

# Vision Kerikeri

*Growth with Vision*

## Thoughts for the day

“If you believe you can accomplish everything by “cramming” at the eleventh hour, by all means, don’t lift a finger now. But you may think twice about beginning to build your ark once it has already started raining.”

– **Max Brooks**

“The problem with political jokes is they get elected.” - **Henry Cate, VII**

“It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere”. -**Voltaire, philosopher and writer (1694-1778)**

## In this newsletter

Since the last newsletter Covid 19 has impacted in some way on everyone's lives. We have evidenced this imminent threat being handled with a level of urgency that many of us dream will soon be applied to the existential threats of global environmental breakdown and climate crises. Every week that passes that we continue to ‘kick these cans down the road’, mitigation and adaptation become more expensive and increasingly urgent. Long term plans might as well be thrown in the bin if we are not factoring in our changing environment - plans that look out to the turn of the century may be an exercise in futility when our very survival is in doubt. With this in mind, Rod Brown has put together a case study on planning in Kerikeri. We have also questioned the timing around seeking public consultation on plans and reviews. Releasing them contemporaneously overwhelms those in the community who wish to offer constructive feedback. Inge Bremer raises questions over water quality signs that regularly appear on the Kerikeri river. On a more positive note, Rod gives us an update on our community led projects down on the Wairoa Stream and also revised his earlier piece on accentuating the positive.

As always, we welcome your feedback on anything in this newsletter or any other matter that has been vexing your mind. Write to us at: [visionkerikeri@gmail.com](mailto:visionkerikeri@gmail.com)

## Planning in Kerikeri: a case study

By Rod Brown

The \$21.5M SH10/Waipapa Road roundabout opened at last in December 2020.

It is not only a very welcome asset but (when fully completed) solves some long-standing planning issues arising from a major development at Waipapa nearly 20 years ago. It has lessons about how we plan in Kerikeri. The story of the planning, or its lack, is instructive.

In 2002, James Bergman, a developer gained consent for an Industrial Zone on Rural Production land for what has become the Waipapa “big box” retail area. Council approved it without



*Looking north toward the recently opened Waipapa roundabout*



reflected in the huge water tank storage at the rear of the development (see picture). There is still no industrial sewerage system and only commercial development with limited water disposal is able to be built there.

Kerikeri's population was increasing rapidly. By 2007 the new area was developing fast as a bulk retail/service area and generated much increased traffic between Kerikeri and Waipapa. This was entirely predictable and lack of infrastructure planning and connectivity soon became apparent.

### A bit of history

Access between Kerikeri and Waipapa was either across the single lane Stone Store bridge and along an inadequate Waipapa Road to the SH10 intersection, or via the Kerikeri Road/SH10 intersection. Both were traffic bottle necks and a source of danger, and needed a roundabout, but integrated planning did not occur because the State Highway network is managed by NZTA and is outside Council jurisdiction. One of the NZTA criteria is based on accident numbers. The Kerikeri road/SH10 intersection had high accident numbers and with the lobbying of local residents, NZTA (formerly Transit NZ) constructed a roundabout in 2007.

The Waipapa Rd / SH10 intersection was dangerous to the extent that motorists exhibited extreme caution and despite having 13,000 vehicle movement per day in 2018, it had difficulty gaining an NZTA priority.

### The Heritage bypass bridge

The next milestone in improving connectivity between Kerikeri and Waipapa was the opening of the \$13M Heritage bypass bridge in 2008 although the impetus came from flooding at the historic Stone Store from the old bridge that caused a debris dam in floods. The bypass replaced the single lane Stone Store bridge with funding from the Minister of Arts and Culture, Helen Clark's budget. Together with the widening of Waipapa road in 2008/09 travel became safer and quicker. However despite this improvement, vehicle queuing and congestion remained highlighting the need for a roundabout.

