

# Stinkin' Pipes!

**A monumental waste of money, or a marvel of science and cultural sensitivity?**

**The jury is still out, but one thing is sure: Almost since the day it was switched on nine months ago, Hastings' new \$27 million sewage system has produced a seriously nauseating smell it wasn't supposed to. Kathy Webb investigates.**

Some days it's so bad John Robertson loses his breakfast as soon as he steps out the front door. The stink from Hastings' new \$27 million biological trickle filter sewage tanks at East Clive "has to be smelled to be believed," he says. "It gets right down into the back of your stomach."

One of his neighbours says she tries not to breathe too deeply when there's a fresh northeasterly blowing across the top of the plant's two giant bio-trickle filter tanks. She describes a raw-sewage taste in her mouth, and cleans her teeth often.

Other neighbours suffer when the wind is more southerly.

There's also another aspect of this much-hailed technology that has raised eyebrows among those less directly affected by its olfactory misfortunes. The inclusion of spiritual cleansing in a modern engineering process was acknowledgement of Maori cultural concerns, but some -- Maori and Pakeha -- wonder about the place of that in a publicly-funded sewage treatment plant.

Complaints about an awful smell began pouring in last July, shortly after the Hastings District Council switched on the much-heralded new bio-trickle treatment plant, which won the top national prize in the Technology Innovations category of the 2006 NZ Post Management Excellence awards.

Since then, it's been a nine-month headache for everyone in charge of it or living with it. Every time the plant builds up toward optimum performance, a gut-wrenching stink wafts across East Clive and the tanks have to be switched off. As Hastings Council chief executive Ross McLeod puts it, "there hasn't been any substantial, protracted operation of the plant yet."

## Two perspectives

There are two perspectives on the smell problem.

The Council insists the bio-trickle filter (BTF) tanks are performing exactly as intended, doing a demonstrably good job, and that the source of the smell is farther back up the line, in the actual sewage coming from Hastings.

To the residents of East Clive, that's a fine distinction. They don't particularly care which part of the system the smell is coming from. They just want fresh air, which they generally had until the Council got technologically adventurous with \$27 million.

Everyone at the Council that Baybuzz spoke to is confident the odour can be conquered, and the bio-trickle system will prove itself a huge asset.

Wastewater manager Brett Chapman explains that the contents of the separate domestic sewage line from Hastings are traveling a little slowly -- six to eight hours -- from



The bio trickling filter tanks in operation at the wastewater plant in East Clive.

Hastings to East Clive. That gives sulphate-eating bacteria an ideal opportunity to create hydrogen sulphide gas, which forms between 4 and 7 parts per million in the waste. That's more than adequate to create a stink when the gas is released into the air as the waste is disturbed by being pumped to the top of the filter tanks.

The sewage is also unexpectedly acidic. "The pH in our waste stream is lower than desirable. We are testing right up the line, right back, to see why, to work it out," Mr McLeod says. He doesn't discount an illegal discharge into the pipeline. "Is there an improper waste stream from somewhere? Is there somebody contaminating the system? We want to find out," he says.

Back at East Clive, Mr Robertson, who has a degree in engineering, says it was clear from the outset there was hydrogen sulphide coming off the filter tanks, but for months the Council kept telling residents there was no unduly bad smell. Or there was a smell, but it was coming from elsewhere. Or it would disappear when the plant had been operating for just a little longer.

Mr Robertson and his partner Rachel have put nearly \$1 million into their accommodation business, Driftwood Cottages, across the road from the filter tanks.

They bought the bare land in 2004, before the filter tanks existed, and began building later that year. Mr Robertson said no one at the Council was able to tell him at that stage what sort of sewage system might finally be built, but he expected nothing worse than the relatively inoffensive old millscreening plant.

The truncated bio-trickle system that eventually materialised has been a nine-month nightmare, he says, and somewhat ironically, has cost his environmentally-friendly, four-star business a lot of cashflow. For three months late last year they took no bookings because they knew guests could not tolerate the foul odour enveloping their cottages.

## Odour management

One of the first things the Hastings Council did when it began investigating the stink was to install a low-tech "odour management system" consisting of plastic hosepipe strung around the treatment plant's perimeter, to dispense air freshener into the coastal breezes swirling around East Clive.

That didn't work, so last month more air freshener hoses were strung around the tops of the filter tanks, while investigations and tests continue.

The smell came as a great surprise to all involved in the bio-trickle plant's design and construction. A small-scale trial plant had worked well, producing no odours and no problems.

In fact it worked so well the Hastings Council assured the Regional Council there would be no odour from a full-scale bio-trickle system. On that basis, the Regional Council allowed an open discharge channel, did not include any regulations regarding odour control in the resource consents, and did not require the

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**Stinkin' pipes!**  
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FROM THE EDITOR

Tom Belford



With the March edition of **BayBuzz Digest**, we welcome a new reporter, Kathy Webb, a journalist with a great reputation in Hawke’s Bay, most recently writing for the *Dominion Post*.

Kathy will investigate a variety of regional issues in-depth in the coming months, with more probing reporting than ever before in local publications. In her lead story, *Stinkin’ Pipes*, Kathy examines problems surrounding the new Hastings wastewater treatment plant in Clive. Not exactly a glamour assignment!

But with \$27 million invested, and more required as the Hastings Council struggles to resolve odour problems, we felt the situation warranted a closer sniff.

The Council insists that odour is the only problem with its new biological trickling filter system for cleaning domestic wastewater ... and that the odour problem originates in the pipes that carry waste to Clive, not the plant itself. But at the same time, HDC admits that the new system, because of the odour problems, is yet to operate for any sustained time under full load. As Kathy concludes, the jury is still out. But sewage treatment isn’t the only issue to cause a stink.

Bitter controversy has been triggered by the National-led Government’s decision to introduce National Standards for literacy and numeracy in primary and intermediate schools. Teachers and principals are outspoken in their opposition, for reasons Mark Sweet reports in his article. Parents are divided or simply uncertain. Reflecting the nationwide disagreement, Mark and I have different viewpoints on the matter. So I too have written

on the standards. Both of us welcome your feedback.

Maori issues feature in two articles. Des Ratima, Chairman of Te Aranga Marae in Flaxmere, champions placing more authority, resources and responsibilities – from job training to health care – in the hands of Marae. In *Nga Marae: A Movement*, he explains the rationale behind launching Nga Marae O Heretaunga, a collective of Marae in the Heretaunga Plains.

In *Under-spending in Maori Health*, Elizabeth Sisson looks at why our District Health Board isn’t yet spending nearly \$1 million (out of \$7.6 million) allocated for Maori health care in the fiscal year ending in June ... following the same pattern as last year. Is this a convenient way to “narrow” DHB’s annual deficit, glacial-paced bureaucracy, or an unfortunate lack of capacity on the part of Maori health care providers?

Columnist Anna Lorck writes on the virtues of family sport, while Tim Gilbertson draws law enforcement lessons for NZ from America’s prosecution of gangster Al Capone.

For our cultured readers, Roy Dunningham reviews *Source: A Contemporary Feminine Aesthetic*, an exhibition now showing at the Hastings City Art Gallery. And in *A Digital Shoebox*, James Morgan puts the case for creating at Hastings’ Stoneycroft homestead a digital archive of HB photos, tape recordings, letters, and films depicting the region’s past. Finally, in *Issue Updates*, catch up on developments affecting Cranford Hospice, the Tukituki, the proposed velodrome, and more. Enjoy!

Issue Updates



Cranford Hospice, Hastings.

Cranford Investigation

Two “auditors” from the Technical Advisory Service (TAS), one an Australian palliative medicine specialist and the leader a non-clinician, visited Hawke’s Bay in late February to investigate complaints about care at Cranford Hospice.

TAS is a shared service used by a number of North Island Health Boards to conduct “independent” reviews of program performance.

Since Hawke’s Bay DHB staff has dismissed complaints about Cranford as either “ancient history” or based on uninformed innuendo, but is nevertheless the entity to whom the audit will be delivered, it remains to be seen exactly how much impact this review will have.

The auditors are presently writing their draft report based upon interviews they conducted with nurses and other practitioners, after spending a weekend with Cranford management.

team, it will be submitted both to Cranford management and to DHB executives for their comments and response. Then a final report will be prepared. Left murky is how the auditors will evaluate management’s response. For example, the auditor did not confirm that the original complainant would have an opportunity to address any Cranford or DHB staff comments before the final report is completed.

And of course no one — auditors or DHB — have indicated whether they will release the final report to the public.

Meantime, we have learned that it’s business as usual at Cranford, with management — apparently presuming they will survive this immediate nuisance — threatening a full investigation into who on the Cranford staff has “leaked” information to outside parties like BayBuzz.

Another reason not to feel sanguine about this process.

