

Kotahi Reo

One Voice



Whiria te Tāngata Weaving the People Together

Summer 2026



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PHOTO: Meg Lipscombe
Aidan Lipscombe enjoying summer at the lake!

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MEET YOUR LTRA COMMITTEE

Below you'll find the contact details for each of your LTRA committee members. We're always keen to chat about your ideas, feedback, or anything related to the lake, land, and lifestyle here at Tarawera.



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A minute with Erin

I was asked to write A Minute with Mike for this edition.

Truth be told, I have had rather more than "a minute with Mike"... it has been a year! A year of long conversations, shared challenges, small wins, and steady progress, all rooted in care for this place and the people who call it home.

As I step down from the LTRA committee, it feels like the right moment to pause, reflect, and pass the baton. Succession and fresh energy matter, as does knowing when to step aside and make space for others. I strongly encourage anyone interested in contributing, in any capacity, to step forward and make themselves known. It really does take a village.

The year just gone has been a significant one. At times demanding, but always deeply rewarding, and grounded in a community that shows up. None of what has been achieved happens by accident. It happens because people give their time, their thinking, and their goodwill.

There are too many people to thank individually, but a few deserve special mention.

To the Sewerage Working Group, for the quiet, persistent work to bring certainty to Tarawera. Much of this effort happens behind the scenes, but its impact will be felt for generations.

To Tori, for Kotahi Reo. This magazine continues to weave our voices together with care, creativity, and clarity, even through a challenging year. That is a rare and valuable gift.

To PJ, once again, for the extraordinary fireworks. They never lose their magic and remain a remarkable act of generosity, welcoming in the new year with optimism and a sense of what is possible.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their stories and perspectives, especially Lippy, Pat, Fenella, and Geoff. These reflections matter. They remind us where we have come from and what we stand for. And special thanks to Meg for her beautiful photographs, which capture the spirit of Tarawera in ways words often cannot, thoughtful, generous, and deeply connected to place.

Looking ahead to 2026, there is a strong desire for LTRA to lift its impact while protecting what makes it work. One voice. One community. One place, cared for with intention and respect. Central to this is our shared commitment as guardians of this environment, from vigilance against the biosecurity threat of Golden Clams, to ongoing broader pest control efforts that affect this region. These are not side issues. They go to the heart of protecting the lake, the land, and the life that depends on them.

It is also important to acknowledge those we have lost along the way. The rhythm of life is always present here. Those who work quietly, persistently, and without expectation of recognition shape this community more than they may ever know.

In that spirit, I would like to acknowledge Gordon Lewis. Gordon was central to the work of the Sewerage Working Group and to securing certainty for our future. His command of detail was formidable and matched by a deep sense of fairness. Even as his health declined, he continued to contribute, encourage, and guide. He is greatly missed, and his legacy remains woven into this place.

As I step away from the committee, I do so with gratitude. Gratitude for the people, the mahi, the conversations, and the privilege of being able to play a small part in serving the Lake Tarawera community.

Here is to the year ahead.
Here is to those who step forward.
And here is to Tarawera, one voice, one community, one very special place.

Ngā mihi nui, nāku noa, nā
Erin

Erin Wansbrough
Past LTRA Committee Member





A photograph of a person sitting on a wooden bench in a park. They are looking out over a body of water, possibly a lake or river, with trees and a building visible in the background. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants.

*They say “New Year, New You”
but sometimes, what you really
need is a **new view**.*

Auction



If your 2026 goals involve downsizing, upsizing, or moving on to a new adventure, now is the time to make it happen.

The Lake Okareka market comes alive in summer. Buyers are here, the lake is stunning, and the demand for quality holiday and permanent homes is real.

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LAKE



Harbourmaster Team Update - January 2026:

Summer has brought exceptionally busy days on our lakes, with some boat ramps and trailer parking at capacity on peak days.

It's encouraging to see that despite the pressure, most boaters are showing patience and good etiquette when launching and retrieving vessels. This sort of cooperation goes a long way in keeping everyone safe. Out on the water, however, patrols have noticed several recurring safety issues this season. Addressing these early helps to prevent accidents and ensures everyone can enjoy the lakes safely.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (JET SKI) SAFETY

One of the most noticeable trends we've seen this summer has been jet ski groups riding and playing in close formation. While riding together can be enjoyable, many of these riders are inexperienced, and when powerful

machines are operated too closely the risks increase significantly.

In early January on Lake Tarawera, two jet skis in the same group collided, partially sinking one craft. Fortunately, no one was injured, but it was a clear reminder of how quickly things can go wrong.

Several riders have received \$200 infringements for:

- Travelling at speed within 50 metres of another craft
- Exceeding speed limits within 200 metres of shore and inside 5 knot areas.

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WAKARUA FOR SALE



Unfortunately ill health means Wakarua, who has spent all her life on Lake Tarawera, has to be sold.
Contact Ian Lipscombe 027 281 4797

If you are new to PWC riding, take the time to start slowly, practise manoeuvring, and become familiar with local navigation rules. Riding responsibly keeps you and others safe and helps avoid fines.

LIFEJACKETS ON PADDLE CRAFT

Patrols have also observed low lifejacket compliance on stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) and other paddle craft, particularly in popular swimming areas such as Boyes Beach and Lake Tikitapu.

Although conditions can appear calm, a paddler separated from their board can get into trouble very quickly, especially when the weather changes. Patrol staff have been surprised by how far some paddlers are travelling without safety gear, despite variable forecasts.

Safety reminders for paddle craft users:

- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD)
- Carry two forms of communication if venturing any distance.

As we move through the latter part of summer, not wearing a PFD on a SUP, kayak, rowboat, or similar craft could result in a \$200 infringement.

KEEPING SWIM AREAS AND SKI LANES CLEAR

Another common issue we've witnessed has been boats and jet skis parked in ski lanes, passive areas, and crowded swimming zones. Where a beach is busy with swimmers, our patrols continue to ask vessel operators to move to the edges of the beach.

Ski lanes and reserved areas must remain clear when in use. This simple separation between swimmers and vessels provides an important safety buffer and reduces the risk of serious incidents.

WATCH YOUR SPEED!

Speed remains one of the most frequent causes of breaches on our lakes.

