

KI UTA KI TAI

HEALTHY CATCHMENT HEALTHY HARBOUR



KIA ORA

It's an exciting time for us with lots of projects on the go, working with landowners, iwi groups, our communities and other stakeholders. This newsletter is packed full with what's been happening across the Coromandel Zone, an area that extends north from Tararu, on the west coast of the peninsula, and Whiritoa on the east.

There has been a lot of funding approved since our last newsletter. We approved funding to community groups, iwi and landowners, and the Government has approved funding to us. The projects which have received funding are helping to generate jobs – with much of the Government funding aimed at shovel-ready projects to drive the economy forward in response to COVID-19.

In the meantime, if you have a wetland, bush or stream enhancement project in mind, or want to carry out river management or weed control on your property, find out what we can do to help. Your Integrated Catchment Management Team is a wealth of information. We can also give financial help for restoration works, soil and stream management, and animal and plant pest control.

Hei konā mai
Coromandel Zone Integrated Catchment Management Team
Phone 07 866 0172

RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

In response to COVID-19 the Government called for 'shovel ready' infrastructure and environmental restoration projects to stimulate the construction and environmental industries and economy, create jobs and be of public or regional benefit. Waikato Regional Council put forward hard infrastructure bids to accelerate flood protection and environmental projects across the region, and to date has \$26 million of funding approved for \$40m worth of projects. Two of these projects – the Manaia River restoration project and Clean Streams – are in the Coromandel Peninsula, although there are a number in the neighbouring Hauraki area which will also be of benefit to our communities.

The projects will start as soon as the funding deeds with respective ministries have been finalised.



SHOVEL READY

MANAIA RIVER RESTORATION

- **\$855,592 funded by Te Uru Rākau (MPI)**
- **\$1.16m total project cost**
- **5.85 FTE jobs created**



The team behind the Manaia River restoration project.

This three-year project, to restore the river catchment and recreate some 20 hectares of saline-freshwater wetlands, has been part of the Coromandel/Manaia Harbour Catchment Plan development process.

The work, to be undertaken by the Manaia community, will help improve water quality and reduce the amount of sediment entering the Manaia Harbour (and Hauraki Gulf Marine Park). The project includes training and development, erosion protection and river restoration, fencing and planting out of rivers and streams, pest control and water quality monitoring.

The council's role is to oversee the project, including establishing roles, providing catchment and river management expertise, managing any river management consented works, auditing work done, and reporting to the funding provider.

Key activities

- Establishing a local native plant nursery.
- Planting over 40,000 eco-sourced native trees – predominantly wetland species.
- Fencing and planting the Manaia River channel and its tributaries, from the mountains to the sea.
- Comprehensive water quality monitoring programme.
- Upper catchment predator control.
- Kauri dieback measures and monitoring.
- Training a local workforce in planting, weed control and vegetation management.

Environmental benefits

- Improved water quality through reduced sediment and nutrient inputs.
- Improved biodiversity through habitat enhancement, weed control, and predator control.

CLEAN STREAMS 2020

- **\$1.9m funded by Te Uru Rākau (MPI)**
- **\$4.34m total project cost**
- **15-17 FTE jobs created**

The Clean Streams project encourages landowners to shift grazing from riparian areas and instead permanently retire streams, wetlands or seeps. The concept is that the landowners who do so may be eligible for the retired area to be planted out in native species at no cost to them. This is a two-year pilot project for the West Coast and Coromandel Peninsula harbour catchments, with clear benefits from controlling runoff. Community-based service providers will be contracted to grow the plants and plant them, and the council's role is to confirm suitability of sites and audit all completed work for required weed control, fencing and planting standards.

Key activities

- Retiring 52ha of land.
- Planting 363,273 native plants (180,000 destined for the Coromandel).
- Planting out 72km of waterways.
- Employment of local and iwi/community-based nursery, planting, fencing and plant pest control contractors.
- On the job learning and training opportunities through employment and engagement.

Environmental benefits

- Protection and enhancement of water quality through reductions in nutrients and sediment.
- Enhanced wetland and biodiversity values.

As this project progresses, we'll let landowners know how to make the most of this opportunity.



Clean Streams encourages landowners to permanently retire streams, wetlands or seeps by providing funding for planting.

