

Plains Water Supply

One of the 'big ticket' items over the next few years for Council and, of course, ratepayers is the upgrading of our water supplies. Council has plans in place to upgrade the water supplies to all our towns, either by upgrading the existing treatment plants, putting in extra storage, changing intakes or amalgamating small supplies with larger ones.

The reasons for these upgrades are several. One is the government legislation that insists that all supplies comply with stringent rules for water quality, a second is that resource consent rules demand that we do not take too much water from small streams, particularly in times of low flow, and a third is that some supplies are inadequate to cope with demand in time of dry weather.

Dry summers in the last few years have highlighted the need for action on the Hauraki Plains and that is where upgrades are commencing. At the time of writing there is a sprinkler ban in place over the whole district after a very dry spring and early summer. Although rain is forecast, indications are that it could well be showers and drizzle that do little to replenish supplies even though they do reduce demand to some extent.

The treated water needs of the Hauraki Plains are currently met from Kerepehi, Waitakaruru and Huirau Road treatment plants. This last plant will be decommissioned, as proposed in the Long Term Plan, leaving the whole supply to come from the other two sources. The Long Term Plan makes provision for the upgrading of the Kerepehi Plant and for the provision of raw water storage at Waitakaruru.

Focus at present is on the Waitakaruru supply, which is in the process of obtaining a new resource consent. It is clear that we cannot continue to take as much of the flow from the Waitakaruru Stream as we have in the past so alternatives have been sought now for a number of years. We need 4600 cubic metres of water per day more than we can take directly from the stream.

The option of bores has been explored as well as raw water storage. Recent drilling near the millennium forest has given some hope but there would be a need for a bore field of 7 or 8 bores to yield enough water to fulfil the requirement.

After a strenuous economic analysis and risk assessment, it has been decided to proceed with the option of using the quarry as a raw water storage reservoir rather than the bore field. The quarry storage worked out as likely to be cheaper and with considerably less risks associated with it. The capital cost of the project will be around 2.7 million dollars.

Meanwhile, remember all your conservation measures –

- Don't wash your car with the hose running
- Water your garden with a hand held hose in the evening
- Mulch your plants to conserve moisture
- Wash your dishes in the sink rather than using the dishwasher
- Short showers rather than deep baths
- If you must have a bath - leave the water until morning and bucket it on to the garden.

SWIMMING POOLS

They are a summertime favourite

Key Pool Hygiene Safety Tips

Council wishes to apologise for having to close the Paeroa and Ngatea Public pools during this summer season due to faecal contamination (from human excrement).

Once contaminated it takes a significant amount of time and resources to get our pools back to a safe standard of water quality so swimming can take place again. The use of chlorine and other pool chemicals help disinfect the pool and sterilize the waters with repeated filtering. While Council has a good pool safety record and good chlorination, all bad bugs are not killed immediately by chlorine. We all have to do our part to keep our recreational water clean.

Swimming pools are fun, relaxing and where many of us spend the majority of our summer. The safety of our swimmers is our main concern so the water quality is imperative, so please spare a thought for the staff and fellow swimmers and follow these simple rules.

- Do not swim if you are ill, have any open wounds or head lice.
- If you have diarrhoea, don't go to the pool.
- Do not swallow the water and try to avoid getting pool water in your mouth as micro-organisms in the water can cause diarrhoea type illnesses.
- Practise proper hygiene before and after swimming, such as showering and thorough hand washing.
- Remember to take children on frequent bathroom breaks and wash and dry your hands thoroughly after using the toilet.
- Children who are not toilet trained should wear tightly fitted plastic or rubber diapers, recommended for swimming by the manufacturer. Please check them frequently. (Council has them available if you have forgotten them).
- Use the toilet facilities for changing infant's nappies and don't change them close to the poolside. It's important to always keep checking their diapers frequently.
- Do not wear contact lenses while swimming. Micro-organisms in the water can cause infections if they get between the lens and eye.
- Report any faecal contamination immediately to the life guards.

