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## Emergency operating centre swings into action



Above: Steve Fabish fronts the Council response to the earthquake scenario.

Council offices in Paeroa became a Civil Defence emergency operating centre on the night of July 24. The emergency was a rupture on the Kerepehi faultline, causing an earthquake at 5.00pm centered near Ngatea. The stopbanks were breached, and Hauraki Plains infrastructure and buildings significantly damaged.

While in this instance the 'earthquake' was a training exercise, the emergency operating centre really was set up, to test our communication, co-ordination and control systems that would be needed in a state of Civil Defence.

The exercise was co-ordinated by Civil Defence Local Controller Steve Fabish, and involved up to 20 Council staff and personnel at different stages: including Deputy Mayor Bruce Gordon, Plains and Paeroa Ward Chairs Councillors Gill Leonard and Julie Bubb, and Waikato Regional Civil Defence Committee member Councillor Max McLean of Waihi.

We didn't know exactly what was coming – the scenario was prepared by volcanologist Brad Scott of GNS (Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences). So it was realistic, and indicated the kind of challenges we need to be prepared for. Potential impacts on the farming and business communities were particularly brought home.

Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management representatives from the Thames Valley operating area also took part, along with fire, police and ambulance delegates. "Everything was as lifelike as possible," says Steve. "We received 30 or 40 phone calls and emails with details of the disaster, and had to plot all the information and brief the appropriate people."

The emergency operating centre was fully functioning and able to provide a comprehensive situation report within three hours of the virtual earthquake, which met expectations of the Council's preparedness to respond," says Steve. "Overall the exercise went very well, and was a chance for us at the Council to familiarise ourselves with procedures."

A subsequent debrief identified improvements to be made, for instance in outward communication and the physical set-up and layout of the operations hub. Strengths were also noted, such as commitment from Council staff, teamwork, and knowledge of the local area that helped in predetermining where issues would arise.

Ongoing mini exercises are planned, to ensure that we are upskilled and ready for a Civil Defence situation – just as we urge residents to be ready to get through by preparing an emergency kit and household plan.

While a disaster may be unlikely and we hope we never have one, events of recent years are a warning that they can happen. How likely was it that in Japan, Fukushima would experience an earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown all on one day?

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Pursuant to Section 46 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, public notice is hereby given that the following meetings will be held during the month of August 2014 at the Paeroa Council Chambers, 1 William Street, Paeroa \*unless otherwise stated.

#### Ward Committees

Tuesday, 12 August 2014

Plains Ward - 9.00am

Paeroa Ward - 12.30pm

Waihi Ward - 2.30pm

#### Operations Committee

Wednesday, 13 August 2014 - 9.00am

#### Audit and Risk Committee

Wednesday, 13 August 2014 - 1.00pm

#### District Licensing Committee Hearing

Monday, 18 August 2014 - 1.00pm

#### Western Plains District Drainage Committee

\*Ngatea Office, 84 Orchard West Road, Ngatea

Tuesday, 26 August 2014 - 10.30am

#### Eastern Plains District Drainage Committee

\*Ngatea Office, 84 Orchard West Road, Ngatea

Tuesday, 26 August 2014 - 1.30pm

#### Ordinary Meeting of Council

Wednesday, 27 August 2014 - 9.00am

LD Cavers

Chief Executive

Hauraki District Council

## Who's in charge?

Steve Fabish was appointed as Hauraki District's Civil Defence local controller in July 2013, as approved by the Waikato Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group.

In his 'day job', Steve is Hauraki District Council's Community Services Manager, but he's also been endorsed as alternate Civil Defence Controller for the Matamata Piako and Thames-Coromandel District Councils.

Steve is involved in ongoing training, after serving as Council's Civil Defence Recovery Manager. This role involves co-ordinating the re-establishment of community quality of life following an emergency, starting as soon as possible.

The Council last week appointed Peter Thom as the new Recovery Manager.

## Full speed ahead for Plains para-cyclist

Tim Williams has lived in Kaihoro for all his 38 years – and when he broke his neck in a rugby scrum at age 19 while playing hooker and was left a quadriplegic, he says the community got behind him "from the word go".

