

REGIONAL REPORT

Issue 36

your regional newsletter

March/April 2016



Pictured checking how Kaitaia's modified Whangatane Spillway performed after recent heavy rain are (from left): regional councillors Monty Knight and Joe Carr; council's Kaitaia Area Manager Peter Wiessing; river engineers Barney Brotherhood (with sunhat) and Joseph Camuso; and Far North Roding Managing Director Brady Wild.

'Big year' ahead for North flood protection

INITIAL WHANGATANE SPILLWAY WORKS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

The first stage of more than \$400,000 worth of work designed to better protect Kaitaia and the wider Awanui catchment from the effects of flooding has been completed successfully.

Councillor Joe Carr, who chairs the regional council's Awanui River Liaison Committee, says about \$150,000 worth of work over two months to modify the Whangatane Spillway weir has just been finished by contractors Far North Roding.

Joe and the council's Kaitaia-based Te Hiku constituency representative Monty Knight say they're thrilled at the realisation of what has been a great team effort by a range of players, all of whom had put a significant amount of work into making the project a success.

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HAVE YOUR SAY - ANNUAL PLAN 2016/17

A 'business as usual' Annual Plan that keeps an overall rates increase to the 2.34 percent agreed last year opens for public comment shortly.

Council chairman Bill Shepherd says an official month-long public feedback period on the Annual Plan opens Tuesday 05 April and runs until 4pm Friday 06 May.

"You can find out more in our Consultation Document which highlights any differences over the next year from those forecast in our current Long Term Plan, although these changes are really only small."

Bill describes the Annual Plan as "very much business as usual", with a total spending increase of less than

\$1 million across six main areas, despite an overall budget of \$33.6 million.

"Of the \$989,750 proposed extra spend over the 2016/17 year, less than a third (\$303,000) will be funded via the previously signalled 2.34% rates increase, with the bulk taken from reserves/efficiencies."

Bill says to put the proposed rates increase in perspective, it equates to an average of just \$4.27 per rateable property over the full 12 months from July 01; equivalent to 8.2c extra weekly.

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Putting Northland first 0800 002 004

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL





NORTHLAND FIELD DAYS 2016

Council had a strong presence at Kaipara's Northland Field Days, where an estimated 2000 people checked out our marquee, themed around working together for the benefit of Northland's environment.

Rabbit rissoles were this year's wild food treat and we showcased a range of activities showing how to take action on issues, including pest plants and animals, land and lake management, kauri dieback disease and farm dairy effluent.

Councillors and staff specialists across a range of fields were available to offer advice or chat about land, while a photo booth for people to show their commitment to improving our environment proved popular again.



INITIAL WHANGATANE SPILLWAY WORKS COMPLETED

From p1

"As well as the contractors, who did a marvellous job, we'd also like to acknowledge the tremendous input from local property owners, council's rivers team and local Kaitia staff and, of course, the liaison committee, whose members have been very supportive."

"What has been achieved here will reduce the flood risk in Kaitia by lowering the peak flood level at the spillway intake and upstream along the Awanui River through Kaitia," Joe says.

Monty says part of the weir intake has been raised to 12 metres, and another section lowered to 9.5m, which will allow floodwaters to enter the spillway from the Awanui River much earlier during a flood. (In a large flood, that means water will enter the spillway's lower section when the Awanui River is flowing at 20, rather than 42, cubic metres per second.)

"As well as lowering the peak flood level at the intake, it should also help reduce the 'backwater effect' at bridges across the Awanui River through Kaitia itself, and assist floodwaters to drain more quickly from Lake Tangonge, hugely improving water quality in the lower Awanui."

Monty says floodgates on the Awanui River downstream of Kaitia will be able to be open for

longer before floods peak, as more water will flow down the spillway during the flood's early stages. "It'll also allow floodgates along the lower Awanui River to open sooner once the flood peak has passed."

