



**LAKE ROTOITI
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC.**

newsletter

summer 2023/2024

Notice of AGM

We again welcome members and others who have an interest in the affairs and wellbeing of our communities. This is an opportunity to find out what LRCA has been involved in throughout the year and to participate in discussions around current and future activities.

10AM SATURDAY 6TH JANUARY 2024

**ROTOITI SPORTS & COMMUNITY CENTRE
SH 30 KOMUHUMUHU (GISBORNE POINT)**

If unable to attend, you can email any questions or comments to lrca@rotoiti.co.nz before 31 December 2023. We will be publishing the AGM minutes on our website and Facebook page as soon as practicable after the meeting.

NAU MAI, HAERE MAI. ALL ARE WELCOME

LAKE ROTOITI COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Committee Report 2023

Kia ora koutou, 2023 has been another year of unprecedented events, this time instead of COVID lockdowns we had weather to contend with.

Some of the highest lake levels we've seen happened earlier this year causing much disruption on the water and around the rohe/district with road closures on both SH30 and SH33. This led to one of our focus areas this year being Civil Defence and our new committee member **Andrea Davies** (Gisborne Point) has taken the lead on this important project. We will continue to work with Civil Defence to prepare more information and plans for unprecedented weather or natural disaster events. There is more information in this newsletter, and we encourage you to get in touch with Andrea if you are a key contact in your bay/area or if you have a particular set of useful skills or challenges.

This year also started with some algal bloom challenges, with closures across the whole lake and extended periods of closure in Ōkawa Bay and the Ōkere arm last summer. Algal blooms can occur very rapidly so it's important you know what to look for – the colour and smell of the lake are important. Hopefully, thanks to Lakes Community Board intervention, any notifications will be more readily available this summer through lawa.org.nz, especially over the public holidays.

2023 also saw some changes on the roads around Rotoiti. There was much disruption for many months at the turn off to SH30 as a roundabout was installed. Those who sat in traffic for an hour at a time might feel differently, but the safety of the right turn from SH30 to SH33 has significantly improved. You will also see new speed limits from Tikitere to Whakatāne, with reductions that Waka Kotahi hopes will decrease the number of serious road accidents. We thank committee member **Tom Macky** (Ruato Bay) for his tireless work trying to get information out of Waka Kotahi to update our community. Tom also lends his considerable expertise towards maintaining our website.

For lake structure owners it was an unsettling time with a resource consent hearing on the lease renewals in August. The result was favourable in the end for structure owners, thanks in part to our Deputy Chair **Roy Duffy** (Te Puna Whakareia) who attempted to negotiate with BoPRC and Te Arawa Lakes Trust/TALT to avoid an expensive hearing. In the end, a hearing was unavoidable, but we know the many hours Roy spent on this project was appreciated by every structure owner.

Roy has also been a key contact for the East Rotoiti sewerage scheme which has made progress over the last year. He also was instrumental in creating a group from around the lake to engage with TALT regarding lake weed. Roy's contributions over the past 4 years on committee have been considerable and he has decided to step down at the AGM. Thank you, Roy, for all your efforts. We know you have invested heavily in the success of many projects around the lake, and you deserve a break. Some of the environmental areas will now be overseen by new committee member **Mark Thomson** (Ōtaramarae) and Roy's other responsibilities will be shared out amongst the rest of the committee.

We want to thank the rest of our volunteers, Chairperson **Reina Engelen** (East Rotoiti) for her continued advocacy as a committee member of the Lakes Water Quality Society, her local knowledge and having her finger on the pulse with residents at the eastern end of the lake, Secretary **Claire Miller** (Rotorua) for continuing to impress with her thorough minutes, Treasurer **Jim Stanton** (Ōkawa Bay) for managing our finances so adeptly and continuing to advocate for Rotoiti through both councils and the Lakes Community Board, **Sarah Uhl** (Ōkere Falls), for being incredibly passionate about pest management and having extensive local knowledge, **Marion Dixon** (Ōtaramarae) for her enthusiasm and useful knowledge of central government, **Mike Gowan** (Gisborne Point) for his invaluable insight and representation of matters relating to lake safety and navigation, and **Annamarie Jensen** (Ōtaramarae) for managing our email and Facebook communication.

If anyone is interested in joining the committee we'd love to hear from you. You can email us at lrca@rotoiti.co.nz or just turn up to our AGM. The date and location of our AGM are changing this year due to feedback from the community about the challenges of an AGM on a public holiday. Due to the spread-out nature of our community across the east and west of the lake, we decided it was time to alternate our AGM location. We hope you will all join us at the Rotoiti Sports Club on SH30 at 10am on Saturday 6th January. They have a new upgraded playground, so if you want to bring the whanau, please do. We'd love to engage with more residents and increase our membership base. **See you there!**

**Noho ora mai, stay safe,
The LRCA Committee**

LRCA COMMITTEE 2023

Chairperson	Reina Engelen (East Rotoiti)
Deputy Chair	Roy Duffy (Te Puna Whakareia)
Secretary	Claire Miller (Rotorua)
Treasurer	Jim Stanton (Ōkawa Bay)
Committee	Tom Macky (Ruato Bay), Annamarie Jensen (Ōtaramarae), Andrea Davies (Gisborne Pt), Mike Gowan (Gisborne Pt), Sarah Uhl (Ōkere Falls), Marion Dixon (Ōtaramarae), Mark Thomson (Ōtaramarae)

Lake Rotoiti Community Association Inc

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The lake from Komuhumu Reserve (Gisborne Point)

MESSAGE FROM

Mayor Tania Tapsell



Tēnā koutou katoa

It's a pleasure to contribute to this edition of the Lake Rotoiti Community Association newsletter.

We know that the lakes and surrounding environment are important to you.

This is also a key priority for our Council and we are pleased the East Rotoiti Sewerage Scheme project is progressing well. We extend our thanks to Fulton Hogan for work completed so far and to the Rotoiti community for your support and partnership in recognising the importance of protecting the health of our community and our waterways for future generations.

We've delivered an Annual Plan that stops unnecessary spending but invests in critical infrastructure, fixed a \$5.6million deficit, restructured Council's Executive Team to deliver more efficiently on our new priorities, we're recruiting for a new Chief Executive, and to improve transparency and accountability to the public we have transformed our decision making-processes.

Prior to the election, with support from the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Programme Strategy Group, I wrote to Minister David Parker urging him to reconsider his decision to withhold \$10million of the expected funding support for this project. Our Council recognises the significant pressure this will put on the community if the decision is not reversed. Fortunately we'll have a new Minister for the Environment and I will continue to follow this up with the new Minister once our Government is finalised. In the meantime we are including a proposal in the development of our 2024-34 Long-Term Plan that will help fund this shortfall, provide assurance to the Rotoiti community around affordability and demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to the reticulation scheme.