PIAKO RIVER GREEN CORRIDOR

- **\$2.8m funded by Jobs for Nature (MfE)**
- **\$3.2m total project cost**
- **28 FTE jobs created**



Dolphins in the Piako River earlier this year.

This five-year project – on our doorstep – seeks to reconnect the Kopuatai wetland to the Firth of Thames through a planted ‘corridor’, with improved water quality outcomes for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Key activities

- 36km of riparian margin fenced and planted along the Piako River (17km along the true right bank) and foreshore toe drain (19km along one side of the foreshore toe drain).
- 35ha of riparian margin retired, planted and habitat created.
- 248,340 native plants planted.
- Animal pest control along a 36km riparian margin for 12 months.

UPPER WAIOMOU WILLOW AND POLAR REMOVAL AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

- **\$1.7m funded by Jobs for Nature (MfE)**
- **\$2.1m total project cost**
- **21 FTE jobs created**

This four-year Upper Waiomou project will restore 48 kilometres of stream bank margin along the Tukutapere, Rapurapu and Waiomou streams in the upper Waihou catchment within Waikato Regional Council’s Hauraki Zone. The improved biodiversity and water quality outcomes will benefit the Coromandel and Hauraki Gulf.

Key activities

- 3km of old poplar/willow removal.
- 48km stream bank pest plant control.
- 45km of fencing.
- 150,000 native plants.
- 480 bait stations for pest control.
- 48km of stream bank weed management in first 3 years of planting.

COMMUNITY FUNDS

We’d like to give a massive thanks to the many landowners and volunteers who support conservation in the Coromandel Zone.

SMALL SCALE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND

Waikato Regional Council gave \$87,228 in grants from the Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund (SSCIF) to 26 small scale pest animal and plant control projects in the Coromandel Zone. A total of \$149,984 was distributed to 48 projects across the region in August.

The SSCIF helps local communities and individual landowners with costs of materials to undertake ecological enhancement through pest animal and plant control.

Being able to support landowners financially to buy the tools can make a real difference in trying to keep on top of pests.

NATURAL HERITAGE FUND

Waikato Regional Council granted a total of \$1.04 million over four years to three community groups working on landscape scale predator control projects in the Coromandel Zone.

The funding was part of \$1.63 million given to five projects across the region from the Natural Heritage Fund, which helps community groups to protect native plants and animals, threatened ecosystems, outstanding landscapes and the natural character of waterways and our coasts.

Moehau landscape predator control \$400,000

Moehau Environment Group (MEG) undertakes community-driven, large-scale pest control and biodiversity management projects in the northern Coromandel on about 15,000 hectares of private landowner and public conservation land. This funding will help pay for staff on the ground, possum control, mustelid control (trapping), the Port Charles Rat Attack programme and Waikawau Wetland rodent and cat control.

MEG chair Lettecia Williams said the projects were long term and “we can’t walk away from them”. “This funding will enable us to sustain our long-term environmental gains and operations ... protecting more biodiversity for longer.”



Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Landscape Restoration Project \$390,038

Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd, the environmental arm of Te Ahi Kaa (Ngāti Porou's Hauraki training and social service unit), has a mountain to the sea project on 1179 hectares of Māori, private landowner and public conservation land. This funding will pay for two manager positions, administration, staff training, traps, bait stations, bait and willow control.

Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd manager Nicholas Hamon said the funding would help the community to look after their own environment. "We have some of the best history around, and by training and upskilling our people we can turn our scenery into mātauranga Māori and create tourism opportunities. It's a true kaitiaki vision."

Whenuakite Kiwi Care Project \$248,707

Whenuakiwi Trust protects Coromandel brown kiwi on 3554ha of private and public conservation land in the Whenuakite area, between Hot Water Beach and Tairua. The area is a stronghold for kiwi (about 133 pairs), has large populations of kēreru (flocks of over 100 birds) and kākā, as well as bittern and pāteke. This funding will help cover the operation manager's wages and some material costs, such as replacement traps, bait and office equipment.

Whenuakiwi Trust fundraiser and trapper Janice Hinds said "this is our forever project". "We love what we are doing. This money will sustain us for four years and keep our kiwi safe."



