

Wetland treasure

A Taranaki couple's award-winning efforts to preserve and enhance native biodiversity on their hillcountry bush block were highlighted at a public field trip to mark World Wetlands Day in early February.

Nature celebrated too, sending heavy rain which was welcomed across the region after a very dry January.

Despite the weather, 30 people turned out for the field trip at the property of David and Marie Russell at Toro Road, Purangi.



Continued Page 2

David Russell points out items of interest to those attending the World Wetlands Day field trip. PHOTO: JANET HUNT

Work starts on long-awaited SH3 project at Normanby Region wins its case

A strong regional push for replacement of the Normanby overbridge on SH3 has borne fruit, with work beginning on a two-year project to realign the highway and build a new underpass beneath the railway line.

The Taranaki Regional Council and the Regional Transport Committee have long been at the forefront of strong community advocacy for this project. These efforts were acknowledged by the Transport Minister, Hon Simon Bridges, and the NZ Transport Agency when the project was announced in January and launched early in March.

"I'd like to thank the local community for all its efforts in advocating for this project to be progressed and I'm delighted the Government can respond in this timely manner," Mr Bridges said.

And the Transport Agency's regional highways manager, David McGonigal, said: "The community have advocated strongly for this project to be built, and we're pleased that the Government's acceleration of the project means we can start to make it a reality."

The Council Chairman, David MacLeod, says it's gratifying to see the regional community's arguments taken on board after a long campaign to rid the highway of a notorious black spot. "We also acknowledge the efforts of local MPs in advocating for the region's important highway projects," he says.

The \$10.2 million Normanby project is among the first in the Government's new Accelerated Regional Roading Package, which provides separate funding for high-priority projects without dipping into the also-new regional

highway funding programme of about \$90 million a year. Allocation of the latter is contestable among regions nationwide.

Wrangles over funding for Normanby had come to a head early in 2012, as transport spending priorities for the coming three years were being drawn up to submit to the Government. The Council and the Regional Transport Committee resisted pressure to make a choice between Normanby and the New Plymouth northern outlet ('Vickers to City'). They insisted both projects were of equal priority and challenged Wellington to come up with ways to fund both.

The Chair of the Regional Transport Committee, Taranaki Regional Councillor

Continued Page 3

From the Chair

The Taranaki Regional Council's programmes cover an extraordinarily broad range of activities, from transport and civil defence through to regional gardens, biodiversity, environmental protection and resource management. And as Chairman, I'm always eager to take up any opportunity to get a first-hand look at some of the work that's going on.



At the beginning of February, for example, it was my pleasure to join 30 or so others marking World Wetlands Day by joining a field trip to look at what's been achieved on the Purangi bush block of David and Marie Russell.

It's a very special property, recognised as a Key Native Ecosystem by the Council, and containing a wetland that's classed as regionally significant. And the Russells received a Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Award in 2013 in recognition of the environmental protection and enhancement work that's been done since they purchased the property on their retirement. The Council's Environment Services and Land Management teams have worked closely with the Russells and it was great to be able to get a close-up look at the results so far.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the Council's role in ensuring consent holders meet their environment responsibilities, and taking enforcement action when necessary. It's interesting to note that after the conclusion of the latest court case, the Council had no pending prosecutions on its books for illegal dairy effluent discharge – for the first time in about 10 years. Hopefully we can take that as a positive sign for the future.

To gain a good appreciation of the breadth of the Council's work, take a look at the Long-Term Plan 2015/2025 Consultation Document that's currently open for public submissions. You can find it at www.trc.govt.nz, so jump online and have a read.

And if you want to comment on any aspect, get a submission in by Friday 3 April.

David MacLeod - CHAIRMAN

Wetland treasure on show

From Page 1

The property's 250 hectares encompass a regionally significant wetland and rich indigenous biodiversity, and since purchasing it on their retirement, the Russells have poured time, sweat and money into predator control, fencing and planting. Most of the block is protected with a QEII National Trust covenant and is recognised as a Key Native Ecosystem by the Taranaki Regional Council, which has worked with the Russells to implement a Conservation Plan and Biodiversity Plan.

The Russells' efforts earned them a Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Award in 2013. To view a video profile made at the time of this award, go to tinyurl.com/ToroRoad.

The World Wetlands Day field trip included presentations by the Russells, Taranaki Regional Council Chairman David MacLeod and Council officers, Fish and Game, QEII, New Plymouth District Council, Department of Conservation, Taranaki Tree Trust, and Taranaki Biodiversity Forum.