Perhaps contrary to what DHB Board members expect, the auditors appear to be operating from a very limited brief. The brief has not been made public. BayBuzz has made an Official Information Act request for any guidance that has been given to the auditors as to the scope of their inquiry, to which a response must be given by March 29<sup>th</sup>.

As indicated in an interview with BayBuzz, the auditors are looking narrowly at the specifics of the complaints that were recently brought to the notice of the Health & Disabilities Commissioner. However, the specific complaints “officially” filed are merely symptomatic of an unhealthy management culture at Cranford supported by Presbyterian Services over a considerable period of time.

Whether or not the auditors will address the full range of management and governance issues — and how DHB Board members respond if they do not — is the million dollar question. Visit our website here ([www.baybuzz.co.nz/archives/1969](http://www.baybuzz.co.nz/archives/1969)) if you would like to see the scope of inquiry BayBuzz recommended.

Once the draft report is written by the audit

Ultimately, whether this audit is deemed sufficient in scope and depth, as well as whether it is actioned, will be in the hands of the Hawke’s Bay DHB Board. They should have the final report in hand by the end of April, according to the lead auditor. May should be an interesting month.

**Tukituki Clean-up**

With dead fish floating in the river recently, BayBuzz checked on the status of the much-heralded plan to build a system that would dispose of CHB’s treated effluent on land instead of into the river.

Inexcusably, it seems that the CHB District Council fell asleep on the consent paperwork, requiring the HB Regional Council to step in and “project manage” the process. BayBuzz understands that the resource consent will be filed by the end of April.

The way things are going, the on-land effluent scheme is unlikely to be operational before the present deadline already stipulated by CHB’s current consent from the Regional Council (i.e., 2014). In other words, no appreciable step-up in the clean-up schedule.

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**Editor:** Tom Belford  
**Publisher:** Brooks Belford  
**Production:** Attn! marketing pr  
**Web site development:** Mogul

**BayBuzz Advisory Board:**  
Anna Archibald, Morry Black, Bruno Chambers,  
Louis Chambers, Angela Hair, Shaun Lines,  
Chris Ryan, Mark Sweet.

**All comments and inquiries:** [editors@baybuzz.co.nz](mailto:editors@baybuzz.co.nz) or P.O. Box 8322, Havelock North 4157

Des Ratima  
Columnist



Nga Marae:  
A New Movement



Te Aranga Marae, Flaxmere.

Some BayBuzz readers may have noticed a recent article in the *Hawke’s Bay Today* written by Lawrence Gullery, called “Nga Marae,” with a wonderful photo of yours truly standing in front of Te Aranga Marae, in Flaxmere. This has caused some to question what or who are Nga Marae, and what if any its relevance is in today’s climate, where words like Iwi, Hapu, and Runanga are used with reckless abandon.

Lawrence reports on the Hastings District Council and this article covered the last meeting of HDC’s Maori Joint Committee. At this meeting a presentation was given by Tama Huata, Chair of Waipatu Marae committee, to the joint committee informing council of the recently formed collective of Marae on the Heretaunga plains known as Nga Marae O Heretaunga. So what or who is Nga Marae? And first, what is the importance of Marae?

Maori have an affinity with their Marae from their inception. Maori and Marae are inseparable. Marae hold the knowledge of the Maori culture. They are the repositories of their history, their stories, and their existence. Marae are the symbol of cultural difference between indigenous people, yet reflect the sameness in purpose between indigenous people. Being Maori without a Marae connection is unknown. Many who have moved from their traditional marae grounds have over time lost *contact* with their Marae, but have not lost their *connection* to their Marae. Thus the importance and relevance of a Marae is easy to establish.

What appears to be more difficult for many to understand is the purpose of the Marae. And largely this is driven by the Marae trustees or Marae committees. For many reasons, the purposes of the Marae have been left as the place for the more formal aspects of Maori culture, powhiri and tangi. While these aspects are important they are but a few of the reasons Marae are held in such high and important regard.

Marae were the centres of economic and social industry. A place where the values of your whanau or hapu were developed, instilled and governed. The Marae was a sanctuary, a haven, a place of safety. A birthplace where babies were born, learnt their culture and were nourished by the many nannies. So much has changed and as we observe the increase in the poor Maori statistics for health, education and crime we should also see the decline in the influence that the Marae has in the lives of our parents and their children.

Perhaps we can see the real purpose of Marae.

A movement

Nga Marae means the multiple of Marae. Nga Marae O Heretaunga simply means the many Marae located in Heretaunga. These Marae have come together because they have aspirations for the economic, social, cultural and spiritual development of their people. Individually Marae carry this responsibility. Nga Marae is an obvious collection of Maori aspirations, which can be achieved individually or collectively. Importantly Marae retain their tinorangatiratanga or sovereignty.

Nga Marae is a movement not a monument.

One of the values espoused by Nga Marae says, ‘ko te mana te kupu’ ... translated means your word is your bond, or in today’s vernacular, walk the talk. So simple, it is hard. Nga Marae is not a government creation or requirement funded by government monies. It is not in any way a legislated anything. It has formed a Trust for the purposes of having a financial post office where monies can be placed; where accountability and transparency is visible for all. It is, however, important to stress that the Trust is not the business of Nga Marae, it is a tool box for the support and assistance of Nga Marae.

At a recent presentation given by Tukuroirangi Morgan, Tainui leader, he shared that Tainui have 68 Marae, 3 representatives from each Marae consisting of a Kaumatua, a rangatahi and a Marae leader combine to form the Tainui parliament of 124 representatives. Tainui decisions are made by their parliament, thus by their Marae.

The journey of Nga Marae has only recently commenced. It will continue and bring benefits to their people, their community, and our country. Nga Marae is not a return to the dark ages of grass skirts and hangi fires. Education is dominant once more on our Marae, which now provide pathways to degrees, trade training and other NZQA opportunities. Good, strong, decisive leadership is appearing on our Marae. It is my view the current landscape as we know it today will be significantly altered. Maori, Marae and their aspirations will improve. Leadership, accountability, and prosperity will be the catalyst that will bring these positive changes and for one simple reason. Marae have regained their proper place in Maori society. Marae are the Foundation of Maori Sovereignty.

So simple it is hard.

COUNTERPOINT  
Anna Lorck



Coming 2nd

We’re big on sport in our household. There’ll be enough of us for a netball team when the youngest starts to run. We love sport – it keeps us active and off the couch, it’s social and it’s fun. And before you even think of asking – yes, I support the Hawke’s Bay Sports Park.

Sport teaches us about people and about ourselves. When you put sport and children together as a parent you will find yourself looking in the mirror. For many it’s reliving that feeling of coming first or playing in a winning team. For others you want them to win because you didn’t and always wished you had. And for most of us it’s about teaching life skills, because sport helps prepare them for facing other challenges.

From an early age sport exposes us to people, their attitudes and their actions. You meet the leaders and the followers, the individuals and the team players, the winners and losers, the supporters and the bullies, the fair and dirty players, the cheaters, and the smarter ones, and those who will, and those who won’t, dive for the line.

As time goes on and we get more competitive, we also learn that our success, or failure, is usually in someone else’s hands. So we grow up understanding life isn’t fair; it’s not meant to be. Hey, we can’t all have natural talent. But if you have the right attitude and work hard you will get there ... because being gifted is only an advantage, not the winning formula.

To be the best you have to work harder than everyone else – mentally and physically. You must train, sacrifice, persevere and be self-disciplined, so that when everyone else is kicking back you keep focused and on track.

Sport is brutal. You will lose and you will fail, you will feel pain and you will cry – but this is the stuff that builds warriors and winners, leaders and champions. As Australia’s cricket captain Ricky Ponting put it after losing twice to the Blackcaps: “You learn more from a loss than you ever do from a win.”

Sport is competition.

This month in our family we came second on

the sporting field. For Augusta, age 8, coming second was a win. She’d matter-of-factly told me based on her time, and because she hadn’t been training, she’d be lucky to come third or fourth, but she’d go fast as! Given her positive but realistic attitude, I made the decision not to go and watch her swimming sports. I came second that day ... I lost out watching her come out of the water like a winner.

For Tabitha, age 13, coming second was different. Because she’d had the fastest time going into the final and her confidence was up. I’d committed to go and watch her run, hoping to see her come first – and proudly say – that’s my girl!

Now, I’ve become pretty good on the sideline, or so I thought! Hey, I’d gone to the weetbix triathlon the week before and knew how to behave ... not like all those nutty other parents who raced around yelling and pushing in front to give their kid the best advantage point.

The 1500m was first up (3.5 times round the track). She ran a strong race and came second. But there was a mix up. They’d run five laps, and she was stuffed. I demanded answers, what went wrong? But was firmly put in my place – the winner still won!

