

CROWDS FLOCK TO LIBRARY AND EXHIBITION CENTRE

The community response to Whakatane's new Library and Exhibition Centre – Te Kōputu a Te Whanga a Toi – has been "just fantastic", according to Whakatane District Council Arts and Culture staff.

In the days following the civic opening of the Centre on 28 June, there has been a "steady stream" of visitors exploring their new library and gallery spaces.

Coordinator Library Services, Tangimeriana Rua, says the demand on staff has been huge, with some 7,000 books returned and 4,000 issued in the first five days alone. Total visitor numbers are also well up.

"People just love the look and feel of the Horizon Energy Library space and we've had lots of positive comments about the comfortable reading and relaxing areas provided," she says. "Many library-goers are also making use of the new self-checkout facility and easy-return chute at the north end of the building, which can be accessed at any time. With extra terminals now available for Internet use, our interactive and research facilities are being particularly well used and we expect that to continue throughout the school holidays.

The Arts and Culture staff who contributed to the development of the new Museum and Exhibition space, Hamish Pettengell and Kay Boreham, are also thrilled with the public's reaction to the displays.

"It's just great to see so many people taking in the exhibits and really engaging with the District's stories and taonga. In many cases, people are finding a personal connection to those stories. We've also noticed a lot of visitors are carrying books, which shows that there is a positive synergy between the Library and gallery spaces," they say.

Meanwhile, the Centre's art galleries have created considerable interest, with hundreds of people appreciating the superb photographic works by the late Brian Brake in the Opus Gallery. Award-winning local artist Jamie Boynton's "Mauri Ora – A Story of Creation" has drawn many visitors to the Sheaff Family Gallery, to marvel at the play of light through intricately-etched glass surfaces. Gina Matchett's fascinating "linear sculptures" complete the arts experience in the adjoining Whakatane Community Board Gallery.

Manager Arts and Culture, Wayne Marriott, says the civic opening and the special sponsors and supporters preview the previous night were both wonderful occasions, which gave the facility "the best possible start".

"There's absolutely no doubt that Te Kōputu a Te Whanga a Toi will fulfil a key role as the community's arts and culture hub for many years to come and for all of the people who have worked so hard to make the dream a



Photo above: Mayor Tony Bonne unveils the new name for the Whakatane Library and Exhibition Centre. Photo right: Children enjoy the Little Orchard activity spaces.



reality, it's hugely gratifying that the public response has been so wholeheartedly positive," Says Mr Marriott.

Anyone who hasn't already explored this great new community facility is in for a treat – spread the word!

FLOOD PROTECTION PRIORITIES DEFINED

Flood protection projects with an estimated cost of \$4.5 million have been programmed for the Whakatane urban area over the next three years.

A report received by the Whakatane District Council Projects and Services Committee last month set out six priority areas for stormwater improvements, with work scheduled according to the outcomes of a flood mapping study and historical flooding information.

Priority areas are:

- Alexander Avenue and Douglas street intersection and surroundings;
- Wainui Te Whara Stream urban catchment;
- McAlister Street Pump Station and Pohutu/Bracken street area;
- Kirk Street area;
- Hinemoa Street Pump Station area; and
- Henderson Street area.

The Alexander Avenue/Douglas Street works will begin with the installation of a new pipeline to take stormwater

directly to Sullivan Lake. This project will be implemented in two stages and has an estimated cost of \$725,000. It aims to prevent flooding events in that area, which have affected homes and businesses on a number of occasions in recent years. Stage 1 will be completed in 2012/13, with further work scheduled in 2014/15.

Work to prevent over-topping of the Wainui Te Whara channel in extreme rainfall events will be undertaken in 2013/14 and 2014/15. Two options are under consideration: widening of the channel to increase flow capacity; or construction of a detention dam in the upper catchment to control stormwater flows. The cost of each of these options is approximately \$1.45 million. Public consultation will be carried out in the 2012/13 year before the preferred option is finalised.

Areas which will benefit from those projects include parts of Valley Road, Alexander Avenue, Douglas Street, King Street, Anzac Avenue, Salonika Street and Karaka Lane.

Screening and flow capacity improvements costing \$125,000 are also planned at the

McAlister Street Pump Station for 2012/13. Further improvements and the construction of overland flow paths are scheduled for 2014/15, at a cost of \$1.24 million. Areas to benefit will include parts of Peace, Bracken, Pohutu and Beach Streets.

New piping and a small pump station are planned for the Kirk Street area in 2014/15, at an estimated cost of \$450,000. The Henderson Street area will see improvements to gravity outfalls in 2012/13 and the use of mobile pumps from 2013/14 to cover periods when high river levels restrict stormwater flows, at a combined cost of \$100,000.

That work programme has been developed as the result of a detailed urban catchment study, which aims to identify the improvements needed to meet the Council's Engineering Code of Practice, which requires a stormwater collection and piping system capable of dealing with a one-in-10 year storm, plus secondary overland flowpaths to deal with a one-in-100 year event.

Further works will be included in the 2015/25 Long Term Plan.

ŌHOPE WASTEWATER OPTIONS DISCUSSED

The Council is seeking community feedback on two wastewater disposal options for Ōhope. As part of gaining a new resource consent, Council was required to investigate alternative effluent treatment and disposal options, which consider alternatives to the present discharge of treated effluent from the existing ocean outfall.

After investigating the alternatives, two options for disposal are considered viable. One option is the disposal of effluent to sand dunes at Port Ōhope Reserve, at an estimated cost of \$4 million. The other option is to maintain the existing disposal of treated effluent to the ocean.

