

# Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Association

**NEWSLETTER - JUNE 1997**



## **Kia Ora Greetings from the Lake**

We are now well into another year and with Council Annual Plans and a number of other important issues upon us, it is timely to bring you up to date and seek further input to guide future submissions. Rotorua District Council are exercising restraint in this years budget with a proposed rates increase of around 2.76 percent overall. Given the current debt level of \$40 million and the impending blueprint for a 10 year strategic financial plan, this should meet with the approval of most. There are, however, some areas of proposed expenditure, or lack of it, which could be subject to debate and we will consider taking further action following a meeting with the District Manager.

We would once again like to express our appreciation for the support given to us by our sponsors and advertisers along with those members who have subscribed to the Association. We can only reiterate that we are a voluntary organisation representing the interests of the community to the best of our ability and providing information and comment on matters which are likely to impact directly or indirectly on our present and future well-being. If you believe that the Association makes a worthwhile contribution in this regard, **we would value your \$10 per family annual subscription** to help defray normal costs. Meantime, we hope that you find this Newsletter of interest and extend our best wishes for the rest of 1997.

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# ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL - ANNUAL PLAN

The 1997-98 Draft Annual Plan was promulgated in mid-April for public comment and approval. The Association will be making submissions based on what we understand and believe to be of interest and importance to our community and/or the District in general.

Council views this year's Plan as 'primarily one of steady progress with no new major commitments' in recognition of current levels of debt and the likely impact of the impending 10 year Financial Plan required by recent legislation changes. If the proposed Plan is adopted in its present form, it will equate to an average rate rise of 2.76 percent which takes into account the overall effect of recent property revaluations but which will translate differently for individual owners. We approve of the general restraint but have noted that the rates increase will be harsher for most lakeside residents following the revaluation. The rating differentials are presently being researched to determine whether they remain equitable for rural ratepayers. We intend to make the following submissions and comment for Council's consideration.

Lakes Management Strategy. Council has designated this as its Number One priority for this year. They have committed around \$100,000 to its development with the objective of finalising detail by 30 June 1998. We are aware of difficulties in advancing primary policy agreements with Environment BOP and Te Arawa Trust Board. However, we are concerned that recent key staff changes within Council's Environmental Services Directorate and delays in implementing the wider public consultation process will compromise the intended target date. We have requested that every effort be made to ensure that present timeframes are met. In the meantime, we believe that any applications for major development within the lakes catchment should be stringently scrutinised and not proceed where impact concerns remain.

Mourea Water Supply. We acknowledge Council's present undertaking in relation to this project. Information to hand indicates that an update of the feasibility study is near completion. There is also a necessity to await confirmation of funding policies through strategic planning requirements later this term. Providing community agreement has been reached, we wish to be in a position by 30 June 1998 where actual work could commence. We are requesting that the performance target be clarified accordingly.

Lake Safety and Control. There have been significant improvements around the lakes over the past year with additional and replacement markers and bouys, better information signage and reviewing of access lanes. This has eventuated through the excellent co-operation and assistance of the present lakes inspector, Dave Pilkington. However, each year more pressure is exerted on Rotoiti by recreational users over the peak summer and holiday season. Increasing numbers of water skiers and the emergence of jetskis is becoming a major concern. We are working alongside Council in seeking satisfactory solutions to some of the problems but it is seemingly obvious that further resources in manpower are required to provide a reasonable level of protection at these times. We have requested that sufficient funding be allocated to employ temporary full-time staff to patrol Lake Rotoiti over a 3 month period between say December and March each year.

Sewering of Lakeside Settlements. We are pleased to see a funding allocation in this year's budget to progress investigations into sewerage options for Mourea. This follows initial community consultation at a meeting earlier this year. It is widely recognised that prevailing high groundwater in this area

demands some early solutions. Council intends shortly to send out questionnaires to all West Rotoiti residents on this subject (more about this elsewhere in the Newsletter). We will also be seeking early consultation for Gisborne Point and Hinehopu residents who have similar problems.

Rural Street Improvements. Council have allocated \$91,000 for this purpose, \$30,000 being specifically for street lighting. Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust have approved an ongoing annual grant of \$50,000 towards lighting improvements. Council has completed an assessment of the District in conjunction with Trustpower and hopes to complete the current programme within the next five years. We have yet to see any details but can expect our earlier submissions on these subjects to be given due recognition.

Upgrading of Playgrounds. \$50,000 has been budgeted this year to upgrade District playgrounds. We have requested that the ageing equipment within the Whakakopa Reserve adjacent to the Ohau Channel be included for attention.