Next was “her” 800m race; but it wasn’t to be. I was gutted for her (and me). So was she. It was there for the taking but she came second. She called later: “Mum, there will be another race. But some of the seniors gave me stick for you screaming on the sideline! I couldn’t hear you but were you!?”

What? She couldn’t hear me?! Was I not loud enough? Then that next dreadful thought ... Oh no, poor Tabs ... surely I didn’t scream that loud!?

“Hey mum don’t worry at least you came to watch. I told them that’s just you - love her or hate her she’s my mum!”

So in reflection my girls have taught me more from coming second than if they’d won. They’ll take what they need from their races. And even if you’re yelling on the sideline they still want you there, no matter what.

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# Stinkin’ pipes

**Stinkin’ pipes!**  
*Cont. from Pg 1*

District Council to get a permit to discharge offensive odours to the air.

However, there was a flaw in the process. The test-plant trials were done with a much bulkier and faster-moving sewage load from both domestic and trade sources, and the results were extrapolated to form models for the design of a domestic-only treatment plant.

History has shown it wasn’t that simple.

Trade waste consists largely of water from food processing industries, and makes up about 70 per cent of Hastings’ effluent. That waste is all still going through a pipeline to the old milliscreening plant at East Clive, where it is pushed through a 1mm grid, and then pumped directly into the Bay.

Without that bulk of water, the remaining domestic waste stream, which still includes discharges from a few trade sources with special consents, has turned out to be too light a load to keep a steady flow through its own separate pipeline to the new bio-trickle plant.

Mayor Lawrence Yule says the fundamental mistake was that the pilot plant trials were done with a much bulkier waste stream. “Now the volumes have dropped and there’s not as much movement down the pipe as we envisaged.”

The smell was completely unexpected, he says, but he remains 100 per cent confident it can be conquered and the BTF plant will be able to demonstrate how effective it really is. “The system is making a massive difference to the quality of the water going into Hawke’s Bay. Any inference that it isn’t is clearly untrue and incorrect.”

He’s also comfortable with the Council’s decision to build stand-alone filter tanks without lids, and without the primary and tertiary treatments that normally sit alongside bio-trickle filtering tanks.

The Hastings Council declines to say how many calls of complaint it has received about the smell, but the HB Regional Council has logged 56, and is now responding to every call from East Clive. It shuts down the filter tanks and diverts the domestic waste to the milliscreening plant when the smell gets too bad.

It has also served an abatement notice on the District Council. Despite a lack of resource consent conditions, the odour emanating from the new plant is illegal under the Resource Management Act.

The District Council has until May 17 to eliminate the odour or install lids costing \$2m-\$3m on the tanks by August 17. Compliance manager Bryce Lawrence says HBRC has also told the District Council to apply for a permit to discharge odours to the air.

Council wastewater manager Brett Chapman said odour from the new plant was always a possibility, “but we didn’t expect there would be. Now that problem exists and it has created a problem away from the plant itself.”

He hopes the lids will not be necessary because “they would contain the odour but not actually deal with it.”

Another source of odour has been the Papatuanuku Channel. In a letter to the Regional Council last October, Mr Chapman said the stop-start operation of the filter tanks had required extra flushing to remove “undesirable biomass.”

“A by-product of the increased flushing is increased odour generation downstream of the BTFs as the biomass passes through the open-air Papatuanuku Channel ... The problems of reduced biomass and frequent flushing have resulted in periods of increased odour generation which has impacted on the neighbouring community,” he wrote.



The papatuanuku channel at the wastewater plant in East Clive.

In the meantime, the Hastings Council continues experiments with a range of options to eliminate the smell, including flushing the pipeline daily, pouring in 600kg of magnesium oxide a day (at a cost of \$1000 per day) for a week to raise the pH level of

the sewage and deal with the sulphate-eating bugs. If that became the preferred solution, the cost would have to be added to the plant’s \$600,000 annual operations budget.

The next trial will use a secret mix of superbugs bought from a private company.

## A saga of investigation and consultation

In the early 1980s, Hastings was pumping all its sewage out to sea via a 2.75km pipeline, the longest ocean outfall in the country.

It was a minimalist approach, relying on oxygen-rich receiving waters and high sunshine hours to provide plenty of ultra-violet light to break down and disperse the sewage. Milliscreens were added in 1993 to catch the toiletries and other items that sometimes got through the initial screening.

In 1998, the Hastings Council sought a renewal of its resource consent to continue the discharge. Maori objected to a continuation of human waste going straight into the ocean, and eventually the Council was ordered to heed their concerns and consult them.

In 2001, the Council was granted consent to build a new wastewater treatment plant, to be ready by 2007, and the Council-Maori Tangata Whenua Joint Wastewater Committee was formed with the task of ensuring any new system resulted in “the significant removal of kuparu (human waste)” by 2007, and the “complete removal



The plastic media inside the bio-trickle tanks.

of kuparu” by 2009.

Maori were not happy about the natural settlement system being considered by the Council, so the committee set about finding an alternative to meet everyone’s standards. The stand-alone bio-trickle filter tanks were the result.

Hastings’ resource consent expires in just four years, so the Council must begin a whole new round of public consultation later this year. Mr Chapman says public expectations for sewage treatment have raised the bar a lot in recent years, so he will not be surprised if there turns out to be a mood for even more treatment, maybe sludge removal after filtering, or ultra-violet light.



Air freshening at the wastewater plant in East Clive.

\$27m down the toilet?

Environmental watchdog David Renouf says Hastings has effectively thrown \$27m down the toilet. Bio-trickle filtering without a first-stage settling process and a third stage clarifier to remove all the filtered sludge is a waste of money, he says, because large amounts of the biomass that removes nutrients from the raw sewage are flushed out of the tanks along with the filtered liquid, on to the seabed.

“It’s a bit like vacuuming your lounge, then emptying the bag all over the floor,” he says. He believes the bio-trickle plant and its accompanying “Papatuanuku Channel” were the \$27m price tag for Maori agreement to a sewage-disposal solution for Hastings.

But he says Maori were misled into believing there is no human waste in the filtered discharge to sea, because although it might not be raw anymore, it is part of a chunky glutinous mass that will take a lot longer to disperse than milliscreened sewage. It’s unknown what effects biomass will have on the marine environment, because not enough tests have been done yet to prove it is harmless. And it still contains heavy metals, viruses, parasites and suspended solids that the filters have not dealt with.

Mr McLeod rejects any notion of “a \$27m spend just to satisfy cultural concerns,” and says the project was necessary to meet conditions for the plant’s resource consent. The Council’s tangata whenua wastewater committee has yet to sign off on the new bio-trickle plant, but if it refuses to do so, “we’ll have to work through the whys and wherefores.”

Group asset manager David Fraser says the concept of changing the form of human waste into biomass came from Monty Paku, one of the wastewater committee members, and he’s confident the system will get the final seal of approval.

The Papatuanuku channel is an open drain studded with rocks that were blessed by Maori and are now generally referred to as “sacred,” although the Council itself does not use that word. The rocks were brought from a quarry at Linton, near Palmerston North, to spiritually cleanse the filtered discharge before it heads out to sea. It is “more symbolic than anything,” Mr Fraser says. But it is a “standard concept across New Zealand , with slightly different perceptions between iwi.”

He rejects Mr Renouf’s criticism. The filter tanks can be compared to a “quick composting” bin in a garden, turning waste into another form, but much more quickly. “What’s coming out is bugs’ waste,” he says, and the Council is monitoring the seabed around the sewage outfall 2.5km out at sea “to see if there are any adverse changes.”

So far, the Regional Council has not replied to BayBuzz requests to see the monitoring data.

In a magazine article headlined “Cultural dreams become a technical reality with innovative wastewater treatment,” Mr Fraser describes the new Hastings system as “a model that others can follow.” “Essentially, we have secondary treatment for half the cost of primary, or one third the cost of the traditional configuration for biological trickling filters.”

The Maori cultural element focused on avoiding the transport of sewage sludge on roads past homes, marae, etc, and required “a great deal of lateral thinking and discussion from within the Maori community,” which eventually aligned the bio-trickle process with “the long drop approach, in which human waste was allowed to grow old and become inert with dignity.”

The Council’s legal adviser, Mark von Dadelszen, is more effusive. In a written

article he describes the consultation and co-operation that led to the construction of Hastings’ novel take on bio-trickle filtering as an historic blend of Maori spirituality and modern science.

The Papatuanuku channel was the solution, he said, by invoking the sons of Papatuanuku ( Maori God of the Earth) to purify and spiritually cleanse the sewage, with “Tanemahuta providing biomass to transform kupara (faeces) by removing the mauri (spirit) of human wastes.