Just like driving on the road, safe speeds apply on the water. In the Bay of Plenty region, vessels must not exceed 5 knots (about 9 km/h) when:

- Within 200 metres of shore
- Within 200 metres of a dive flag
- Within 50 metres of another boat or

swimmer

- A person is outside the vessel's deck

Many lakes are clearly marked with 5-knot buoys to help make these zones easy to identify. Breaching these rules can result in \$200 infringements.



BUOY BOY OUT AND ABOUT ON THE LAKES THIS SUMMER

Looking sharp as ever, Buoy Boy is proving to be a great safer boating reminder. Before heading out, remember to wear a lifejacket, carry two waterproof ways to call for help, and always check the marine weather forecast.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFE SUMMER

Most people on the water are doing the right thing, and that's appreciated. By understanding the rules, wearing the right safety gear, and operating vessels considerately, we all play a part in keeping the lakes safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Let's continue to look out for one another and make safety the priority.

Written by Roly Bagshaw
Harbourmaster, Bay of Plenty
Regional Council Toi Moana





PHOTO: Michele Melchior, NIWA

Biosecurity Update – Summer 2026:

Regional Council would like to thank the Lake Tarawera community for your support in helping to prevent the spread of invasive freshwater pests into, and between, the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes this summer.

The latest Check Clean Dry Certify figures, show a substantial increase at Lake Tarawera, with self-certification almost double compared to this time last year. This highlights the community's commitment to protecting our lakes and rivers we love from threats such as the invasive gold clam.

CHECK, CLEAN, DRY, CERTIFY STATISTICS

Boat ramp biosecurity behaviour across all the lakes so far this year seems to have improved significantly. Across the region 92% of the 451 physical inspections by the TALT team passed these inspections demonstrating good vessel hygiene and encouragingly 49.5% of vehicles parked at the boat ramps had completed



the self-certification process – up from an average 25% last year.

Based on online figures available, the statistics for Lake Tarawera are positive. The number of people completing the self-certification is up from 24% this time last year to 47.4% this year!

EXTRA WASH STATION IN WHAKATĀNE OPENED

To avoid an extra 54 km roundtrip to the wash station on Te Ngae Road, a new MPI-approved wash station at the Whakatāne Harbour boat ramp opened 19 December for boaters wanting to go to Lake Ōkataina. Since 1 July 2025, 400 washdown forms have been submitted. While 87% of them are for access to Lake Ōkataina, the other 13% also reflects various event competitors fulfilling their biosecurity requirements and people coming from the Waikato region adhering to the CAN.

GOLD CLAM FAQS

Have gold clams been successfully eradicated anywhere in the world?

While it's too early to tell if the eradication efforts at the Taupō Aqua Park have been successful, there are no documented cases of eradication internationally. However, there are some successful management success stories. Suction dredging in North America and Ireland has achieved over 95% reduction in local clam densities for a given period.

Are they good to eat?

Aside from whether they are good to eat or not, they have the legal status of an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act. This means that people must not knowingly move them or water that may contain them.

As small filter-feeding shellfish that eat deposits from the river or lakebed they can accumulate toxins in their gut, making them unsafe to eat from polluted waterways.

What are the details of the gold clam discovery in Taranaki?

Gold clams were detected in Lake Rotomanu in Taranaki in early November 2025. This small man-made lake has subsequently been closed to the public and drained to allow scientists to undertake a detailed delimiting survey to determine the next best steps.

What risk do they pose?

They outcompete native species (kākahi/freshwater mussels) and because each clam can produce up to 70,000 juveniles per year, they can clog water intake pipes, filters, and

machinery, affecting power generation and irrigation.

What do I do if I think I have found one?

- **Report it:** Take a photo, note the location, and contact **Biosecurity New Zealand at 0800 80 99 66** or report it online at report.mpi.govt.nz

- **Do not move it:** Leave the clam where you found it to avoid accidentally spreading larvae.

Written by Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana





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King of the Lake 2026

This sailing challenge is held every year on the 3rd January, with a LE MANS start at the Cliff Rd Sailing Trust venue. Way back in the 1980's Ian Thorpe designed this 20 K sailing challenge to test the skills of experienced sailors. He enjoyed that!

On January 3rd 2026 the sailors were confronted with rough water and a possibility of thunder and lightning. A joint decision was made to postpone the race until 10 am the next day. Rough water and high wind made for a reduced course.

Three safety boats were kept busy. Thank you to Tony Perks and Andy Goad, Sue and Stu Baker, and Gilly and Greg Shine for keeping the sailors safe on the water.

The conditions were ideal for the three Foilers. They looked magnificent skimming the tops of the waves while the Lasers and a Trimaran ploughed through.

RESULTS

Old Gold Trophy (1st Place)
Ray Gatland

Solitaire Trophy (2nd place)
Erin Schulte

Foilier Trophy
Chris Leuschke

Lucky number donated money
Claire Stewart

TO ALL SAILORS – PUT 3RD JANUARY 2027 INTO YOUR DIARY

Next year you might be QUEEN OF THE LAKE – it is a challenge – it is FUN



TAILORED TRANSITIONS, FOR ALL SEASONS



After a summer of changeable weather, it's easy to see the value of well-designed indoor-outdoor living. When spaces are thoughtfully connected, a home feels open, light and breezy on warm days, yet sheltered and comfortable when conditions shift.

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This might mean adding covered decks and perhaps an outdoor kitchen for year-round outdoor living, or larger glazing that brings in light while retaining warmth. The result is outdoor spaces that feel like a true extension of the home, not just a setting for summer.

We deliver renovations and new builds that adapt to every season, enhancing both daily living and long-term value.

Let's shape spaces that feel tailored to the way you live, all year round.



John Goad 022 524 5741
Steve Webb 027 300 9804



PHOTO: Geoff Thomas
 A healthy smelt population results in conditioned trout, like these two-year-old fish.

Summer '26: Cast Your Line

"The trout are smelting!" is what a lot of Tarawera people want to hear. It refers to when the fish are smashing the surface as they chase smelt. Then you can cast a smelt fly from a boat or harl with a sinking fly line.

Smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*) are silvery fish that occurs in estuaries and lowland rivers and some lakes. Known only in New Zealand and Australia, they average 6–10cm. in length, and they are the key to the trout fisheries in the Rotorua lakes including Tarawera, and Lake Taupo.

