



Whitewater NZ

"Our purpose is to preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely"

Annual Report to Members 2017-18

August 2018

President's Report

Another year has flown by and it has been another year of change on many fronts. We had a change of Government and for arguably the first time, the health of our rivers was one of the biggest election issues. The Waitaha hydro concession application continues to test the resolve of our community and the lack of a decision 20 months after the hearing would imply it is also testing that of the Minister. We will continue to hold the Department and the Government to account on this. It should be noted that the decision maker role was passed from Minister Sage to Minister Parker. Access and Conservation issues continue to raise their head across the country and will remain major areas of focus for us for the foreseeable future. There is more commentary on both topics further on in this report.

At last years Whitewater NZ AGM, we changed the constitution and modernised the previous construct of elected roles for specific, narrowly focused positions. The board members are now jacks of all kayaking trades, which seems to reflect the kiwi kayaking mentality better and enable the team to work on the things that they are best suited to or most passionate about. For the most part this is working, but we still struggle to get some of the day-today administration tasks covered. We are also trialling an online AGM this year to reduce travel costs and make it easier for members to participate. This is no replacement for valuable face to face time, but does mean we can dispatch with the compliance activities more effectively.

This year will see some of the current board stand for re-election for another year and number of new nominations that will bring fresh thinking and energy. My personal view is that board membership should be a finite stint, ideally three years or so to keep the roles sustainable in terms of the time commitment and ensure participation is energised and evolving. We need to share the learning (there is a lot!) and ensure the up and coming leaders in our community are given an opportunity to serve and upskill .

Although there is no data to support this, it feels like the whitewater community is becoming more connected and united, which has got to be a good thing. Packrafting is on a roll as new way to enjoy rivers and several clubs have seen increasing membership. Whitewater events that occur across the summer continue to be well supported and the Tekapo course had its busiest season to date. The WWNZ Regional Ambassadors are proving invaluable, connecting on common issues and working together or simply giving local focus to resolve local issues. These are often safety, access or conservation related. And recently an IT group has formed to design and build an app that is intended to help both paddlers on a trip and the conservation effort to preserve our rivers.

Finally, thank you to every individual that has given generously of their time to our rivers and the advancement of our chosen "sport," although at times it feels more akin to an addictive religion than a mere activity. Our gratitude and respect goes out to the members of the board, our patron who is always willing to help out or provide guidance after lifetime of service, the regional ambassadors looking after local runs and sorting out local issues, the people working behind the scenes running events, discovering new runs, sharing and caring for the rivers, the club stalwarts that train and guide others, run trips and get people passionate about dancing down the river in the wild, with a boat and paddle as a seamless part of the journey. Now that is something worth fighting for.

Membership

A drive for membership at the Citroen Race, Bullerfest, Wairoa releases and Kaituna events plus the reduced cost of individual membership (now \$10 per year, the same as members affiliated through clubs) has increased the number of full individual members. We are working on ways to smooth the joining and renewal process and hope that this can be done in conjunction with the launch of a new website later in 2018. Huge thank you to the organisers of the events for their support in promoting WWNZ, and to Buller festival for the \$200 donation towards protecting our rivers.

The changes made to the membership categories at the 2017 AGM have also resulted in a significant upswing in the numbers of paddlers we are now able to count as members. In the past we have counted only the paid financial members of the association, despite many thousands of paddlers being represented by us through their clubs. Club membership has remained steady, and we are working with those clubs who do not affiliate their full membership to find ways of recording all the members they have so we can work out how to best support all members of the kayaking community.

We currently have approximately 4500 members and supporters (we are unsure of the exact numbers as we do not have accurate numbers of members in the clubs).

Regional Ambassadors

Last year Whitewater NZ established a network of Regional Ambassadors to cover 18 regions around the country. Regional Ambassadors have an important role, even though some have had little real work to get through, ultimately it makes us stronger when we have a local person to call on to deal with and help identify local issues. A huge thank you to the paddlers who have volunteered for these roles, a list of ambassadors is included at the end of this document.

Conservation

Waitaha River and the Fate of Morgan Gorge

The Waitaha hydro concession from DOC has still not had a decision delivered, and the latest chapter in this tale has introduced another twist in the saga. The Minister of Conservation passed the decision over to the Minister of Environment, due to a perceived conflict of interest. The applicant (Westpower) has offered modified conditions including money to support a Trust administered by Tai Poutini Polytechnic to support whitewater training and tourism on the West Coast, but conditional on the installation of the hydro scheme. No consultation with the local or national

whitewater community has been involved. Just why DoC thinks that this latest offer from Westpower is relevant to conservation is far from clear.