Tangaroa (the sea) receives the transformed waste after passage through Papatuanuku and heals himself through movement of the ocean, and Tawhirimatea (god of the winds and weather) agitates the surface of Tangaroa and through a synthesis of air and water completes the cleansing process.”

Des Ratima, a member of the District Council’s Maori Joint Committee, is less than impressed by the lateral thinking and consultation that led to the construction of a waste disposal channel named Papatuanuku.

In fact, he’s horrified. “It’s not respectful at all. It’s totally inappropriate, almost to the point of being offensive.”

Papatuanuku (Mother Earth) is a concept of support and nourishment resulting in a cleansing, “not to take dirty water and make it less dirty,” Mr Ratima says.

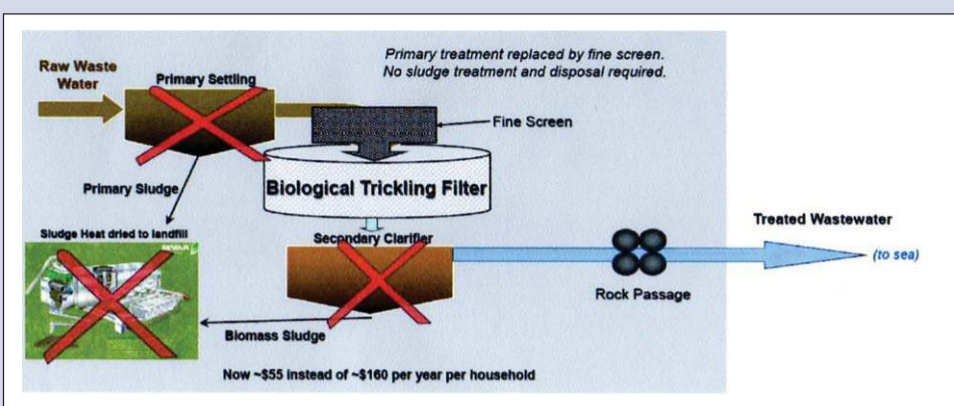
He’s surprised the Tangata Whenua Committee allowed what he considers to be a serious spiritual distortion, and intends to consult “a few people whose opinions I respect, and see what they think about it.” A name change for the channel could well be on the cards, he says.

The East Clive treatment plant has already attracted a lot of attention from other councils.

Napier is poised to build an identical system at Awatoto, but its tanks will have lids. Mayor Barbara Arnott says Napier is still watching events at East Clive before seeking its own resource consents later this year. “Everyone’s learned a lot from the Hastings experience.”

Napier should not have the same problems because it has a larger urban area and therefore higher volumes of domestic sewage to maintain momentum in the pipeline and filtering, she says.

It will also have a permit to discharge offensive odours to the air!



Bio-trickle filter system

How it works

A traditional bio-trickle filter system has three stages – primary treatment such as settling tanks, followed by the trickle filtering, then clarifiers to collect the resulting sludge, which is removed before the wastewater flows on to its intended destination.

Settled sewage is pumped up to the top of each tank, where rotating arms spray it on to some form of media on which sewage-eating microbes, composed of algae, fungi, protozoa, rotifera, nematodes, and aerobic bacteria, live as a slimy substance commonly called biomass.

As the wastewater trickles through the media, the microbes in the biomass grab and eat the nutrients in the sewage.

But Hastings does not have a traditional bio-trickle system.

Mr Fraser says that is because traditional systems, built when milliscreening was unavailable, went out of vogue as more cost-effective ones were developed.

To save money, it dispensed with the usual first and third stages, and built only the second-stage filter tanks.

It also omitted lids on the filter tanks and a closed channel to the sea outfall, which it replaced with an open “spiritual cleansing”

channel studded with “sacred” rocks from a quarry at Linton, near Palmerston North. The rocks were free, but cost \$5000 to truck to Hastings.

Raw domestic sewage arriving at East Clive is screened and pressed to remove the bulkiest of solids, which are then carted off to Omarunui landfill.

The rest is pumped to spray arms at the top of two 37 metre diameter tanks, each containing five million pieces of plastic, nine metres deep.

The wastewater takes 12 minutes to trickle down through the plastic.

It’s a complex process. Bio-trickle filters need a critical mass of sewage to keep their biomass alive.

Too much or not enough biomass creates odour. Blockages in the media can cause sections to go anaerobic and smelly, so every few hours, the tanks are flushed to remove any lodged solids such as toilet tissue and excess biomass.

The filtered wastewater and flushed-off biomass flow into the Papatuanuku Channel for “spiritual cleansing” before entering a pipeline where it is joined by all the milliscreened trade waste from Hastings , and pumped 2.5km out to sea.



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Tom Belford  
Editor



National Standards:  
Pass or Fail?

The National-led Government has set off a firestorm with its National Standards for assessing reading, writing and maths progress in Years 1-8.

Education Minister Tolley says: “National Standards will identify kids who are slipping behind so that parents and teachers can intervene early to help them. We just can’t let them fall through the cracks.” The most often-cited statistic to support this initiative is that as many as one-in-five Kiwi children are leaving school without the basic literacy and numeracy skills they need to succeed.

Most affected teachers and principals have reacted with alarm and strenuous resistance. Their various arguments include that national standards will lead to labeling kids, to “league

tables” that foster unfair and simplistic comparisons of school performance, to another unnecessary pile of paperwork, to undue emphasis on “teaching to standards” as opposed to broadly and truly educating students, to performance pay for teachers, and ultimately even to a voucher system enabling parents to “shop” for the best schools.

Teachers do not seem to deny that there’s a serious problem with under-achieving students. However, they say that they already know who these students are, and already have, with the newly adopted national curriculum, the pathway for making progress. The national standards are either unnecessary, or represent an experiment – embraced without significant teacher consultation – with possibly unwanted consequences (and so should be tested on a



Prime Minister John Key speaks to pupils in Havelock North.

limited basis before country-wide rollout).

For their part, parents seem mainly confused. At Taradale Intermediate, the Board of Trustees has consulted with parents by way of a questionnaire.

In answer to the question -- “Do you agree with National Standards as proposed?” -- parents were split between one-third supporting, one-third not supporting, and one-third unable to decide.

Under the circumstances, it seems to me that one can examine the issue in two steps.

First is the very starting assumption ... are NZ kids lagging behind in their basic literacy and/or numeracy skills? Critics of the national standards produce data indicating that New Zealand kids are performing well, including international comparisons.

But whatever the statistics say, I would suggest that the practical answer depends on what decile school a parent’s child attends ... the higher the decile, the less likely the parental perception that there’s any problem.

As BayBuzz columnist Elizabeth Sisson noted in her article, *Education Primer*, back in February 2009:

“The fact is that a greater proportion of pupils in low-decile schools tend to fail. ‘Young people from schools that draw their students from low socio-economic communities are less likely than other young people to attain higher school qualifications,’ notes the Ministry of Social Development in its Social Report 2008. ‘In 2007, only 49 percent of school leavers from deciles 1-3 schools (in the most disadvantaged communities) attained qualifications at NCEA Level 2 or above, compared with 62 percent of those leaving deciles 4-7 schools and 79 percent of those leaving deciles 8-10 schools.’

The Report continued: “Students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities and Maori students have relatively poor rates of school participation and engagement and for some groups it is continuing to worsen.”

Broadening the issue for a moment beyond kids, it is worth noting that approximately 1.1 million New Zealanders (43% of adults aged 16 to 65) have literacy skills below those needed to participate fully in a knowledge society, and 51% of adults have numeracy skills lower than those needed to meet the complex demands of everyday life and work.

As noted above, teachers don’t say there is *not* a literacy and numeracy skills problem; rather, they question whether national standards are the correct response or intervention.

Debating solutions

So it seems more productive to debate potential solutions than to deny the problem.

And that, perhaps, is where politics enters the situation.

The Key Government certainly *sounds* like it is placing blame for student under-performance

squarely on the shoulders of teachers. It cites studies claiming that 30% of teachers are “below standard.”

Yet research shows over and over that the students who struggle most – who are failing – are those from home environments that are dysfunctional in many ways -- where there are low or no parental expectations of academic achievement (or even school attendance), where alcohol or drug abuse prevails, where there is overcrowding, where there is hunger. And clearly none of these factors are remotely controllable by teachers.

Rather than leaning on teachers, John Key and Minister Tolley should be leaning on parents. Look behind a failing student and you are more likely to find failing parents than failing teachers or schools.

Which isn’t to say there are no under-performing teachers or schools to be dealt with.

[In the U.S. in recent days, President Obama has alienated the entire teaching profession by supporting one school board’s decision to fire its *entire* teaching staff and school management outright. This from a President who enjoyed overwhelming support from teachers’ unions during his election campaign.]

Note that I’ve used the word “failing” several times in the last few paragraphs. As a word, “failing” has more stigma attached to it in New Zealand than the “F-word”! It is politically incorrect for any New Zealander to “fail” at anything.