Smelt were first introduced into Lake Taupo in 1934 to provide an alternative food source for the ailing trout population. Gone were the halcyon days of huge trout and twice in the preceding years the condition and size of the trout had crashed as the population of native fish, and the koura (freshwater crayfish), collapsed under the predatory pressure. On the first occasion, authorities allowed controlled netting in an attempt to reduce the size of the

trout population and between 1913 and 1920, 103,000 trout were sold at markets in Wellington and Auckland to defray expenses.

The trout population made a remarkable recovery and the mid 1920s probably reflect the best years of the Taupo fishery, as epitomized in Zane Grey's writings. However, the recovery was short-lived and by the 1930s it was again apparent that the trout population had outgrown its food supply. Coincidentally, a similar situation was also occurring in Lakes Tarawera and Okataina and smelt which had been successfully released into Lake Rotorua from the lower Waikato River in 1907 were in turn released into these lakes.

Within two years a huge turnaround occurred



PHOTO: Geoff Thomas
Smelt can grow to 6cm or more, providing a good mouthful for a hungry trout. The small fish is a cockabull, also important prey for trout.

in the size and condition of the trout and so, not surprisingly the release of smelt from Lake Tarawera into Lake Taupo was trialled. Releases of smelt continued at intervals through to October 1939 and by 1940 smelt were clearly established in the lake. By 1942 smelt were a large part of the diet of Taupo trout which has remained unchanged today.

Smelt spawn in the shallows on sandy beaches in autumn and spring, and it is the newly hatched young smelt which attract the trout into the shallows, particularly on large weed-covered shelves like those off Kariri Point and Moura (White Cliffs). Harling is best when waves break up the surface, and alternatively hard when it is calm and the trout can see the line. The extra high lake level in the past two years, caused by abnormally heavy rainfall, covered more sand beaches providing perfect habitat for the smelt to spawn.

Written by Geoff Thomas
The Outdoors Adventurer



PROPERTY MANAGER LIVING LOCALLY

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PHOTO: Rotorua Lakes Council
Mayor Tapsell with Phill Thomass at the rollout of fibre internet in Rotoiti.

Message from Her Worship the Mayor, Tania Tapsell

Greetings Lake Tarawera residents!
Tēnā koutou te hapori ō te roto ō Tarawera

I hope you've all had a safe, relaxing, and happy summer, and that the holiday break gave you a chance to unwind with friends and whānau.

Our lakes were front of mind this summer as we all did our best to prevent the devastating spread of Gold Clams. Protecting our lakes from invasive pests requires a whole-of-community effort, and Council will continue to support this wherever we can.

You may be aware of the significant lake weed issues we're facing in Lake Rotorua. The core challenge is a lack of sufficient Government funding to action the local solutions we've developed with regional council and Te Arawa

Lakes Trust to reduce, and potentially eliminate, the problem.

We've raised concerns about the much higher funding given to other NZ lakes, in particular South Island lakes, and have since met with Minister Chris Penk, Govt agencies and local leaders to discuss solutions and fairer funding for Rotorua lakes.

Our lakes communities, including yours, currently have an important decision to make about representation on the Rotorua Lakes Community Board. A by-election is now underway to fill two extraordinary vacancies. These vacancies arose due to insufficient nominations during the 2025 triennial elections, along with the sad passing of a candidate before election day.

COLLAB ELECTRICAL

LAKE TARAWERA • OKAREKA • LYNMORE
ROTORUA & BEYOND

Losing our friend and colleague, Phill Thomass, was felt deeply across Rotorua. Phill served on the Lakes Community Board from 2013 and was a tireless advocate for the protection and enhancement of our lakes. His dedication leaves a strong legacy, one that we hope our newly elected Board members will continue.

Your votes will help decide who steps into these important roles. Voting runs from Friday 30 January until 12 noon on Tuesday 3 March 2026. The by-election will be conducted by postal vote, using the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system. This by-election is an important chance to help choose who speaks on your behalf when decisions affecting lakes communities are made. I encourage you to read about the candidates and make your vote count.

For more information about the by-election and the candidates, please visit rlc.net.nz/by-election.

Kindest regards,
Tania Tapsell

Written by Tania Tapsell
Her Worship the Mayor of Rotorua



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[RLC.NET.NZ/BY-ELECTION](http://rlc.net.nz/by-election)

PŌTI 2026
PŌTITANGA-ĀPITI

VOTE 2026
BY-ELECTION



PHOTO: Meg Lipscombe

Pest Control – February 2026

Our resident "Ratmeister" is back with a fascinating insights and unexpected dangers of the rats, possums, wasps, and rabbits roaming our community.

RATS

Last time I talked about Tracking tunnels and using them as a method to monitor rodent populations. So far the results of the tracking tunnels is that we have the same amount of rodent activity as we did with 12 month baiting compared with baiting at the critical Autumn and spring periods. My data needs to have a few more years to take account of variables such as weather.

One thing is very clear, in areas that are not being baited the rodent populations remain high, plus rats are everywhere, anyone who thinks their property somehow doesn't have rat activity is dreaming. People say to me "I don't see any rats" well rats didn't get to where they are now by telling us where they live and handing over their phone number.

INTERESTING RAT STORY

Now and then I get people contact me to say they have rats in their roof space and how to get rid of them without causing a literal stink.

1. Rats need water: they cannot live in your roof space without a source of water, people think they go up there to hibernate or just lounge around, no they are constantly coming and going to source food and also sourcing of water. Rats cannot survive without a good water supply.

2. Rat Teeth: I think I have mentioned this before, rat teeth are constantly growing and lot of their gnawing is to reduce the size of their teeth. (My Japanese friends daughter is working at Tokyo University where they are trying to isolate the gene that allows rat teeth to grow and maybe use that in the future for humans).

3. Rat Diet: That last bit wasn't my interesting story. I was reading about ratty sorts of stuff and came across an article discussing rats eating the plastic covering off electrical wires, especially in roof spaces. This had then caused fires and in one case an electrocution. Turns out that the plastic coating was supposed to be virgin plastic material but this was being substituted for cheaper 2nd grade recycled material which had an amount of used food container regrind in it. Rats smelled the minute oil and fat residue on the plastic wire coating and chewed away.

Didn't say how they resolved this issue.

POSSUMS

I have caught 4 possums in a week at my place. Simple Tims trap with apple and cinnamon, so

not savvy possums. I border the bush at the back and possums are a constant problem that comes and goes.

