

WHAKATĀNE SHINES AGAIN

On a day that defined the occasion, Mayor Tony Bonne joined local contractors this week to install the Sunshine Capital flags that Whakatāne can proudly fly for the next year.

Mayor Bonne visited “cloudy Nelson” for family reasons in January and took great pleasure in uplifting the spoils of victory from Nelson Mayor, Aldo Miccio, who reluctantly handed over the coveted trophy and broad-brimmed hat which acknowledges the town’s status as the country’s sunniest centre.

“In early-2011, Nelson presented Whakatāne with a trophy and hat proclaiming us as the winner of the sunshine stakes for 2010,” Mr Bonne says. “We had to give them back last year, but now the title of New Zealand’s sunshine capital is back where it belongs, in the heart of the Bay of Plenty.”

National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research records indicate a sunnier year for many centres in 2012, with Whakatāne finishing on top with 2,602 hours of sunshine (up 222 hours on 2011). Nelson finished 18 hours behind on 2,584 sunshine hours, 97 hours ahead of the city’s 2011 total.

“I know from the feedback I receive that climate has a major effect on many people’s decisions about where they choose to live and the Whakatāne District will certainly be looking to capitalise on its pre-eminent sunshine status,” Mr Bonne adds. “To encourage our residents to take advantage of the District’s sunny nature, the Council has eliminated consent fees for solar energy systems and we are also intending to install solar water heating for our Aquatic and Fitness Centre – a move which will quickly pay for itself and deliver lasting benefits for all ratepayers.”



Right: Mayor Tony Bonne pictured with an Horizon Energy staff member installing Sunshine Capital flags this week.



BEST BEACH IN NEW ZEALAND

If, like us, you agree that Ōhope Beach is the best in New Zealand, then visit www.bestbeaches.org.nz/beaches and vote to make our beach number one! At the time Ko Konei went to print there were about 100 votes separating us from first place. You have until 28 February to make your vote count.



GREAT BRITISH CAR RALLY COMING TO WHAKATĀNE

Whakatāne is to feature as a lunch and rest stop on the second leg of The Great British Car Rally this month.

More than 200 British-manufactured vehicles, old and new, are expected to take part in the rally, which begins in Auckland on 17 February and ends in Christchurch on 22 February. Day 2 (Monday 18 February) will see participants travel from Tauranga to Gisborne, with a two-hour stop scheduled in Whakatāne from noon till 2.00pm.

The Whakatāne District Council’s Kakahoroa Drive Car Park (to the east of The Warehouse and between the rear of The Strand and Kakahoroa Drive) will be closed for the day to accommodate the rally participants and support vehicles.

Mayor Tony Bonne says the Council realises that the car park closure will cause some inconvenience for regular

users, but the area is the only viable location for the event. “We have to be able to park more than 200 vehicles in the CBD, so that participants can access the town’s cafes, restaurants and retail opportunities,” he explains. “Being included as a stop-off is a very positive development for the District and the Council and the Eastern Bay of Plenty Chamber of Commerce are fully supportive of this high-profile event.”

Mr Bonne says a welcome is being planned for rally participants, who will also be encouraged to visit the Molly Morpeth Canaday Art Award exhibition at Te Kōputu – the Whakatāne Library and Exhibition Centre – or take in the visitor experience provided at the Mataatua Whareni.

The Council will publicise alternative parking arrangements in the lead-up to the event.

DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN GOES TO COUNCIL THIS MONTH

The Whakatāne District Council’s draft Annual Plan 2013/14 will be presented to the Monitoring and Policy Committee on Monday for comment or amendments prior to adoption on 19 February. Once adopted, the draft Annual Plan will be released for public consultation from 11 March to 12 April 2013. This will be your opportunity to ‘have your say’ on our work programme and budgets for the 2013/14 year.

Mayor Tony Bonne says there are no significant changes to the programme that was set out in the Long Term Plan for 2012-22 (LTP).

“The key messages signalled in the LTP are affordability, sustainability and responsibility and the draft Annual Plan continues that focus. Through careful management of expenditure and ongoing attention to creating efficiencies, we can ensure that we deliver quality services at the least possible cost to ratepayers.”

Mr Bonne says the proposed draft Annual Plan includes an indicative average rates increase across the District of 2.47 percent, which is considerably lower than the 4.52 percent forecast in the LTP. The actual increase will vary from property to property, depending on a number of factors, including capital value and the impact of targeted rates for services such as sewerage and stormwater. A table of what your rates might look like will be included in the draft Annual Plan 2013/14 Summary, which will be distributed to all households and Post Office box-holders in mid-March.

“The draft Annual Plan will be open for submissions between 11 March and 12 April,

with hearings to be held in early-May. The Council will then consider all of your submissions, make any changes required and adopt the final Annual Plan before the end of June,” Mr Bonne explains.

“We encourage you, your organisation or your business to ‘have your say’. Make a submission and let us know which aspects of the draft Annual Plan you support or oppose, and your suggestions for improvements. For the Council’s elected members, this is a key part of the democratic process, because it tells us exactly what you want and what your priorities for the District are.”

ANNUAL PLAN 2013/14 DATES

4 February	Preliminary draft Annual Plan 2013/14 considered by Monitoring and Policy Committee.
19 February	Council adopts the draft Annual Plan 2013/14 for public consultation.
11 March	Consultation opens and the Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 is made available from the Council offices, libraries and on our website www.whakatane.govt.nz
16 March	Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 Summary distributed.
12 April	Consultation closes (at 5.00pm).
Early-May	Submission hearings.
Late-May	Council deliberates on submissions.
June	Final Annual Plan 2013/14 adopted.