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES FUND

Projects in the Coromandel Zone received \$195,583 in funding from the council's Environmental Initiatives Fund. A total of \$417,976 for grants of up to \$40,000 was given to environmental, restoration and educational initiatives across the region in October.



Whiritoa Conservation Trust Board \$32,572

This funding will go towards the eradication of target plant and predator species and to undertake restoration planting within the reserve, riparian and cliff areas of Whiritoa.

Coromandel Independent Living Trust \$39,900

This funding is for the establishment of a native plant nursery, growing eco-sourced plants for local projects and providing training and employment for local rangitahi.

Habitat Tuatēawa \$23,754

This funding is for the wages of the project coordinator and contractors for track maintenance and GIS mapping.

McGregor Bay Wetland Society for Conservation \$12,210

This funding is for a project coordinator for two years to undertake educational projects for the protection and restoration of the McGregor Bay wetland at Long Bay.

Rings Beach Wetland Group \$15,507

This funding is to extend the predator control network within the Matarangi Bluff Scenic Reserve to protect a newly discovered kiwi population.

Upper Coromandel Forest & Bird Society \$27,078

This funding is for pest plant and animal control in 24 hectares of reserve land with significant coastal kauri and nikau forest at Long Bay, Coromandel.

Mercury Bay Environmental Trust \$17,850

This funding is for nursery-related costs.

Kapowai Kiwi Care Group \$18,720

This funding is for a contractor to undertake trap clearing and baiting to protect a small kiwi population in Kapowai Valley.

For more information on funding and scholarships by Waikato Regional Council, go to [waikatoregion.govt.nz/funding-and-scholarships/](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/funding-and-scholarships/).

BIOSECURITY

NOT SO WILD ABOUT WILDING PINES



Photo: Pete Corson
Emerging *Pinus pinaster* through kanuka forest above Peachgrove Bay.

Four projects to manage wilding pines are underway in the Coromandel Zone after the council received \$1.2 million in funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries to help with the economic recovery from COVID-19.

The projects, in Kuaotunu Peninsula, Whenuakite, northern Coromandel and on Ahu Ahu/Great Mercury Island, are in collaboration with landowners, iwi and other stakeholders, and bring employment to the local communities.

Wilding pines affect more than 2 million hectares nationwide – more than all of New Zealand’s commercial forests combined!

Pine seeds can be blown for miles, so it’s easy for them to spread onto farmland, high country and public conservation land. They grow fast and can create dense forests, outcompeting any native plant species and removing the habitat of native animals.

Biosecurity pest plants team leader Darion Embling says the Coromandel’s ecosystem is already under threat by kauri dieback and myrtle rust, “we don’t need wilding pines as well”.

There are several ways to control wilding pines, depending on the terrain and physical access.

“In some areas we use a helicopter to spot spray the individual trees. We also use ground control teams to go through an area using electric drills to drill and fill pine trees, filling the holes with a small amount of herbicide to kill the trees.”

Ahuahu/Great Mercury Island

Groundwork will stop further spread across the southern end of this mammalian pest free island, but the main objective is to prevent wilding pines from spreading to the other islands of the archipelago. Atiu/Middle Island, Green Island, Korapuki Island, Double/Moturehu Island, Kawhitu/Stanley Island and Red Mercury/Whakau Island are either nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries, afforded the highest protection.

Kuaotunu Peninsula

Wilding regrowth is presenting an immediate threat to gains made from original fellings.

The elimination of wildings will allow native flora to re-establish in what is a harsh coastal environment and encourage the return and proliferation of native birdlife as well as other fauna. There is a regionally significant wetland which is home to critically endangered fernbirds and kiwi in addition to other birds, insects and reptiles.

Whenuakite

This coastal regenerating forest, which is very susceptible to wilding pine invasion, is home to one of the Waikato region’s most successful community-led predator control and ecosystems management projects. Whenuakite Kiwi Care group has been protecting North Island brown kiwi in the area since 2000. The work by the group has also seen a proliferation in kākā and mobs of kēreru. Hochstetter’s frogs are also present.

Northern Coromandel

A Northern Coromandel Wilding Pine management plan is being developed and a control programme started for about 18,000 hectares, including the ecologically important Te Moehau mountain, in the Colville Ecological District. This area is a stronghold for many New Zealand endangered species, including pateke, North Island brown kiwi, kākā, North Island robin, flightless stag beetle, New Zealand land snail, long-tailed bats, kārearea, rare Coromandel striped gecko, and Hochstetter’s and Archey’s frogs.