Trout Pool Road Reserve. The Plan recognises the need to address shortcomings in this Reserve since commercial rafting companies have used it extensively for assembly and egress. However, we are disappointed that no funding has yet been approved after 6 years of unsuccessfully attempting to persuade Council to more actively control commercial activities within the Okere Scenic Reserve area. We have requested that they consider utilising appropriated funds. If not, we would expect funding to become available as necessary early in the 1998/99 year.

Navigational Lighting on Lake Rotoiti. Boat traffic on all Rotorua lakes has increased significantly over the past five years. Commercial night kayaking and other activities are also beginning to emerge. Deficiencies in navigation lighting should no longer be ignored. We are requesting that RDC in conjunction with other authorities carry out a comprehensive survey of all lakes within the next six months to determine whether such requirement is justified and, if so, to programme implementation for completion by year 2000.

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Visitor Attractions - Crime Prevention. We have noted ongoing problems with criminal activity in areas such as Okere Falls Scenic Reserve carpark and recommended that Council investigate further initiatives in combating such crime, eg the use of camera surveillance equipment and/or supplementing schemes similar to Tourist Watch.

Okere Falls Jetty. The jetty was damaged last year when a boat caught fire at mooring. There are also safety concerns where the jetty meets the embankment. We are seeking to have the jetty surveyed, not only to determine its integrity but to review its adequacy for present usage.

Triennial Electoral System. Council is required to carry out a review of the basis for next year's triennial elections by August this year. The main issue is whether a Ward or District-wide system provides us with the best quality of representation. We have argued to retain the Ward system because we believe that it allows for greater accountability and representation of all District communities. It would also seem to present a better opportunity to 'despatch' Councillors who consistently under-perform. Conversely, there are many who contend that it restricts their choice and is therefore undemocratic. We are aware that there has been a recent shift by Councillors towards a District-wide scheme. Our concern is that it could allow specific interest groups to be over-represented whereas the Ward system is likely to provide a more balanced representation through its defined mix of urban and rural voters.

Once again, we welcome and encourage your views on any of the above matters. Hearings of submissions to the Draft Annual Plan are scheduled for the week commencing 16 June 1997

## MAX BRADFORD

MP ROTORUA

*"Please do not hesitate  
to contact me if you  
have any  
queries"*



Max Bradford MP

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Last year, Environment BOP sought to vary its consent to control lake levels through the use of the Ohau Channel weir. One of the component parts in granting this consent was that an improved fish pass be installed by 31 March 1997. The target date has not been met and implementation is now planned for early July.

For the past eight years, the Ohau Anglers' Klub has been fighting for a fish pass to enable smelt (inanga) to move through into Lake Rotorua. At certain times of the year, vast shoals of smelt swim steadily up the Ohau Channel until they are halted by a man-made concrete obstruction - the weir at the Lake Rotorua outlet.

Scientific experiments last year confirmed that juvenile smelt do not succeed in negotiating the weir and adult smelt 'dribble' through at optimum times. As smelt are the principal forage food of the Lake Rotorua trout, they are of vital importance to the fishery. It is also believed that smelt spawn on the shorelines near the airport.

The scientifically designed fish pass will be constructed of fibreglass and placed downstream of the weir on the Takinga landing side. If successful, it will be repeated on the opposite side also.

The intention of Environment BOP to progressively close and re-open the Okere Control Gates to enable an inspection of both the control structure and the Kaituna River bed has been further postponed and may now not take place.

The exercise would have involved completely shutting off water flow through the gates for up to 8 hours and many felt that this would constitute a gross abuse of the environmentally sensitive river, especially with its lack of side streams in the upper reaches.

It appears that a preliminary study with divers by shutting down half the flow at a time has produced a favourable report on the structure.

BOP Electricity had hoped to utilise the flow restrictions to examine the upper gorges of the Kaituna in preparation for a bid to implement a hydro-electric scheme and may still be keen to see the 'dewatering' proceed.

An assertion in the media a little while back suggesting that proposals for hydro-power on the Kaituna were unlikely to attract much opposition could not be further from the mark and belies the cultural and environmental significance of the river.