WASPS

I have seen the first wasps exploring. If you see any wasp nests get hold of me and I will sort them out. But you need to find the nest! I have spent many fruitless hours searching for wasp nests.

RABBITS

I don't think they are better or worse than ever, just a low level menace.

Written by Ratmeister



REMINDER: It's renewal time of your LTRA subs

Our community is what makes Lake Tarawera so special, and the Lake Tarawera Ratepayers' Association is dedicated to keeping it that way. By renewing your annual subscription, you're directly supporting the preservation and enhancement of our community.

How to Renew your Membership Fees 2025/26

It only takes a moment to make a difference. Annual Subscription due: \$50 per household for the year ending 30 September 2026

Due date was: 12 December 2025

Payment to be made by internet banking to:

Account Name: Lake Tarawera Ratepayers Association Incorporated

Account No: 12-3155-0095175-00

Reference: Name and Lake Address
Invoices will not be issued unless requested.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping Tarawera extraordinary!



Fred Stevens
ARCHITECT

027 4060406
252 Spencer Road

No project too big
No project too small



PHOTO: Pete Fahey

Tarawera Landcare & Pest Control

Tarawera Landcare and Pest Control have hit the ground running for 2026, combining forces to protect our local environment through successful community working bees and ambitious new restoration projects.

Working Bee Number One for 2026

Walking Track between Rangiuru Bay and Boatshed Bay

Our first working bee held on February the first was an outstanding success. We had a great turn out of volunteers. Normally we would start at 9.00am and knock off at midday, however this time we went until the job was finished at 2.00pm. No one wanted to stop until the job was finished.

A special word of thanks goes to Murray Holmes for the use of his front-end loader which he brought from Te Puke just for the job, Chris Hanson for donating his time and the use of his tip truck, but special mention goes to Stu and Jay from DDL. They volunteered their time and

boundless enthusiasm to assist. They formed the track so that all our Landcare people had to do was spread the mulch. They also used their equipment to spread the mulch that Chris Hanson had dumped to cover the invasive tradescantia. Hopefully this will go a long way to controlling this weed.

You walkers should go and check it out.

You might also like to know that the pile of mulch that was in the carpark that was earmarked for Landcare use was regularly raided by some entitled locals for their own purposes. One of these lovely people even went as far as removing the sign we had put up. There are some strange people about.

As you may, or may, not be aware we have

combined the Pest Control and Landcare activities under the one umbrella.

Pest Control focus is on rats, possums, feral cat, mustelids and wasps. The tools we require:

- **Volunteers** – first and foremost. The more volunteers we have the more effective the eradication programs can be.
- **Traps** – including bait stations. Self-setting traps are expensive but a welcome addition to the arsenal.
- **Poisons** – rat baits for the bait station you may have on your property (or wish to obtain).

Tarawera Landcare focus is on controlling pest plants – cherry trees, old man's beard, spindle berry, tradescantia, jasmine, wild ginger, cotoneaster etc.

What we require:

- **Volunteers** – again our top priority. The Spencer Road corridor is 14km if you include both sides of the road, plus the lakefront; about 20km of road corridor and lakeside. The pay's not that good, but the environment will thank you!!
- **Tools** – power tools and spares, spray backpacks for example, if you have any of these you are no longer using, we would be happy to take them off your hands. (Currently our volunteers use their own equipment).
- **Poisons** – pesticides, paste, sprays – these are available from Bay of Plenty Regional Council, but at a cost.
- **Storage Facility** – We have been talking with Rotorua Lakes Council regarding a site for a secure permanent storage facility to store our equipment and chemicals. This is not a pipe dream; currently all Tarawera Landcare equipment and poisons are stored on members properties, this is not a practical solution. A recent quote for a storage shed, came in at a very large cost, some thousands of dollars to do it effectively.
- **Funding** – we require an injection of funds to be able to do the things required in the community. As a result, we would welcome community support, either by way of volunteers to call on or money donated to

Lake Tarawera Landcare, which we are sure you would recognise as a very worthy cause.

Kariri Point – we have some unfortunate news about Kariri Point.

We were advised by Bay of Plenty Regional Council to halt all work on Kariri Point. There are new trustees on the Te Rua O Umaukaria Trust, these trustees have said until they have a better understanding of the scope of work, they do not want Landcare volunteers working on their land. Also, they do not want people walking around the Point. This is despite the previous trustees giving us their support in writing, as well as supporting our fund-raising efforts, in particular letters in support to the Sir John Campbell Residuary Trust, in which we were successful and received \$20,000.00 over two years. This money was used to pay professionals to remove most of the acacias from the Point.

This is incredibly disappointing after approximately 100 working bees since 2017. Approximately 2,600 hours Tarawera Landcare volunteers have spent working there. Between 4,700 and 5,000 native trees have been planted. There are 9 rat bait stations and 14 possum traps. Over a period of time 73 possums have been trapped and well over 1,000 rats killed – after that we gave up counting. As a result, the bird life on the Point has increased enormously.

We have been absent since August 2025 when the trustees first flagged their intentions. It doesn't take much imagination to know what has happened since then. The weeds especially old man's beard has started to regenerate and will continue to do so. The rats and possums will predate on the flora and fauna. The birdlife that had re-established itself since we started work will once again come under pressure.

Tarawera Landcare future Projects:

- **Spencer Road Corridor** – we are planning, with Rotorua Lakes Council, to start a programme to eradicate pest plants from Spencer Road, especially invasive cherries. Given that the road is 7 kms long and we plan on working both sides of the road that's a total of 14 kms give or take. Volunteers alone can't do this because some of it is hard to get at and there are health and safety issues to contend with. The most practical and effective way to attack this project is by using contractors so that means raising money, that's a big job. There are funding sources out there which we plan to approach. We know the community will

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be the main beneficiary of this work and we sincerely hope you will be supportive as well.

• **Rotomahana Parekarangi 6G3B** – you will have noticed the dying trees and plants on the right-hand side of road just before you reach the settlement on Spencer Road. This is a joint project between, the Iwi landowners, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council and Tarawera Landcare. In the not too distant future these dead plants will be mulched in preparation of a planned planting programme to start in the Autumn. It's planned that 4,000 native plants will be planted and yes, we will require volunteers to help with this. The landowners will also be providing labour for the planting and after care until the plants are established and able to cope on their own.