Find out more about wilding pines at wildingconifers.org.nz.

KAURI GUIDE FOR LANDOWNERS

Waikato Regional Council’s kauri team have worked with rural industry groups, farmers and the Kauri Programme to provide a guide on protecting kauri for rural landowners. The guide has a simple list of actions for landowners to take. See waikatoregion.govt.nz/kauri.

Looking for funding support to fence your bush with kauri in it? Get in touch with our catchment management team at the Whitianga office (07 866 0172). There is kauri funding and catchment new works funding available to help support your fencing (conditions apply).

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR CATCHMENT?

Wharekawa



Check out these awesome sediment traps we constructed as part of a wetland restoration project near Onemana. The landowner retired around 4 hectares of marginal pasture near the confluence of the Kapara Stream and Wharekawa River. The traps filter sediment from adjacent hill country and discharge cleaner water into a shallow lake that is a habitat for wildlife. Our water quality and biodiversity will benefit from these sediment traps, thanks to the great collaborative effort between the landowner, Rayonier Matariki Forestry and the regional council.

Tane's Tree Trust is investigating the potential of pine as a nursery crop for regenerating native forest. The trust, with support from Waikato Regional Council, Ministry for the Environment, Northland Regional Council, Department of Conservation, iwi and community volunteers, is trialling the planting of native coastal forest species in front of and among the pine plantations in Opoutere. More than 3455 plants were put in the ground in July. The pines will shelter the young, growing native plants which in time will provide food and shelter for native birds, lizards and invertebrates. The native vegetation in time will act as a shelter belt for the pines, which are badly affected by salt spray, coastal winds, saltwater inundation and coastal erosion.

Mercury Bay



The mouth of Tohetea Stream at Wharekaho Marae was planted out during an afternoon public planting day in September (pictured). The planting was part of a larger project by Ngāti Hei to restore the riparian margin of the stream in native vegetation. Coastcare organised the day, and supplied the plants through its winter dune planting programme.

Whangamatā

Shout out to The Friends of the Otahu Catchment Inc who planted over 5000 native plants this winter. Much of the work was focused in the oxbow wetland area adjacent to the Otahu River. The group showed fantastic drive, perseverance and community spirit, and mustered up a diverse group of volunteers to complete this good mahi.

Tairua



Rayonier Matariki Forests hosted a fish passage workshop in the Otuwheti Stream catchment of the Tairua Forest (pictured). The workshop covered how to improve passage for native migratory fish, especially through modified landscapes and culverts. Kelly Hughes from ATS Environmental ran the workshop which was well attended by regional council staff, contractors, Rayonier Matariki Forests, PF Olsen and the Wharekawa Catchment Care Group.

About 25 large pines were removed from Pepe Point reserve in Tairua in a joint operation by the regional council, Thames-Coromandel District Council and the Department of Conservation. The pines were becoming hazardous for those using the reserve and causing navigational safety and erosion issues at the Pepe stream mouth. Removing the pines also enhances the native biodiversity values of this area.

Colville

Three landowners worked with Colville Harbour Care and Waikato Regional Council in winter to fence off and plant waterways in the Colville catchment. A total of 45 hectares of land was retired from stock and 11,020 native wetland plants planted to improve biodiversity, in-stream water quality and habitat. More than 3 kilometres of fencing now protects the Umangawha River, wetlands and seeps. As one landowner said: "We are proud that our stock no longer poses a risk to the health of two significantly sized wetland areas which will now link the native bush to the Umangawha Stream; and we hope that the ease and successful results of our land protection agreement encourages other landowners in our area to utilise this serendipitous collaboration between WRC and the locally sourced and operated CHC." Awh, thanks, we love working with you, too.