That was abundantly clear when Minister Tolley met with the public (virtually all teachers and principals) recently in Napier to promote the national standards. Nobody wanted to use the “failing” word.

Educators at the meeting even balked at the idea of simple charts that might show that Hamish or Tanya was “just below standard” in his or her maths or reading. And even National’s own brochure touting the standards uses euphemisms like “slipping behind” and “struggling children” and “having problems.”

I appreciate that there are important issues of self-esteem, and that over-dependence on one measure of accomplishment or performance (for an individual or a school) could be imperfect or misleading.

But here’s the harsh reality: the odds are overwhelming that kids who leave school unable to read or write to a decent standard will *fail* in their lives. Parents need to understand their child’s situation and appreciate that fact sooner – when it can make the most difference – rather than later.

And from that perspective, I would submit that critics of national standards need to put more on the table by way of alternative – and new – paths to equipping our kids to function effectively in their future lives ... because present practices just don’t seem to be working for a large segment of our youth population.



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## Mark Sweet Columnist



# National Standards: A Dangerous Thing

The introduction of National Standards in primary and intermediate schools is controversial, and quickly escalating into a damaging stand-off between the Government, determined to implement the policy, and those who resist.

The Minister of Education, Anne Tolley, has threatened to “sack school boards” if they don’t comply. Boards have been told they can bring “employment action” against dissenting principals.

So the scene is set for a bruising confrontation between the Minister and teachers; school boards are the piggies in the middle; and if things get rough, students will suffer because of diminished teacher morale.

The way things are shaping, parents are being asked to take sides; support the Government, or the schools. Ultimately it’s the parents who will decide the outcome of this issue, either by evidence from opinion polls, or at the ballot box in the next general election.

## What are National Standards?

National Standards are tests in writing, reading, and mathematics. They are “standardized” in the sense that from years 1 to 8, school children throughout the country, will twice yearly sit the same basic assessment tests, set to the same “standard.”

The Government has made it clear that National Standards are at the core of its social policy aspirations.

Prime Minister, John Key says: “*National Standards in education are a critical part of the National-led Government’s plan for securing a brighter future for New Zealand. New Zealand deserves a future with more highly skilled citizens, who have better job prospects, greater life choices and, in turn, who live in a society with less dysfunction, unemployment, welfare dependence and crime. This policy is a critical step along the pathway to achieving that. I hope you and your family make the most of it.*”

At a public meeting in Napier on 1 March, Minister Tolley explained how National Standards will assist in achieving “a brighter future” ... “National Standards will identify kids who are slipping behind so that parents and teachers can intervene early to help them.” The Minister said she was “not going to stand by and see 20% of kids leave school without adequate literacy and numeracy skills.”

The audience in Napier was well attended by teachers, and Anne Tolley told them: “After parenting, teaching is the most important job.”

## Teachers respond

Minister Tolley anticipated teachers’ concerns by telling them National Standards “were not about labeling kids, league tables, a new test replacing others, performance pay for teachers, or similar to any overseas systems.”

Interestingly the teachers and principals interviewed were not particularly concerned about those issues. Their overwhelming concern is about the impact an untried system will have on their resources and ability to teach to the high standard of the New Zealand

Curriculum that was launched in 2007.

Nelson Park Primary principal Nevan Bridge praises the Curriculum as “inspired”. He pointed out that: “What National Standards are meant to achieve is already in place with the new Curriculum.” His focus as a principal “is in developing a culture of learning by creating an atmosphere where children want to learn.” And he sees “the relationships between teacher and child, and the home, school and child” as crucial factors in improving pupils’ ability to learn.

Erin Lawrence, a teacher at St Joseph’s School in Hastings said: “All it seems to be doing is measuring who are part of the ‘tail’, and we have those tools already in the Curriculum. Every teacher knows who the struggling children are. What we need are more resources to help those children.”

At St. Patrick’s in Marewa, Katrina Alexander is concerned about the potential for the National Standards issue to “cause divisions within a school, between management and teachers, and the school and parents.”

Dennis Coxon of Taradale Intermediate has been a principal for 22 years. He thinks National Standards have made a bad start. “There’s been no meaningful consultation. There was one meeting at the War Memorial where we were told what the standards were, and how they’d be implemented. Questions were not answered adequately. There’s been no discussion with the schools.”

The principals and teachers are supported in their opinions by the country’s top education academics, Professors Martin Thrupp, John Hattie, Terry Crooks, and Lester Flockton.

In a joint letter to the Minister in November 2009 they said:

“Minister, in our view the flaws in the new system are so serious that full implementation of the intended National Standards system over the next three years is unlikely to be successful. It will not achieve intended goals and is likely to lead to dangerous side effects.”

Despite the warnings, the Government is determined, and National Standards are increasingly being sold to the public with distorted statistics, and a high degree of emotional rhetoric.

## Misinformation

The promotion of National Standards has given the impression to many parents that our education system is somehow in deficit, which it is not.

The Government says “Twenty percent of kids are failing in literacy and numeracy,” without qualifying that the figure refers to the 20% of students who don’t achieve NCEA2 (University Entrance) standards in literacy and numeracy.

And in Napier, Minister Tolley repeated the claim that “the 2009 ERO report showed us that 30% of teachers were below standard.” Speaking on TV3 on 15 February, John Key politicised these figures when he said: “We are a government that’s not going to sit back and accept the status quo, which is decades of under-performance from some teachers and a

failure of a whole bunch of kids.”

What Minister Tolley didn’t tell the meeting, and perhaps hasn’t told John Key, is the ERO report was titled, *Reading and Writing in Years 1 and 2*, and what it really said was 26% of teachers of 5 and 6 year olds had a “high rate of effectiveness,” 43% were “good,” 21% “adequate,” and 10% were “limited.” A more generous reading of the 2009 ERO report would see 90% of teachers regarded as adequate or above.

The picture of a healthy education system is reinforced by the *Report of the Inter-Party Working Group for School Choice (2010)*: “International comparisons confirm that the achievement of some New Zealand students is among the best in the world. For example, of 57 countries that participated in PISA 2006 study, only two performed better than New Zealand overall. Only three countries had a significantly higher mean reading literacy performance and only five recorded a significantly higher mathematical literacy score.”

Parents in Hawke’s Bay need not be concerned about the quality of their childrens’ education. New Zealand has a world class education system, which prepares pupils better than most other countries. From OECD (2009) *Education at a Glance*:

“In 2007, the proportion of adult population with tertiary qualifications in New Zealand increased from 39 percent in 2006 to 41 percent, which is far above the OECD average of 27 percent. In 2007, only two OECD countries had a higher percentage of the adult population with tertiary education than New Zealand, namely Canada and Japan.”

## A little knowledge

In a letter to parents, St.Patrick’s principal Lurek Wypych, succinctly expressed the position of many schools:

“National Standards will not in themselves raise achievement levels for pupils. The teaching, school environment, resourcing, home and child are the crucial factors in achievement. These standards are untested, critically acclaimed to be divisive and rushed. To make

the most of them and the \$millions spent to implement them, they should be trialed.”

Surely, implementing any new policy in education without the support of the teaching profession and parents is doomed to fail. Given the potential for the issue to cause disruption in schools, the request of the education academics in their open letter to Anne Tolley seems reasonable:

“Minister ... we advise further development work is necessary before all schools are asked to implement National Standards ... say 150 to 200 schools ... this additional work would allow the development of the most effective implementation strategy to ensure standards are successfully introduced, without negative consequences.”

Why is the Government pursuing National Standards with such haste and intransigence?

The answer might be found in the *Report of the Inter-Party Working Group for School Choice (02/2010)* which recommends a voucher system for the top 5% and bottom 20% of students as measured by National Standards. (Step 1) Further steps in the eight step process include: “provider identification; a learning broker mentor; provide success payment.”

The *Working Group* of National, Act, and Maori Party MPs described “success payment” as, “bonuses (are) paid for substantially lifting the performance of low achieving or gifted students to new levels.”

The recommendations are not policy, but they signal that the probable reason for National Standards is they are the first step in a system that sees “learning brokers” negotiate where to spend “education vouchers” ... and teachers paid “performance bonuses” according to the “league tables.”

So much for transparency!



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Elizabeth Sisson  
Columnist



# Underspending On Maori Health

With less than sixteen weeks remaining in the fiscal year, the Hawke’s Bay District Health Board has yet to allocate \$947,000 in available funds earmarked for Maori health care. This represents a major chunk of the total \$7.6 million dedicated to Maori health programs.

Is the DHB holding on to the money to bring down its projected deficit, which will run around \$4.9 million? Or is it simply a question of funds being allocated before services and programs have been put in place?