Meanwhile, work is underway on a second contract, which will see a 54-metre long stock bridge built about 2.5km downstream from the weir by Steve Bowling Contracting Ltd, again over about eight weeks. (The bridge is being built so access to a dairy farm spanning the spillway isn't affected by the weir modifications.) The works are the latest in a series of scheme improvements the regional council and river liaison committee have approved on behalf of the local community in recent years.

"In addition to the latest weir and bridge works, we've also allocated another \$350,000 in the current financial year for maintenance and other improvements to the existing scheme, including ongoing monitoring and works associated with stabilising the Bell's Hill slip."

Joe says 2016 is shaping up to be a big year for flood protection works in Northland.

"The council hopes to be in a position to start a \$2M-plus Kerikeri River spillway downstream of the Waipapa industrial estate to divert flooding from high-risk areas below the State Highway within the next year."

"And on April 09, we're due to formally open and name our \$12m Whangarei detention dam, which is the largest construction project of its kind council has ever done."

The 18-metre tall dam (which to date has simply been unofficially referred to as the 'Kotuku dam' after a street in the area) is designed to save the city's CBD and parts of Morningside and Raumanga millions of dollars in flood-related damage from the Raumanga Stream. Joe says the dam is not designed to completely stop the CBD from flooding as the Waiarohia Stream and tidal Hatea River also flow into the area.

"Instead, it's designed to quickly capture up to 1.27 million cubic metres of floodwater during heavy rain and then slowly release it back into the stream over several days. In a very large storm, this dam should significantly slow damaging floodwaters and cut flood depths in the CBD by up to half a metre."

He says webcams capturing images at the 'Kotuku' dam and the Whangatane Spillway can be viewed on the council's website at:

www.nrc.govt.nz/Environment/webcams

Joe says with spillway and detention dam projects now well in hand and the Kerikeri-Waipapa project progressing, council is now turning its attention to flooding issues within the massive Taumarere (Kawakawa) catchment.

A Taumarere Flood Management Liaison Committee with a final membership of more than a dozen is currently being formed and is expected to meet for the first time shortly.

HAVE YOUR SAY – ANNUAL PLAN 2016/17

From p1

The council will also effectively be able to do more with less by borrowing money (largely for infrastructure projects) more cheaply and passing these savings on to ratepayers.

Bill says the Annual Plan differs from the LTP in that it includes extra funding for:

- Community representation and engagement (\$73,000)
- Resource and catchment management (\$267,000)
- River management (\$131,500)
- Public transport (\$30,000)
- Harbour safety and navigation (\$182,000)
- Support services (\$306,250)

He says once again the council will use a simple and clear 'Consultation Document' and associated supporting information to spell out those changes in more detail and as a basis for public feedback.

"As usual, councillors and staff remain very focused on striking a good balance between affordability, value for money and striving for improvement."

He says there are a number of avenues for people to have their say on the Annual Plan and encourages those who want to give feedback to get the full picture first by reading the Consultation Document.

"These include using our online consultation portal or through Facebook or Twitter, filling in a feedback form that can be emailed, posted or faxed."

Bill says last year's changes to the Local Government

Act mean that the public hearings traditionally held after submissions close are not required for this year's Annual Plan.

"People who want to outline their thoughts to councillors in person can still do so, but during the submission period itself at councillor community feedback meetings. However, you'll need to pre-book speaking time by Friday 22 April. Contact us on (0800) 002 004 for locations and registration details."

FIND OUT ABOUT OUR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Before giving us your feedback, we encourage you to read our Consultation Document, which highlights any differences from our current Long Term Plan.

Copies are available from all regional council offices and public libraries or on our website: www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016

USING OUR ONLINE FEEDBACK PORTAL

Our online portal is a great way to give us your feedback on the Consultation Document.

- Go to www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016
- Register your details
- Read the Consultation Document and tell us what you think!

