



OUR PLACE

Ko Konei

Your Whakatane District Council
Community Update - November 2014

PROFILE: Councillor John Pullar

Though this is John Pullar's first term as a Whakatane District Councillor, he is no stranger to serving his community. Throughout his life, the prominent Whakatane builder has been an active volunteer and is a long-time Rotarian as well. He is known on Council as someone who is always willing to offer his support and time to a good cause, whether it is mentoring the Youth Council or lending his construction expertise to Te Kōputu installations.

He has also been a long-term advocate of the District. "Whakatane is a fabulous place to live, work and play; we just have to get the word out to the world so that people come and live here," he says. "New residents will bring additional expertise and knowledge and start up new businesses, enabling our District to grow and provide something for our younger generations to engage with."



Councillor Pullar says that during his short time on Council, he has been encouraged by the forward thinking of his fellow Councillors, who are always mindful of the need to maintain a balance of affordability and levels of service to the District as a whole.



New plaza opens

The newest addition to Whakatane's CBD was officially opened by Mayor Tony Bonne on 24 October. The Strand plaza features two new retail outlets and a large public space with seating, and is designed to provide a link between the Whakatane River and the escarpment. Mayor Bonne said the new space was a great asset to the town and expected it to become a community focal point over the busy summer holiday season.

Shot in the Arm

Retail entrepreneur Suzie Johnson has been in Whakatane administering a 'shot in the arm' for the local retail sector via a series of events organised by the Whakatane District Council.



In association with the Eastern Bay Chamber of Commerce, Whakatane's Retail Promotions Group and the Zest young professionals group, Ms Johnson delivered an inspiring message about how one couple's determination, courage and imagination created a growing boutique retail chain and (so far) revitalised two provincial town centres.

Ms Johnson says she found Whakatane warm and friendly and believes the District has massive potential. "To be honest, there is much more here than I expected, it has a fantastic work/life balance, and is not too commercialised," she says. "It makes me want to come back and I really this this part of the country is a hidden jewel."

The 'Shot in the Arm' events were also generously sponsored by the Beacon Business and Leisure Show and Whakatane New World.



Murupara Pool opens

The opening of the Murupara Pool on Saturday 25 October was enjoyed by over 100 people. An inflatable playground proved popular throughout the day, and a free sausage sizzle was prepared by Aquatics Centre Staff on the Pool's new electric BBQ, which is available to all users free of charge. The Murupara lifeguards, who are members of the local community, ensured all pool users were safe and the day was incident-free. This season, the pool is open from 6 am during weekdays to accommodate early morning swimmers, and concession and season passes are available at the Murupara Customer Services office.

Disney Channel impressed with Bay

Whakatane and the Eastern Bay of Plenty are to feature in an upcoming Disney Channel Australia television show. A film crew from the Saturday Disney programme stayed in Whakatane on 14 and 15 October and visited several locations throughout the District.

Nicola Burgess, Whakatane District Council Promotions Officer, says the programme is popular with teenagers and young families, and its coverage of the District provides excellent exposure in one of our largest markets. "The film crew visited White Island, Moutohora, and the Mataatua Whareniui and left very impressed by what they saw," she says.

The family-oriented programme will screen nationally in Australia on 6 December 2014 on Channels Seven and 7TWO.



Visitor Information Centre takes award

The Whakatane District Council's Visitor Information Centre has won the 2014 Yammer award.

Yammer is a social networking forum for iSite staff and the award is given annually to the iSite that contributes most to the community network and that has been the best team player over the course of the year.



L-R: VIC Team Leader Bruce Erasmus with staff members Kelly Waterson and David Martin display the 2014 Yammer Award.

VIC Team Leader Bruce Erasmus says the award is a reflection of the positive attitude of the centre's staff and that they are knowledgeable not only about the District, but also about Tourism in New Zealand in general.

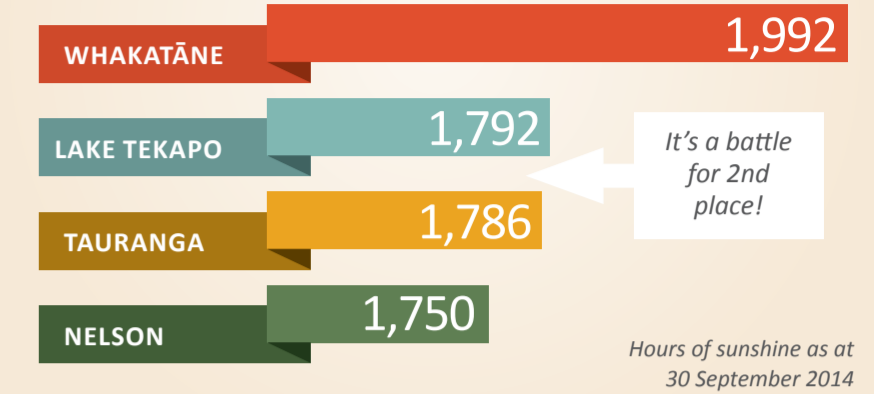
Mr Erasmus said the award was particularly gratifying given that Whakatane was competing against iSites in the main centres with far greater staff numbers.

Toi's track maintenance

Nga Tapuwae o Toi, the popular walking track between Whakatane and Ohope, will be undergoing maintenance over the coming weeks. The work is to provide greater safety for walkers by installing barrier rails and should be completed by mid-December. While the contractor will endeavour to keep any track closures to an absolute minimum, some short access delays are expected. No works will be undertaken at weekends, however, and warning signs will be in place.

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Stormwater upgrade for Ohope



The first stage of a major stormwater system upgrade in the vicinity of Ohope's Maraetotara Stream is underway.

The first part of the project will see considerably larger piping mains installed to the west of the stream, with work pausing on 12 December to avoid traffic disruption during the busy holiday period. The installation of piping will resume on the eastern side of the stream on 9 February next year.

Mayor Tony Bonne says that the project is part of a much wider programme of priority stormwater upgrades in Whakatane and Ohope, which aim to reduce the risk of future flooding issues. "There will be a seven-fold increase in the drainage capacity in that area," Mr Bonne says, "and in conjunction with the improvements undertaken in the upper catchment, this should greatly reduce the likelihood of flooding in the urban area."

Ohope resident and Deputy Mayor Judy Turner says a more resilient system is very welcome and residents will now have greater protection from flood-related property damage. Fellow Ohope resident, Councillor Dave Sheaff, says that the wider community will also see benefits in terms of improved road access during extreme weather events.

The second stage of the stormwater project will focus on the residential area between Bluett Road and Te Akau Street. Potential solutions in that area are still being investigated, with design development expected to be completed early next year and the physical works required in place before winter.

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