It’s generally agreed that Maori health statistics are abysmal. The New Zealand Health Survey in 2006-2007 found that Maori in Hawke’s Bay have higher rates of smoking and hazardous drinking, more deaths from ischaemic heart disease, more premature deaths (under 65 years of age) compared with non-Maori (53.2% versus 16.4%, respectively), both cancer mortality rates and heart disease mortality rates twice those of non-Maori, more hospitalisations and early deaths from diabetes, and greater prevalence of anxiety and depressive disorders.

With Maori constituting about 24% of the Hawke’s Bay population, it is obvious that, until those statistics change, the DHB will not be able to realise its goal of improving the overall level of health in Hawke’s Bay. To quote from the board’s draft annual plan for 2010-2011, “The DHB acknowledges that our vision of ‘healthiest families’ will never be achieved without significant improvement in Maori health status.”

Since the 2006-2007 survey, the board has been engaged in a concerted effort to improve the health of Maori in the district, which runs from Mahia Peninsula in the north

to Lake Waikaremoana, down through the central ranges of the North Island to near Waipukurau, across to the coast at Porangahau and out to the Chatham Islands. The district is more or less contiguous with the vast territory of the Ngati Kahungunu.

The Ngati Kahungunu has been working with the DHB to develop health services for Maori. Ngahiwi Tomoana, chair of Ngati Kahungunu, also chairs the Maori Relationship Board, which works with the DHB. Tomoana serves on the board as one of two deputy commissioners to the government-appointed commissioner, Sir John Anderson.

Tomoana recently delivered a number of Maori Relationship Board (MRB) recommendations to the DHB. The recommendations respond to a previous discussion with the board about “the historical underspend in Maori health.”

“The underspend is \$947k as at January and expected to increase further due to timing issues with contracting,” writes the MRB. “The concern for the MRB and the Hauora Provider Council is that for two years 2008/9 and 2009/10 there has been a recurring under spend evident in the Maori portfolio. To the MRB this is unacceptable and (we) have insisted changes be made for 2010/11 to ensure this does not occur again.”

In the meantime, Maori Health Services are working to allocate the \$947k to various services before the fiscal year ends 30 June. According to Tracee Te Huia, director of Maori Health Services and a member of the Maori Relationship Board, the money was made available before planning was completed. It will be contracted to Maori health service providers prior to 30 June, she said. She noted that the

**A different approach**

Des Ratima would like to see a different approach to the delivery of services to Maori. He says health services can be delivered directly on the marae without creating another level of bureaucracy.

As chair of the Flaxmere marae, he has worked to bring other marae in the area together to identify aspirations, discuss problems and propose solutions. Now the 17 marae are working to bring services to their people on site. For example, the Flaxmere marae is beginning literacy and numeracy education on site and has just started its first degree program in Maori knowledge.

Ratima believes the marae should have a

voice in how and when programs are delivered. If marae can choose the services they want delivered on site, those services will be more successful, he says. “We know the issues, we know the solutions, but we need funding.” He thinks funders themselves could provide oversight of the use of allocated funds so no intervening level of bureaucracy would be necessary. “Any organisation introduced between funders and the solution just takes off money.”

His marae is building a health clinic now and going to the District Council for funding. “We want to normalise the process of our people going to the doctor.”

total funding for Maori health services is only 2% of the DHB’s annual budget for all services. The Maori health services that will receive the \$947k include antenatal care for Maori women, acute-care, nurse-led clinics in the community, a healthy lifestyles programme for the region, clinical navigation for cardiology and cancer patients in hospital, and community and clinical nurse specialist services.

**A solution?**

The MRB has considered several options for dealing with the underspend problem. The MRB’s preferred option, proposed initially by the Planning Funding and Performance (PF&P) division of the DHB, is to establish a partnership between a Maori health-planning group and PF&P.

The MRB’s frustration comes through loud and clear. “There is no group or entity currently that could assume this role without the need for management of the identified issues of local politics among providers, conflict of interest issues and the competitive environment. While all points raised are healthy within a business environment, all three issues have assisted in the bottlenecking and lagging in Maori health development in Hawke’s Bay since the inception of the Kaupapa services.” The latter are services operated by Maori for Maori. The MRB suggests a proposed Maori Clinical Governance Group currently being formed “could well form the nucleus of this Planning Group, with the addition of appropriate Maori health planners and HBDHB Maori strategists.”

Under the proposed arrangement, PF&P would continue to manage contracts with providers in general and the Maori Clinical Governance Group “would assist in developing the strategic direction for future Maori health

development.”


While the MRB finds the underspend “unacceptable,” they attribute it to “a lack of alignment between the overall budget programme, the preparation and acceptance of detailed plans and service specifications, the capacity and capabilities of some providers and the contracting process. All of these can be summarised as ‘timing.’”

If “timing” is indeed the issue, then all eyes will be on the clock over the less than four months now available to actually commit the monies to improving Maori health.

Existing Maori health services are seeing positive results. “There have been improvements in the health of Maori in Hawke’s Bay,” reports the Maori Relationship Board. “Life expectancy has increased, and mortality rates are decreasing.

“However, the rate of decrease is often not as great as that observed for non-Maori, resulting in a widening disparity between Maori and non-Maori.”





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Tim Gilbertson  
Columnist



I Paid Up

This is a modern fable. It happened a year or two ago, but fables are timeless.

Once upon a time, about five years ago, in a small town in provincial New Zealand, one of the local drug dealers, who had never had a paying job in his life, moved into an expensive house in one of the better suburbs, bringing his collection of Harleys and four wheel drives with him.

This annoyed the populace and set a bad example to the youth of the area, who could see that being a drug dealer was more rewarding than going straight. I was a minor politician at the time and spoke to the local Sheriff. The Police said they were hoping to appoint a detective to the town one day and he would look into the situation. I refrained from inquiring as to why the other dozen or so sworn police officers in the town could not look into it themselves.

Some time later I was invited to meet the Police Commissioner, Mr Howard Broad. Over tea and cakes I asked him if the boys in blue ever liaised with the IRD as a means of confiscating the earnings of the ungodly, since the chances of catching Mr Big red-handed were remote ... to say the least. Whereas wandering round to the mansion with the Taxman in tow and looking at the books would certainly deliver results.

Commissioner Broad fixed me with a sympathetic gaze and told me about the proceeds of crime act, which I knew about already. That act says that upon conviction, the state may confiscate the assets of the offender. Naturally, 99% of serious criminals put their assets into unassailable family trusts, so that if they do serve time, their luxury homes are still there when they come out of the slammer. Al Capone was gaoled for tax evasion. Not for the multitude of other crimes he committed.

The Commissioner said No, the Police did not liaise with the IRD. I was unimpressed.

So I wrote to the Prime Minister, who referred me to Mr Peter Dunne, the Minister of Inland Revenue. Mr Dunne's claim to fame is that he insisted that his party would only support the coalition government if they funded a \$10 million report on families. I read the report. It was possibly the most complete waste of taxpayers' money I have ever encountered, and believe me, in my time I have seen wastage in spades.

The Minister's reply to my letter stated that I could not be given access to the tax returns of private individuals, which was not the question I had posed. It was deliberate evasion as often practised by MPs faced with difficult questions. Any one who has listened to question time in the house sees the system in action every day.

I rang the Minister's office and harangued



Al Capone

a minion who finally got rid of me by transferring me to an official who confirmed that the IRD have about 20 people who investigate suspicious bad people, but they have no back up, and if warned off by threats of violence they retreat. His words were "I have to be cognisant of the safety of my staff." There was nothing about enforcing the law impartially and putting the baddies out of business. None of the twenty staff ever left the main centres, but they did receive information from the provinces, which it seems, they never actioned.

Theoretically everyone's books get audited by the IRD every three years and tax evaders are severely punished. However, if you threaten to kill the tax inspector, you are left alone.

The official told me that there were no plans to make any changes to the system, which I suggested would be reassuring news for organised crime. The Official refrained from commenting. And that was that.

I was unhappy. The government was criminally negligent. The criminals were sleeping happily in their beds. The populace was getting ripped off. And one day a detective might arrive.

Shortly afterwards, I recieved a bill from the IRD for \$36 for late filing of a GST return. I paid up.

The moral of the story is this. If you see a problem with a relatively simple solution that has been tested and proved successful internationally, don't adopt it. Spend a lot of money on something completely irrelevant and unrelated. The second moral is that if you mislead and evade well-intentioned citizens for long enough, they give up and leave you alone.

And finally, if you are a serious Crim, stay in the provinces and ignore the IRD.

Deciphering HPUDS

By Tom Belford

Representatives of the Hastings, Napier and Regional Councils have selected their preferred growth scenario for the Heretaunga Plains, and the official public consultation process will begin in early April.