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

You can have your say on all the key issues we're seeking feedback on, or just the ones that interest you. There are several ways to do this:

- **Use our online portal** – we encourage you to use our consultation portal, which makes it easier to have your say online. Go to www.nrc.govt.nz/annualplan2016
- **Get on Facebook or Twitter** – we'll be asking and answering questions throughout the feedback period. Visit www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/NRCexpress
- **Fill in a feedback form** – you can still send in your feedback via post, email or fax. You'll find a feedback form at the back of our Consultation Document.
- **Feedback sessions** – Want to talk to a councillor about our Annual Plan? For locations/to book a time call us on (0800) 002 004 by Friday 22 April 2016. Remember, online and written feedback closes 4pm on Friday 06 May 2016.

You can read the Consultation Document without registering, but to give feedback you'll need to register. Once registered, you can give feedback on any of our future consultations. You'll also be able to review your past feedback anytime. (If you've provided feedback before, you'll already have an account, we'll send you a reminder email.)

EXERCISE PLANNED FOR 'NEAR-SOURCE' TSUNAMI

A fast-arriving and potentially devastating 'near-source' tsunami is the scenario for a major national Civil Defence exercise – 'Tangaroa' – later this year.

The three day exercise in August/September is being used to raise Northlanders' awareness of near-source tsunami, potentially the most dangerous type.

Graeme MacDonald, spokesman for the Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group says a 'local source' tsunami (for example, one generated by an earthquake off the New Zealand coast) could arrive within just minutes.

"That's potentially too soon for an official warning. Given that, it's vital that Northlanders living in tsunami evacuation zones, and those who holiday or work in our coastal locations, are able to recognise the natural warning signs of a tsunami."

"Northlanders should use the opportunity to make

themselves familiar with evacuation routes and make plans for their own households given in a real event they may need to act quickly and decisively.

NATURAL WARNING SIGNS OF A TSUNAMI

Move immediately to the nearest high ground (or as far inland as you can) if you are at the coast and experience any of the following:

- A strong earthquake (one making it hard to stand) or a weak but rolling earthquake lasting a minute or more
- A sudden sea level rise/fall
- Loud/unusual sea noises

"Local community response groups already exist in more than 50 Northland locations, and will be taking part in *Exercise Tangaroa* in a range of ways." (The same groups have already prepared response plans for a range of other potential hazards.)

Tsunami sirens from Te Hapua to Mangawhai will be tested when daylight saving ends on Sunday April 03. Over 150 Northland sirens will sound – at 9.20am for 10 minutes, again at 10am for just 30 seconds – as part of regular twice-yearly checks to ensure they're all working correctly.

To check out tsunami information, your local community response plan and evacuation maps, visit:

www.nrc.govt.nz/tsunami
www.nrc.govt.nz/communityresponseplans

Or follow us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/civildefencenorthland

NEW APP FOR OFFICIAL HAZARD ALERTS

Keen to keep up to date with the latest tsunami and other warnings?

Northlanders are being encouraged to check out a new smartphone 'Hazard app' as a fast way of receiving official alerts for a range of hazards. Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has decided to use the app (developed by Red Cross) for alerts, in preference to the previous text-based OPTN system. This means Northlanders who had previously subscribed to OPTN will need to download the Hazard app.

The app allows users to choose to monitor both their current location and up to five others as well as the

types of alerts they wish to receive for each, including storms/flooding, earthquakes, tsunami and rural fires (the key hazards for Northlanders).



Android

The app also includes general advice on what to do before, during and after different types of disasters, and checklists for survival items, 'getaway kits' and household emergency plans.



Apple

The Hazard app is free to download from Google Play (for Android phones) and from the Apple iTunes and App Stores (or by scanning the appropriate QR code).

Local Elections 2016

YOUR VOTE YOUR COMMUNITY

Saturday October 08, 2016 is local body Election Day. Held every three years, the event will see the election of nine Northland Regional Council members to represent seven council constituencies. Postal voting will begin Friday 16 September and culminate with Election Day on 08 October. Further details about the process will be posted in coming months on our website: www.nrc.govt.nz

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