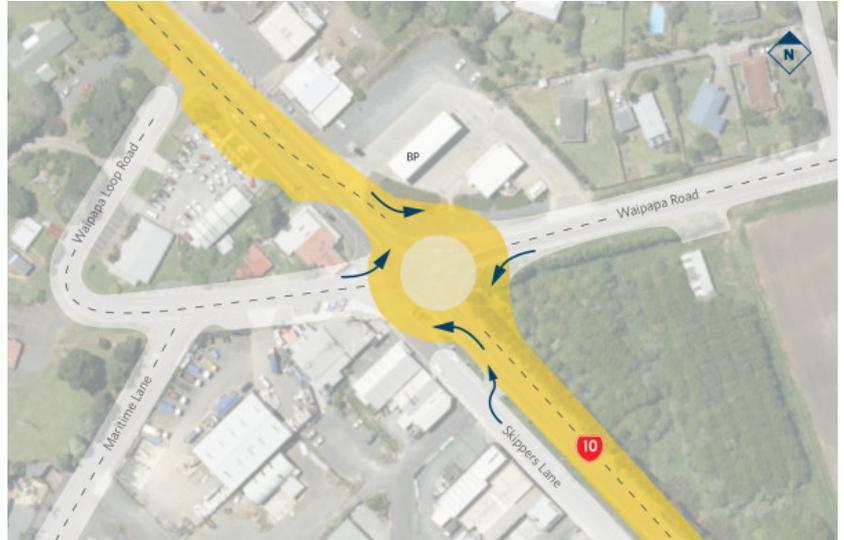
necessary infrastructure, adequate connectivity to its principal customer base at Kerikeri, or wider planning. The development was linked to SH10 through a single road access point. The area is prone to flooding, and the road access is engineered as the flood pathway with ultimate flow into Kerikeri River. There was no connection between the east and west sides of Waipapa township because a Klinac Lane/ Waipapa loop road link was not built. Communication between them was via State Highway 10 which increasingly had to act as a suburban feeder road, although it is part of the Twin Coast Highway. The Warehouse, the first building on site, opened in 2005. Its roof area is huge; its rain collection capability

## The Waipapa/SH10 roundabout

A Waipapa Road roundabout had been on Transit New Zealand's (now NZTA's) work-plan since at least 1996. Council was pressing strongly for it in 2008 and Deputy Mayor Ann Court (supported later by VKK) has been a strong advocate for 30 years on safety grounds.

The \$24.5M SH10/Waipapa Road roundabout opened at last in December 2020 with \$17.7M funding from the Provincial Growth Fund, and within the next few months will at last link eastern and western Waipapa commercial areas as well as much improved safety and efficiency.

It has taken nearly 20 years and the costs have been an eye watering \$24.5M for the Waipapa roundabout, \$13 M for the Heritage bypass bridge and additional costs for the Waipapa Road widening and the Kerikeri Road/SH10 roundabout.



## Summary

We have got away with less than adequate strategic planning. The infrastructure issues are now resolved after nearly 20 years (except for a Waipapa sewerage system) but it has required very large contributions from Central Government. This is appropriate as a small council with few ratepayer's and limited revenue sources cannot generally build infrastructure before development. The Provincial Growth Fund recognised that to a degree.

## Conclusions

Was the placing of big-box retail at Waipapa appropriate?

The population was growing rapidly, especially after Kerikeri was voted the best small town in NZ by "North & South" magazine in 2002. The commercial value to the district of Waipapa's retail and services is very apparent and Kerikeri township had little available land.

There are, however, lessons to be learned. A more strategic view before allowing large developments is required. Kerikeri still lags behind similar District Councils with its forward planning despite this being long recognised as a problem. The 2007 Kerikeri Waipapa Structure Plan, intended to lead to more detailed planning, appears to have been ignored, even denied, by successive Councils. The earlier 2000 Structure Plan vanished into oblivion, like many other Kerikeri plans. Effort and money have been squandered on the year 2100, 80-year navel gazing planning exercise and the Integrated Transport Plan for the Far North, processes which gave an illusion of an effective community contribution but have provided little confidence in an acceptable community outcome for the long-term future growth of Kerikeri.

The population of greater Kerikeri is now 13,350, and growing, but we appear to be no closer to planning for it. Vision Kerikeri's input over the years has largely been ignored. *Our Kerikeri* was created due to the same local frustrations.

There are a number of key issues after a long period of inadequate planning which need consideration including:

- A vision for urban design for the CBD.
- Lack of road connectivity
- The misuse of our natural resources. Since the report produced for FNDC in January 1996, "Horticulture Soils, Economics and Opportunities for the Far North" which recommended that the 2% of the total land area of the district of high value for sustainable horticulture, should be preserved. Kerikeri's fine volcanic brown loam has continued to be subdivided and built on compromising future critical food production.
- Walking and cycling infrastructure. We have a dispersed population. Safe cycling would reduce many car trips.