Council staff will be at the Ōhope Craft Market today to discuss the options with community members. Residents are also invited to complete an online survey which is available on the Council website (www.whakatane.govt.nz/ohopewastewater).

GENERAL MANAGERS JOIN THE TEAM

In June, we officially welcomed our new General Managers, Julian Reweti and Tomasz Krawczyk to the Council. Julian Reweti (front left) joins our team as General Manager Community and Economic Development, and Tomasz Krawczyk as General Manager Infrastructure.



MATATĀ PROJECTS GOVERNANCE GROUP FORMED

A governance group has been established to oversee the progress of two significant Matatā projects.

The Matatā Project Governance Group is headed by Councillor Russell Orr and includes Councillors Christine Chambers and Gerard Van Beek and senior Council staff. It will focus on the township's proposed wastewater reticulation and treatment scheme, which is currently under review, and the debris control structure planned for the upper Awatarariki Stream.

The Awatarariki catchment debris control project is the subject of a 117-page review report, which was presented by the review team leader, Alan Bickers, to the Council's Projects and Services Committee this week. The committee adopted the report's recommendation that no future action be taken to develop solutions for debris detention in the upper catchment and that

possible downstream debris control options be re-evaluated.

Councillors and staff met with the property owners most directly affected by the report findings on Monday. Feedback from that meeting will be used by the governance group to assist the development of any future debris control plan. A project plan and timeline for investigating downstream options is expected to be available for the Council to consider on August 1.

Meanwhile, the Beca engineering consultancy is leading a review of the need for wastewater reticulation and treatment in the town. Matatā properties currently rely on septic tank disposal systems and the review is investigating whether there is a human health need for a change to full reticulation. The outcome is expected to be reported to the Council later this month, with further community consultation to follow.

ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY

Residents will have the opportunity to help Council improve its systems and services through the annual residents' survey project which is currently underway. The project includes the Annual Residents Survey and a smaller Development and Compliance Survey. The Annual Residents Survey captures the community's views on a wide range of Council services and involves telephone interviews of 300 respondents.

The Development and Compliance Survey is targeted specifically at building and resource consent applicants over the past year. Survey results are expected in August and will be reported back to Council when available. The results will be used to update performance measures in the Annual Report and to inform business improvement processes.

COUNCILLOR PROFILE - GEORGE JOHNSTON



George Johnston and his wife Noleen were both born in Whakatane to families who had emigrated and settled on the Rangitāiki Plains more than 100 years ago. George attended Whakatane High School before working as a mechanic in the Johnston family garage and service station in Te Teko. Noleen taught at schools around the district for almost 50 years and they have a son and four grandchildren.

From 1961, George became involved in the deer industry through live capture and venison recovery, and held the country's second deer farm licence. He was a pioneer in local jet boat tourism and in 1963, chartered the first game fishing boat out of Whakatane. He later built an export packhouse for deer products, which he personally marketed throughout Asia.

AQUATIC CENTRE CELEBRATIONS PLANNED



The Whakatane District Aquatic Centre is celebrating its new status as a Council-run enterprise, and the whole community is invited to join the party.

For the weekend of July 14 and 15, there will be free entry to the pool and hydroslide, and on Saturday, you can expect extra fun and games galore.

"The Whakatane District Council took over the management of the Aquatic Centre on 2 July and we thought it would be appropriate to mark that with an 'open weekend' with lots of fun activities for everyone," says Manager Community Facilities Paula Chapman. "This is a significant turning point for the centre and our pool staff are looking forward to the showing-off their facility and making sure the community knows what a great asset we have."

Saturday's fun activities will run from 10.00am till 4.00pm, with highlights including water walker races, a dunk tank, pool inflatables, a bouncy castle, face painting and more. There will also be some surprise celebrity events and to keep hunger at bay, a sausage sizzle and espresso coffee treats will be available for purchase.

Centre staff will also offer tours of the gymnasium and provide information on the fitness assessments and plans.

"All of the fun activities will be free and anyone who can't be involved on Saturday can also enjoy free entry and hydroslides on Sunday," Ms Chapman adds. "As for the future, we have some exciting plans under development to increase community involvement and support, but in the meantime, don't just watch this space, come and enjoy it."

STAFF PROFILE - JULIE GARDYNE

It was a busy start to 2012 for Policy Manager, Julie Gardyne who managed to combine a key role in the development of the next Long Term Plan with preparations for the birth to her second child. Julie joined the Whakatane District Council eight years ago, having worked previously in both central government and private sector policy roles. She enjoys the variety of requirements her policy work brings. "You get quite involved in what's going on, and you get a real perspective on what the Council is doing across the community."

Julie was announced the inaugural recipient of the recently-established Hautipua Award, which recognises outstanding performance amongst Council staff. Chief Executive Marty Grenfell says the recipient is "someone who has upheld the values of trust, teamwork, excellence and learning in carrying out their work and Julie's positive attitude and perspective has made a difference across the organisation".



Julie Gardyne (second from left) with the finalists of the inaugural Hautipua Award, Cherie Robinson (left), Sandra Pettigrew, Liisa Tioke and (front) Melanie Bell and Fiona Hennessey.

George has carried out many voluntary roles over the years. He is an honorary member of Whakatane Coastguard and was awarded the first merit award by Coastguard NZ for outstanding rescue service, having operated Thornton rescue for 29 years. He was also an honorary Fisheries Officer and has been heavily involved in the Whakatane Charity Fishing Tournament.

A man of many talents, George has authored four books and has been a piper and past president of the Whakatane Pipe Band.

George's community service has included being President and a committee member of Pride Whakatane and he has served as a Parks and Reserves Warden for 26 years. He brings strong local knowledge, experience and common sense to his role as a councillor representing the Rangitāiki ward.