The new Council and I are grateful for the very productive year we have had and we look forward to delivering even more for our Rotorua community over the rest of our term. We will be seeking your feedback on what this should look like during consultation on our draft Long-Term Plan early next year.

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you out on our beautiful Rotorua lakes this summer!

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Rotoiti Sports Club Playground

Rotoiti Sports field now has a fantastic new playground facility thanks to Council who worked closely with the Rotoiti Sports & Community Association, landowners Haumingi No.3 Trust and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rotoiti. It features an activity tower with two slides, as well as separate swings, a net seesaw, carousel and an interactive play panel.





LAKE STRUCTURE RESOURCE CONSENTS

– SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Pre-Hearing

As previously reported, LRCA was actively involved with Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BoPRC), and Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT) in attempting to facilitate a mutually agreeable outcome for consent renewals for existing lake structures. Numerous previous updates recorded the extensive efforts made by the LRCA subcommittee through meetings and hui with BoPRC and TALT staff. Some progress was made with debating and agreeing in principle Conditions and Advice Notes that addressed some of the cultural and environmental concerns that TALT's Cultural Mapping Report and its May 2022 Submission raised in response to the 295 limited-notified consent applications.

As an example, retaining walls/erosion protection walls were one such area. Whilst not being totally resolved, it was generally agreed in principle that replacing walls when at the end of their life with 'Habitat walls', of a suitable design and if the site allowed that, would provide shelter for Koura, as an appropriate mitigation to address cultural concerns.

As recorded, it was disappointing that these discussions with TALT were unsuccessful in achieving agreement on the term for new consents. TALT preferred a 10-year term, and Applicants were requesting 30-year terms, which BoPRC indicated it also supported.

At that point (November 2022) the LRCA subcommittee concluded its efforts in attempting to facilitate community-wide agreement, and a large group of applicants prepared for an Independent Commissioner hearing, as TALT wished to be heard. LRCA had no formal role in the Hearing, but individual members of the former subcommittee who were also applicants, provided considerable assistance to the structure owners to advance their case at the hearing.

Hearing

A two-day hearing was conducted in Rotorua in late August before two Commissioners. Two groups of applicants had

engaged Legal Counsel and a Planning Consultant, who provided written and oral submissions and expert evidence on day one. Over 120 applicants had lodged written evidence and around 30 presented verbally (in person or via Zoom) in support of their applications. This extensive evidence described in many cases deep multi-generational connections and a love for the lake, some back to the 1920's. A great deal of history was revealed, including very close connections with Iwi in many cases, particularly in the early days.

TALT attended in person on day two and presented legal submissions but TALT did not file any evidence. The two staff members from TALT who were present were questioned on a number of points by the Commissioners.

The BoPRC Officer who had prepared the s42a pre-hearing report containing recommendations to Commissioners, then presented after hearing all the legal submissions and evidence and made several changes to her recommendations and advice to the Commissioners, including recommending a 30-year term for all limited-notified structures (including 50 previously unconsented structures that had been missed in the 2007/2008 consents, that some applicants sought to be included in their new consents).

A Legal right of reply on behalf of applicants followed and the Commissioners closed the hearing.

Decision

The written decision was delivered in early September with a 30-year term granted for all limited-notified consents. The 15 working day appeal period passed on 4 October and no appeals were lodged.

The Commissioners clearly gave a good deal of thought into the Conditions and Advice Notes that will accompany the Consents (a single Consent will cover all structures under the same ownership).

The BoPRC patrol team have been travelling around the lake checking existing measurements of structures, which will be inserted into the Consent documents.

Funding

A group of applicants funded the main legal/planning work necessary to prepare for and present at the hearing, and a collection from other grateful applicants defrayed much of that cost. A number of that group very generously chose to donate some or all of their share of the fundraising to LRCA. Whilst no LRCA funds were expended on this exercise, a great deal of voluntary community work was undertaken.

Issuing of Consents and Fees

BoPRC is now working on issuing 30-year consents to applicants who will undoubtedly be grateful to receive them, in particular to avoid having to repeat this exercise every ten years. The Consents will include a 10-year LINZ lease in relation to the Crown stratum, and where appropriate, a 10-year Right to Occupy licence for structures on, or partly on, District Council reserves. There are some on DoC land as well. These will all need to be renewed twice during the 30-year consent term.

The 30 or so non-notified consent holders were invoiced the balance of the estimated \$1,500 consent processing fee for simple cases. The fee will be higher for the more complex limited-notified applications and include the cost of the Commissioner Hearing. BoPRC have not yet calculated the fee, but the overall costs will be shared by 295 applicants.

This is the final report on Lake Structure Resource Consents, and LRCA wishes to acknowledge the considerable work undertaken, and the interactions with BoPRC and TALT staff.



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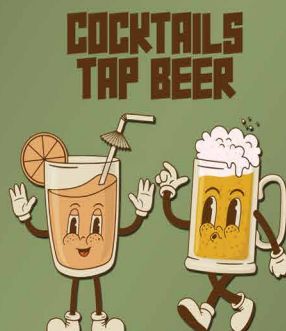
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ROTORUA LAKES COMMUNITY BOARD REPORT 2023

Phill Thomass, Chair, Rotorua Lakes Community Board
email: rlcbb@thomass.net Ph: 0275 47 4455.



Hello fine weather (please)!

After such a wet winter I've been holding my breath that the promised El Nino would settle in, which seems to have happened. The drier weather is bringing some relief to our neighbouring lakes of Rotoehu and Rotomā, which this year have seen flooding of private properties as well as public assets (all boat ramps, public toilets, the new playground at Matahi Spit along with the road into Lake Rotoehu have been under water and closed for months).

These issues have coincided with the Lakes Community Board focusing on helping all our communities develop and review their localised Civil Defence planning. It's great to see all the work being done by the LRCA committee to create localised plans that they will take out to the wider community to discuss.

Councillors are currently working on developing their ideas for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan. This year Council decided not to include Community Boards in these discussions. However we have presented to Council recently on what we see as the important issues and projects for our respective

communities. We will continue to put forward issues from our lakes communities to councillors as they work through developing the LTP. Public feedback will be sought early in 2024. I encourage you all to engage when that feedback is called for, especially around the role of the Lakes Community Board and funding for it.