• **Lakefront** – If all of the above is not enough, the lakefront requires attention as well. Willows are probably the main culprit but there are other baddies as well. There is a great deal of work to be done here. Many lakeside property owners are doing a great job, but there is still plenty to be done. You

will have noticed that a very large Chinese Poplar was removed from Rangiuru Bay in December. Tarawera Landcare met with Rotorua Lakes Council recently and it was decided to plant some Kowhai on the lake front.

We will get back to you on this.

'Tarawera Landcare's ultimate goal for future generations is that Tarawera be free of both pest plants and pest animals.'

We would very much appreciate your help.

Contact Fiona at fiona@betterwords.co.nz to register as a potential volunteer or you want more information.

If you would like to donate and support our programme, our bank account is:

Lake Tarawera Pest Control
03-0415-0502432-00

Written by Pete Fahey



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PHOTO: Akatea Ltd ground control crew carrying out wilding pine removal on Tarawera Maunga, working across steep terrain to protect and restore native ecosystems.

Caring for Taiao Caring for Whānau

Update from Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihī Trust

Te Mana o Ngāti Rangitihī Trust continues important mahi to protect and restore Tarawera Maunga, ensuring our whenua and waterways remain healthy for generations to come.

Wilding pines remain a significant threat to the mauri of our taiao. Their rapid spread displaces native plants and impacts water systems. Through their removal, space is created for native ngahere to regenerate and for balance to be restored across the landscape.

Recent Mahi Completed

Between August and January 2025, key preparation and control work was carried out on Tarawera Maunga as part of the Trust's long-term wilding conifer control programme on Whenua Rāhui land.

During this period:

- Essential infrastructure repairs and upgrades to the hut were completed by September 2025, ensuring field crews could work safely on the maunga.

- In October 2025, a karakia was conducted at Rangitihī Marae to acknowledge and safeguard the upcoming phase of work. This reinforced tikanga Māori and cultural responsibilities throughout the project. Additionally, aerial wilding pine control was carried out in key areas of the maunga using helicopter operations.

Work Ahead

From **late 2025 through to autumn 2026**, ground-based wilding pine control will continue across Tarawera Maunga. This work focuses on removing remaining pest trees and preventing further spread, while supporting the natural regeneration of native species.

Planning and monitoring will also continue alongside project partners, helping to guide the next stages of this three-year programme and ensure the mahi remains effective and sustainable over time.

D'Arcy Stoneham
Tiaki Taiao/Assistant Environmental
Manager, Ngāti Rangitihī



Working BEE

Lake Tarawera Community Centre

Sunday 15 February @
10:30am

Come along and enjoy some some
homemade treats to keep you going.



PHOTO: Courtesy of Geoff Thomas

Where the Blue Line Runs

When you talk to Geoff Thomas, it becomes clear that Lake Tarawera is not just a place he has lived, fished, or filmed, it is the thread running through every season of his life.

Long before he became one of New Zealand's best-known fishing storytellers, he was a skinny kid in a ten-foot fibreglass dinghy with his brothers and father, gripping a fly rod and waiting for the invisible pull of a rainbow trout somewhere beneath the blue line.

Geoff grew up spending holidays at Waitangi Bay on the land his grandfather, Harold Tahana Thomas, bought in the 1940s. Getting there was always part of the adventure. First the drive over the Mamakus, then unloading at The Landing, followed by the boat trip around to Waitangi. The cottage sat tucked between the stream and the lake's edge, with a waterfall tumbling through native bush and a curve of water wrapping around the back lawn. Inside was the Heads Room, lined with hunting trophies from New Zealand and Africa. But for young Geoff, it was the two mounted rainbow trout, 12 and 13 pounds, both taken on successive casts, that

stopped him every time. Proof that Tarawera held magic.

Summer days followed a simple rhythm, one that anyone who has lived at the lake understands. Wake early, fire up the smoky little Seagull outboard, troll the blue line, come home for breakfast, then head straight back out. The gear was basic, sinking lines and a Z-spinner or eye spoon, but the possibilities felt endless. Characters drifted in and out of those years, Jim Liggins with his mysterious 'magic line', - the first lead line in 1956 - the neighbour hauling in eight huge trout a day with a mother-of-pearl spoon, and the tiny frog-shaped lure that changed everything for the Thomas brothers. These moments were the building blocks of Geoff's fishing instinct, half adventure and half education, shaping his understanding of the lake and the people who loved it.

Winter brought its own lessons. Standing at the stream mouth in the dark with a cane fly rod, listening to trout crashing in the rip and possums screeching behind him, he learned patience and instinct, and the quiet confidence that only comes from hours spent reading water by sound and feel.

Fishing deepened from childhood obsession to lifelong calling. After a stint at the Auckland Star, Geoff returned to the lake in the early 1970s to help set up Waitangi as a fishing lodge. When the property was sold, he suddenly found himself with a young family and no clear path. Guiding began as a sideline while a reporter at the Daily Post, but soon the fishing, travel, and guiding business took over completely. The Tarawera of that era was still raw, still rural, rabbits, possums, wallabies on the gravel road, and the occasional pig. Once the school bus and the tar-seal arrived, Geoff knew a chapter had closed.

What never changed was the joy of taking people out on the lake, especially children. One good fish could transform a day, a holiday, sometimes even a childhood. Geoff still talks about the look on their faces, the instant when excitement overwhelms words, as the real payment for the work, which continues today.

And woven through those early years were memories that captured the spirit of Tarawera at its most generous. Geoff shared one of his fondest, from long winter stretches camping near the Wairua Stream with a close group of mates. One of them was Deek, Derek Morrison, cousin of the late Howard Morrison. Deek had a camp for three months when the trout were running up the stream, and Geoff spent many nights fly fishing the stream mouth; the kind of experiences only Tarawera can produce.

One late afternoon they were sitting around the campfire when a small boat puttered past. Deek, never shy, called out, "Caught any fish?" The boaties replied they had a good one aboard. "Come on up," Deek shouted. "We'll show you how we cook them the Māori way."

The curious fishermen pulled in to the beach and Deek called: "Got any beers? Oh, bring those too." They watched fascinated as Deek expertly split the trout open and laid it flesh down on the grill over the coals. He looked at the beer crate and put three concrete blocks on each side of the fire. Then, as the beers went down, Deek would remove a block on each side. He flipped the fish over, carefully lifted off the backbone and scattered diced onion, butter and salt and pepper on the flesh.