In addition to submitting against Westpowers proposal, WWNZ has written to the Minister outlining our position and requesting a meeting. We maintain that the Westpower hydro proposal should not be approved as it fundamentally does not pass the necessary tests of the Conservation Act. Watch this space as a decision is expected "shortly".

Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order (WCO) Application

The first stage of the Hearing by a Special Tribunal was completed in Napier late last year. This has dealt with the outstanding river values above the Whanawhana cableway, which is where our interest lies. Evidence has been presented by interested parties including Whitewater NZ and paddlers and clubs from throughout the country. The Hearing has now been adjourned awaiting various scientific reports from the Hawkes Bay Regional Council dealing with groundwater, and that are considered important for informing the second stage of the Hearing from Whanawhana down to the sea, which is where the interests of our co-applicants lie. The final part of the Hearing will start no earlier than November this year and we expect that the final decision should be released next year some time.

Rangitata River

A Hearing by the Canterbury Regional Council and Ashburton District Council has been completed in Ashburton to consider the consent application by Rangitata Diversion Race Management Ltd to take a further 10 cumecs of fresh/flood flow water from the Rangitata River and for building a storage pond for further irrigation use in the district. We along with local canoe clubs and the New Zealand Rivers Association presented comprehensive evidence to the Hearing and opposed the water take, but negotiated some consent conditions around provisions for a small white water facility that RDRML will build should they get consent to build the pond. The commissioners confirmed their decision to approve the application in July with certain conditions, including the building of a whitewater course. The decision report can be found online here:

<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/do-it-online/resource-consents/notifications-and-submissions/current-consent-projects/rangitata-diversion-race-management-ltd/>

Kawarau River

The Queenstown Lakes District Council has finally reached a decision to uphold and not change the Navigation Safety ByLaw 2014 (NSB) as requested by Kawarau Jet Services Holdings Ltd (KJet) that would have permitted KJet to run commercial jet boating operations on the Kawarau River down below the Arrow River confluence to the bungy bridge. KJet have been trying to get a consent to do this for a number of years now, which we and other groups have strongly opposed, as it would compromise the Chinese Dogleg run. KJet still have a consent application lodged. However, it is most

likely impossible for the consent to be granted given the navigation restriction imposed by the NSB. We will have to remain vigilant on this matter as KJet will no doubt continue to try to get what it wants.

Looking to the Future

The project to stocktake all development (dams, intakes, mining, dredging, etc) that affects white water users so that data can be used as an advocacy tool, evidence in new developments, and to ensure we are well informed when resource consents come up for renewal, has been taken as far as it can at present. We need access to a key dam database, which we are working on, to complete this project.

Access

Wilderness Areas and National Parks

As we reported last year, equity of access for kayakers into Wilderness Areas and National Parks is something we want to see addressed. Our view is that the access outcome for kayakers is often inequitable compared to other outdoor recreational groups. As an example, Tai Poutini Westland National Park has 15 designated landing sites for mountaineering whereas kayakers have zero access to any rivers in the park. However clawing back access to our wild rivers is not a short term job and will take persistence. We have engaged with both the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) and found that in principle, we are mostly aligned on flight access for kayaking.

We are continuing to work with DOC on the draft management plan for the Westland Tai Poutini National Park, due out in September. We hope to see new flight access points in the draft however regardless of whether we do or not it will take a lot of submissions supporting the thrust of our argument for equitable flight access for kayakers and other white water paddlesports to make it into the final plan. Our focus over the next year will also cover the plans for Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks and ensuring that kayak flight access is accommodated in a sensitive fashion.

Wilderness Zones

Access into Wilderness Zones is more problematic. It will require a change in the law and finding a way to accommodate in-frequent and rare excursions for kayak exploration and ensure that the wilderness remains a truly wild experience for all is not a simple matter. More work is required and we thank FMC for the positive way in which they have engaged with us on this issue to date.

Local Access Issues

There are a number of local access issues being worked on currently. Drive in access via a farm track to the Toaroha is on hold whilst discussions are held with the local farmer, who is understandably concerned about the spread of mycoplasma bovis. Flight access to the Arahura is currently on hold pending a management plan review by Mawhera Corporation, who are the trustee managing the surrounding reserve. In the north we are to meet with Mercury regarding a workable protocol to prevent the hassles seen recently on the Aratiatia and this is another one that will take a while to get everyone on the same page. Finally, access to the get in on the Tuakopai over a short section of farmland can be problematic and another that seems solvable, particularly if paddlers can ensure they avoid parking on the farmers access road.

