKenzie says.

"While there's an ongoing focus on preventing Mediterranean fanworm spreading further from Whangārei Harbour, we're also concerned the Japanese kelp undaria is established in Houhora and the entrance of Rangiputa Harbour."

Don says it's important vessels leaving these areas are also aware they may be carrying undaria; this invasive kelp could reach the Three Kings Islands or other Northland harbours via vessel movements.

"Our annual diver survey of hulls is underway again and to date the dive team has surveyed about 130

vessels in Whangārei Harbour and a similar number of vessels responding to a fanworm vessel incident in the Bay of Islands."

The dive survey is important to pick up any vessels which are infected with fanworm and other marine pests and council appreciates reports of potential risk vessels from the public.

Diver surveys will continue right through summer with a minimum of 2000 hulls to be inspected.

Don says depending on the pests found, owners will be told to haul the vessels out and clean or treat them. A \$500 fine may also apply.

The website – www.marinepests.co.nz – is a useful 'go to' site to connect with haul-out yards and slipways. It also shows council's rules and marina requirements.

Other information on marine pests can be found online at the regional council's award-winning pest management website: www.nrc.govt.nz/pestcontrolhub



This Biosecurity NZ image shows a boat hull heavily infested with the unwanted Japanese kelp undaria.

Ka timata te rangahau wāhi mo te kauhoe

Summer swim spot survey begins

Our annual summer water quality tests begin soon at many of Northland's popular beaches, rivers and lakes.

This testing looks for bacteria used to gauge the risks of contracting gastrointestinal and other infections while using beaches, rivers and lakes for swimming, water sports and other forms of recreation.

Chairman Bill Shepherd says testing resumes on Monday 04 December 2017 and will run until Tuesday 06 March 2018.

Hundreds of samples will be taken from 46 popular coastal sites and 13 freshwater locations across the region with results posted in the 'Can I Swim Here?' section of the national environmental reporting website LAWA – www.lawa.org.nz

Weekly results are also forwarded to the Whangārei, Far North and Kaipara district councils, Northland District Health Board (DHB) and other interested parties.

"We let the health board and relevant district council know of any results showing elevated bacterial levels within 24 hours. It's then their responsibility to take any further action needed," Bill says.

That action can include further site investigations to establish the source of any contamination, public warnings not to swim or gather shellfish, and putting up permanent warning signs at the worst sites.

Bill says last summer 99.8 percent (642 out of 643) of samples at coastal sites and 92.9% (169 out of 182) samples at freshwater sites over summer met national

'guideline values', meaning they were considered suitable for swimming.

Simple tips to judge water quality include not swimming for two or three days after heavy rain (which can carry run-off from land) or if there are warning signs indicating unsafe water.

"As a general rule of thumb, don't swim if the water looks dirty or murky, smells or has scum on its surface. Also, look out for or consider any potential sources of contamination, both nearby and upstream," says Bill.

Any water quality concerns can be reported to council's freephone 24/7 Environmental Hotline on 0800 504 639



*Te mahi tahi o
tangata whenua*

Working with Māori

Māori continue to provide crucial advice to Northland Regional Council on issues of importance to tangata whenua through Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party (TTMAC Working Party).

Established during the previous term of council, the current working party has 30 members, including representatives drawn from iwi and hapū across the region. It is co-chaired by Pita Tipene (Ngāti Hine) and regional councillor Paul Dimery. Four other regional councillors, including chairman Bill Shepherd, are also members.

As well as providing advice on topics referred to it by council, the working party also monitors and advises on council's compliance with its obligations to Māori



**'He waka hourua, eke noa |
A re-adzed voyaging canoe upon
which everyone may embark' - TTMAC
Working Party's vision statement.**

under the Local Government Act and Resource Management Act.

It also aims to develop pathways and processes that will achieve 'lasting and meaningful relationships between Māori and council' and ensure Māori views are taken into account 'in the exercise of council functions'.