**JOAN PIESSE A.R.E.I.N.Z.**  
**BRIAN PIESSE**  
Lake Property Specialists



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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - DECEMBER 1996

This year has again been a very busy one for the Association with the many ongoing issues and new proposals requiring attention. The growing emphasis of Central Government to divest themselves of responsibility for District and Regional management has placed considerable pressure on territorial bodies, in our case Rotorua District Council, to devise the plans and strategies which are needed both in terms of local development and to meet new legislation. The principles of accountability and community consultation are now quite firmly entrenched in matters of policy. Whilst this translates into a great deal more work for Council, and certainly for interest groups such as our own if we wish to maintain an input, I believe that these changes should be welcomed as they are infinitely better than some of the procedures used in the past. Although there will always be decisions, or lack of them, which cause us concern, our relationship with the two main local bodies, Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty, has for the main part been positive and constructive with satisfactory progress being made on a number of fronts through continuing dialogue. Whilst groups such as ours will inevitably be viewed from time to time as protagonists in attempting to 'protect' our patch we have nevertheless established ourselves as a well recognised link in the community where our input is sought on a wide range of proposals and issues. We look forward to maintaining this position for the purpose of benefitting and protecting our community along with the overall interests of the District.

The year began with all Lakes Ratepayer groups expressing concern over the lack of sufficient recognition and protection for the lakes environment within the Rotorua District Plan which was in its final stages of implementation. It was believed that any large development proposals could be given the go ahead without due regard to detrimental effects to the lake catchment areas. The recent decision to approve the Crater Lake Hotel complex between Okareka and Tarawera perhaps demonstrates the fragility of present controls. The interpretation of 'sustainable' development differs markedly between the various business and community sectors and may well require to be more clearly defined to ensure that ecological ideals are not unduly compromised. It is pleasing to note that these concerns have been accepted with a joint Lakes Management Strategy being developed as a matter of priority for inclusion in the District Plan as a stand alone chapter.

Continuing dissatisfaction in recent years over the control of lake levels, particularly Rotoiti, prompted Environment BOP to seek amendments to their existing water rights and discharge permits through public consultation. The outcome provided an excellent example of what can be achieved through the co-operative and consultative approach adopted in this case. Environment BOP staff are to be commended for their conciliatory efforts which resulted in a new agreement being reached which should remedy most previous complaints as well as providing scope for adjustment within the next two years. The exercise also resolved much of the argument over the reasons for the differing levels at the eastern and western extremities of the lake and was notable for being finalised without the expensive necessity for a formal hearing.

The survey of property owners in West Rotoiti to determine support for a mains water supply has experienced slow progress in most areas due to lack of volunteer assistance and difficulty in making contact with the many absentee owners. However, a 70 percent response rate in central Mourea with more

than 60 percent in favour of pursuing the option has now been communicated to Council for further action. The Council Report on options for sewerage of small rural and lakeside settlements was completed in September. With Mourea high on the list of priority, a public meeting is planned for early in the New Year to examine these options and seek further opinion. A meeting with Hinehopu/Gisborne Point residents will occur at a later date. Any implementation plans are at least 3 years away according to Council. A plan for regulated management of septic tanks is now in place with the recent commissioning of Environment BOP's On-Site Effluent Treatment Regional Plan. This involves all septic tanks being subjected to inspection and cleaning at regular intervals to comply with requirements of the Resource Management Act.

A Rural Footpath, Kerb and Channel Policy is shortly to be finalised along with designated priorities. District street lighting surveys in conjunction with Trustpower are also due for completion. Funding availability in this financial year's budget will be applied when priorities have been determined. A Rural Reserves Draft Management Plan is to be promulgated by June 1997 for public comment. This is intended to standardise general policy for Reserves management. Further proposals for the disposal of Rural Refuse are currently being examined. Public toilet facilities and drainage are other matters being presently attended to. Road safety issues have been progressed with intention to implement a 70kph speed limit for the whole of SH30 between Gisborne Point and Hinehopu. Transit NZ have also allocated \$300,000 for preliminary work to upgrade SH33 between Whangamarino School and Okere Falls.

The performance of Trustpower in the Rotorua District has shown considerable improvement this year due in no small part to the pressure applied by Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association for a better service. Attempts to secure funding to set up a Rotorua Electricity Consumers Representative Body are still being pursued. Further proposals to extract geothermal power from the Taheke field were floated during the year but no formal applications have yet been made. Strong opposition by Tikitere Holdings, owners of Hell's Gate, added to the concerns expressed by this Association and local residents. Further pressure on the area comes with the announcement by Whakatane based BOP Electricity of their intention to seek Resource Consent to construct a Hydro Electric facility on the Kaituna River below the Trout Pools this coming year.