Busy Coastcare season

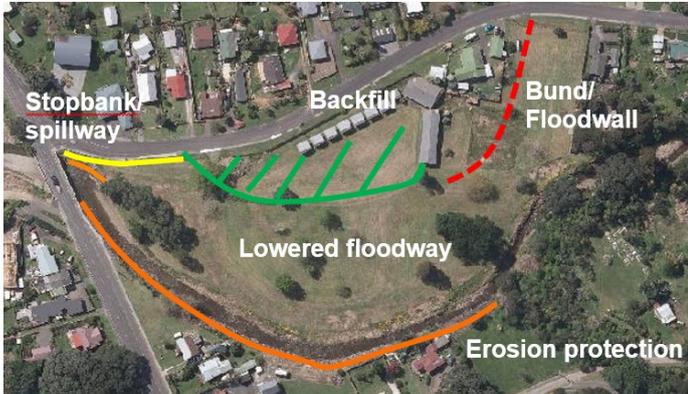


The Coastcare planting season was delayed by about six weeks this year due to COVID-19 lockdown, so a huge effort was made by volunteers to get them in the ground by Labour weekend. The winter planting project saw about 48,000 plants go in at Whangapoua, Matarangi, Rings Beach, Kuaotunu, Otama, Opito Bay, Wharekaho, Buffalo Beach, Cooks Beach, Tairua, Pauanui (pictured), Whangamatā and some smaller beaches. Coastcare is a partnership between the local community, iwi, district councils and Waikato Regional Council, working together to protect and restore our precious coasts.

FLOOD PROTECTION

PROTECTING WAIOMU

Flood protection reduces the likelihood of floods impacting on our communities. It safeguards lives and property, enables use of land, and protects services such as water supply and power. However, some people have no idea that flooding was an issue in the past, or even know they are protected by schemes.



Why was the scheme built?

It came out of the Peninsula Project, which is about improving the health of the environment and reducing flood risks on the Coromandel Peninsula. Waiomu was one community identified in the project as having a very high risk to life and property due to flooding. The flood infrastructure was put in after the weather bomb of 2002, when water carrying trees and debris came down the hills and through the campground and into all the homes along the sea.

What's in the scheme?

The assets protecting Waiomu are floodwalls. Basically, the scheme focuses on providing a clear floodway (obstruction free) for the stream during extreme weather events. There is a spillway to take flows greater than the design can cope with to protect the integrity of the bridge.

The scheme is designed to handle a 2 per cent annual exceedance probability (AEP), also known as a one in 50-year flood. This level of service is only for flooding caused by the river and does not include various tidal and coastal conditions. It also doesn't take into account climate change, which may mean more frequent and intense weather events and rises in sea level.

Scheme review

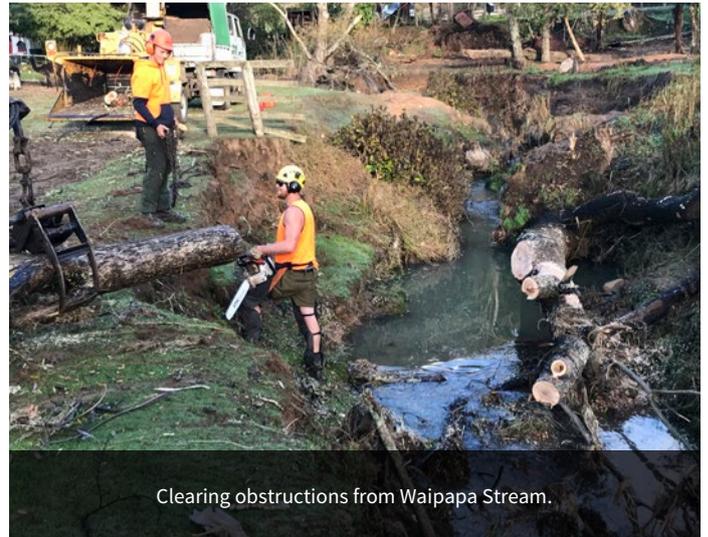
A review of the scheme will be completed in 2020/21 to make sure it is still of a standard to withhold the level of flood events it is designed to protect against. This is to ensure we know about changes in the catchment and that the structures remain suitable.

Residual risk

This exists when a flood event is larger than the scheme is designed to handle, and it could be from debris within the flow or obstructions within the scheme. Obstructions (including walls, buildings, sheds and other structures) in the stream or floodway may result in wider, higher and faster floodwaters, so if you see anything you're unsure about please let us know.