Economic Development Update

OUR JIADING SISTER CITY

The last 3 months have been busy with the 12 Hauraki and Paeroa students and 3 teachers travelling to Jiading for their two week exchange. The students provided an excellent report to Council on their experiences and the benefits they had gained from the exchange.

Deputy Mayor Mary Carmine led a business delegation to Jiading in September 2009 covering the development of tourism and industry opportunities. Tourism packages are to be developed for the Jiading Government and a delegation will visit Hauraki in the first quarter of 2010 to look at business opportunities.

PROJECT ASSISTANCE

Council has agreed to support two local attractions that are important assets for Hauraki. The Historic Maritime Park in Paeroa was provided a grant of \$12,000 to help re-roof the Park's Museum building to preserve the historic records that the society holds.

Goldfields Railway in Waihi was provided with a \$30,000 loan to be repaid over 2 years. Interest will be charged on the loan. The funds will assist with important track upgrade work which the Railway is undertaking.

THE WAIHI DISCOVERY CENTRE

The Resource Management application for the new Gold Discovery Centre to be built in Waihi has now been lodged with Council and will go before a Commissioner for a decision. Under the contract with Central Government for the Major Regional Initiative funding, reports showing expenditure on the project are filed quarterly.

BUSINESS AFTER FIVE

Business After Five (BA5's) meetings are held in Ngatea (quarterly), Paeroa (monthly) and Waihi (monthly). These meetings are informal and allow the business community to get updates on events in the District and to network with others in their business community. The meetings are hosted by businesses and light refreshments are provided. Invitations are emailed and mailed to all businesses. Any business person wishing to attend should ensure their name is on the business database by contacting either Brian at Go Waihi (07 862 3030), Anee at Positive Paeroa (07 863 6999) or Gray at Positively Promoting the Plains (07 867 7299).

AQUACULTURE

The Hauraki Coromandel Development Group has appointed a contractor to drive the further development of Aquaculture in the Hauraki Gulf. This work will include providing a submission on the recently released Technical Advisory Group report on the proposed Aquaculture legislation changes before Central Government. A resource consent application for fuel facilities for the marine industry in Coromandel is being prepared as is a submission on economic development issues to Thames Coromandel District Council on their Blueprint Plan.

Elected Members' Diary

Meetings for the week: Wednesday 27th January to Tuesday 2nd February 2010

- Wednesday 27th January – Full Council Meeting



Surviving the Recession

An economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn't happen today

– Laurence J. Peter

So this is a layperson's look at how our district has coped so far with the recent economic downturn.

The main effect appears to be in the building and construction sector where the credit squeeze and lack of confidence in the industry has reduced the construction of new buildings and projects. This is obvious from the downturn in consents both resource and building that have gone through Council in the past year. On the other hand while these have dropped substantially from what we had over the last couple of years, they are simply back to the levels they were before the property boom.

Anecdotally, we hear that we may be getting a "spill over" effect from the cities where the recession seems to have hit harder. It appears that contracting firms, from both Hamilton and Auckland are tendering for projects in our District and at times undercutting our local firms. This may be having a negative effect on our economy.

Most of the other major drivers of our economy have not been negatively affected by the recession. The dairy industry has had its ups and downs but these happen regardless, tourism seems to be booming,

which means that the retail trade that caters for the travelling public is doing fine and the gold price ensures that the mining industry will stay as long as possible where there are prospects of further discoveries.

Finally, we must also note that with our ageing population our economy has a large dependence on the government in the form of benefits, in particular superannuation. The problem for the elderly is that, with low interest rates, those who rely on investments to top up their super and to give them their discretionary spending will have found that their income has been substantially reduced. This will flow through into the retail sector in reduced spending.

How does all this affect Council? As usual, we try to do a balancing act between "business as usual" in order to promote confidence and stimulate the economy and trying to keep our rates down so that an added burden is not put on those who have been adversely affected by the credit crunch.

And as to the future – who knows but the enemy of prosperity and growth is negativity so let us be positive and expect improvements both nationally and worldwide. We will leave you with another quote:

"The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable."

– John Kenneth Galbraith