After the issues and difficulties encountered last Christmas with a health warning being put on the whole of Rotoiti and information being slow to be updated, I have been facilitating a project involving all the agencies to streamline the testing and issuing of health warnings and the communications around them to make sure the public is getting timely and updated information even during public holidays. This new model should be in place for this Christmas if health warnings are necessary.

Finally, after a number of years where we haven't been able to, I'm pleased that the Lakes Community Board has resolved that next year we will again be bringing our meetings out to all our communities, with every second meeting being held at a different lake. Once the Council Meeting Calendar has been set I'll be back with further information on this.

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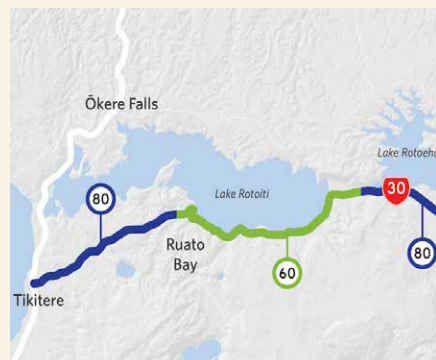
THROUGH ROTOITI EAST COMMUNITY

After almost two and a half years of public consultations, submissions, internal and external reviews, Waka Kotahi proposals, more consultations and submissions, new government safe speed rules, Waka Kotahi's final decision announcement, the government scrapping of the Road to Zero initiative, the decision to proceed with reviews already in place, signage design and adaptation to new bilingual rule requirements etc, the new speed limit around the East Rotoiti shoreline and community was implemented. There were 2 fatalities and 4 people were seriously injured on this stretch of road over this period!

The East Rotoiti lake edge had been the exception in the Rotorua area with speed limits of 80 to 100 kph along our shoreline and through our community. Waka Kotahi commented that the decision came after favourable submissions for the 60kph speed limit from Treaty Partners - Ngāti Pikiao kōeke (70 people attended their hui), Ngāti Pikiao and Te Wharekura o Ngāti Rongomai, along with other key Stake Holders - Ministry of Education, Whakatane District Council, Automobile Association, LRCA and the lake side community.

Waka Kotahi NZTA Speed Management Programme Lead Andy Burdett *"thanks the local lakeside communities and mana whenua for their ongoing support for the State Highway 30 speed review and is pleased to hear the benefits already being experienced following the implementation of the safer speeds. The comprehensive feedback provided from the community during public engagement and consultation was incorporated into the result. Safe speeds really matter and we appreciate how they can help in creating safe communities. By adopting safe speeds on this route, we are making it safer for everyone who uses it"*.

It is pleasing to see that most are complying with the new limits. We hope you all enjoy the safer, quieter area our community has now become. Unfortunately we will have to wait and see whether this continues under the new government which has signaled that it will repeal the speed limit reduction rule, "as soon as humanly possible". Hopefully, areas such as ours where reductions have been heavily supported will be treated differently.



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WALLABY CONTROL UPDATE

Work in the Central North Island through the Tipu Mātoro National Wallaby Eradication Programme continues, to locate, contain and control wallabies, with several operations being undertaken near Lake Rotoiti. The wallaby-proof fence erected in 2021, north of the Ōkere Falls Road bridge, is a key barrier in slowing the dispersal of wallabies across the Kaituna River.

Research to understanding the effectiveness and challenges of wallaby control techniques continues to expand. A trial near Hell's Gate confirmed that possums will actively exclude wallabies from bait stations. Similarly, contractors working on the "Waerenga" wallaby eradication operation (west of Ōkere Falls and north of Lake Rotorua) estimate they killed approximately 8000 possums before the first wallaby feed from a bait station. Contract hunters using thermal scopes and a drone carrying a thermal camera, will attempt to locate and destroy the remaining wallabies at Waerenga.

DOC's aerial baiting operation in Rotoehu Forest north of Lake Rotoiti (aimed at protecting kokako from predation by possums and rats) has been completed. Camera monitoring results, which will highlight the percentage of wallabies killed in that area, will be available at the end of November.

Parma wallabies discovered in the Bay of Plenty

Recent DNA analysis has identified the presence of a second species of wallaby (Parma) in the Bay of Plenty. Two of the Parma wallaby samples collected were shot south of Lake Rotoiti. Prior to this revelation it was thought there were only Dama wallabies present in the Central North Island but given the physical differences between the two species are so subtle it is understandable that the presence of Parma wallabies previously went unnoticed. Anecdotal evidence suggests these may have been released near Rotoiti in the mid 1990's and could make up about 10% of the population.



Dama Wallaby



Parma Wallaby

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LAKEWEED

Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT) has resumed Aquatic weed spraying over November and December 2023 using the herbicide *Diquat Dibromide*, with 109 hectares in total being sprayed on four lakes including Lake Rotoiti. Follow-up treatment may be applied following this period depending on the results of the initial treatment. There was good control from the last round and dive assessments will be carried out following the spraying. More specific detail can be found on the website <https://tearawa.io/>

The continued prevalence of poor water clarity and 'dirty' weed resulted in the planned early spring spraying of **Ōkawa Bay** to be cancelled. Use of the weed harvester during this term will be investigated, provided a sufficient amount of surface reaching weed is present.

Diquat has been the control method of choice since the 1980s and more recently another effective herbicide *Endothall* has been trialed but with mixed results to date. Whilst the use of these herbicides seem to have little or no effect on native flora, there have been long-held views, particularly amongst iwi and environmentalists, that development of an effective biological control programme should be regarded as a preferable option to chemical spraying. However, despite ongoing research by agencies such as NIWA and Landcare, viable solutions remain elusive. Mechanical harvesting has been moderately successful as a short-term control measure for hornwort but is limited in shallow areas and requires relatively large-scale disposal options. In recent times, TALT have had some success in trialing the use of uwhi (flax woven) mats to suppress exotic weed growth in sheltered areas of Lake Rotoiti.



Essentially though, changing human behaviour in efforts to eliminate the transfer of pest fauna and flora between and within waterbodies would significantly complement future aquatic weed management programmes. Apart from physical interventions such as wash stations and pre-entry/exit inspections for watercraft, there are a number of actions that individual residents and lake users can undertake to help in the improvement of lake water quality. Visit our website <https://www.rotoiti.co.nz/blog> for more info on this.

CATFISH

The Catfish Killas have continued netting again with more schools coming from out of town. The kids are netting in Te Weta Bay and Ōhinemutu and have been removing catfish but numbers are steadily climbing. Catfish removed by the schools this year is 1213. This is significantly lower than last year. The Netting program finished in June with the team netting 11,000 catfish. This also was significantly lower on previous years. The team reported very small numbers of juveniles this season with the bulk of the catch being around the 10 to 15 cm mark. This program will look to start again in November with the team looking to remove adults before spawning and run until June 2024.