Wetlands in any setting – be it a bush block like that of the Russells, or a ring plain dairy



Taranaki Regional Council Chair David MacLeod addresses attendees at the World Wetlands Day field trip. PHOTO: JANET HUNT

farm – are a major focus for the Council in its work with landowners.

"Wetlands are a valuable asset, not only environmentally but also in farm management terms," says the Council's Land Services Manager, Don Shearman.

"Wetlands store water during rainfall, helping to reduce flood levels. And in dry periods, they release water to help maintain farm supplies. And when wetlands are protected with fences, this also prevents stock losses.

"The days of regarding swamps as just another bit of unproductive wasteland are well and truly over. They are the 'kidneys of the land' and in intensively farmed areas, they are often the most important ecosystems for biodiversity."

Effluent fine sets regional record

A record fine in January for illegal dairy effluent discharge has brought total penalties to more than \$400,000 in cases brought by the Taranaki Regional Council and concluded in the past four months.

Francis John Mullan's fine of \$66,000 for unauthorised discharge of dairy effluent is the largest ever imposed in Taranaki for this offence. It was imposed in the Environment Court in New Plymouth on 27 January.

In November last year, fines totalling \$340,000 were imposed in cases relating to odour discharges from a grain storage facility at Port Taranaki, odour discharges resulting from the unsuccessful attempt to store and treat waste buttermilk and milk at the Eltham wastewater treatment plant, and the actual and likely effects on the Waiwhakaiho reef from the Lake Triview grounding off New Plymouth.

The Mullan fine follows a long history of non-

compliance resulting in enforcement action by the Taranaki Regional Council. This was the third successful prosecution of Mr Mullan since 2002.

The Council has also applied for an enforcement order to achieve compliance with resource consents.

The fine and the enforcement order application deliver a strong message about the need for all consent holders to take their resource management responsibilities very seriously to protect our environment, says the Council's Director-Resource Management, Fred McLay.

As Recount went to press, the Council had no pending dairy effluent prosecutions, following the conclusion of the Mullan case.

"It's the first time in about 10 years that we've had no effluent prosecutions on the books," says Mr McLay.

Future-proofing Waitara

Good progress in stopbank upgrade

Good weather at the start of the year has allowed rapid progress in the Taranaki Regional Council's \$3 million, three-year project to boost Waitara's flood protection.

Major sections of the project on both sides of the river are now nearing completion, on time and within budget.

The pre-upgrade stopbanks were only high enough to protect Waitara from a flood that is likely to occur on average every 30 years – like the 1971 flood, for example. If the defences weren't being upgraded, another flood of that size would result in water spilling over stopbanks, causing significant flooding affecting many homes and businesses.

By 2060, the effects of climate change are predicted to increase the average frequency of a flood this size to once in every 15 years. The upgrade is designed to protect Waitara from a 'one in 100-year' flood, even taking into account the effects of climate change.

Work currently completed or nearing completion includes:

- Raising the height of the stopbanks by one to 1.5 metres on the town side of the river upstream of the Town Bridge to Browne Street.



Contractors raise the stopbanks upstream of the Town Bridge.

- Raising the stopbanks on the east side of the river between the Town Bridge and High Street East.
- Raising the height of the stopbank by about a metre on the town side alongside Queen Street from the NPDC pumping station to the northern end of Domett Street.
- Constructing a flood wall alongside the Anzco meat plant.

The upgrade project includes pedestrian access, with a new walkway on the town side along the top of the stopbank from Domett Street upstream to the flag station. From there it will be possible to walk along the riverbank among the trees to the NPDC pumping station, then on to a new walkway path up to the Town Bridge. Upstream from there, a path will be

constructed along the stopbank to a new access road over the stopbank at Toohill Park, and from there along the river's edge up to Browne Street.

Meanwhile, work will begin soon on removing current piping infrastructure along the river bank in front of the Anzco plant. When the pipe has been relocated and trees removed along a 140-metre section, the riverbank will be re-contoured and the new walkway constructed.

The final stage of the upgrade will involve raising the stopbank through Marine Park and from Gold St to Howard St on the eastern bank of the river.

This work is programmed for next summer.