With the summer holiday season once again in full swing, attention turns to water surface activities on the lake. The increasing numbers of recreational users, particularly water skiers and jet skiers means extra vigilance required by all and adherence to Lake Water by-laws. Unfortunately, this does not always prevail and highlights the necessity for further resources to improve safety and protect the lake environs.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members who have volunteered their time and effort in helping to look after the interests of the community. It is with regret that we lose the services of our treasurer of the past five years, Ernie Cordwell, who has carried out this task with professional dedication as well as taking on the duty of secretary to the Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the contributions of our subscribers and advertisers without whom we would struggle to operate effectively. Continual support and communication of your views and concerns are essential ingredients to the future success of the Association.

**JIM STANTON**  
Chairman



**POLICE**  
Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa

**BLUEPRINT**

On the crime scene for your area burglaries and thefts from tourists cars have been prevalent. Burglaries have occurred in Okere Falls, Otaramarae and Mourea and while many of them have been cleared, a few simple precautions could have deterred the offenders or reduced the amount of property stolen. Security of some properties should be reviewed by all home dwellers. While it is generally accepted that no property is foolproof, you can make it difficult for the burglars.

Holiday homes are more vulnerable to attacks and I suggest to owners that you remove as much of your property as possible when you leave. You must also make yourselves known to permanent residents living nearby or to your Neighbourhood Support Group Co-ordinator which will assist the Police to contact you in an emergency.

Tourist Watch is a group of people who maintain a watch over cars which are parked in the local tourist spots. They have spent a large part of their time at Okere Falls and are probably responsible for the reduction of thefts if last years figures are anything to go by. Their continued existence can not be underestimated. They need your support.

For those who don't know, a sector meeting was held at Okere Falls recently. This was aimed at keeping you informed on crime trends and so on. I made it clear that people are not always calling the Police immediately when they see something suspicious happening at their neighbours. Time is wasted when property owners are the first people called whether they be at work or living out of town. I likened it to a house on fire and suggested that if you get a call at work from your neighbour informing you that your house is on fire, that its up to you what you say to them if emergency services haven't been alerted first.

*Police in Edmonton, Canada, braced themselves for a chase when a motorist reported an armoured security vehicle was driving erratically and it's doors were being opened and closed repeatedly from within. Armed police surrounded the van and an embarrassed guard got out slowly to explain that he had been opening and closing the doors to clear the air after his colleague passed wind. (The Dominion)*

For any free crime prevention advice, call the Te Ngae CPC on 345-3453.

COMMUNITY CONSTABLE - GEORGE ANARU

## Mobile Library Calendar

Tuesday Route 1997	
9.00 - 9.45am	Rotokawa School
10.15 - 10.35am	Rotoiti Store
10.40 - 11.00am	Te Kura o Rotoiti
11.15 - 11.35am	Rotoma School
11.40 - 12 noon	Merge Lodge, Rotoma
1.00 - 1.30pm	Okere Falls/School
1.45 - 2.30pm	Hamurana Store
3.00 - 3.20pm	Mamaku School
3.25 - 3.45pm	Mamaku Store

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Special requests can be made for specific items.

**1997 Rotokawa Route July 1, 15, 29 August 12, 26 September 9, 23 October 7, 21 November 4, 18**

Most of us have to travel to and from Rotorua via Te Ngae Road which has been to the forefront of such debate. At a recent Road Safety meeting attended by members of the Combined Lakes Ratepayers group, we learnt that whilst several improvements were planned, no major expenditure was likely due to the impending eastern by-pass from Sala Street through to the airport. A roundabout at the Tarawera Road intersection was rejected as most traffic on Te Ngae Road was through traffic and would therefore achieve little purpose. The turning bay from Rotorua into Tarawera Road will be lengthened however. Speed limits are also due to be lowered between Rotokawa and Sala Street.

Closer to home, concern regarding the speed of heavy transport vehicles on SH30 both through Rotoiti and Rotoma was again expressed. Whilst police studies suggest relatively few transgressions, ongoing checks will be made. It was emphasised that the Road Transport Association fully supports strict adherence by their members and welcomes any reports of bad driving. A 70kph speed restriction now operates along the whole of SH30 between Gisborne Point and Hinehopu. Many of us have seen some close shaves at the Te Ngae junction (Whakatane turn-off) especially with the sight restriction for traffic turning right from SH30 towards Tauranga. Once again, accident statistics are insufficient to attract any Transit remedial funding.

However, the Whangamarino School entrance/exit and Okere Falls corner on SH33 are programmed for safety improvements this coming financial period. Sigma Consultants are currently carrying out feasibility studies including consultation with local interest groups. We are hopeful that most of our concerns expressed over the past six years will be addressed. Good to see the carriage width extended and surface rejuvenated on Hamurana Road between Ohau Channel Camp and Mission Bay. We have requested that the Okawa Bay Road intersection with SH33 be placed on the Minor Road Safety programme to allow for a turning bay due to increased usage and the nature of the turn.