FRESHWATER GOLD CLAM (CORBICULA FLUMINEA)

Native to eastern Asia, this shellfish has apparently been present in large stretches of the Waikato River for 2-3 years but gained prominence earlier this year as another pest, breeding rapidly, forming large groups that can clog up irrigation systems, hydro-electric and water treatment plants, and potentially out-compete native species for food.

Since the revelation, Te Arawa Lakes Trust and Bay of Plenty Regional Council have been working together to determine whether it is present in our lakes. So far, it has not been found in any of the lakes but close surveillance is being maintained. Biosecurity New Zealand is the lead agency for response to the clam and our local agencies are continuing to collaborate with them to develop plans to protect our waterways.

As an initial response, and on the back of serious concerns expressed by mana whenua, Biosecurity NZ closed Lake Ōkātina for 6 weeks from the beginning of October. New rules by way of a Controlled Area Notice (CAN) under the Biosecurity Act are now in place to stop the spread of the clam.

These rules apply to the 14 Te Arawa lakes with additional protections for Lake Ōkātina and will be in place until further notice. Included is a legal requirement for all vessels and trailers that have been in the **Waikato River within 30 days** to wash down at a new permanent wash station established at "The Wash Place", 338 Te Ngae Rd (SH30) before entering the Rotorua lakes. Shoreline fishing is still allowed, but waders will need to undergo washing. In addition, clam-specific check, clean and dry requirements for **boats and equipment** are required under the law.

Biosecurity New Zealand has launched a comprehensive awareness campaign to encourage all water users to help prevent the spread of gold clams from the Waikato River to other bodies of water. While eradicating them from the

Waikato River is unlikely, it is believed that containment is possible. Updated information and advice can be accessed from the MPI website <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/>.



We urge all lake users to pay attention to information and advice on how to clean gear, boats and other watercraft to help protect our lakes from this pest.

Rotoiti Rotomā Sewerage Scheme (RRSS)

Our periodic emailed newsletters and website have continued to provide updates on the progress towards completion of the sewerage scheme. Major community concerns over the mounting increase in overall capital costs (currently believed to be in the region of \$53 million) have continued, with Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC) still unable to provide firm commitments.

To summarise the most recent information relating to the scheme:-

- 282 Rotoiti installations completed to date with the aim to complete 340 properties by December 2023.
- Additional properties to be completed in Jan/Feb 2024 as legal hurdles are resolved with property owners.
- Marae installations should be completed under RLC Maintenance division in June 2024 as design work is under way currently with Iwi to identify the system configuration required to meet Marae 'super events'.
- Whenua Māori installations are 'progressing steadily' with site visits to affected properties and Locality Plans (LPs) being drafted. Completed documentation is being lodged with the Māori Land Court.
- Significant impacts on project costs have occurred from high lake levels. At least 40-60% of all installations now require de-watering and sheet pile protection versus earlier estimate of 10%.
- Power fluctuations have been found in the electrical supply to Rotoiti, triggering a low power voltage and activating alarms. UNISON is installing another three transformers.

Council has acknowledged the cost concern to property owners. They note that the final gross cost of the scheme is well canvassed as are the driving factors for that. Initially the Crown made an allocation of about \$11.5 million for East Rotoiti based on the concept estimates of 2014 that were structured with a 30% uncertainty. Since then, a significant level of costs have been introduced with subsequent resource consent conditions, and the non-inclusion of construction inflation.

In 2021 the actual costs of East Rotoiti were further assessed taking into account the consent conditions, the on-site pre-treatment systems, the Treatment Plant and the outcomes of the tenders. It was established that the gross costs would be around \$43 million (at that time). Based on that RLC made a further application to the Crown to match 50% of the revised cost which included a proposal to transfer \$10 million of Crown Deed funding from the underspent Land Incentives Scheme to the RRSS. This was intended to be repaid by 2032 via an increase to the existing Lakes Enhancement Rate targeted to all District ratepayers.

The proposal was subsequently approved by Environment Minister Parker conditional upon Council reimbursing the Land Incentives programme when these funds were required. Disappointingly his approval was withdrawn earlier this year due to apparent concerns over the repayment options. Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group, as the coordinating body towards improving lakes water quality, are currently pursuing a reversal of this latter decision.

In the meantime, RLC has agreed to put forward a proposal to progressively increase the Lakes Enhancement Rate as part of deliberations on the draft 2024-34 LTP to help fund the shortfall



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on the RRSS in order to prevent the cost per property of blowing out to \$35,000. This would presumably coincide with a review of the long-standing RLC funding support of \$1,500 per property given the significant cost increase of infrastructure over the past decade. In the course of these deliberations, Council will consider the full actual costs of the scheme minus available subsidies and decide what to charge as the Capital targeted rate. The community will then be consulted on these decisions.

The scheme has clearly been challenging because of its history, the Environment Court Decisions of 2012, the strict Resource Consent conditions, the market conditions and the difficulties presented more recently by the weather and lake levels. On the positive side sewerage reticulations have proved to be very effective (especially with the weather patterns) in diverting untreated sewerage from septic tanks seeping into the lakes.

The reticulations carried out in the last 15 years are now preventing at least 2.5million litres of sewerage getting into the lakes every day. They are increasingly costly but over a 50 year horizon should prove to be a good investment for and by the communities.

LRCA will continue to monitor the decision making and success of efforts to secure funding of scheme cost increases, and the final determination of property costs by Councillors. If necessary LRCA will lobby with other affected parties to achieve an equitable outcome.

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ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL (RLC) - 10-YEAR LONG TERM PLAN 2024/34

As required by legislation every three years, RLC have begun development of their next 10-year Long Term Plan (LTP) 2024/34 with initial workshops already held. Further information can be viewed on Council's official website. The community will be consulted on what is proposed next April with final decisions expected in June 2024.

Some discussion proposals of direct interest to our communities will include consideration towards rating of short-term accommodation (e.g. book-a-bach homes) as commercial, rating of vacant land, and extent of devolved funding for community boards. Future workshops are planned to discuss other projects and proposals, fees and charges, financial policies, capital works programmes and the rating framework.

Of specific importance to our affected residents will be the final funding plan for the Rotomā/Rotoiti Sewerage Scheme. Whilst final installations are now expected to take place in 2024, there are deep concerns over the full extent of cost overruns due to the number of known and significant factors encountered along the way, and how these are likely to impact on the ultimate capital cost. LRCA will be proactively seeking to ensure that the final cost implications for individual property owners are reasonable and acceptable.