Region wins its case

From Page 1

Roger Maxwell, says discussion over Normanby and Vickers to City was wrongly portrayed by some as a 'north versus south' debate. "It was never anything of the sort," he says. "Taranaki's representatives



Work has started on the SH3 Normanby project.

have been standing together on this." The Normanby project was also highlighted by the Taranaki Mayoral Forum in the pre-election period last year as among this region's key issues for the incoming Government to address.

NZ Transport Agency's Mr McGonigal says the project will see the creation of an entirely new 3.6km section of highway with a straighter alignment and a considerably reduced risk of crashes.

The project will also provide a more direct route that will make journeys about half a kilometre shorter.

The existing overbridge will be demolished, to be replaced by an underpass to be excavated underneath the railway line near Te Roti Rd.

There will also be two new passing lanes and a new stock underpass.

The Government's Accelerated Regional Roothing Package also includes investigations into improvements to SH3 north (Mt Messenger and Awakino Gorge), with initial work already under way.

Regional rates outlook stable

The Taranaki Regional Council has signalled essentially no change in rates next year despite plans to expand some programmes.

The Council's draft budget for 2015/2016 envisages an overall decrease of \$34,594, or a little over a third of 1%, in its total rates take (made up of general rates, targeted rates and uniform annual charge).

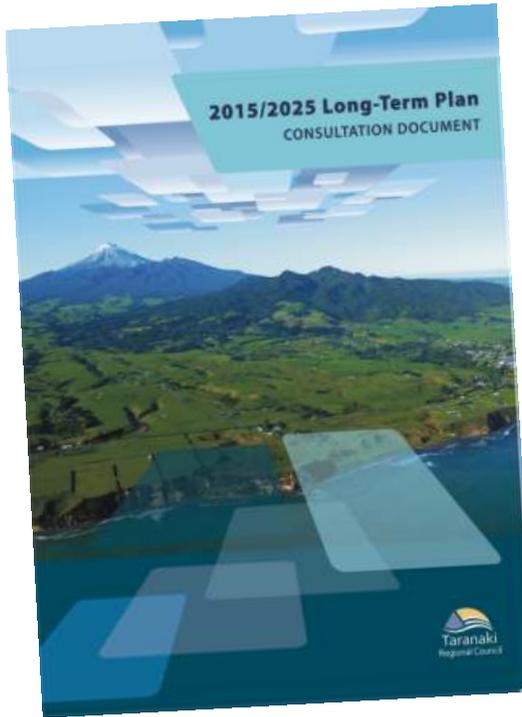
However, the general rates take on its own will increase by just under 1%, with the impact to vary across the region.

The 2015/2016 budget forms part of the Council's draft Long-Term Plan 2015/2025, for which a Consultation Document is now open for public submissions.

The Chairman, David MacLeod, says the Council's long-term budgets are based on general rates increases below the rate of inflation across the life of the plan.

"We are among the lowest rating Councils in the country and we want to keep this status," he says.

"Rates increases have been minimal in recent years, the Council's financial position is strong and we have no public debt."



Progressions to existing programmes, rather than fundamental changes, are envisaged in coming years:

- New Government directives and the

Council's own extensive reviews will bring changes to its state of the environment reporting regime and its resourcing of the riparian management programme.

- The Council's approach to biodiversity partnerships will evolve, building on a strongly collaborative approach it has helped to foster among Taranaki agencies and groups working in this field.
- The cost of an exciting upgrade of the Pukeiti gatehouse is being added to the budget.
- The Council plans to enter a partnership with other regions and the Government to develop a new electronic ticketing system for bus services.

Submissions on the Long-Term Plan Consultation Document run until Friday 3 April.

The document, and information on how to make a submission, are available at public libraries and district council service centres across the region, and online at www.trc.govt.nz.