MOLLY MORPETH CANADAY ART AWARD

The opening week of the Molly Morpeth Canaday Art Award, held for the first time at Te Kōputu a te whanga a Toi – the Whakatāne Library and Exhibition Centre, has been hugely successful, with more than 2,000 people taking the opportunity to view the 74 works on display over Anniversary Weekend alone.

Close to 100 people attended the Saturday floor talk by 2013 judge Melvin Day and were given a fascinating insight into his thoughts and selection process.

Artwork sales were strong, with 15 paintings selling on opening night, and a further four through the weekend.

The functionality of the spaces at Te Kōputu came to the fore – with the Little Orchard Activity Room and Atrium becoming a venue for dance performances; and the Opus Gallery used for a series of live music segments.

Supporting events this weekend (2–3 February) include the opportunity to watch the portrait painting process (Saturday and Sunday 10.00am – 12 noon, Little Orchard Activity Room and Atrium); Art Award floor talk (11.00am Saturday, Opus Gallery); Israeli, Belly and Latin dance performances (Saturday 12.30 to 1.30pm, Little Orchard Atrium); and live music (Opus Gallery, Sunday 10.00am and 12.30pm).

The Molly Morpeth Canaday Art Award continues until 31 March.



Local artist Ian McKelvey pictured with his award-winning painting, 'Main Ridge Pakihoroa Station'.

During the summer months, we will be treated to a series of fantastic Summer Arts Festival events, many of which are hosted in the District’s parks and community facilities. The festival is organised by Arts Whakatāne, an incorporated society which aims to promote, initiate and support projects and activities that stimulate and strengthen the artistic and cultural life of our community.

Visit www.whakatane.com to check the other arts treats in store.

WAITANGI DAY

The gallery spaces at Te Kōputu will be open to the public between 10.00am and 2.00pm on Waitangi day, 6 February. An entertainment programme will be provided.

WHAKATANE HARBOUR – SOME INTERESTING FACTS

Did you know that Whakatāne Harbour is home to a unique estuarine environment which includes the Apanui Saltmarsh? A group of dedicated volunteers help to look after this special place, and you could join them.

During the 12 months from July 2011 to June 2012, care group members clocked up 727 hours looking after the Whakatāne Harbour environment. Their work largely involves weed control, predator control and revegetation planting.

At a bird count session at Apanui Saltmarsh in October last year, people saw around 20 different bird species, including oystercatchers, pukeko, white-faced heron, kingfishers, various gulls, spur-wing plovers, as well as finches, sparrows, and blackbirds.

Would you like to be part of the Whakatāne Harbour Care group?

The Whakatāne Harbour Care Group is always looking for support and welcomes volunteers for planting and other activities. If you would like to help and be part of the Harbour Care Group, or if you have particular skills you can offer, the group

would love to hear from you. Please contact Jane Wells on 308 8014, Gaye Payze on 312 3844, or Rene de Jong on 304 8158.

Upcoming events:
Autumn Planting Day – Sunday 21 April
Areas of Apanui Saltmarsh will be replanted with native plants. Volunteers welcome.



REMINDER: RATES DUE THIS MONTH



Ratepayers should have received their third rates instalment invoices last week. **The due date for payment is 22 February 2013.** Invoices were sent out earlier than usual this time to ensure that there is as much time as possible between receipt of the invoice and the due date – an important factor at this time of year.

Remember, you can also pay your rates by direct debit. This system means you never have to worry about your rates payment being overdue and incurring a late-payment penalty. All that’s required to put the system in place is to provide authority for payments to be deducted from a specified account on the due date, or in monthly payments which cover the amount owing by the due date. Direct debits will then take place automatically, but can be cancelled at any time.

eBook WINNER

Pictured right is the happy winner of the Whakatāne Library’s Kobo eBook prize draw, Jackie Stockwell (left), with Librarian, Collections Management, Christine Whalley.

To mark the introduction of eBooks to library users in the Whakatāne District, local retailer Noel Leeming offered a Kobo eReader to one lucky person through a prize draw before Christmas.



An eBook is a book published in digital form, which can be read on electronic devices such as iPads, tablets and PCs. Library members can download eBooks at no cost through the Library’s website and wherever they can access the Internet. Access to each eBook expires after three weeks.

PROHIBITED FIRE SEASON DECLARED FOR WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT



The current dry weather has created an extreme fire hazard for the whole of the Whakatāne District. The high risk has led Whakatāne District Council Principal Rural Fire Officer, Neal Yeates, to declare a prohibited fire season until further notice.

“Scrub fires have already been an issue around Matatā, so we need to reduce the risk of anything more serious occurring,” Mr Yeates says. “Vegetation is tinder dry and even the smallest spark could ignite a major fire. Long range weather forecasts indicate that the dry conditions could continue for some weeks, so it’s essential that we put these protection measures in place.”

During a prohibited fire season, it’s an offence for any person to light any fire within the District in the open air, or to cause or assist any person to light such a fire. This includes braziers, incinerators, charcoal barbecues, bonfires, Chinese lanterns, and burn-offs.

“Areas of particular concern are the coastal strip from Port Ōhope to Ōtamarākau and Onepū, Otakiri and Galatea. Residents in these areas should be extra vigilant and immediately report any sighting of smoke.”

Mr Yeates says farmers considering doing any rotary slasher mowing should put it off. “In hot, dry conditions, the blades hitting a stone or piece of metal may be enough to ignite dry grass. Arcing electric fences could also cause of ignition.”

He explains that all permits previously issued by the Council are cancelled and no open fires are permitted. “We’re relying on the public to assist us by reporting any smoke or fire sightings to Fire Emergency 111.”

For further information on the prohibited fire season visit: www.whakatane.govt.nz/Services/Fire-Safety1