The scenario ultimately adopted as the Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy (HPUDS), and then embedded in District Plans, is intended to guide land use decisions in much of the region from 2015-2045

Given the significance of this strategy, how the public is consulted will be of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the four-page brochure broadly disseminated for consultation will be unable to shed much light on what is planned or the analysis behind it. However, a great deal of material is available online at [www.hpuds.co.nz](http://www.hpuds.co.nz). Look especially for the *Draft Heretaunga Plains Urban Development Strategy* document.

As you think about future development in Hawke's Bay, you might want to ponder these questions ...

1. *How far-reaching is the recommended scenario geographically?* People hearing "Heretaunga Plains" might not be aware that this plan will have significance for areas like Bayview, Te Awanga/Haumoana, Ocean Beach and Waimarama. Given the intense controversy over some of these areas, many people might be expected to take a keen interest in how the preferred scenario addresses them.
2. *Precisely what parts of the Heretaunga Plains are to be protected from urban encroachment?* Our politicians tout HPUDS as an exercise to "protect the versatile soils of the Heretaunga Plains." Therefore, it should clear beyond doubt exactly what land is to be protected and what is not.
3. *Exactly what parts of our community will*

*growth come from ... and how will the needs of those segments be handled?* The latest growth estimates from Statistics NZ say the region's population will decline after 2026. So what growth are we planning for?! Perhaps more important will be the changing composition of HB's population ... with much larger percentages of Maori and seniors over age 65. Residents in those groups should be clear about how their unique housing and lifestyle needs will be met by the recommended scenario.

4. *Similarly, each of us might ask how the recommended scenario will affect our own present neighborhood* (or future lifestyle choices)? What does the plan mean if I live in Clive or Meeanee or Napier Hill or Bridge Pa?

5. *Finally, how do the Councils actually expect to accomplish the land use and settlement goals expressed in their recommended scenario?* Housing choices are the reflection of thousands of individual private decisions based upon lifestyle, financial means, and personal taste and values. Developers try read the market and invest accordingly. How do HPUDS and "the market" get reconciled? What tools and incentives will our Councils use to use to "steer" the community toward the settlement (and industrial location) outcomes the planners say are most sensible?

Hastings and Napier residents will receive a brochure summarizing the HPUDS recommendations starting April 9, and the same material will be published in the Regional Council's monthly newsletter. As mentioned earlier, it's tough to condense volumes of analysis into a few consumer-friendly pages. So that website address again is [www.hpuds.co.nz](http://www.hpuds.co.nz)

Submissions on HPUDS will close on May 14. A round of hearings will be held in mid-June by a joint committee representing the three Councils.

The Councils have done their part. Now it's up to us to engage as if we cared.

Chambers Estate – another success story with Tremains!

You may have noticed that since Tremains took over as the agency there have been seven unconditional sales up at premier subdivision Chambers Estate. The subdivision had stalled in 2008/2009 but upon Louise Addis and Tessa Chambers taking over the marketing they have flown out the door. I am sure you realize there are now limited sites available so if you have been considering a lifestyle change five minutes from the village, don't delay any further – [www.tremains.co.nz](http://www.tremains.co.nz) web ID H10865.

We have also recently had two \$1m plus sales of substantial homes up at Chambers Estate, so if you are buying or selling in this quality subdivision call/email us today.

Simon Tremain, [simontremain@tremains.co.nz](mailto:simontremain@tremains.co.nz)



Hawkeye is available for events

Some readers may or may not know but the mighty Hawke's Bay mascot Hawkeye was resurrected by Tremains managing director Simon Tremain in early 2009. He had been sitting for years behind a packhouse in Whakatu. Hawkeye was taken to Turangi to support Simon's local friends in a battle of golf amongst 34 University mates. Last weekend it took watch over the Magpie team at the Gisborne Golf Club. Hawkeye enjoyed his trip, had many favourable comments and is looking a lot brighter after a fresh paint from Alison Small's husband Bruce! Hawkeye is available from Tremains for all events!

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Roy Dunningham  
Columnist



# Source: A Contemporary Feminine Aesthetic

Once again the Director of the Hastings City Art Gallery has challenged local artists. *Source: A Contemporary Feminine Aesthetic* is the response of nine women artists who were invited “to re-visit the notion of a feminine aesthetic, a highly contested discourse of the nineteen eighties.”

The resultant show is not really polemical, or driven by the same agendas that galvanized feminist art of the 1970s and 1980s.

At least some of these artists see themselves as artists first, who happen to be women.

This, of course, still brings a particular set of viewpoints which give this exhibition its own dynamic.

And have the battles of those earlier feminist artists been won? Well, I had to look through three books (written by men) on 20<sup>th</sup> Century art before I found mention of Judy Chicago or Miriam Schapiro, who were major protagonists of feminist art.

Housework may be the most mundane gender issue (how many male flatmates clean the toilet?), but it may also be the most wearing. Desna Whaanga-Schollum cites the precious hours of her existence which have been consumed by ironing.

Her installation of ironing boards holds her ghosted self-portrait images as though the boards had absorbed some of her psyche.

She admires the design integrity of the boards but sees them as oppressive symbols and questions how should we best spend time in a

life which always goes faster than we expect.

Leanne Culy’s “The Ultimate Gift” is a significant development in her work. Complex and revealing, it comprises photographs and a series of small tableaux presented like cake decorations, which rather eerily speak of the saga of family life.

Marriage, birth, parenting are here along with images that point to wider issues. These memories, frozen in time, are a poignant reminder of how fleeting is our time with our children.

Graphically, the strongest work here is probably Elaine Meyer’s reprisal of the old “Dear Liza” folk song. Her arrangements of old milk buckets and nail boxes create allegories of real life problems and practical solutions (but can the red ram ‘Dear Henry’ really fix it?) We are also invited to admire the buckets and nail boxes as art objects in their own right.

Linda Bruce makes this same point when she says in the very attractive catalogue, that she “wants to break down the pretty to create beauty.” Bruce does just this in a remarkable tribute to her grandmother with a garland of cattle ear tags, rubber teats and brass rings.

The result is layered with metaphors and references. The floral prints on the ear tags acknowledge her grandmother’s name (Violet), her passion for gardening and the last five generations of women of which she is part.

The found objects bring their own associations with family, nurturing and farming practice and, of course, their own visual strength.

In a world where gender roles and expectations are constantly shifting, Jill Webster uses Alice in Wonderland to confront the illogicality and uncertainty of values and identity.

Her modern day Alice ponders these issues in a comic book style thought cloud populated by dozens of alternative Alices. Which one should she be?

As a teacher, Webster places goals of thinking above those of appreciating technical virtuosity, but there is nothing wrong with the techniques of design and image making in this work, which is very cogently put together.

Fiona Hislop suggests that her meticulous line of white plumbobs in “I could have been a ballerina” is an exhortation to get things right. Equally,



“I am” by Jo Blogg.

though, it could be seen as a veil, curtain or wall creating barriers and limitations. It is an elegant idea that seems capable of further development.

There is an obsessiveness about the way Jo Blogg works that I really admire. It is what good artists do.

The dots and circles of recent work now speak more eloquently than ever about the way we do (or don’t) communicate.

This work is about looking but not seeing, and hearing but not listening. Mandelas of pills speak of the medical patronization of women, while a female figure emerges from a field of colour test dots waving impotently for acknowledgement.

I also enjoy the skill and care with which Blogg handles an endlessly diverse range of media.

The fairy tale illustrations used by Denise Wilkinson are trite (but, like her, I loved them

as a child because they told stories). However, she manipulates the pictures to make surreal Magritte-like additions, out of scale and threatening.

A huge singlet hovers over a vulnerable and comatose Snow White and a bowl of pins dominates the princess’s wedding. Did she really live happily ever after?

If beauty transcends prettiness in anything here, it is in the work of Anneliese Hough. She opens up her life in a wall of small resin-encased photographs.

In turn, these are playful, intimate, questioning and sensual. They read like a stream of consciousness novel. Individually each photograph is a gem, collectively they are stunning.

This is a show which expects the viewer to do some thinking, but it will reward you if you do. The more I looked at it the more I liked it.

*Hastings City Art Gallery until 23 March 2010*



“Roe” by Anneliese Hough.

James Morgan  
Community Foundation Hawke’s Bay



A Digital Shoebox

Stored in shoeboxes throughout Hawke’s Bay are items of memorabilia, references to the life, times and styles of the people who contributed to the heritage of this province, and those who continue to do so.

They can be found in every house and factory from Wairoa to Porangahau. Individually these items are invaluable. Collected together, they become an asset worth millions of dollars to the province, increasingly so as the years advance.

Those fading photographs, letters, personal observations of our forbears need copying before they are lost. So do the tape-recorded narratives and 8mm films.