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## TV VIEWING

An interesting development for frustrated TV watchers around the lakes. Sky TV can now offer sports coverage to virtually every property via satellite. Details are still a bit sketchy but information to hand suggests that a oneoff cost of about \$650 will cover the Reception Disc fully installed plus 12 months free viewing. Further inquiries can be made through Tel. 0800-800759.

Not so good news is a lack of progress in seeking solutions to improving TV3 coverage in the area. At last contact, TV3 had still to complete the NZ on Air funded expansion which does not include 'small' communities such as Rotoiti due to low population density relative to cost. We are 22nd on a list of 35 small communities requesting assistance outside of the expansion programme. For these areas, NZ on Air will provide a subsidy of up to \$100 per Broadcasting Fee payer within each area to assist in the purchase of transmission equipment and to establish a new transmission site. TV3 will provide engineering planning services and equipment supplier discounts and make available a transmission frequency where possible. They may also provide a small subsidy to cover annual operating costs. There is no indication at present as to when they would be able to work on our application. Furthermore despite several rumours, there is no impending likelihood of either Sky TV or Bell South installing equipment which may be utilised by TV3.

## RUBBISH!

District Council is re-appraising the options for rural refuse disposal in the light of experience with the Mamaku and Reporoa transfer stations. An acceptable alternative to the present Skip Bin Sites has yet to be found. We need facilities close to each locality to cater for our particular requirements which include a significant transient population. Site availability, accessibility and affordability will figure prominently in future discussions. In the meantime, we wish to remind users that Skip Bins should not be used for large household items or garden waste. Where possible, rubbish bags should be left for Council's weekly collection. The biggest problem with our present set-up is abuse from out-of-area dumpers who see the Skip Bins as a convenient facility for all manner of refuse. We would like to encourage you to administer a gentle reminder or report vehicle registrations to Council if prohibited dumping is witnessed.

## TE NGAE PHYSIOTHERAPY

Mary Bradley & Laurice Smith



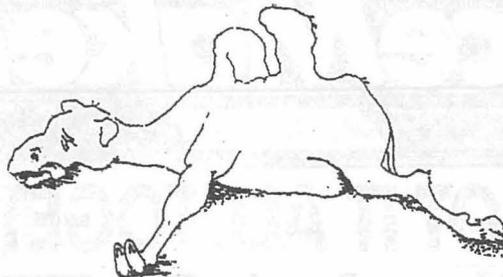
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## FISHING PAGE

The usual Rotoiti story - if you can be over the trout while they are feeding you will catch them. The trick is to be there at the right time. Very large schools were showing around the Delta but these now seem to have moved east to the Peninsular or the northern shore. The 'pros' say shallow trolling is best. But the recent heavy rain could stir things up and bring harling on. Rastafarian has consistently been the best lure. What will happen in the last month of the season is anyone's guess - but the old timers say this can be the best time of the year.

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Earlier this year an angler was fly-fishing the Kaituna River down near Te Puke where a contributory stream enters the river. He was nymphing under some willows when he hooked and landed an 8 pound rainbow. It was a tagged fish. On taking the fish to the Ngongotaha hatchery, he discovered that the fish had initially been released into Lake Rotoiti. It had therefore swum under the Okere gates, down through the turbulent 'rafting' water, and through even rougher water in the gorges below the Trout Pool to where it was ultimately caught - a journey of approximately 35 kilometres. Hatchery staff were amazed and are contemplating a drift dive in that part of the Kaituna.

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The debate on whether Rotoiti should continue to have a closed season or not has progressed a stage further. A group of residents met recently with senior Eastern Region Fish and Game staff to push for year round fishing, pointing out that this would eliminate the opening and closing 'rush' amounting to the same number of rods in the water but more spread out. Other advantages are seen in visitors staying longer to fish Rotoiti rather than travelling on to Taupo as reports indicate which should mean more license sales and more funding for hatchery operations.

However, there are grave misgivings amongst fishing club enthusiasts and some ERFGC staff who believe that the status quo should remain at least until sufficient research has been undertaken to determine the spawning habits of Rotoiti trout. Unlike Lake Rotorua, for example, it is estimated that around 70 percent of the catch in Rotoiti are wild trout. Despite its limited season, Rotoiti is already the second most utilised fishery nationally totting up 33,000 angler days.

Rotoiti is currently the top trophy lake in the region and any extra pressure could see a greater number of immature maiden fish taken thus altering the balance and possibly compromising its reputation (as has occurred at Aniwhenua). A further concern is the advent of modern fish finding technology and improved lines which put a further strain on the 'big fish' population. Many anglers would like to see jigging banned from Rotoiti for this reason. It is perhaps a matter that needs closer study before reaching a decision.

