



Waikato River Authority

Media Release

Waikato River Authority awards \$5.7M to 26 projects

The Waikato River Authority has successfully concluded its 2025 funding round, awarding \$5.7 million to 26 projects aimed at protecting and restoring the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers and their catchments.

Waikato River Authority Co-chair Stu Kneebone reported that there was strong interest in this year's funding round, with 43 applications seeking \$12 million from the WRA for projects with a total value of \$22 million.

“It is great to see the level of ongoing collaboration between landowners, iwi, and larger restoration groups to increase the impact of our funding across the catchment,” he said.

Now in its 15th year of operation, the WRA continues to receive applications for a wide variety of projects spread across the catchment. This year more than half of the projects sought less than \$100,000, while four projects requested more than \$1 million.

The 2024–2026 WRA Funding Strategy places an emphasis on fostering collaboration with iwi, and the WRA has seen significant growth in the number of applications led by entities linked to the five River Iwi.

Waikato River Authority Co-chair Danny Loughlin said that “Forty percent of project applications were submitted by iwi entities this year, and there has been strong engagement with River Iwi across most projects.”

The largest funded projects this year were awarded to Puniu River Care and NZ Landcare Trust, who are both working with landowners in the Waipā catchment to prevent erosion, improve water quality, and protect natural areas.

The Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group and Awaroa ki Kariotahi Landcare Group also received funding to undertake similar projects with landowners elsewhere in the catchment.

Other notable projects include:

- Restoration of the Ngā Tamariki Scenic Reserve and Lower Orakonui Stream
- Construction of waka access to the Waikato River near Waahi Pā, Huntly
- Restoration of several streams and wetlands associated with Māori-owned land blocks
- Two educational programmes designed for children to experience the Waikato River and contribute to its health and wellbeing.

Since 2012 the Waikato River Authority has allocated \$86.3m of funding to 522 projects supporting the restoration and protection of the Waikato and Waipā Rivers and their catchments.

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