The last two issues are relevant to planning for climate change.

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## Councils: Is public consultation just a sham?

You could be forgiven for thinking that Councils are not really that interested in your opinion, especially in 2021 when so many Far North District Council reviews and plans have all been opened for public consultation at the same time. Adding to the 'log-jam' are regional and national consultations currently open for public feedback.

It is totally unacceptable to expect volunteer community groups and members of the public to provide meaningful, quality comments on 4 major FNDC consultation documents at the same time. Many of us have limited time available because of work and other commitments. and can only review documents and draft submissions in our miniscule 'spare' time, a few hours at weekends or after other work.

While it may be too late to make changes to the current schedule, if the Far North District Council is genuine in its desire to consult with the public, we implore the council to be more realistic about the schedules and be mindful of both regional and national processes in play.

At present the following plans and reviews are open for consultation:

**Far North District Council:** (4 overlapping plans) by 6 April

- Far North 2100 ***Far-North-2100*** (submissions open 01 March)
- Representation Review - ***Representation-Review***
- Long Term Plan 2021-2031 ***Long-Term-Plan-2021-31***
- District Plan

Northland Regional Council: by 26 March

- Draft Regional Land Transport [Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-2027](#)
- Draft Regional Public Transport Plan [Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2021-2031](#)
- ***Long Term Plan*** (during March-April, not released yet)

National

- Infrastructure Commission: Three Waters discussion document
- *Climate Change Commission*: by 28 March, submissions on draft ***Greenhouse Gases reduction budgets***
- ***Water Services Bill***: by around 14 March



## Accentuating the positive

By Rod Brown

This opinion piece was published in November 2017. It is reviewed with comments annotated in bold reflecting the writers view on what has changed with time.

Beset with present problems we can forget success. What are some positive things that have happened in the public and private sectors over the last ten years or so? We need both sectors working effectively for a successful town.

- The 8 level Butler Road high rise apartment building didn't get off the ground.
- The height limit of buildings in the CBD was reinstated after mysteriously disappearing from the District Plan.
- The Turner Centre opened. Thanks to the perseverance of Doug Turner and John Dalton & community contributions. **It needs more Council support.**
- The Proctor Library was built thanks to a bequest from the Proctors.
- The Café Cinema modernised & extended to three cinemas.
- The Heritage by-pass has diverted traffic from the Stone Store, and we have an impressive pedestrian bridge at the Basin.
- The Kerikeri Mainstreet Project has smartened the town centre **(but traffic circulation, pedestrian safety and urban design all remain as longstanding problems).**
- The "Café" culture is alive and well, and Kerikeri is still an attractive place to visit and live in **(but traffic is an increasing source of complaint).**
- The Domain debate was resolved (after a fashion), and organised sport shifted to the newly developed Proctor sports fields.
- The Chris Booth sculpture erected on the Domain
- The Farmers Market has been an outstanding success.
- The Pack House market opened in 2015 is an even greater success.
- The Makana Chocolate Factory - redesigned and extended.
- The Kerikeri/Waipapa Structure Plan was adopted by Council in 2007, (but has been ignored ever since).
- DOC's impressive upgrading of the Basin, including Kororipo Pa, has improved its already park like character.
- Well designed and constructed footpaths along Kerikeri Road to the SH10 roundabout and from Haruru to Paihia
- 2017 Track to Te Wairere waterfall opened & about 4km of stream restored for public access and as a wildlife corridor.
- **The KK sewerage scheme opened in December at last – late, expensive and probably already near its limits, and with Riverview, Reinga Road, Waipapa etc omitted; but after decades of debate, and the existing plant being well outside its consent, we'll take it.**

### *A couple of new ones*

- SH10/Waipapa Road roundabout. A safety and a game changer. Planning at last! Kerikeri linked to Waipapa.
- Te Ahurea (formerly Rewa's village) revitalised in the hands of Ngati Rehia. A cultural game changer (picture below)

***BUT – unfortunately some bad things have happened too – like degradation of Kerikeri Road and other gateway roads and inadequate landscaping.***

- The delayed implementation of the structure plan, and a weak effects-based district plan has permitted fragmented development and a lack of link roads and connectivity. The alternative Butler/Homestead/Clark Road traffic bypass connection, is urgently needed for urban design and to enable a pedestrian



friendly CBD, but will not relieve the Butler/Cobham Roundabout, and congestion south along Kerikeri Road will remain a problem. At the last 10 year plan misguided effort by some councillors prevented consideration of Kerikeri traffic problems.