When the beers were finished the fish was cooked. His timing was impeccable. As the light faded behind the hills he put slabs of trout on warm bread and butter, and passed it around. "That's how you cook a Tarawera trout. Now, off you go, I'm going to have a moi (sleep)" Deek announced. We had drunk their beer and eaten their trout and they'd had a great time. It was Tarawera at its best, a moment where time stops and strangers become mates.

Tarawera has always carried a reputation for big fish. Geoff has tracked its cycles for decades, and one story stands out. In the early 1980s, while filming his first television series, he hosted an American actor, Craig Huebing of General Hospital fame. Huebing hooked a ten-pounder on a lead-line and black toby, and the trout carried a hatchery tag. At the Ngongotahā hatchery they traced its history, released as a 40-gram yearling only 15 months earlier and Geoff filmed the huge trout beside a yearling, a perfect illustration of Tarawera's remarkable productivity.

Guiding brought its share of characters, none more memorable than C. B. Stratton, a 77-year-old American who arrived in bright green check



PHOTO: Grand-daughter Nora hunting cockabullies, doing exactly what I was doing more than 70 years ago, in the same place. And so it continues...

trousers and announced he was on honeymoon with his seventh wife, who came from Romania, and he was the world champion golf masters champion. He offered Geoff a "Romanian sandwich", essentially a whole packet of ham and cheese between two slices of bread, then told the story of breaking his wife's sentimental ashtray, which came from the Hilton Hotel in Bucharest. "The next week I was flying to Bucharest to steal ashtrays." Geoff took him fishing, his father later took him golfing, and both confirmed that despite the theatrics, CB could actually play.

Now living once again on the lake, in a home with its own small stream, Geoff has watched four generations of his family fish Tarawera, from his family's 16-pound trophies to his own honeymoon ten-pounders and the fish he now helps his grandchildren catch. Technology has raced ahead, with downriggers changing the dynamics, but Geoff's approach has stayed grounded in respect for the fish, an eye for the small details of water and weather, and a sense of guardianship for the place that shaped him.



PHOTO: Daughter Katie is an expert on the downrigger and the rod.

Ask Geoff what Tarawera means today and he is likely to talk about the simple pleasures, a perfect day on the lake, a familiar bay, good company, the quiet satisfaction of knowing exactly where you are in the world. He still carries the enthusiasm that drew him to fishing as a boy and the steady connection to a place that has shaped every chapter of his life.

Tarawera has changed over the decades, but for Geoff Thomas it remains the beginning and the through-line of his story, his spiritual home, a proving ground, and the lake that turned a young fisherman into the storyteller New Zealand knows today.



PHOTO: Geoff's biggest trout - a 14-pounder caught at the Waitangi Stream mouth in 1968

COMMUNITY



PHOTO: George Gilmour

Fire Brigade Update – Summer 2026

Here at the Tarawera Volunteer Fire Brigade we have had a relatively quiet summer as far as call outs are concerned.

With several calls coming in for our local community, we haven't had our usual summer calls to assist in the wider region due to the fire danger levels being relatively subdued so far this season.

Our first fairly major call out was an excavator fire in a paddock, which we were first on the scene and assisted both Okareka and Rotorua brigades in extinguishing the fire and preventing it spreading through the paddock into neighbouring houses. The excavator took several hours and 12,000L of water with foam additives to fully extinguish.

We also assisted Lake Security and Police with traffic control during a major motor vehicle incident in which one lane was completely

closed for over an hour on a busy summer afternoon. Our volunteers kept traffic moving safely and steadily while police conducted their questioning and waited for a tow truck to clear the lane.

The wild weather has resulted in multiple calls for trees down across roads that required chainsaws to clear, both around our community and in Okareka and further up Tarawera road in which our volunteers once again assisted our neighbouring brigades.

Always keen to help out at community events we had two awesome volunteers put their hands up once again this year to assist PJ in his fantastic new years fireworks display. They were on the ground with our First Response Ute,

helping with cordons and ready to respond instantly if anything sparked up.

To make sure both us and our equipment is always ready to respond to a variety of incidents in a timely, effective manner we train weekly throughout summer. There has been a very encouraging uptake of volunteers in recent months with 6 new community members volunteering and getting stuck in!

If you have any questions about what we do or how to volunteer in a operational or non-operational role please feel free to get in touch or call in to the fire shed at 7pm Wednesday evenings.

A reminder we are currently in a restricted fire season so lighting a fire on your property requires a permit.

To check if you can light a fire please go to checkitsalright.co.nz and follow the online prompts.

Hope you all have a great rest of the summer.



Written by George Gilmour
Rural Controller
Lake Tarawera Volunteer Fire Brigade
027 282 9034 07 3628 378



Lake Security Summer Newsletter

Kia ora everyone,

Summer is here, despite the recent weather, and lake life is in full swing—boats in the water, holiday homes open, and friends and family coming and going.

Throughout the Christmas holiday period there was certainly an increase in traffic and users in and around our lake and community. This has resulted in two separate instances in the last two months. Both instances occurred on isolated properties, one resulting in a boat being taken. I am continuing to work alongside police on these incidents with camera footage and anything else I can. In addition to these I also was among the first on scene on a major motor vehicle accident between the Tarawera Landing and Lookout. There was only one vehicle involved, the driver and two passengers were very lucky another vehicle wasn't coming the other way and there were minimal injuries.

Many of you will have seen the NZ Herald article yesterday about the gang related brawl that broke out at the Lake Okareka boat ramp on Sunday afternoon. Children and families were present and police were called. Although incredibly disappointing this behaviour is increasing sadly. I have had two encounters this summer at Lake Tarawera similar to this that thankfully didn't escalate to this degree. If you witness or suspect any type of this anti-social behaviour like this in our community or don't feel safe please don't hesitate to call both myself and the police.

A few quick summer reminders:

- Check doors, windows, and outbuildings if you're just opening for the season
- Secure boats, garages, kayaks, and tools when not in use
- Be mindful of extra foot traffic from guests, renters, or service providers
- Summer storms happen, please make sure to check vulnerable areas around your property
- There are a lot more cars and boats coming and going on our roads, please drive safely

Whether you're here full-time or heading back

and forth, **Lake Security** is here to help keep an eye on your home, boatshed, jetty, and property. We're local, we know the area, and we look out for our neighbors.