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Some preliminary discussions have been held about a Rotoiti 'Wooden Boat Regatta'. Our lake has a wonderful heritage of older boats and this idea is to get them all together for a day of festivities, photographs and general 'camaraderie'. Tentative plans are for Waitangi Day next year at Te Arero Bay commonly known as 'Trailer Sailor' Bay. More details in the next Newsletter.

## COMMUNITY SEWERAGE PROPOSALS

Rotorua District Council will shortly be sending a letter to all property owners in the Mourea, Okere and Otaramarae area with a questionnaire regarding proposals for a community sewerage scheme(s). Mourea has been identified as a high priority area in need of reticulation with the possibility of linking with Okere and Otaramarae because of their close proximity. The letter outlines the main points in considering whether to retain the existing individual septic tank systems or change to a community scheme managed by Council. In the past, attempts to obtain public opinion through this method have not met with any great success due to around 50 percent of owners not bothering to reply. We strongly recommend that you take the time to read the explanatory material which will be contained in the Council circular.

**THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE AND WE URGE EVERYONE, WHETHER YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSALS OR NOT, TO RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE. A REPLY PAID ENVELOPE WILL BE PROVIDED.**

The following information may also assist you in completing the questionnaire. With effect from 1 December 1996, Environment BOP's On-Site Effluent Treatment Regional Plan for the Bay of Plenty became operational. This means that the provisions of the Plan with regard to septic tanks have to be adhered to. A copy of the relevant parts of the Plan will be sent with the questionnaire. The purpose of the Plan is to reduce the impact of individual septic disposal systems on the environment, mainly through the contamination of ground water. For those living in Mourea, Okawa Bay, Hinehopu and Gisborne Point, it will require each property owner to undergo regular inspection of septic tanks and drainage fields once every three years. Any system which does not comply with certain design standards or is found to be adversely affecting ground water will require to be upgraded accordingly. In extreme cases, this could mean replacing the whole system with costs in excess of \$2,000. Other lake-side communities can expect to be similarly regulated sometime in the future.

Notwithstanding the above, each property owner needs to carefully consider the options from both an economic and environmental viewpoint and with the longer term impact in mind. As Council points out, in areas which have consistently high ground water tables such as Mourea, it is unlikely that most existing conventional septic tanks will comply with the Regional Plan. Therefore, it is likely that relatively expensive modifications will be required to upgrade systems. Indeed, it is quite possible that Public Health or Environmental factors will eventually force these areas to become reticulated. On the other hand, most technical advisors agree that a modern and well maintained septic tank system in areas where ground water clearance is not critical will provide adequate means for effluent disposal. However, these would eventually have to conform to the stringent design standards set down in the Regional Plan. Many parts of Okere and Otaramarae could identify with this situation.

Whatever the current position, a longer term view should form part of decision making. Across the country, it is a strongly held belief that we should take positive steps to protect our lands and waterways from the adverse effects of environmental contamination. Excessive nutrients from sewage and other effluent disposal significantly contribute to such contamination. Any efforts on our part to minimise these effects should be encouraged. To this end a reticulated sewerage scheme is generally far more efficient than individual systems. However, whether it is a matter of choice or not, it is recognised that costs will be foremost in the minds of most.

Current Council policy is to fund 100 percent of the capital cost of sewerage schemes from the general rate. This policy is to be reviewed as part of the Strategic Plan process. Under present circumstances, we can be confident that this will not change, at least in the immediate future.

At a meeting in Mourea earlier this year, Council presented a very attractive offer which provided for the utilisation of existing septic tanks for primary collection and treatment. The effluent would then be pumped to strategically placed transfer stations for further treatment and disposal. In return, the cost of any upgrading of individual tanks including sealing against flooding, along with necessary pipework between the tank and the property boundary would become part of the capital cost. In isolated cases, it may be decided by Council to upgrade the tank but not connect to the pipeline because of distance or other considerations. In either case, the property owners would then be responsible only for annual maintenance costs as set by Council. These can only be estimated at this stage but are likely to be in the region of \$150 - \$200 initially. Obviously such costs would be reviewed each year along with all other service charges. Funds have been allocated within the coming year's budget to further investigate overall design schemes for Mourea. Similar considerations for Okere and Otaramarae will depend on response to the questionnaire. Further meetings with the communities will be held prior to any implementation.