- We lack a vision and plan for the CBD.

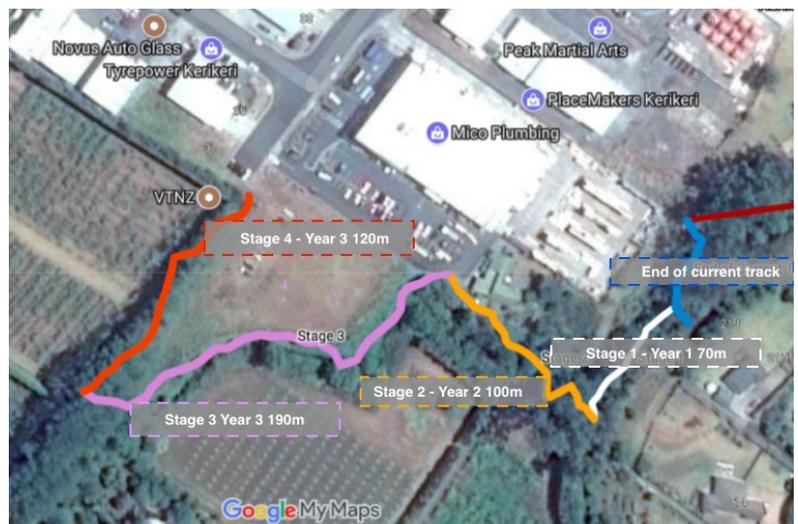
## Wairoa Stream update

By Rod Brown

### Te Tahawai track extension

Starting in August last year Friends of Wairoa Stream have been working steadily up the formerly unnamed tributary Stream, now named Te Tahawai (beside the water) by Ngati Rehia, on what are known as Stages 2 and 3 of the 450 metre track extension (see map below).

Stage 2 construction started in August 2020 and proceeded quickly once the obstructing Jasmine had been sprayed and died off. It was planted immediately with 700 native plants in a well-attended public planting.



Stage 3 track construction leading around United Civil fence line was completed in February. Planting will be undertaken this Autumn to screen the fence as far as possible.



*Step building on stage 2 (left & middle) - stage 3 under construction (right).*

## Stage 4

An unexpected public benefit of the stream restoration is pedestrian connectivity.

Stage 4 which will emerge by VTNZ has been largely prepared by Arvida, the development company doing ancillary work associated with the development of a retirement village. There is now an opportunity to link Hall Road to the public walkway network that we have created. Arvida, has facilitated the final Stage of Te Tahawai public walkway to the vehicle testing station, by removing a row of Japanese cedar and levelling the land along the paper road from Mill Lane to Hall Road.



*There is now a clear path from Mill Lane to Hall Road.*

Although connectivity was not conceived as a restoration objective, the public walkway, would have 11 entry points including Hall Road, will be able to be entered at Mill Lane, Placemakers, Campbell Lane, Sammaree Reserve, Cobham Bridge, Dalton Reserve, Kerikeri Primary School, Alderton Park, Pa Road bridge, Kororipo Reserve, and lead onward to the Stone Store and the wider Kerikeri track network beyond. to the vehicle testing station, by removing a row of Japanese cedar and levelling the land along the paper road from Mill Lane to Hall Road.

## Rainfall or its lack

Following a drought in 2019 and 2020 a dry spring, only 11.8mm of rainfall in December, bucket brigades were used again by Friends of Wairoa Stream to keep young plants alive. Thanks to a generous donation by Primrose Summers, supported also by Lindsay and Dale Turnor, a light weight, portable pump has been bought for FOWS.