That local support, including a \$400 grant from the Council's Hauraki Plains ward discretionary fund, is now helping Tim get to the United States to compete in the 2014 Para-cycling Road World Championships in Greenville, South Carolina.

He was selected for the New Zealand team of nine (hand cyclists and tandem riders) after qualifying at this year's Club Road National Champs in Cambridge. The athletes are self-funded, and Tim is still raising money toward the cost of the \$9,500 trip, having paid half so far. He also needs to travel with a carer – his mother Lorraine Williams.

In his second tilt at the world champs, Tim will race in the H1 grade 17.9km individual time trial and 49km road race. He's striving to improve on his 11th and 12th placings last year, in the knowledge that some of his more able-bodied rivals have been re-graded since then and he should have a more level playing field. Another boost has been investing in a new bike, upgrading his first hand-cycle which was basically a 10 speed.

"Despite my injury and the impact it has, I am still very active, have a competitive streak, and enjoy the comradeship that sport brings to my life," says Tim. "This passion was originally fuelled by playing wheelchair rugby in 1996. After the struggles of the day, being on court with like individuals was a great release. Equals at last."

In 1997 Tim achieved Wheel Blacks selection, and the following year was a member of the silver medal-winning team at the Wheelchair Rugby World Championships in Toronto. The New Zealand Rugby Foundation has continued to assist him with funding toward his sporting goals.

But now that he and his wife Jo have two children, aged 14 and 7, family is his first priority, and in 2008 Tim took up hand-cycling – which involves much less travelling and allows him to be more independent and active as a father and husband, while still being competitive.

"I had a go when a mate lent me a bike, originally for fitness, and got into it seriously last year," he says. "I can train from home on the roads of the Hauraki Plains, which is both good and bad. It's hard to find any hills!"

Tim is coached by Cambridge-based Paralympics New Zealand Bike Performance coach Jono Hailstone; and is a member of the Morrinsville Wheelers club.



Above: Tim Williams has qualified for the New Zealand para cycling team.

## New bridge will keep heritage asset on track

A \$30,000 grant and \$30,000 loan to the Goldfields Railway recently approved by Council brings literal meaning to the term 'bridging finance'. The money will be used to help rebuild the substructure of the wooden truss Waitete rail bridge, built in 1905.

The bridge is one of three on the Waihi to Waikino line, which annual inspections of the track and bridges identified as needing replacement or complete renovation. Work has been completed on the Victoria Head SH2 overbridge, and replacement of the remaining Waitekauri Bridge is planned within the next five years.

Goldfields Railway society secretary-treasurer Chris Hale says the Waitete Bridge project has been on the drawing board for about two years, since an engineering and site investigation aided by a Council grant showed there was some deterioration to the wooden piles below the ground. As a short-term measure, concrete reinforcing was placed around the foundations.

The new bridge substructure will cost \$328,000, with \$28,000 available from the society's own funds. While the predominantly volunteer-run railway has an ongoing works programme financed from its income, most of that is used for maintenance or restoration of the track and rolling stock, and preservation of the historic railway buildings.

"The Council is one of our key supporters and its assistance is really important," says Chris. The Council interest-free loan is for a five-year period, and the grant is being provided half from the Waihi Community Recreational Facilities Development Fund, matched by half from the District Community



Above: The rail bridge over the Waitete Stream is a vital link on the Waihi to Waikino line.

Recreational Facilities Development Fund.

Deputy Mayor Bruce Gordon says "that Goldfields – the only working example in New Zealand of a heritage-listed railway precinct complete with original infrastructure – is a huge asset to the whole District. In conjunction with the Hauraki Rail Trail cycleway, it's a very important part of our economic development and tourism platform."

A Lotteries Heritage grant of \$150,000 toward the bridge has also been approved, as well as \$35,000 from Trust Waikato. Applications to other prospective funders are still pending.

Chris anticipates that the rebuilding will begin later this month, and be finished by Christmas, depending on the weather. Much of the job can be done while the train is still operating, but a disruption of up to six weeks will be necessary when work begins on the abutments – the pressure-bearing substructure at the ends of the bridge.

"We'll try to fit around the school holidays, which are a very busy time," says Chris.

The railway attracts about 25,000 visitors annually, including 6,500 school children; with numbers rising significantly in parallel with the growing use of the Rail Trail.