If you'd like to talk about coverage, have any questions or concerns or see anything suspicious around our community, just give us a call. We're happy to help.

Have a great (and safe) summer,

George and Eden Gilmour
027 282 9034
07 3628 378

Written by George Gilmour
Lakes Security
027 282 9034 07 3628 378
George.gilmour@fireandemergency.nz



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Rotorua Lakes Community Board By-Election: Local Voices for a Local Impact

Your ballot packs should have arrived in your mailboxes over the last few days, and with them, the opportunity to shape the future of our lakeside communities. We are fortunate to have two dedicated local candidates, **Mitch Collins and George Gilmour**, standing for the Rotorua Lakes Community Board.

Both Mitch and George are invested in the unique challenges and opportunities our area faces. From infrastructure and water quality to the landcare and pest control initiatives we value so highly.

Read Mitch and Georges Candidate profiles here: <https://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-council/local-elections/by-election-2025-26#toc-link-1>

Don't Forget: You Have Two Votes

It is important to remember that you have two votes available in this by-election. Using both votes ensures that the Lakes Community Board is represented by individuals who truly understand our landscape and our people.



COMMUNITY



Tarawera Sailing

Once again, a big thank you for all the community support for Tarawera Sailing at the Spring Fair. This includes all those who donated goods for Pat's Tombola stall, the auction and all the participants in the ever popular and entertaining golf challenge run by Dave Townsend.

The Spring Fair is our major annual fund-raising effort. The funding supports our family centred programme where membership is free, sailboats are provided, and anyone can learn to sail at no cost.

The new season commenced with Registration Day and Working Bee on 16 November 2025. There was a great turnout of new and returning families with over 50 people attending. This season we have an especially strong group of enthusiastic young sailors.

The weather on club days this season has often been a challenge. However, variable weather conditions is one of the things that makes sailing such a special sport. The key to continuing our programme so far this year has

been the excellent work of our safety boat crews and shore helpers.

We had to delay the start of racing and often limit the number of boats we can manage on the water. However, the big positive is we have continued our beginner's programme even in testing wind and waves. The confidence of our young sailors in these conditions has been amazing to watch. Sailing in blustery westerlies with gust knockdowns, constantly changing wind direction and capsizes has if anything made them keener to sail and accelerated their progress.

Racing finally got underway under beautiful conditions at the start of February. The format is like our regatta day with a beach start

and finish. This gets everyone involved – with spectators close to the action and lots of shore help required to manage sailboats on the beach. Typically, three sets of match races run in parallel (Firebug, Micron and Laser/Radial), with longer courses for the larger sailboats. While the emphasis is fun, we continue on-the-water coaching during racing.

Our season concludes with Regatta Day on 29 March 2026. All are welcome to a day of fun competition including racing at all levels, a lottery race, a pirate relay, and a sausage sizzle followed by prize giving.

We are always on the look out for experienced sailors who can assist with coaching our beginner and intermediate sailors, and crew our safety boats. There is also opportunity for helpers to get out on the water in our Lasers.

We meet every Sunday at 2pm at Cliff Road Reserve. Experienced sailors also meet one evening a week, usually on a Thursday commencing about 5pm. For any enquiries, please contact Carol Gilchrist on 027 442 3333.

Written by Patrice Gatland



COMMUNITY



Thank You Everyone

The organising committee thanks all the volunteers at the 2025 Spring Fair.

Thank you for the gift of your time; whether small or great it makes the fair the wonderful community event that it is.

Volunteers helped with traffic control, parking, putting out equipment for the fair, putting up banners, looking after stall-holders, directing them to sites, being MC, and many other tasks. Without the volunteers the fair would not happen.

Huge thanks, also, to the people who donate equipment to the fair.

The organising committee also thanks all the people who attended the fair and spent their money to support this great local event.

Email laketarawerafair@gmail.com if you wish to help in 2026.



Written by Carol,
Spring Fair Committee



COMMUNITY



PHOTO: Rose

Illuminate the Night: New Year's Eve in Tarawera!

This past New Year's Eve, we were treated to a breathtaking fireworks display over the tranquil waters of Lake Tarawera!

Vibrant colors lit up the night sky, cascading reflections on the shimmering lake, creating a magical atmosphere. Children pointed and squealed in awe at the dazzling bursts of light.

A heartfelt thank you to PJ and Megan for their tireless dedication in making this event a success year after year. Their passion and commitment transformed our New Year's Eve into a cherished community tradition.

Here's to another year filled with memories made under the stars, and to the anticipation of next year's spectacular display!



Written by Iris Harvey,
LTRA Committee



COMMUNITY



IN REMEMBRANCE OF GORDON LEWIS

The LTRA would like to recognise the recent passing of a longtime Tarawera resident Gordon Lewis.

Gordon passed away just prior to Christmas after a challenging year of ill health which he fought with admirable grit and determination. He is survived by his wife Lois, children Catherine and Hamish and 3 grandsons.

Gordon was the ultimate gentleman who would help anyone and gave everything to what he did. He had a large number of friends and the substantial crowd that gathered to remember him was testimony to that. In his business career he strove for improvement as the status quo was never good enough. He was a calm and sincere relationship builder, with an unrelenting focus on workplace culture and team building. In recent years he was a foundation driver in the establishment of the Tarawera Sewerage

Working Group, and we know he was proud of what the community eventually achieved together.

Tarawera was his happy place, where his personality always shone and our deepest sympathy and thoughts go to Lois and family at this difficult time.

Heart Defibrillator Locations (AED's)

Lake Tarawera Fire Station	Stoney Point Reserve, 151 Spencer Rd	Secure external cabinet by front door and in the crews medical kit. Phone 111 (Does not require phone reception) for cabinet combination from Ambulance Communications 24/7
The Community Hall	475 Spencer Rd	Accessed through the main door with key from lock box or call George Gilmour for key ph 027 282 9034
The Buried Village	1180 Tarawera Rd	+07 362 8287
Rangiuru Bay – Privately owned	11 Rangiuru Bay Rd	This is the farthest house on the right of Rangiuru Bay Reserve as you look out at the lake. Access across Rangiuru Bay Rd. Private Property --- Please respect
Privately Owned	541 Spencer Rd	Corner of Spencer and Bayview Rd Situated on External wall at front door with all equipment required
Privately Owned	4 Bay View Rd	Available 24/7
Solitaire Lodge	16 Ronald Rd	Available Business Hours
Privately Owned	187 Spencer Rd	Available 24/7



PHOTO: Meg Lipscombe

GET INVOLVED

Help us spotlight what makes our community unique. We're looking for genuine stories—personal anecdotes, historical moments, or event recaps—that capture the heart and soul of our lake, land, and people.