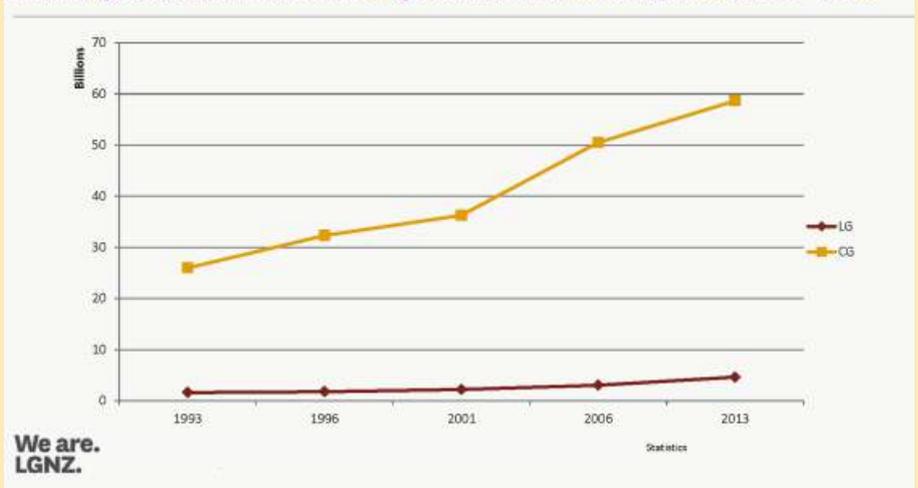
Discussion paper puts Council rates in perspective

Preparation of the Taranaki Regional Council's Long-Term Plan 2015/2025 has been taking place against the backdrop of a Local Government NZ review of the way Councils are funded.

While the Council's own financial position is strong, with no public debt, an LGNZ discussion paper on funding highlights some interesting and possibly little understood facts and trends relating to local body income and spending.

This graph, for example, shows how local body rates (brown line) in New Zealand are relatively low compared with central Government taxes (orange line).

Central government taxes & local government rates compared: 1993 - 2013



The real financial impact of taxes versus rates illustrated here is probably in reverse order to the way many people perceive their impact. Council rates demands are very visible and commonly regarded as a large imposition on the household budget. But PAYE and GST deductions, which are much larger over the course of a year, tend to be 'invisible' and not often thought about.

LGNZ President Lawrence Yule says that across New Zealand as a

whole, there is a significant shortfall between Council revenue and expenditure. "We must take a fresh look at the way local government is funded for the benefits of communities," he says.

"Councils spend approximately 10.5 per cent of all public expenditure, yet they raise only 8.3 per cent of all public revenue."

For more information on the review, go to www.lgnz.co.nz.

\$872m scandal highlighted

It's a hidden scandal that costs New Zealand \$872 million a year, with the burden in Taranaki alone totalling nearly \$20 million.

The scandal is household food waste, and everyone has a part to play in slashing its huge financial and environmental toll, say the organisers of the newly launched 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign.

The campaign is being run by Councils nationwide and is based on research that included surveying 1365 New Zealanders, examining the contents of nearly 1400 household rubbish bins and giving 100 families diaries to record food disposal for a week. Findings include:

- Kiwis spend an estimated \$872 million a year on food that then gets thrown away uneaten.
- We throw away more than 122,500 tonnes of food a year – enough to feed around 263,000 people, or two and a half times the population of Taranaki, for 12 months.
- Bread, fruit and vegies, and meal leftovers are the most commonly discarded foods.



- The average household sends around 79 kg of edible food to landfills every year.
- In Taranaki, avoidable food waste costs the average household nearly \$460 a year, totalling nearly \$20 million for the region as a whole.

The Love Food, Hate Waste campaign in Taranaki is being promoted by the region's four Councils through their joint Waste Management Committee. Its Chair, Taranaki Regional Councillor Neil Walker, says the

amount of wastage is nothing short of scandalous.

"Not only is it an insidious drain on family budgets, but it creates an unnecessary environmental burden. Look at all the good food that goes to landfills every year – we don't need that sort of pressure, particularly here in Taranaki where our landfill is nearing the end of its life," says Cr Walker. "And all this rotting food contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions – eliminating the wastage would have the same effect as taking more than 118,000 cars off the road."

The research showed most people don't realise how much good food they are throwing away and how much it's costing them.

The Love Food, Hate Waste campaign will run for three years. It aims to bring the problem out into the open and provide information to help Kiwis cut the waste.

It also highlights the importance of planning purchases, clever food storage and creativity with leftovers. Follow the campaign at www.facebook.com/lovefoodhatewastenz.

Well worth pond-ering

The dry start to 2015, followed by a brief spell of intense rainfall in early February, highlighted the importance of sound dairy effluent management practices.

"We're finding a few common pitfalls that can lead to non-compliance with dairy effluent discharge consent conditions during abnormally dry or wet weather," says the Taranaki Regional Council's Compliance Manager, Bruce Pope.

"These are points for every dairy farmer to keep in mind."