Following earlier discussions with Council's Infrastructure team, local community advocates will be seeking to advance

implementation of policy and commitment for supplying reticulated drinking water to un-reticulated areas, viz West Rotoiti, primarily for long term health reasons with Mourea as a particular priority. LRCA has historically supported this matter in principle. Clearly, affordability and the question of subsidisation from both central government and/or the wider Rotorua District will influence direction going forward, especially given the emphasis and intention of the proposed 'Water Services Reform Programme' and how or if that will proceed under the direction of the new government.

Indeed, the whole debate over funding for both new and replacement local infrastructure will be under the microscope, especially since Rotorua, like most Council's around the country, is already approaching its current debt ceiling. As in the past, LRCA looks forward to maintaining its relationship and interaction with the Lakes Community Board and both District and Regional Councils in dealing with matters of interest to our communities.

ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera o ngā Roto o Rotorua



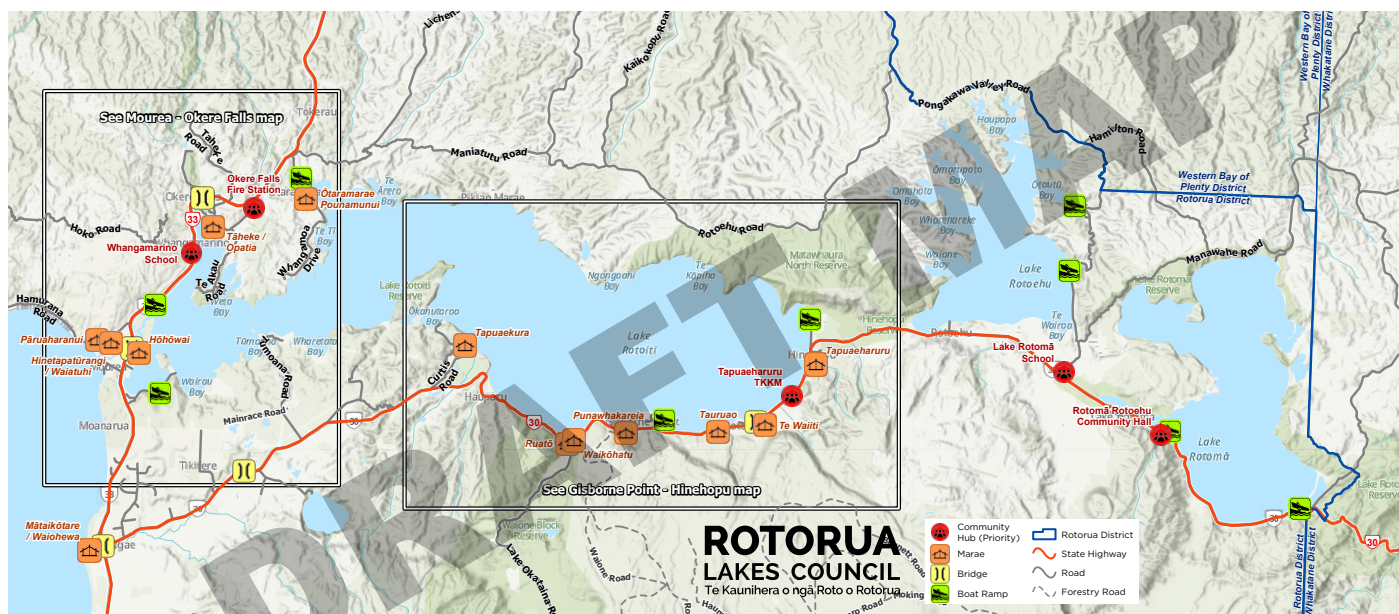

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LAKE ROTOITI COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING REPORT

Since the last newsletter, our initial community response team has begun the important process of developing an emergency response plan for the Rotoiti community.

With the summer months approaching, as home owners, it is also important to ensure that our whanau, friends and visitors to our homes are as prepared as possible in the event of an emergency.

A significant proportion of the lake community is made up of holiday makers and while many of you will have plans for your permanent homes, you may not have given the same thought to your baches, cribs or holiday homes. Do you have an escape plan in the event of fire; a place to meet if you are not altogether if there were an emergency; methods of communication, considering what impact an extended loss of power might have, with so many of us reliant on cellular

networks and internet access; a grab bag if you need to evacuate or provisions should you need to stay in a place for up to 7 days? The LRCA website emergency contacts page includes important phone numbers, websites and opening hours for services that maybe useful to you. In an emergency Dial 111, for police, fire, medical, ambulance and search and rescue. The operator will assist you until help arrives including access to your nearest defibrillator, if appropriate.

Our team wish you all a safe summer and holiday season and hope this information has been of use BUT that no one will need to use it! If you want to be involved in developing the plan or in any other way, please email Andrea at lrca@rotoiti.co.nz

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Visit Our Website

Scan this QR code to direct you to our website or visit www.rotoiti.co.nz to keep up to date.

HEI MATAU PADDLERS

WHO WE ARE

Tena koutou katoa, we are humbled to provide a korero for this newsletter. For those in the community who are unaware, we, Hei Matau Paddlers, are a paddling club who have been a part of the Rotoiti whanau since pre-2004.

We hold 2 of our club waka at Ōkere Reserve just down from Tāheke Marae. We have paddlers that utilise this space throughout the year. The space is more active in Summer, than it is in winter, as summer is our sprint season, and winter is our marathon season.

Today is no exception, as we continue to support paddlers from throughout the Rotorua community, both young and old.



HMP TODAY

Some may see us at the Ōkere Arm on Saturday mornings which is a regular at this time of year, while we are preparing for the Regional and National Waka Ama Sprint Events.

WORKING TOGETHER

Our latest collaboration was to support restoration on the Ōkere Reserve, where we removed a large amount of invasive plants and replanted natives. We also took this opportunity to build a new Waka rack to keep the area tidy and better maintained. We look forward to continuing to support activity in the community, now that we have been invited to be a part of it... Have a great summer, and be mindful of invasive species of any type being allowed in and near our waterways.



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UPDATES FROM THE RAFTING AND ZIPLINES ADVENTURE FRONT!

Kia ora Rotoiti Whānau

Our commercial river community is currently grappling with the most challenging operating conditions in the history of our industry. We've experienced over 450 days of closure due to relentless rain. While we're currently operating intermittently, we are facing further testing times without the flexibility to make minor river level adjustments at night for storage.

Unfortunately, this has resulted in estimated losses of over \$3,000,000 for the industry. To alleviate this situation, we would appreciate greater tolerance by residents not penalising the BoPRC when lake levels temporarily dip below or rise above the target operating range. This situation occurs 99% of the time for less than 24 hours, with variations typically less than 1cm below or above the target levels. The actions of penalising them cost 50 people their livelihood.

