

CONSERVE WATER NOW TO AVOID RESTRICTIONS

When it rains, it pours. But when it's sunny, we face water restrictions. We're asking Whakatāne and Ōhope residents to conserve water now to avoid the inconvenience of restrictions, which could be required as early as next week if storage levels continue to fall.

Low Whakatāne River flows mean salt water intrusion is already extending past the treatment station intake during high tides, restricting the volume of water which can be extracted for treatment. With no significant rain forecast, severe water use restrictions are only days away unless we can increase our reservoir storage by reducing usage.

Whakatāne District Council Infrastructure General Manager Tomasz Krawczyk says the call for water conservation applies particularly to consumers connected to the Whakatāne and Ōhope schemes.



"Our first priority is to ensure that the treated supply is not contaminated by salt water so that the water in our taps remains suitable for drinking. We would like to avoid enforcing restrictions on use, but if our storage continues to drop, that will not be



possible," Mr Krawczyk concludes. "That's largely in the hands of consumers and any changes they make to reduce their normal usage now will certainly help us to manage the situation."

SOME SIMPLE TIPS TO REDUCE WATER USE:

- Don't wash cars or boats
- Don't refill or top-up swimming pools
- Don't use sprinklers on lawns or gardens
- Hand-water gardens sparingly and only early or late in the day
- If you know you have leaking taps, fix them now
- Flush toilets sparingly
- Don't use your bath and cut your shower time down as much as possible
- Turn taps off when they're not required

The only way to avoid severe water restrictions is to start conserving water now!

GREAT BRITISH CAR RALLY CRUISES THROUGH TOWN

It was a great day for showing our District off to visitors who rolled into town as part of the Great British Car Rally. The Tauranga-Gisborne leg of the rally involved some 130 vehicles and more than 200 people, all of whom have taken away a great impression of what the Sunshine Capital has to offer.



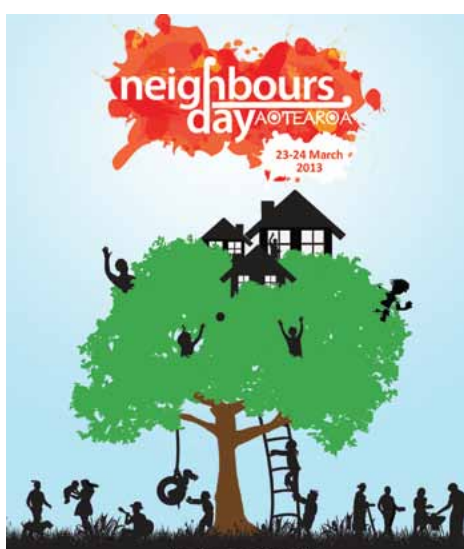
NEIGHBOURS DAY AOTEAROA 2013

How well do you know your neighbours? Neighbours Day Aotearoa 2013 is your opportunity to get to know them better. Held over the weekend of 23-24 March, Neighbours Day is about turning strangers into neighbours and streets into neighbourhoods.

Initially launched in Auckland in 2009, Neighbours Day Aotearoa (NDA) became a nationwide initiative in 2011. Its aim is for streets to have a get-together of some sort, whether it is a barbeque, a street-wide garage sale, a potluck dinner or a picnic in the park.

It's not about big events, but rather taking the time to engage in small, local acts of neighbourliness, over the course of one weekend. For some, that may mean a first wave or smile, a chat over the fence, inviting a neighbour in for a cuppa or holding a street barbeque. Put simply, it's about going one step further in getting to know those 'next door'.

The four NDA campaign team partners: Neighbourhood Support NZ; Lifewise; Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand; and Inspiring Communities have developed



a national website with a range of resources available to businesses, community organisations and the general public. These include posters, flyers, invitations, ideas, and step-by-step guides, so much of the hard work has already been done. Why not be the person to kick it off in your street? It could be as simple as a shared morning tea.

To join in the fun and to get planning, check out www.neighboursday.org.nz.

TOTAL FIRE BAN REMAINS IN FORCE

Dry weather conditions continue to affect the Whakatāne District, keeping the risk of fire extremely high.

Principal Rural Fire Officer Neal Yeates is reminding the public that a Prohibited Fire Season remains in force for the whole of the Whakatāne District, which includes land administered by the Department of Conservation and Pumicelands.

"Vegetation is tinder dry and even the smallest spark could ignite a fire," Mr Yeates says. "A scrub fire at Matatā and a grass fire at Julians Berry Farm last month were quickly extinguished by the Fire Service. Fortunately, on both occasions there was very little wind to fan the fire, otherwise we may have been dealing with something major."

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

"With no significant rainfall in sight, a Total Fire Ban will remain in place until further notice. We ask that farmers and the general public be extra-vigilant and report any smoke sightings to Emergency Services on 111."



SPORT NZ RURAL TRAVEL FUNDING AVAILABLE

Are you involved in a sports group catering for youth from 5-19 years old who need to travel to compete in regular sporting competitions? If so – we may be able to help.

Sport NZ has recognised the need to assist rural communities and has given Council a grant to help rural sports clubs and rural school teams with young people aged between 5 and 19 years who need help with transport expenses to sporting competitions.

A total of \$14,985 is available for allocation. The fund is not available to representative teams travelling to competition games.

Application forms can be collected from Whakatāne District Council Offices, public libraries or on www.whakatane.govt.nz. Applications close at 5.00 pm on Friday, 28 March 2013 and should be posted to: Whakatāne District Council, Private Bag 1002, Whakatāne, 3158.

Further information on the fund can be obtained from Janie Storey, Administration Officer Community, on 306 0530 or 0800 3060 500.



DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN – HAVE YOUR SAY SOON

The Whakatāne District's Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 and Draft Fees and Charges 2013/14 have now been adopted by the Council and will soon be available for public consultation. These documents highlight our proposed budget, projects and fees and charges for the year beginning 1 July 2013.

The draft Annual Plan represents year two of our Long Term Plan 2012-22 (LTP) and takes on a 'business as usual' approach. This means that there are not many changes from the programme we set out in the LTP, with our main focus remaining on the key principles of Affordability, Sustainability and Responsibility.

We have proposed an average rates increase of 2.47 percent for the coming year, which is the lowest increase for the past 10 years. Your rates pay for a number of things that you may not even be aware of – everything from roads to footpaths, halls to boat ramps, water to sewerage, and much more. Your rates, and funding we receive from a number of other sources, help us to provide you with these services.

Consultation on the draft Annual Plan and draft Fees and Charges opens on 11 March. This is your opportunity to 'have your say'

on our proposals. You can do this by visiting our website (www.whakatane.govt.nz) or fill in a submission form and drop it in to our Council offices in Whakatāne or Murupara.

Alongside the draft Annual Plan, we are also consulting all ratepayers connected to a sewerage scheme (excluding Murupara) about Matatā Sewerage Reticulation options. You can 'have your say' on that at the same time.

Look out for the Draft Annual Plan Summary in your mailbox, via the Bay Weekend edition of 16 March, and make sure you have your say. Submissions close at 5.00pm on Friday, 12 April 2013.

TIMELINE:

11 March	Consultation on the draft Annual Plan and draft Fees and Charges opens
16 March	Summary distributed in Bay Weekend
12 April	Consultation closes, 5.00pm
3-7 May	Hearings
17-21 May	Deliberations
26 June	Adoption of final Annual Plan 2013/14 and Fees and Charges

2013 CENSUS – EVERY PERSON COUNTS

On Tuesday 5 March, every resident and visitor in New Zealand must take part in the 2013 Census.

The census will count how many people and households there are in New Zealand. Among other things, this information will be used to help determine funding for services such as education, transport and healthcare.

You can fill in your census form online or on paper. Most of you will have received Internet Access Codes and paper forms, which were delivered to your home from Saturday 16 February. Collection of forms will begin on Wednesday 6 March.

Visit www.census.govt.nz for more information call 0800 236 787.

KEEP NEW ZEALAND BEAUTIFUL AWARD FOR COUNCILLOR JOHNSTON



Keep New Zealand Beautiful (KNZB) has recognised George Johnston as their February 2013 Volunteer. George has been a member of the Pride Whakatāne team for many years now.

We value his mammoth contribution and commitment to all of their projects.

"George has been a Parks and Reserves Warden for 26 years. He removes litter and graffiti whenever he sees it around the area and supports marine fishing education and all local fishing competitions and local schools."

KNZB National Office spokesperson, Tracey Shackleton says George is a very community-minded person. "He is involved in many organisations, such as the Whakatāne Coastguard and Pride Whakatāne," she says. "He is a real unsung hero for Pride Whakatāne, and the Whakatāne community."



BOOKABOO ENTERTAINS YOUNGSTERS

Tuesdays at the Whakatāne Horizon Energy Library will be a highlight of the week for local children, thanks to the Bookaboo programme. Children will be entertained with stories, songs and rhymes to inspire imagination and creativity. Local business 'Top of the Crop' has also got behind the initiative with the provision of free apples for the children attending.



Bookaboo is on every Tuesday during term time from 10.00am to 10.30am. For more information, ring the Library on 306 0509, or email library@whakatane.govt.nz.

Children enjoy Bookaboo storytime with Public Programmes Officer, Anneke Philips at the Whakatāne Horizon Energy Library.

NEW TOOLS FOR TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS

Knowing what to do if a tsunami occurs will now be clearer for residents along the Eastern Bay of Plenty coastline, thanks to the new Tsunami Evacuation Information booklet released in February.

Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki District Councils have jointly developed the booklet, which includes evacuation route maps, information about natural warning signs and how you can prepare for a tsunami.

The booklet details how residents will be warned of a potential tsunami. The main signals people should rely on for close source tsunami are the natural warning signs. If there is a strong earthquake which makes it difficult to stand up, or there is a quake that lasts for more than a minute, then people should not wait for an official warning, but take action and move to their nearest evacuation point.

The evacuation maps, which contain specific evacuation route maps for each area, have been made as simple as possible. The booklet includes the maps of the highest population areas along the coastline, with the remainder accessible online or upon request from either Council.

Five of the existing New Zealand Fire Service sirens (Matatā, Whakatāne, Ōhope, Ōpōtiki and Waihou Bay) in the Eastern Bay are being converted to produce a continuous rise signal, which differs from the normal rise and fall of a fire call-out. These sirens will now emit a 10 minute constant rise tone, which is the signal for people to tune in to Radio 1XX (90.5 / 92.9FM or 1246AM) to receive information about any potential threat. We have also purchased two mobile alerting systems, or 'stinger sirens' that can be used on top of a vehicle along the coastline. These systems, which have the ability to not only alert, but also inform, will be deployed in Whakatāne/Coastlands and Ōhope should the need arise.

The tsunami evacuation information booklets have been made available from our offices, website and other council facilities. Eastern Bay residents can expect to see more developments to help better inform people about what to do and where to go in the event of a tsunami. Over the coming months, both councils will be installing information boards at major coastal access points and will be placing evacuation signage on key routes.



The Tsunami Information Board and Tsunami Evacuation Information Booklet - get your copy now.