Typically, the TTMAC Working Party

meets 10 times a year, split roughly between hui on regional marae and the regional council's Whangārei headquarters.

So far this year, the group has met at Panguru's Waipuna Marae in May, at Te Hana's Te Ao Marama Marae in July and Takou Bay's Te Whare Awhina in September. The working party next meets at the council chambers in

Whangārei on Thursday 07 December. Council also plans to launch an electronic panui to keep people informed about TTMAC Working Party's activities before the end of this year.

People interested in receiving the panui should email the regional council's Kaiarahi Tikanga Māori (cultural advisor) Abraham Witana at this address: panui@nrc.govt.nz

He mihi mo ngā tohatoha i to Tai Tokerau tuturu

Thanks for sharing your True North!

Over the last few months we asked people to tell us what they love and value about Northland – and the response has been fantastic!

More than 400 photos and videos were submitted from around the region, showcasing beautiful scenery, our incredible coastal playground, connections with whanau and friends, and much more.

These are just a handful of the photos we received – you can check out all the entries on our website at: www.nrc.govt.nz/truenorth

Not surprisingly, our amazing coast and native bush are incredibly important to Northlanders. It's also a top priority for the regional council, and we are working hard to keep our waters clean and healthy for people to swim and take kai, and to protect our native biodiversity.

Join us on Facebook to find out more about the work we're doing to protect our environment, connect our communities and invest in our economy: www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil



Rosina Tuinier



Dianne Ten Haaf



David Anson



Tina Quitta



Sales executive Catherine Logan outside the new museum at the award-winning Waitangi Treaty Grounds.

Ko te Waitangi Trust e whiti ana ki nga tohu pakihi

Treaty grounds shine at business awards

Waitangi Treaty Grounds has been named the winner of this year's Northland Regional Council Sustainable Business Award at the annual Westpac Northland Business Excellence Awards held on 27 October.

Described by judges as a "jewel of Northland, and New Zealand", Waitangi Treaty Grounds was commended for its revitalisation, vibrancy and sustainability, a focus "shown throughout all levels of the organisation".

Waitangi Treaty Grounds was among entrants from 42 Northland businesses competing across five business categories, seven ancillary categories and for an overall supreme winner award.

Top honours on the night went to the operators of the regional rescue helicopter service, Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST), which took out Supreme 2017 Westpac Northland Business of the Year and won three category awards.

Northland Regional Council is a proud supporter of NEST, currently providing around \$525,000 a year in funding to this vital life-saving service. The council is also supporting the upgrade of NEST's helicopters through provision of a loan.

To find out more about the awards, entrants and winners for 2017, go to: www.northlandbusinessawards.co.nz



Te mahere-ā-rohe - e whai ake nei Proposed Regional Plan – next steps

As this edition of Regional Report was being prepared, more than two months of formal public consultation was ending on what will be an updated rulebook for the way our water, air, soil and coast are used and managed.

At 10 weeks, this longer-than-usual period for public comment ended on 15 November.

The Proposed Regional Plan will ultimately replace three existing regional plans (each is now more than a decade old). We've worked hard to make it more simple, streamlined and easier to use.

It will impact – both directly and indirectly – on most Northlanders in some way, covering a broad range of activities, including proposed rules for coastal works, earthworks, water use and discharges to air, land and water.

Among key changes in the Proposed Regional Plan are new limits on taking water from rivers, lakes and aquifers; making it easier to get permission for mangrove removal; and new stock exclusion rules for rivers, drains, wetlands and lakes.

In a new approach to fresh water management, the proposed plan also has some tailor-made rules for five priority water catchments – Doubtless Bay, Pouto, Waitangi, Whangārei and Mangere.

More than three years in the making, the Proposed Regional Plan is less than a quarter of the combined size of the three plans it will replace.