Dry weather

- Ensure that the in-stream dilution rate at the point of effluent discharge to the stream from oxidation ponds is at least 1:100.
- If stream flows are too low to allow a dilution rate of 1:100, discharge the effluent to land by spray irrigation. Contractors with mobile effluent irrigation equipment are available if the property does not have its own infrastructure and resource consent.

Wet weather

- Be prepared for prolonged wet weather by installing a stormwater bypass. Operate the bypass when necessary to ensure effluent ponds maintain retention capacity.
- Be vigilant when operating the stormwater bypass.

Taranaki Regional Council compliance officers visit every dairy farm at least once a year to inspect ponds and take samples (the latter covering every farm over a cycle of about two years).

What's in your shed?



AGRECOVERY
Rural Recycling Programme

chemicals

When Chemicals expire, get rid of them! Don't leave them as a problem for the next generation.

Agrecovery Chemicals is a safe and simple nationwide collection and disposal system for unwanted and expired chemicals in agriculture.

Book your unwanted chemicals NOW!

- ✓ Easy Online or Freephone booking
- ✓ Visit www.agrecovery.co.nz
- ✓ Freephone **0800 247 326**

For household or garden chemicals please contact your local council as these chemicals are not subsidised under the Agrecovery programme.

In association with Taranaki's regional and district councils:
We Can
Reduce • Reuse • Recycle

Taranaki region

Booking deadline:
24 April 2015

Agrecovery – more than just Chemicals!
Contact us for more information about other recycling and recovery programmes.

www.agrecovery.co.nz | Freephone: 0800 AGRECOVERY (0800 247 326) | Email: chemicals@agrecovery.co.nz

New video showcases riparian programme

The rationale for and scope of the Taranaki Regional Council's world-class Riparian Management Programme is explained in a new video on the Council's YouTube channel.

The video, *Transforming Taranaki*, explains how the Council and ring plain dairy farmers are working to protect and enhance freshwater quality by protecting rivers and streams with millions of native plants and thousands of kilometres of fencing.

The video also explains the scientific basis of the programme.

"The Riparian Management Programme truly is transforming Taranaki," says the Council Chairman, David MacLeod.

"But this hasn't happened by accident – it's been a 20-year project for farmers and the Council, with a clear strategy.

"First we identified the need for action, then gained support for a common goal, then built



Council Chairman David MacLeod in the new riparian video.

the capacity to deliver ... and then we got on and did it! And the finish line is in sight.

"Taranaki is leading the country with this

world-class programme. It will secure the future of our vital dairy industry and protect our precious water."

[See the new riparian video at tinyurl.com/TRCriparian](http://tinyurl.com/TRCriparian)

Sharing the Waiwhakaiho River

The importance, history and beauty of the Waiwhakaiho River have been highlighted in an innovative project led by Massey University in partnership with the Taranaki Regional Council, NIWA and others.

The project, *Sharing the Waiwhakaiho*, has woven different threads of the river's story into multimedia presentations including website, video and artworks.

A defining entity for three iwi and associated hapu, the Waiwhakaiho River is one of more than 300 waterways flowing from Mount Taranaki and one of the region's largest rivers, with high cultural, aesthetic, recreational, ecological and economic value to the people and iwi of Taranaki. Its catchment includes part of Egmont National Park, three marae sites, areas of intensive agricultural land use, and urban and recreational sites.

As the *Sharing the Waiwhakaiho* project progressed, social scientists collected and recorded diverse experiences, memories and images of the Waiwhakaiho, including the streambank planting undertaken by farmers as part of the Taranaki Regional Council's Riparian Management Programme.

The Council's Tupare heritage property, on the



Farmer Wayne Peters and Massey researcher Tom Phillips at the Waiwhakaiho River.

banks of the Waiwhakaiho within the New Plymouth urban area, has also been the venue for activities associated with the project.

Massey's Department of People, Environment and Planning developed *Sharing the Waiwhakaiho* as part of its 'Living Lab' concept, designed to encourage researchers

from multiple academic disciplines to collaborate with a community to create a deeper understanding and appreciation of a natural entity or physical space from many perspectives.

See www.waiwhakaiho.org.nz for more information.

Speakers inspire at mobility forums

Christine Windle was among inspirational guest speakers at Taranaki Total Mobility annual forums in the run-up to Christmas.

Christine talked to the forum in Hawera about life as an above-the-knee amputee, her campaign for the health sector to review its approach to the physical integration of prosthetics with stumps, and her voluntary work with Patea Old Folks Association, Taranaki Amputees Society and South Taranaki Coastguard.