The Community Foundation Hawke’s Bay is advancing a project to establish a permanent digital window into our past. We have proposed that the Stoneycroft homestead be utilised as a venue for taking digital copies of these privately-held treasures. These copies would be properly annotated and stored for posterity.

Via Stoneycroft’s scanners, computers and file servers, digital copies of such treasures then become available as a quick reference for researchers, businesses, writers, students of every age, even on the other side of the world.

The copies would also be available to those families who lost or damaged their originals by way of misadventure. It means that precious records no longer disappear once silverfish take control.

Over the past 100 or more years not one body in Hawke’s Bay has seriously been in a position to consider the means of preserving this region’s “personal” history ... as opposed to balance sheets, planning applications, road maps, employment records, engineers’ reports and minutes, which are slowly being archived, and for which the tempo must increase by Government decree.

Hawke’s Bay’s own regional archivist, Chris Johnson, employed by three local authorities, has said on numerous occasions that there are “whole collections” of privately-held material which need scanning to a regional archive.

The potential of Stoneycroft is that it could be the most important historical archive outside Wellington. Graham Coe, Wellington, a former director of digital innovation at the National Library, is the man who invented the remarkable Papers Past resource. He predicts: “The Hawke’s Bay digital archive will become a national and international resource of value to everyone for economic, educational and cultural purposes.”

National institutions are clearly better funded than those operating at the local level, but paradoxically it is likely that precious material such as letters, photographs, films and sound held by individuals or local archives far exceeds in volume material collected centrally, Mr

Coe says.

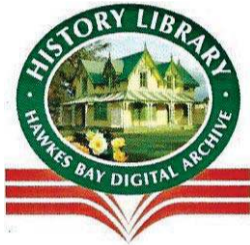
At Stoneycroft equipment will be of international standard, mostly superior to that seen elsewhere. It will be used in capture studios geared to complement workrooms of the National Library.

There will be a story booth, a sound-proofed interview and recording studio for oral histories, equipped also with cameras so that narratives can be linked with pictures.

The Stoneycroft project brings together knowledge, thoughts and experiences of companies, private individuals, institutions across the province. The technology will make it a searchable record of Hawke’s Bay’s history. The end result will be a modern encyclopedia of everything Hawke’s Bay.

Inevitably, questions arise as we do our part to inform the community of the detail of this project.

No, the digital archive is not in competition



The historic Stoneycroft Homestead in Hastings.

with any museum, large or small, anywhere in the province. The project is complementary. It supplements the work and the capacity of all of them. It is doing work which is not already being done. It will inevitably develop greater links and cross-indexing to established groups and repositories.

As Graham Coe says, the volume of treasures held by individuals far exceeds the volume of material that could be collected in any one place. Nor, with the threat of earthquake, fire or flood is it a good idea to have all your treasures stored in one place.

That is why it will be great to have a digital image of all things valuable while the originals are stored elsewhere (never all of them in one shed anywhere).

Nor will it ever duplicate plant or manpower.

The Hastings District Council has made a significant contribution toward the preservation of Hawke’s Bay’s heritage ... by making Stoneycroft homestead available as headquarters of the province’s regional digital

archive.

This is Hawke’s Bay’s greatest opportunity. It is over now to the community to show their approval of council’s decision by contributing toward the state-of-the-art equipment needed. This is, after all, an initiative of the community, not that of a local authority.

Between \$800,000 and \$1 million would get the project off to a flying start. It’s not an impossible sum. This project is about doing what is achievable versus an impossible dream.

Stoneycroft is right by the expressway meaning easy access from all quarters of the province. The property is visible.

A covenant signed with the Historic Places Trust binds future owners not to damage or alter Stoneycroft or allow detrimental activity. The beauty of this project is that it will comply.

If you would like to know more about the digital archive and how you can support it, contact the foundation’s administrator, Janice Gilmour, at 06 870 4648 or me at 06 879 6362.

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# Issue Updates

[Continued from p.2]



## Sports Park Velodrome

No news on whether Hastings will get the nod from sports authorities as the preferred location for a North Island velodrome. However, the infighting amongst the several contenders must be quite intense, judging by Mayor Yule’s efforts behind close doors to amass a lobbying slush fund (euphemistically called the Velodrome Bid Fund) by tithing the Hastings, Napier and Regional Councils, plus Unison for a further contribution of \$15,000 each.

## Horseshoe Bend

In February, the Hastings Council issued its staff report on the resource consent application of Andy Coltart and Australia-based landowner Garth Paterson to intensively develop a 25 hectare property along the Tukituki (indeed, 8.5 hectares is the riverbed and river channel itself!), at one of the river’s most scenic and recreationally enjoyed locations ... Horseshoe Bend.

Terrific news! The staff has recommended — courageously, in our view — that the application be denied ... full stop.

Two principal reasons:

First, staff concludes that the landscape and recreational values at Horseshoe Bend (about 5k up the river from the Red Bridge, along

Kahuranaki Road) would be so adversely compromised by such intensive development that mitigation measures simply could not achieve the necessary protections required by the District Plan and the RMA.

Second, staff argues that granting this application would create a precedent conducive to additional, similar development along the Tukituki, which would run contrary to both existing and pending rural development policy for the District, which aims to protect the rural character and amenity of the Tukituki area.

You can get a copy of the full staff report on the BayBuzz website here:  
[www.baybuzz.co.nz/archives/1909](http://www.baybuzz.co.nz/archives/1909)

Adjacent landowner, Bruno Chambers, filed a robust submission opposing the resource consent. Well done, Bruno!

I should note that this consent was processed by HDC under limited notification, which BayBuzz opposed. Ironical that the staff has decided that indeed the proposal affects a considerable stretch of the Tukituki, as well as recreational users ... and consequently, one might infer, many additional “affected parties” after all!

The staff report, citing advice from the Regional Council, unfortunately was dismissive of potential issues surrounding water extraction (cumulative effects), wastewater management, and stormwater management. It would appear that the Regional Council takes a rather myopic view of the proposal, as opposed to stepping back and looking at the overall impact that consenting this project would have on development all along the Tuki.

One might hope that the Regional Council (our environmental protector) by now would have a bigger picture in mind when it comes to protecting HB rivers. But alas!

Fortunately, the Hastings Council staff rose to the occasion this time, and provided the broader perspective on the Tuki the Regional folks lack.

As stated, this is terrific news for the Tuki. So far ...

A Hastings Council Hearings Committee session had been set for 18 February to hear the applicant’s case for the consent. But that

has now been indefinitely postponed ... it would appear that Mssrs Coltart and Paterson are a bit groggy (at least temporarily) from this unexpected staff blow!



## HB Environment Awards

Displaying a schizophrenic approach to its environmental education function, the HB Regional Council has killed funding support for its “Enviroschools” program providing environmental education in local schools, but has agreed to soldier on with respect to the annual environmental awards it co-sponsors with the Napier and Hastings Councils. Various enviro awards will cost HBRC \$29,000 in the next year.

The Enviroschools program, in which 23 area schools participated, had cost HBRC \$10,000 annually, but with central government funding now eliminated, the Regional Council would have had to fund the entire cost of \$30,000. That was too much for Councillors to swallow. I guess there was nothing left in the bank after the contribution to Mayor Yule’s Velodrome Bid Fund.

## Springhill Addiction Centre

The Springhill Addiction Centre has been given new life by the HB District Health Board’s decision not to pursue a consent to re-locate the facility to Tomoana Road in Hastings.

However, there are still considerable funding hurdles to overcome to get the Springfield facility up to standard.

In this part of Napier, neighbors of the addiction treatment facility actually welcome



its presence. Perhaps these folks should offer some sensitivity training to the NIMBY opponents of the mental health facility proposed for Meeanee by the highly-regarded Whatever It Takes organization.

True, lack of consultation, of which Napier Council and WIT are guilty, is inexcusable and always generates ill will ... it just fuels fears and resentments.

That said, these patients deserve their home.

## Dairy farmers warned

And not by our local officials, but by Fonterra! As reported in *Rural News*, around New Zealand dairy farmer non-compliance with regional council effluent management rules stood at 11% in 2007-8, and apparently results to be released for 2008-9 will show a further rise in non-compliance.

So Fonterra has put farmers on notice that any enforcement action from regional councils will incur a milk payout deduction for the 2010-11 season, which starts in June.

“Effluent management remains our Achilles heel,” said John Hutchings of Fonterra.

“We have warned these farmers that they are damaging Fonterra’s reputation and we can exercise the opportunity not to pick up their milk ... Increasingly consumers are exercising discretion and even sometimes paying an extra dollar for sustainable products.”

“Having a small number of non-complaint farmers will cost us.”

Yes, that’s a quote from Fonterra, not BayBuzz! Of course, for Fonterra to penalize farmers, the regional councils would have to act first.



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