The rafting companies are actively pursuing an independent study by a hydrologist to validate our belief that these minor evening gate adjustments will not adversely impact the riverbanks downstream. We hope this study will persuade the BoPRC to extend our operating days by 30%.






On a brighter note, Rotorua Ziplines has had a fantastic start in its first 18 months of operation. So far, we've successfully planted 40,000 native trees along the riparian boundary, and our goal is to reach 60,000 trees planted by autumn 2024. We also have exciting plans to enhance our fourth Zipline, which will take participants on a thrilling ride over Troutpool Falls and conclude a breath-taking 400 metre journey.

Editor's Note: Most within our community would acknowledge that the commercial and social interests of rafting companies are important, and their extended downtime periods over recent years due to climatic changes have been particularly challenging. BoPRC manage lake levels in accordance with specific operating conditions derived after comprehensive reviews. In providing as many opportunities for rafting operations as possible, it has invariably been on the basis that this should not be to the detriment of water quality, potential flooding and lake recreational access.



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ROTOITI LAKE LEVEL 2023

Rotoiti lake levels and rainfall
1 January to 31 October 2023.
Total rainfall to 31 October
= 1,830mm



ROTOITI LAKE LEVEL 2023

- HIGHEST RECORDED LEVELS IN 50 YEARS...

Although the Rotorua district escaped the devastating extremes of the climatic bombshell that devastated the east coast communities earlier this year, we nevertheless took a substantial hit with some extremely high rainfall volumes. The Okawa Bay gauge recorded 600mm during January and February and a further 478mm through May resulting in a roller coaster for lake levels through to mid-July as illustrated in the chart above.

Despite the Ōkere gates being held virtually wide open for 153 out of the 212 days to the end of July, Rotoiti exceeded the operational and consented upper levels over lengthy periods, reaching its highest level in 50 years during February. It is fortunate that the Ōkere/Kaituna river system accommodates much of the overflow, whereas our neighbouring lakes Rotoehu and Rotomā

have no natural outlets and continue to suffer from extreme flood levels that have impacted badly on their local communities.

Since late July, lake levels have for the most part been managed by BoP Regional Council within the consented operational envelope despite some perceptions within our communities, i.e. between RL279.10 and 279.20 metres Moturiki datum, whilst ensuring lake outflows exceed inflows. Nonetheless, Council has been controlling the gates strategically in attempting to provide maximum opportunities for commercial rafting operations on the river as provided for in the consent. In so doing, the upper level has been breached on a couple of occasions due partly to unpredictable weather. Whilst we should support these opportunities, LRCA has reminded Council of established protocols towards prioritising water quality, mitigating potential flooding and maintaining lake recreational access.

As an outcome of the Commissioner's determinations from the 2012 Review, BoPRC were required to establish a Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Operational Liaison Group (RTALOLG) comprising of key stakeholder representatives including LRCA for the purpose of facilitating discussion and feedback on Rotorua and Rotoiti lake level management, and providing a forum for community input into resolving any difficulties encountered.

Our current long term representatives on this Group, Jim Stanton and Hilary Prior, are looking to step back. Any LRCA members interested in becoming involved should email the committee at lrca@rotoiti.co.nz. Ideally, contenders would be prepared to gain a good background knowledge of the history surrounding the maintenance of Rotoiti lake levels, keep abreast of evolving issues, and be ready to engage with regulators BoPRC and other stakeholders.

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FISH & GAME REPORT

Trout fishing season 2023 off to a great start.

Opening day 2023 kicked off on Sunday the 1st of October. As usual, a great turn out of anglers took to the waters to celebrate the occasion. Though the wind picked up, driving many anglers to find shelter early, there were plenty of healthy trout caught to make the day a success.

Lake Rotoiti is continuing to produce trout of exceptional quality. The heaviest fish weighed and measured by Fish & Game on the Opening Day was a 3.1kg rainbow measuring 655mm. This fish was Lp (left pelvic) fin marked, making it a 3-year-old hatchery release – reinforcing the lake's reputation as one of the best producers of rainbow trout in the North Island. 2-year-old spring 2022 releases averaged 522mm and 1.69kg (longer and heavier than previous year) whilst autumn 2022 releases averaged 552mm and 2.05kg (longer but lighter).

The Ōhau Channel also began the season well, with solid fish caught including a brown trout exceeding 4kg weighed in. Unfortunately, at time of writing, Lake Ōkātina is yet to be opened to recreation use due to biosecurity issues. We very much hope that this is resolved shortly.

A month into the season on Lake Rotoiti, fishing is prospering down the Western end (Power Lines through West Bank and down to Picnic Point) with jigging working particularly well early in the season. It won't be long before the smelt are migrating down the lake and the trout will follow the prey resource. From latter November through the



New Year period the point of focus for many will be Picnic Point/ Island around to Gisborne Point and then post New Year period across to Vercoes through Hinehopu.

As spring weather draws on and the heat of summer closes in, expect the fishing to become more predictable. Fish will descend to depth chasing their food and preferred water temperatures. But keep an eye out for surface activity. A spinning rod in the boat can be a great way to target these smelting fish. Remember to keep mixing it up! Try something for a while, perhaps just 30 minutes, and if it doesn't produce results make a change – a new lure, location, or another method.

Carry your fishing licences with you, as Fish & Game will be out and about regularly this summer doing surveys on the lakes. And make sure you follow the Check, Clean, Dry protocols to keep the pest species out of your lakes!

Lastly, all the best with your summer fishing – lets hope we get a beautiful summer to enjoy with our families on the lakes this year. We all deserve it!

Tight lines

Matt Osborne, Eastern Fish & Game

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BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL

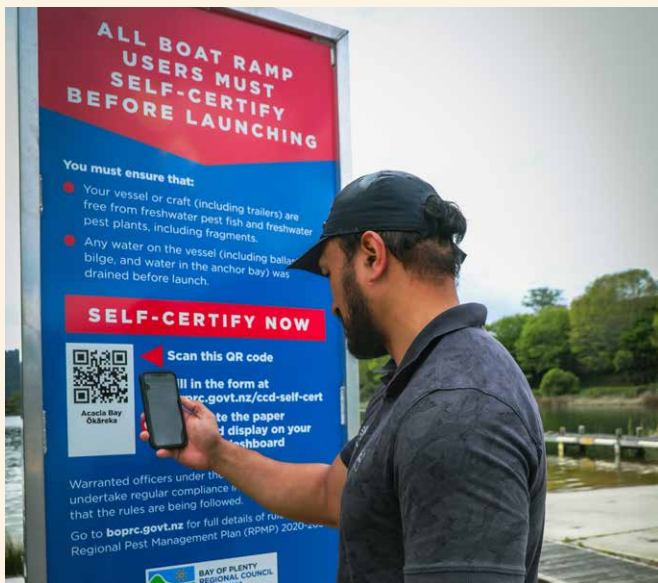
AQUATIC PESTS UPDATE

Following the installation of new signage at boat ramps it's now faster and easier for people to confirm that their boat and trailer is free from freshwater pests. Instead of relying on a paper form to self-certify, lake users can now scan a QR code found on the signs at the boat ramp which takes them direct to an online version of the form.