## Vandalism

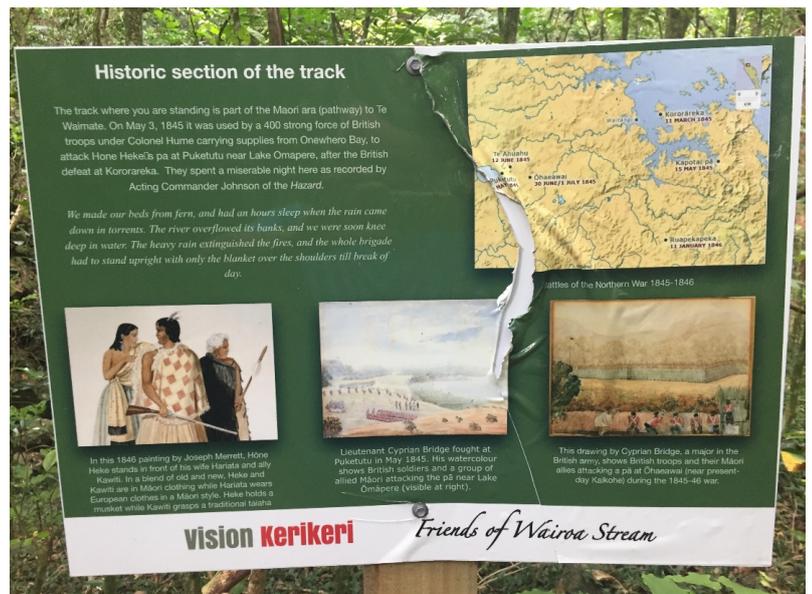
Vandalism is an increasing source of frustration for the team. The picture below shows an historic sign damaged by stupidity. A Whangarei printing businessman, Carl Copaan who runs [hotprintz.co.nz](http://hotprintz.co.nz), reading of this damage in a press report, volunteered and replaced this sign and couriered it to us entirely at his expense. We are very grateful and has restored our faith in human nature.

Recent vandalism on the Kerikeri Primary School track has been 27 steps which have been ripped up and thrown down a cliff face. All that was left is the pegs. See attached photo. 18 steps have been recovered at some risk to Friends of Wairoa Stream personnel.

This is frustrating and very stupid. Apart from volunteer wasted time and energy the Parent Teacher Association paid the \$3000 for the track construction from funds raised by the children. It is the children of Kerikeri who are penalised. The track was not able to be used until repaired by Friends of Wairoa Stream on on 1st March, at a cost of 20 hours labour and diversion from other maintenance tasks. The financial cost will be borne by the school



*What remained of the steps on the Primary School track.*



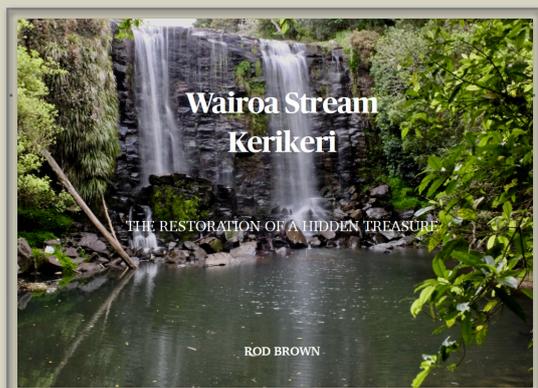
*This historic sign was significantly damaged along with a botanical sign*

## Funding of operations

We are largely dependent upon donations for the restoration and track work. These can be made to Vision Kerikeri either on our website or by contacting us at [visionkerikeri@gmail.com](mailto:visionkerikeri@gmail.com)

## Wairoa Stream - The Numbers since the projects started in 2013

- ★ 18,000 native trees planted on more than 20,000m<sup>2</sup> - more than 4km of native forest under management
- ★ 4km of walking tracks completed by end of 2020
- ★ 8,200 hours of volunteer labour
- ★ 260 predators trapped - 42 rat & 4 possum traps being maintained thanks to Kiwi Coast



### Book Preview - *The Restoration of a Hidden Treasure*

Rod Brown has filled in his summer "break" by writing a book covering the story of the Wairoa stream and its restoration..