She and others are also working to establish a New Zealand equivalent to the UK's Amputees in Action, which provides amputee actors for the film industry and for emergency and military training simulations. Amputees are uniquely able to provide realistic and challenging problems for those who train for disaster and rescue – search and rescue teams, the Fire Service, police, ambulance services and the military.

Philip Wells, who has been paralysed from the shoulders down since a rugby injury as a teen, told the forum in New Plymouth about the challenges of being in a wheelchair for 35 years. In earlier times there were steps and stairs everywhere, no accessible toilets, and lifts in only two public buildings in New Plymouth. Everything was a lot more difficult, including getting on and off planes, attending events at Rugby Park or the Bowl of Brooklands and even going to the movies.

So much has changed, and Philip played a part in this as a member of advisory groups and New Plymouth District Council's accessible working party. He says the working party has the ability to change things but people need to speak out so the committee can get traction on their particular problem.



Christine Windle.

More than 50 people attended the New Plymouth Total Mobility forum and a dozen were at the Hawera event.

Total Mobility, which is administered by the Taranaki Regional Council in this region, provides taxi subsidies for people with impairments that prevent them from using public transport. For more information, go to www.trc.govt.nz/total-mobility/.

Coming to Hollard Gardens in April



Expert and budding gardeners alike are invited to join legendary Bugman, Ruud Kleinpaste, for a field trip at Hollard Gardens from 1pm to 3pm on Wednesday 15 April.

Take a tour of the gardens and learn about the importance of insects, spiders and other creepy crawlies.

Bring your raincoat and gumboots. Children welcome.

Taranaki Regional Council Facts File

Address: Private Bag 713,
Stratford 4352

Street Address: 47 Cloten Road,
Stratford 4332

Telephone: 06 765 7127

Fax: 06 765 5097

Email: info@trc.govt.nz

Websites: www.trc.govt.nz
www.taranakibus.info
www.tupare.info
www.hollardgardens.info
www.pukeiti.org.nz
www.taranakiplants.net.nz

Twitter: @TaranakiRC
@TaranakiCD
@TaranakiRG

Facebook: TaranakiCivilDefence
TaranakiRegionalGardens

Environmental hotline: 0800 736 222

Civil Defence freephone: 0800 900 049

NP bus information: 0800 827 287

REGIONAL COUNCILLORS

New Plymouth Constituency:

Tom Cloke 06 753 5586
Peter Horton 06 758 8011
Moira Irving 021 944 809
David Lean 06 753 3325
Craig Williamson 027 687 4122

North Taranaki Constituency:

Mike Davey 06 756 7126
Roger Maxwell 06 752 3622

South Taranaki Constituency:

Michael Joyce 06 274 5800
David MacLeod (Chair) 06 278 5577
Neil Walker 06 278 7541

Stratford Constituency:

Brian Jeffares 06 765 7773

MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings are held at the Council chamber, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford, unless otherwise stated.

Monday 30 March, 10am: Executive Committee.

Tuesday 7 April, 10.30am: Ordinary Council meeting.

Tuesday 28 April, 10.30am: Consents and Regulatory Committee.

Thursday 30 April, 10.30am: Policy and Planning Committee.

Monday 11 May, 10am: Executive Committee.

Monday 11 May, 10.30am: Ordinary Council meeting (LTP submissions)

See www.trc.govt.nz/meetings-calendar/ and www.trc.govt.nz/agendas-and-minutes/

Hallard Gardens

Harvest Festival



**Free
entry**

Easter Monday 6 April

10am - 3pm

Great prizes!

Bring your most unusual vegetable and enter the following categories:

- ◆ Most unusual pumpkin
 - ◆ Smallest pumpkin
 - ◆ Scariest scarecrow
 - ◆ Biggest pumpkin
 - ◆ Best vegetable creation
 - ◆ Best vegetable dish
- (theme "Garden Tool")

ENTERTAINMENT • FAMILY FUN • DELICIOUS FOOD

Music from: K 2 The Power - a cosmic folk duo who will take you on a magical mystery tour of the 60s to the 90s.

Taranaki Ukestra - the Ukulele orchestra will be playing from midday

Hallard Gardens
tread the soils

1686 Upper Manaia Rd, Kaponga
Ph: 0800 736 222
www.hollardgardens.info