Showcase your Photos

Send us your high-resolution photos that embody the spirit of our community to be featured!

Great Neighbour

Do you know someone who's going above and beyond or just being an all-round great neighbour? Let us know! Whether it's a grand gesture or a quiet act of kindness, we want to shine a light on the wonderful people making a difference in our community. This is your chance to say thanks very much.

Nothing's a Secret

Got a funny story or a hilarious moment to share? We all love a good laugh, and there is always something unfolding that would be a laugh to share... particularly those moments you may have witnessed that your neighbour might prefer went unseen... Please share it with us! Let's keep it light-hearted, just make sure the 'hero' of the story is anonymised or given a pseudonym. It's all in good fun, after all.

When you contribute, you're not just helping to fill a newsletter; you're actively shaping something that truly reflects the spirit of our community. Every submission makes a real difference, especially since we're all volunteers here.

And as a little thank you (and to spark some friendly competition), the best submission in any of our three categories will win a \$50 voucher to either Redwoods Butchery or Good Eastern!

So, get creative, share your stories, and help us make this issue truly memorable! We can't wait to hear from you.

Email itra@xtra.co.nz

FREE CLASSIFIED ADVERT LISTINGS

Connect with [Tori](#) for classified advertising opportunities.

Classified adverts are FREE for 3 lines of text, plus phone and email address.

While we appreciate all contributions, please note that due to space and editorial considerations, not all submissions may be printed.

Tori Jantke
Email victoriajantke@gmail.com

Join Our Community Database

If you're not yet in our database and would like to be, email itra@xtra.co.nz and tell us you want to be added to the database to receive this quarterly newsletter!

THANK YOU!

If you've visited the hall recently, you might have noticed things are looking a lot more "polished." We've upgraded our toilet facilities, and it wouldn't have been possible without some incredible local support. A massive shout-out goes to:

BOP Plumbing and Gas: For their expert work on the new toilets. Their team generously discounted their time to help keep our community costs down!

Tailored Builds: For their ongoing support with our general hall maintenance. They keep our favorite gathering spot standing tall and looking great.

We are so lucky to have local businesses that truly care about the heart of our community.

Next time you see these folks out and about, be sure to give them a wave and a "thank you"!

Helpful Numbers

Emergencies	Police Fire Ambulance	111
Tarawera Fire Unit	Chief Fire Officer George Gilmour	027 282 9034/07 362 8378 george06@gmail.com
	Deputy Fire Officer Steve Gatenby	0274 664 161 steve.gatenby@til.co.nz
	Station Officer Murray Dillner	021 290 0376 murrayedillner@gmail.com
Rotorua Hospital		07 348 1199
Lakes Primecare Accident / Urgent Medical		07 348 1000 1165 Tutanekai Street, Rotorua
National Poisons Centre		0800 764 766 (0800 POISON) This is a free, 24/7 service for all New Zealanders
Rural Delivery	Jan & Glen Harmer	07 349 1254 022 153 6894
Security	George Gilmour	027 282 9034/07 362 8378 george06@gmail.com
Rotorua Lakes Council		07 348 4199
Bay of Plenty Regional Council		0800 884 880
Department of Conservation		07 349 7400
The Buried Village		07 362 8287 1180 Tarawera Rd
Editor Kotahi Reo - One Voice	Victoria Jantke	ltra@ltra.co.nz

Have you visited the LTRA website yet?

Your new online home is now live at www.laketarawera.org.nz. We've designed it to be a rich, engaging resource for everyone.

WHAT'S INSIDE

LOCAL EVENTS: Check the Community Calendar for upcoming gatherings, Spring Fair, and celebrations. Got an event? Easily submit it online to share it with the community!

COMMUNITY GROUPS: Find and connect with local clubs, associations, and volunteer opportunities.

LOCAL NEWS AND UPDATES: Stay informed on important issues, project updates, and announcements.

Archived Newsletters: Past issues of Kotahi Reo - One Voice and The Phantom.

We invite you to explore and make it your essential hub for all things community!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2026

15 Lake Tarawera Community Centre
Working Bee
10.30am, Lake Tarawera Community
Hall

JUNE 2026

10 150 Year Anniversary Mt Tarawera
Eruption

JANUARY 2027

3 Sailing - King of the Lake

CLOSING REMARKS

It's a Wrap!

I want to make our closing remarks mainly bouquets as that is far more positive and uplifting.

This is our 1st edition of Kotahi Reo for 2026 brilliantly compiled by Tori Jantke – Tori does an amazing job and it really is a great publication so thank you Tori.

Thank you to everyone who turned out for the AGM and again congratulations to Libby Fletcher for her New Years honour and subsequent life membership of the LTRA – a real community stalwart.

Volunteering on the boat ramps on Waitangi weekend to gather data and educate boaters on the Golden Clam issue was fun – thank you to all that volunteered. Please keep educating as the issue is real.

The working bee that has done an amazing job on the Rangiruru Bay/Stony Point walkway is written up on page 20 but we just want to reinforce the gratitude to Murray Holmes, Chris Hanson and the DDL team of Stu and Jay – the Landcare team do such a sensational job and will be great to hear more as I know there are a lot of people that would love to help.

We had hoped to bring you details of how you take up the option of paying off the capital cost contribution to Rotorua Lakes Council for the sewage scheme but Council are still working through the options. We do know that the payments you have made for the 1st year to the scheme as part of your rates will reduce the capital cost you owe and from 1 July 2026 interest will be charged so many will want to pay off this balance to reduce any interest cost however there is quite a bit of detail to be worked through to ensure you know exactly what your options are. We are indebted to Duncan Evans who is doing an amazing job of working through this detail with Council on all our behalfs.

Enjoy the warm weather and our wonderful Taradise and let us know if you have a great story for our next edition.
Steeloo