With plenty of pictures to support this great story it will be a fantastic addition to the book shelf or coffee table. If you are interested in purchasing a copy contact Rod: [summerhouse.kerikeri@gmail.com](mailto:summerhouse.kerikeri@gmail.com)

## Carbon Neutral NZ Trust, Kerikeri Branch

By Rolf & Inge

The Climate Change Commission has recently published its draft report for the Government and invites submissions from the public to refine it. The 188-page report with 650 pages of evidence includes analysis of the present situation and proposed actions in the various sectors and emissions budgets. Chair Rod Carr strikes us as a very clear thinker and good communicator; his report was basically well accepted by all sectors, even though it recommends a carbon price of \$50 up to \$150 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>e. There is a lot of common sense about the de-carbonisation of transport and industries, change of land-use and re-generative farming, shift from pinus radiata forests to native trees, improvement of the handling of waste and construction of buildings, and much more. And there is a sense of urgency: any delay will make it more difficult and costly to reach New Zealand's commitment of reaching the net-zero target for 2050. The Commission concludes "that there are achievable, affordable and socially acceptable pathways for Aotearoa to take". - We'll be working on a submission.

We saw the TV series of his team, one of them about agriculture. They explained that they do not think that we should work on increasing the carbon sequestration by the soil, because the NZ soil is already better than that of many other countries. We can submit on that, because regenerative agriculture is exactly about that, and the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> absorption by regenerative farming is enormous, while helping the balance sheet of the farmer at the same time. What we would need is government guaranties for farmers' loans during the time of conversion.

The operative word in one of [Rod Oram's](#) articles is "[nature capital](#)" and that is what we have attempted to show all the time with our [Carbon Calculator](#): we have a lot of capital already, and we can manage it to increase by a lot. [The report on the contribution by the oceans around Northland](#) shows that very clearly (written by our volunteer Dr Joe Russel, gaschromatographer from Bristol uni). We can absorb about 30% of our emissions just by taking

good care of the plants at our coasts, and increase our mangrove and seaweed areas substantially, with lots of other side benefits like more fish and methane reducing seaweed supplements for dairy cows.

We definitely need to reduce our CO2 emissions. The recent suggestion of asking our 20,000 truck drivers to come up with ideas on reducing fuel consumption is of great value, as it includes them in the exercise and their observations can contribute useful “shovel ready” actions for improvement. (Remember the bus driver’s idea to move the Kerikeri bus stop to the library side? Problem solved without extra expenses).

Planting natives in all unused areas would naturally help tremendously and rewarding people with ETS credits for their areas would provide a great incentive. Apparently the LIDAR technology is already able to determine from the air which plants are there and how much they can sequester (see Bradley Cases’ thesis on sequestration by beef and lamb farms in NZ). A lot of his work is based on assumptions for Northland, but it is good start.

Almost three years ago we had the first Te Tai Tokerau Climate Change conference in Whangarei, organised by Northtec. This is when we started the Carbon Neutral NZ Trust to raise awareness about what people and their households can do to reduce their CO2 emissions. The next Conference is coming up at end April. The organisers have asked us for comments/help on an idea of a weekly simple calculator with gamification for cell phone use. That is a very expensive idea as we know now, but it shows that the young adults are interested now in understanding what greenhouse gases are about and how it concerns them. Things are changing!

By the way: our carbon calculator has 852 registered users now who have filled in all details and many more un-registered. users with partial inputs. Publications by Rod Oram, Forest & Bird and AA magazines resulted in brief spikes of interest from companies and individuals. Weekly participation is around 70 now, compared to earlier 30.

We recently transferred CO2 offset donations of \$925 that CNT has received, to Vision Kerikeri for the purchase of further plants for the Wairoa Stream Track.

Our active cooperation with FNDC unfortunately dwindled and now came to a halt, as Climate Change Team Head Chris Sargent left. It was intended for all FNDC staff to use the calculator for their households to be familiarised with it, and to integrate a link for the calculator on the FNDC website. Now we’ll have to start again with the newly appointed Sustainability Officer Donald Sheppard. Hopefully our appeal to CEO Shaun Clarke for support will help. He explained to us that climate change is being taken very seriously at Council, while it is not visible to the public. We suggest more public information to showcase FNDC as a good example. FNDC, WDC and KDC are cooperating in a working group together with NRC to avoid duplication and to support each other.

We are looking for “ambassadors” to help us spread the news about climate change and the free and easy carbon calculator on our website [www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz](http://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz).