The current option of remaining as we are will involve the necessity of regular inspection either by District Council or private contractors (presumably at a cost to individuals), contents removal presently costing around \$200 (at least once every three years for Mourea and Okawa Bay residents with other areas likely in the future) along with any ongoing costs to upgrade or maintain septic tanks and drainage fields.

As previously stated, each property owner will need to balance the pros and cons to arrive at their own decision. **Given the critical groundwater problems that are experienced in most of Mourea, we believe a strong case exists for accepting Council's proposal. Okere and Otaramarae residents will have to determine whether Council's offer along with the long term environmental and economic benefits outweigh the status quo.** Once again, whatever your opinion, we ask that you take the time and effort to return the impending Council questionnaire on this matter. Further queries may be directed to committee members Jim and Mary Stanton or Gillian Marks (refer to back page) or Council's Asset Management Engineer, Mark Craigie, Tel (07)348-4199.

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## CRATER LAKE RESORT PROPOSALS - APPEAL FUND

Last year, Rotorua District Council controversially approved a proposal to establish a large resort development on Crater Lake Farm, which is located above and between Lakes Okareka and Tarawera, despite strong opposition from local residents and a recommendation by its own Planning Manager.

The appeal is being co-ordinated by a sub-committee entitled FLAG (Friends of the Lake Action Group) representing Lakes Okareka and Tarawera Ratepayers Associations and an environmental group, Kaitiaki Tarawera and is against the RDC decision to approve the development. Because of the present deficiencies of the Rotorua District Plan in providing for sufficient protection of the lakes catchment areas against inappropriate development, this Association aligns itself in principle to the appeal cause. We feel, however, that any decision to support the appeal financially should be left to individuals. Anyone who wishes to do so is invited to contact Denis Falconer Ph (07)362-8737 or send donations C/- Okareka Postal Centre, Rotorua.

The following is a resume of the reasons behind the appeal. The complex will be a 480 bed resort with 2 golf courses, 150 seat restaurant and a conference centre. Traffic generated is anticipated to be around 1,000 vehicles a week with helicopters also operating from the Resort. Specific objections relate to the inappropriate scale and intensity of development in a rural area, the increased traffic volume and associated noise, and pressure on existing recreational facilities. More importantly, objections and the appeal focus on the cumulative effects of possible further developments such as this on the wider Rotorua lakes environment. The Council decision sets a precedent for the application of the new District Plan and is a potential threat to the character and development of all the lakes

in the region. The development is a discretionary activity under a plan which has been drawn up prior to completion of a Lakes Management Plan, and therefore the precedent could well lead to further such developments at key lake sites. In view of the potential repercussions, all lakes residents should be concerned and seek to reverse the decision.

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# WEST ROTOITI FIRE FORCE

The Fire Force and Incorporated Society continue to thrive. The number of callouts has been low, but with the usual unfortunate series of car crashes on SH33. Take care on the road - we don't want to see you at an incident!

Training has been maintained at a high level by the activities of our Training Officers, with assistance from the Fire Service and Dept of Conservation. The Rotorua District Council has organised a Fire Service Training programme for all volunteers, with the first intake in June. Our working relationship with the Council has continued to be excellent with regular meetings both with Council and other volunteer units. The Council and the Fire Force are currently considering options for equipment upgrades over the next 2-3 years, including the possibility of a new purpose-built fire engine.

We are to be in a new Fire District, but are not yet sure of the implications of this change which has come about because of changes to the plantation forest industry in the central North Island.

Our recent garage sale was a successful occasion, and all contributors are thanked for their support. The annual fishing competition is on 22 June - entries are available at the Okere Falls and Mourea Stores. We are currently seeking new volunteer firefighters, male or female. No experience required, just a willingness to learn and help. All training provided to those who are interested. If you require further information or have any other queries, please contact one of the following:

Willie Shaw - Ph 362-4315	Ted Boucher - Ph 362-4815
Noel Ruebe - Ph 362-4814	Pam Waaka - Ph 362-4432

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Speaking of our heritage, Don Stafford's latest publication, 'Landmarks of Te Arawa Vol 11' is devoted entirely to Lakes Rotoiti, Rotoehu and Rotoma and provides a comprehensive account of life around these lakes until the turn of the century. A beautifully presented book, it contains many maps and coloured photographs and is available from most of the larger bookshops at around \$69.