To find out more about flood protection in the Coromandel area visit waikatoregion.govt.nz/comehighwater.

RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD RESPONSE



Clearing obstructions from Waipapa Stream.

The heavy rain event during Queen's Birthday essentially broke the drought, but in the worst possible way, and was quickly followed by more flooding.

About 300mm of rain fell in the Coroglen and Whenuakite catchments within six hours during the long weekend, and the Pinnacles rain gauge recorded 540mm of rain.

In mid-July, another heavy rain event had a wider impact between Whitianga and Wharekawa with the Pinnacles rain gauge recording 600mm over 48 hours. Rainfall peaked at 470mm in 24 hours, the equivalent of a one in 20-year event.

In the aftermath, the regional council helped landowners with the removal of debris and obstructions, erosion protection and reinstating channel capacity. The remedial works for both events is estimated to be \$315,000 for contracted services alone.

Willows and poplars intended for other projects had to be redistributed to landowners to help remediate waterways impacted by the flood damage, with our catchment staff helping with the planting in the worst affected areas.

The council also worked with Waka Kotahi/NZ Transport Agency, Thames-Coromandel District Council and forestry service PF Olsen to clear obstructions from waterways.

More work in response to these floods is planned to begin in December, along with usual river management and maintenance jobs.



Manuka Stream, Whenuakite.

Please call us if any river management work is required on your property, and find out how we can help.

MARITIME SAFETY

MEET ROD COROMANDEL'S NEW MARITIME OFFICER



Waikato Regional Council's new maritime officer for Thames and Coromandel town knows only too well how things can quickly go wrong for boaties out on the water.

Rod Edwards, who started in his new role at the regional council this month, was a volunteer for Coastguard Taupō for four years as part of the operational team, responding to callouts, and part of the Taupō Civil Defence Response Team.

“Seeing first-hand how quickly things can go wrong motivates me to ensure that our boaties are safe and acting appropriately on the water,” says Rod, who has moved to Coromandel from Taupō.

The role of a maritime officer is to enforce the local bylaw schedules and promote safe use of the region's waterways. A big part of the job is building a presence in the community and being the go-to person for navigational safety concerns.

Rod, who has already joined the Coromandel Fire Brigade as a volunteer, says he is excited to be part of a town and region that is growing and showing lots of development.

“You can feel the opportunity all around as you head up the Thames Coast. It's a vibrant community with a bright future.”

Rod is no stranger to his role, having helped the team out over the last three summers and holding a brief secondment in the role earlier this year. He worked for Waikato Regional Council in Taupō and takes over from Stuart Crawley, who stepped down after 11 years due to ill health.

“I intend to continue the good work that Stu started. People stop me in the street and there is such a fondness when they are talking about Stu and the passion he has for the role and industry.

“I've got some pretty big shoes to fill.”

NAVIGATION SAFETY BYLAW REVIEW

Waikato Regional Council recently reviewed its 2013 Navigation Safety Bylaw.

Proposed changes for the Coromandel Peninsula are:

- new swim zones in Oamaru Bay, Long Bay (both in Coromandel Harbour) and Ohuka Beach (Brophy's Beach, Whitianga)
- the removal of the 5-knot zone across the estuary in Whangapoua Harbour.

As always this summer, the regional council will be out patrolling the various hot spots to keep an eye out for unsafe boating behaviour.

GIVE YOUR COAST A HELPING HAND

You can still have your say regarding the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan review. Read about the review and tell us what you think at waikatoregion.govt.nz/rcp-review. On our website we break down the plan into topics and briefly explain what they mean so you can easily provide feedback.

WAYS WE CAN HELP

Call 07 866 0172 or 0800 800 401.

Activity	For assistance with	Ask for
Catchment management	Restoring a wetland, stream or forest area? Want to reduce erosion, run off and improve water quality? Did you know that there is financial assistance, and we can draw up a programme of works specifically for you?	Catchment management officer
Rivers or flooding	Eroding stream, in-stream blockages? Issues with vegetation choking a waterway? Our river staff can help.	River management officer
Pest plants	Issues with pest plants? Not sure how to control a pesky weed? Just need some advice?	Biosecurity pest plant officer
Maritime safety	Moorings, safety on the water, jet ski registrations, concerns about others behaviour on the water.	Maritime officers