## Swimmable Kerikeri River ?

By Inge Bremer

“Swimming not advised” says NRC’s sign at the pier by the Stone Store.

NRC’s CEO replied to my recent inquiry “The source tracking results have shown the faecal contamination at the Stone Store is avian source.” NRC’s website states that swimming at the Rainbow Falls is safe (sample from 12th Dec), but no samples are taken at the Stone Store because the long term average shows it as unsafe.



On Dec 18 we counted only a total of 50 geese and ducks at the Mission House and doubted that NRC's blaming them for the pollution with E. coli in a rather voluminous river was justified. So we took water samples at the Golf Club bridge, the Stone Store bridge, and the Stone Store pier (right beside the sign that says that swimming is not advisable due to bacterial contamination). We received a surprising result from Far North Lab in Taipa: the samples came up as suitable for swimming with E. coli counts of 270 (pier), 112 (Golf Course bridge), and 88 (Stone Store bridge). The admissible count is 540 presently (raised from 260 about 3 years ago). We paid for the tests on behalf of Vision Kerikeri.

Since the e.coli count is low enough for the river to be swimmable with the water fowl being present, they cannot really be the cause of the higher e-coli levels at other times. There must be some other cause.

A resident next to the waste water collection basin and pumping station at Tuatahi Place told us that the concrete waste water tank between her house and the river sometimes stinks to high heaven. Transfield Services empties the tank from time to time - maybe not often enough? Or could it be that floodwater causes the tank to overflow sometimes? During the past few years we repeatedly approached NRC and FNDC to clarify the reason for the sometimes significantly higher pollution level at the Stone Store compared to the Rainbow Falls (eg Jan 23, 2017 after the big rainfall on the previous day NRC measured E. coli of 3076 at the Rainbow Falls and 9804 at the Stone Store) without ever getting a response other than pointing to the other Council.

Without any livestock farms along that 5km of river banks we suspect non-functioning septic tanks or the like. The NRC CEO further states that their sampling at selected river location "are generally not designed to investigate potential contamination sources, for this we run other more targeted programmes." Without apparent success at the Kerikeri River?

We expect NRC and FNDC to finally investigate the real cause(s) of pollution and take steps to stop it, as well as to re-commence the regular water testing at the Stone Store Basin to enable swimming when the water is sufficiently clean. So much could be gained from a very big Kororipo Basin swimming pool surrounded by the newly restored Te Ahurea (old Rewas Village), the Stone Store, the Plough and Feather and the Honey House Cafe: beefing up domestic tourism and improving the local leisure options.

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## Infrastructure Developments in the North

### Upgrading the Northland train line

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The upgrading of 13 tunnels by lowering the tracks and replacing 5 bridges between Whangarei and Swanson has completed. This is important because heavy freight taken by rail is much more fuel efficient with 70% fewer greenhouse gases per tonne than by truck transport. It will reduce truck movements and thus contribute to road maintenance and road safety. Lowered tracks in tunnels will enable high cube containers to be carried and since it is estimated that freight volumes in the north will increase from 18 million tonnes/year at present to 23 million tonnes in 2042 the contribution from rail is very important. Northport at Marsden Point must be one of few ports in the world without connection to a railway. A rail spur from Marsden Point to the rail line at Oakley is necessary to raise the efficiency of rail freight and avoid double handling. From the draft Northland regional Transport Plan, connecting North Port to rail could save up to 75,000 heavy truck trips per year between Northland and Auckland. If you think heavy truck movements have been increasing, they have – an increase of 24% since 2011. Rail carried about 250,000 tonnes of freight annually in 2013 but less than 50,000 in 2019.

**Let's link North Port to rail asap!**

## Ngawha Geothermal power station

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Top Energy, which is owned by the community, has recently commissioned a new geothermal power station generating 32MW. Together with the 25MW generated by the earlier power stations they will generate sufficient energy to supply the Far North's electricity 95% of the year. Excess power will be exported to the rest of Northland via the National Grid.

It is renewable energy and is not subject the climatic variability which sometimes affects hydro and frees us from energy being transported from the South Island on the National Grid with the energy losses that entails. It provides baseload energy sustainably, unlike a coal or gas fired plant, and is a contributor to the 85% renewable energy of New Zealand. The project was a \$185M investment in the Far North.