The self-certification is a requirement set out in the Bay of Plenty Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) to help stop new pests (such as the invasive Asian gold clam) being introduced into, and between the Rotorua Te Arawa lakes. While compliance of the rules themselves have always been high at over 95%, the number of vehicles actually self-certifying has been disappointing at 24% last summer.

The option of using a QR code-activated form and the fact that Biosecurity Officers can quickly check online to see whether people have filled out the form, means the previous obstacles for non-compliance have been removed. People can still complete the form on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council website or fill out a paper form which will be available at the boat ramps.

Warranted Te Arawa Lakes Trust Biosecurity Officers will be out at boat ramps throughout the summer period checking for self-certification compliance. Lake users need to be more vigilant than ever in stopping the spread of freshwater pests between waterways and are asked to make themselves familiar with the new Check, Clean, Dry steps and follow them carefully.



FRESHWATER REFORMS UPDATE

What we do on the land, such as farming, horticulture, urban development, commercial and industrial activities and land drainage, can have a big effect on lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries, and this is causing big problems in some of the region's water bodies. Council is exploring what changes need to be made to ensure these special taonga are protected and improved for future generations. Changes need to be made to better protect our freshwater and give effect to direction from central government.

Over the last six months, we've spoken to hundreds of people across the region about potential changes to how land and freshwater are managed in regional rules.

During the engagement phase Rotorua lake communities expressed concerns about algal blooms, pest animals (swans, Canadian geese, wallabies, catfish), weeds, illegal dumping, sewerage leaks and urban and geothermal influences. There is a consistent desire for lakes to meet water quality targets. Attendees at engagement events discussed management options and good management practices such as riparian setbacks including fencing and planting, sediment bunds, wetland conversion, use of farm environment plans, risk score cards and N surplus, input rules, strip grazing and rules for forestry. There was strong opposition to stock exclusion from steep slopes as a blanket rule.

The feedback received will help shape the draft options presented to your elected regional councillors for consideration. By the end of 2024, proposed changes will be formally notified and submissions heard by a freshwater hearings panel.

We continue to invite tangata whenua involvement in this process and have also been engaging directly with sector groups, head to our website www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwater to learn more.

Changes to the Charities and Incorporated Societies Acts

Recent changes to both of these Acts have implications for LRCA in the near future. The Charities Amendment Act 2023 brings with it a number of new requirements and important changes such as the definition of Officers, along with disqualification processes, a need to review governance procedures regularly to ensure rules and processes are still fit for purpose, and new accounting thresholds which should simplify our annual reports.

Under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022, LRCA will need to reregister to maintain its status. There is no immediate urgency as we have until April 2026 to do so. However, although our existing rules already meet many of the proposed new requirements, there will be a need to update and enhance our Constitution to comply fully. We are currently gaining professional advice in the process of making the necessary amendments which will then be presented to a general meeting for ratification to confirm our existing status.

HARBOURMASTER REPORT

This year we're anticipating a busier than usual summer around the lakes region with the forecasted El Nino conditions hopefully delivering plenty of sunny days. El Nino also tends to bring typically strong westerlies and if previous years are any indicator that results in more of the coastal boaties coming to the lakes in search of calmer conditions. We also anticipate a displacement affect from Lake Rotomā's high lake levels which are making launching and parking more problematic. The expectation is that Lake Rotoiti will be an obvious alternative.

With summer demand expected to be high we have undertaken a fair amount of navigation aid maintenance and signage audits. Replacing lights, cleaning buoys and straightening navigation poles (mostly in the Ōkere Arm and entrance to Te Weta Bay.) Due to storm events it is not unusual to have some of the buoys move or even break away. Please report any wayward buoys or markers to **0800 5KNOTS**, we always appreciate these calls.

As the summer season begins we are seeing more paddleboards and kayaks turning out for a freshwater dose, so it's a great time of year to be reminded of some key safety messages. Front of mind for me is the requirement for everyone to have life jackets. If you are on a kayak or Stand-up Paddleboard (SUP's) you **MUST** have a PFD (Personal Floatation Device) more commonly known as a lifejacket with you! There are lots of options these days with inflatable PFD's being very comfortable and hardly noticeable when on.

Around the Lakes the weather can change very quickly, and these paddle craft are particularly susceptible to wind - especially the inflatable versions. When wind and wave combine both kayaks and SUP's can become unstable and can flip and potentially blow away.

During October we had to assist three people caught out with rising winds and lake conditions. It was cold and their energy levels were getting low. This incident was a frightening reminder of how quickly things can go wrong and why a little safety planning prior to hitting the water just may save your life.



Straightening and resurfacing south cardinal.



Isolated danger markers in the Ōkere Inlet.

Frankly it astounds me why paddlers would not take a lifejacket and wear it!

Maritime NZ have recognised the need for more education for paddleboarders and kayakers and produced two very good publications which I highly recommend. These can be found on the **Maritime NZ** website (search Paddlecraft).

For SUP (Stand Up Paddleboarding) around the lake, especially on an inflatable SUP, it's highly advisable to be wearing a leash that connects you to your board. The last few paddlers we have spoken with haven't had leashes, which raises concerns should they fall off in windy conditions and become separated from their board. Again, we recommend reading the Maritime NZ guidelines and make the basic safety messages part of the pre-launch checklist.

Our Maritime Patrols are now on the water educating and enforcing our local Navigational Safety Bylaws. For more information and to know the rules head to the BOPRC website or get a copy of our Boating in The Bay next time you see our patrols. There is signage also at each ramp so please take a moment to take in these key messages!

All the best for the summer ahead everyone, lets make it fun and safe!

Roly Bagshaw, Senior Maritime Officer (Lakes)

AEDs Save Lives

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen any time

Below is a list of your nearest defibrillator. In a Medical Emergency call **111 Ambulance** for access information, and also advise the operator of the defibrillator on the fire truck. They page **West Rotoiti Volunteer Fire Unit** who could be there a lot faster than an ambulance coming from Rotorua.