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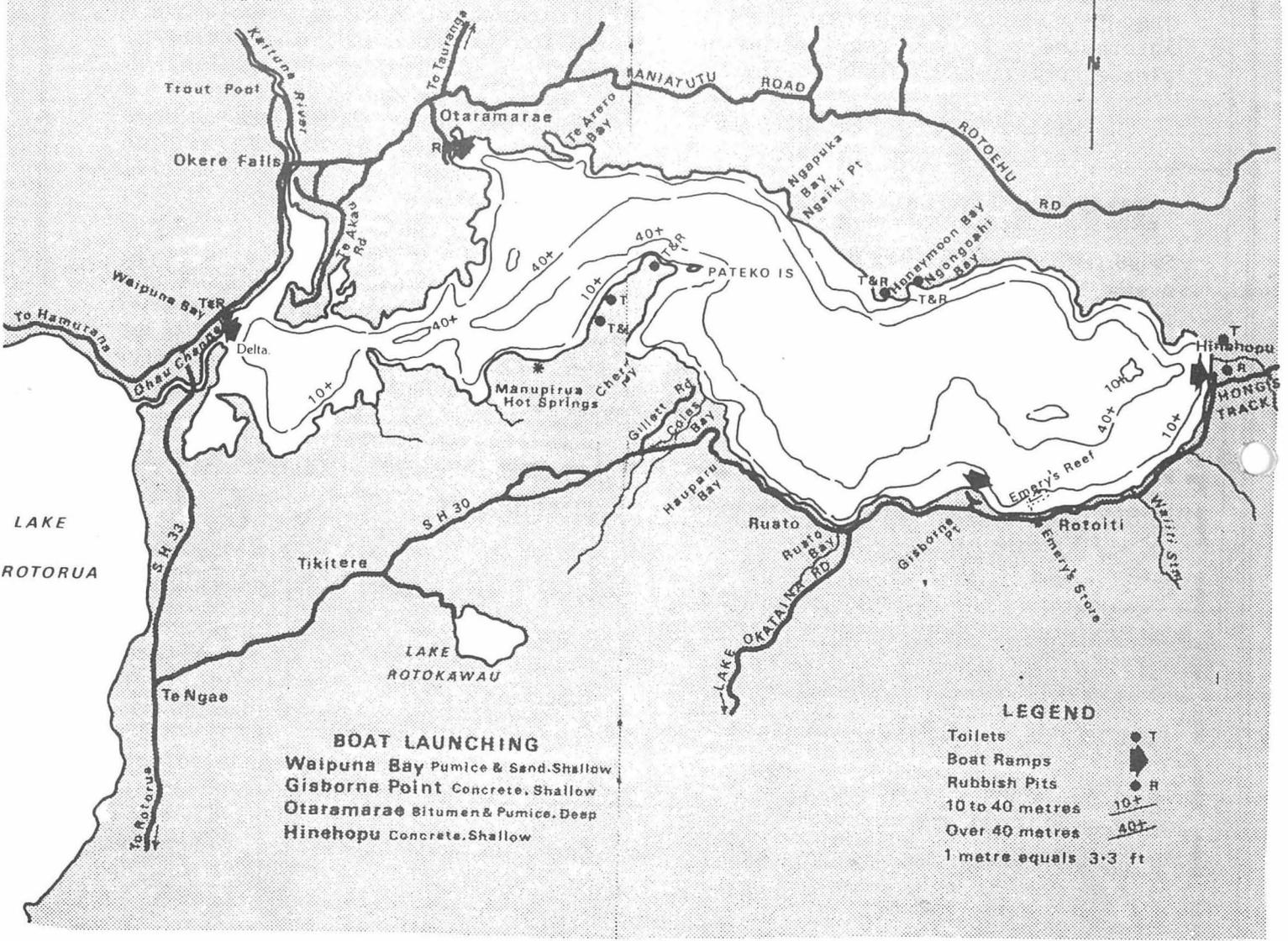


# 1997 COMMITTEE

**CHAIRMAN**  
**DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**  
**SECRETARY**  
**TREASURER**  
**COMMITTEE**

Jim Stanton	Okawa Bay, Mourea	Ph 3624690
Lindsay Brighthouse	Te Akau Road	Ph 3624876
Mary Stanton	Okawa Bay, Mourea	Ph 3624690
Michael Gill	Okawa Bay, Mourea	Ph 3624589
Theo de Lange	Otaramarae	Ph 3624342
Maureen Doherty	Hamurana Road	Ph 3624866
Bill Kingi	Parcliffe	Ph 3457186
Gillian Marks	Te Akau Road	Ph 3624804
Tai Eru Morehu	Maniatutu Road	Ph 3624392
Joan Piesse	Gisborne Point	Ph 3627755
Fred Whata	Okere Falls	Ph 3624842
Hapi Winiata	Koutu Road	Ph 3487783

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