It also represents substantial input by numerous stakeholders along the way, including feedback we received last year from nearly 300 people and organisations when we 'road-tested' a first draft.

So, where to from here?

Over the next few months Northland Regional Council staff will put together a summary of the various decisions sought in submissions on the proposed plan.

We expect to publicly notify this summary in March next year – this will provide an opportunity to lodge further submissions supporting or opposing the decisions sought in original submissions.

The next step is to hold formal hearings where submitters can present their views to a panel of hearing commissioners. We expect this to happen about the middle of next year.

He toa a te kararehe kino

Pest Control Hub project is a winner!

Our award-winning and user-friendly animal, plant and marine pest database 'Pest Control Hub' has been nationally recognised for the second time in as many months.

The Pest Control Hub is an easy-to-use, web-based database with a wealth of information on animal, plant and marine pests relevant to Northland. Developed from an idea by council biosecurity and website staff, it helps users identify, report and control pests, as well as providing them with information about local rules relating to each pest.

In mid-September, the hub was named '2017 Web & Digital Project of the Year' at the Association of Local Government Information Management's (ALGIM) Spring Conference in Dunedin.

The project finished runner-up in the 'Excellence in Innovation' Award at ALGIM's national Annual & Infrastructure Awards in Rotorua on 14 November.

Kaitiāia-based Te Hiku constituency representative Mike Finlayson, who chairs council's Pest Management Working Party, says he's thrilled by the hub's success.

"It's a credit to all those involved, including many members of the public who provided invaluable feedback during the hub's development," he says.

"As a result, we've now got a simple and really user-friendly tool which one of our biosecurity colleagues further south has told us they think is the best 'one-stop-shop' currently available in New Zealand."

Mike says the success is even more special as it's the second year in a row the council has won the coveted 'Web & Digital Project of the Year' accolade.

"We won last year's award for a project that has drastically sped up the way information on Mediterranean fanworm infestations is captured, recorded and



Biosecurity/Land Assistant Cam Bunton, left, and Online Services Manager Tracey Morris use the Pest Control Hub website to identify unwanted pest palm seedlings.

reported back to staff to deal with. It's credited with trebling the number of boat hulls that were able to be inspected last summer."

The fanworm project uses a range of technology and programmes specifically integrated by council IT staff for use with iPads in the field, and saves staff and

contractors hours of work a day.

Mike says the council is keen to invest in ways it can take advantage of new technology to allow people to easily access staff knowledge and expertise.

The Pest Control Hub can be found at: www.nrc.govt.nz/pestcontrolhub

Nga haora tari i te Kirihimete me te tau hou Christmas-New Year office hours

Our offices will be closed from 2pm Friday, 22 December 2017 until 8am Wednesday 03 January 2018 for the Christmas-New Year holiday break.

The closures apply to our Whangārei, Kaitiāia, Ōpua and Waipapa offices.

Dargaville staff (who share offices with the Kaipara District Council) will also be on leave from the afternoon of 22 December until 03 January.

Environmental or maritime incidents can be reported to our 24/7 Environmental Hotline (0800) 504 639 over the break. Maritime, environmental response, Civil Defence and hydrological staff will remain on-call and our annual summer swimming water quality monitoring programme will continue.

Councillors, management and staff wish Northlanders and visitors a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Rohe whenua waka arotake mahere

Regional land transport plan review

A three-year review of the region's land transport plan – effectively the blueprint for transport spending across Northland – is underway.

The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2015-2021 details local roading projects proposed by Northland's three district councils, state highway projects put forward by the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), and strategic projects and public transport matters dealt with by Northland Regional Council.

The Regional Transport Committee is planning to release the review for the final three years of the plan (2018-2021) for public comment in mid-December, with the feedback period set to run until the end of January.

A series of drop-in sessions will be held around the region in January, so people can ask questions and find out more. The review document, and details about how to make a submission, will be on our website at: www.nrc.govt.nz/TransportPlan



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