LOCATION	PHONE	ADDRESS
Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rotoiti	077 362 7718	1620 State Highway 30, Tawhakarere Bay, Rotoiti Forest
VR Rotorua Lake Resort	027 314 1762	366 State Highway 33, Mourea, Rotorua
Rotoiti Sports & Community Assn / Rugby Club	07 362 7614	1297-1325 State Highway 30, Gisborne Point, Rotoiti Forest, outside main entrance
Manupirua Hot Pools	07 345 8070 or 0800 768 6484	Manupirua Bay (only accessible by water)
Lake Rotoiti Holiday Park	07-362 4860 or 027 314 1762	103 Ōkere Road, Ōkere Falls
Rotorua Rafting	0800 772 384	761 State Highway 33, Ōkere Falls
Kaituna Cascades Rafting Co	027 276 5457	18 Ōkere Falls Road, Ōkere Falls

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Fire, Police, Ambulance, Emergency	111
Police - Non Emergency	105
St John Ambulance	0800 785 646
National Poisons Centre	0800 785 646
Rotorua Police Station	07 349 9554
Rotorua Neighbourhood Support	07 349 9470
Ōwhata Medical Centre	07 345 5678
Power Companies - Unison	0800-286-476
Power Companies -Trustpower	0800 878 787
Energy Online Faults	0800 083 0285
Rotorua Lakes Council	07 348 4199
BOP Regional Council	0800 368 267
Rotorua Lakes Community Board - Phill Thomass	0275 474 455
SPCA	07 349 2955
Pollution Hotline (BOPRC) (24/7)	0800 884 883
Harbour Master (24/7)	0800 556 687
Dog Control (RLC)	07 348 4199
Dept. of Conservation	07 349 7400
M.P.I. - Ministry of Primary Industries	0800 809 966
Environment Pollution Hotline	0800 738 393
Fish & Game Eastern	07 357 5501
Fishing Licences	0800 542 362
Fish Poaching	0800 762 244
Lakes Maintenance (Ruebess)	07 362 4814
Pumps - Hi Flo Pumps 24/7	07 348 7516
Plumber - Foleys Plumbers	07 343 9060
Electrician - Hepburn Electrical 24/7	07 347 8491
Chris Smith Glass 24/7	07 348 5038
Emery's Store	07 362 7857
Happy Angler Store	07 362 4709
Mourea Mini Mart	07 362 4076
Ōkere Falls Store	07 362 4944
Rotoma General Store	07 362 0722
Manupirua Springs Hot Pools	07 345 8070
Waitangi Soda Springs	07 362 0788

REFUSE DISPOSAL

Weekly Household Refuse Collection

Collection day is Monday except on Christmas Day and Good Friday. All other public holidays run as normal. Red bin for rubbish, Yellow bin for recyclables, and Blue bin for bottles. Take lids off bottles. Bottles in cardboard boxes will not be picked up. Some areas use bags, only RDC Official bags will be collected. Residents are entitled to 52 plastic council bags each rating year (1 July to 30 June). These can be picked up from Smart Environmental office in the corner of the Recycling Centre, 24 Te Ngae Rd.

REFUSE & RECYCLING – ŌKERE TRANSFER STATION

Located at Ōkere Road (just south of SH33)
Hours: Recycle materials and Council issued rubbish bags may be placed in the relevant containers 24/7 (This service is free of charge – please respect it)
The Transfer Station is open:
Thur 8.30am – 12pm, Sun 8.30am – 12pm and the last day of every public holiday period. *The Transfer Station is never open on Christmas Day.*
Landfill fees apply
Domestic waste only
NO Trucks
NO Hazardous Waste

THE RECYCLING CENTRE

24 Te Ngae Rd
Mon-Sat 7.30am – 4.30pm, Sun 9.30am – 4.30pm
For further information — 07-3484199

ROTORUA LANDFILL

Located off Atimuri Highway SH30
1.6km from Waipa Junction
Hours: Monday - Saturday 7.30am – 4.30pm
Sunday & Public Holidays 9.30am – 4.30pm
CLOSED: Christmas Day. Landfill Fees Apply.

MARINE VHF RADIO ROTORUA FREQUENCIES

Coastguard NZ offers a 24hr-7 day radio service on Channel 02

Visitors are encouraged to make trip reports (TR's) on this channel when using the Rotorua Lakes.

Emergency (May Day) calls are also made on CH 02 and by calling 111.

For boat to boat chat three frequencies are available:

- If boats are within sight: CH06 and 08
- If boats are not within sight or on different lakes use CH 64
- Channel 64 recommended for all chat
- All lake users are encouraged to join Rotorua Lakes Coastguard to support these services and the rescue boats
- Please contact Rotorua Lakes Coastguard at PO Box 892 to join. Your support is needed to provide the radio service. Or find us on www.coastguardrotorua.co.nz, www.coastguard.nz/regions/eastern-region/units/rotorua-lakes/ www.facebook.com/Coastguard-Rotorua-Lakes

MEDICAL SERVICES

ACCIDENT & URGENT MEDICAL CENTRE

Cnr Arawa & Tutanekai Streets, Rotorua
Phone 07 348 1000
Monday – Saturday 8am– 10pm.
Sunday 8am–11.30pm

ROTORUA HOSPITAL

Accident & Emergency Department
Off Arawa Street
Phone 07 3481199
(Call 111 for Ambulance Service)
Patient enquiries 07-3497977 (Mon-Fri)

LAKE SCARE (URGENT) PHARMACY

Cnr. Arawa & Tutanekai Streets, Rotorua
Phone 07 348 4385
Open 7 days 8.30am–9.30pm

ŌWHATA MEDICAL CENTRE PHARMACY

556 Te Ngae Road, Owata
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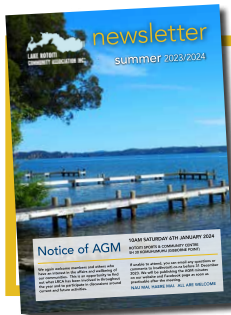
AEDS SAVE LIVES

Sudden Cardiac Arrest can happen any time—are you prepared?

IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL 111

AMBULANCE also advise the operator of the defibrillator on the fire truck. They page West Rotoiti Volunteer Fire Unit who could be with you a lot faster than an ambulance coming from Rotorua.

Information and locations of more defibrillators around the lake can be found on page 19.



Find this newsletter on our Facebook and Website

This newsletter is printed on sustainably produced paper from ECF (Elemental Chlorine Free) pulp sourced from farmed trees, it is manufactured under the strict ISO14001 Environmental Management System.

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