Releases

Scheduled hydro releases over the last year in the North and South islands went ahead mostly as planned and continue to be well supported across the country. There was a rahui on the Tongariro that meant one of the Access 13/14 releases was cancelled. The upper section of the Waikarataheke has been choked up with wood but is now runnable as long as the river is scouted the day before when it is empty. It was disappointing to see some kayakers paddle over the Access 10 weir on the Tongariro - this directly jeopardises releases as the hydro companies see it as a Health and Safety issue. Please don't be the kayaker who compromises the releases that so many of us enjoy. Stay off and well away from all hydro structures.

The project to install a more reliable gate on the Mangahao is making slow progress after a wet summer delayed some of the work required to determine which of the two engineering options were viable - a new through-dam outlet or a new vertical shaft and gate in the existing tunnel, downstream of the defective gate. Our expectations were for releases re-commencing late summer 2019, but there is a risk that this is pushed out another year. However, King Country Energy are actively working on the issue and communicating regularly after 7 years of delay and obfuscation, and the positive engagement from King Country Energy is acknowledged.

Treasurer's Report

We have maintained a sound position. The audited Statement of Financial Performance shows a 50% increase in membership revenue and a 25% reduction in costs. However, there are a number of conservation related expenses which have been carried into the 2018/19 year and these show as accounts payable in the Statement of Financial Position. The accounts have been audited by Zane Colville and his report and the Financial Statements are available to members in conjunction with this annual report.

Vice-President's Report

The main focus for me as the Vice President (VP) in the last year was the internal workings of the Board. With the Boards blessing I have been designing policies and procedures to hopefully improve the Board's effectiveness. These policies are only at the start of their journey; they are living documents and should be tweaked when necessary. I suggest moving forward that the VP role is to manage the internal policies and procedures to help with the day to day running of the Board. This gives the President space to focus on strategy, looking upward and outward.

Induction Pack

Designed to on-board new board members faster. This will ensure that new Board members feel like they can add value earlier. Needs reviewing 3 months after AGM to ensure it is working sufficiently.

Succession Planning (Process and Timetable)

To help the organisation plan for the future; being able to shoulder tap individuals in the whitewater community when expertise is needed.

Code of Behaviour

Giving some direction on what is expected and what is not acceptable behaviour when volunteering for WWNZ.

Meeting Agenda Process

Creating a structured meeting agenda a week prior to the monthly meeting so to encourage board members to read agenda and topics over weekend prior so members can add value to discussion. Rotating the meeting chair responsibilities around the team would add value and build capability with individuals.

Communications Systems

An intro into our communications systems

Expenses Policy (Designed by Robin)

Creating guidelines for Board members on the expenses Board members can and cannot claim back from WWNZ.

Job Allocation

To help Board members understand when to delegate to the Regional Ambassadors or do the work themselves.

Ambassador Liaison

This past year the Board created the Regional Ambassador roles to help connect better with the whitewater community, to lift engagement and to grow the expertise and interest for future Board prospects. This has been a successful experiment and requires a current Board member to liaise with regional ambassadors to keep them engaged. I suggest that in the upcoming year we involve and grow this capability more, this is only the start.

Kaituna Liaison

Have been working with Dylan and the local paddling community to push the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to install sirens, lights and to better use their social media channels to inform the public when the Kaituna River flows are to be changed during daylight hours. Still needs more pressure applied to ensure that these discussed warning systems are put into place.

Whitewater Extreme Events

Went to all/most of the Extreme events here in Bay of Plenty with WWNZ banners and flags. Gave away cooked sausages to lift our presence in region. WWNZ cannot rest on our laurels; we need an ongoing presence at all whitewater events. To grow our membership we need to show more visible support to the greater whitewater community.

Science Team

Creating a science team to help grow the knowledge and expertise within the organisation to help with the complicated and often very political issues surrounding our freshwater resources. This is still very much in its infancy stage and requires more deliberate action to ensure it is activated.

Where to from here?

When we held our AGM this time last year we spent some time working through what we needed to focus on in the coming year. The three main areas were lifting our engagement with the whitewater community, improving access for whitewater paddlesports and river conservation. Whilst there is still a lot of work required, for the most part I think we are progressing and punching well above our weight, getting heard where it counts and generally lifting the profile of whitewater paddlesports.

There are also some areas where we have slipped backwards, areas where we seem to lack the time and resources required and in part that comes down to ensuring we are directing our energy into the most important areas. It is encouraging to see a strong group of new board members put their hands up and we look forward to moving our waka faster and further over the next year.

We also wish to acknowledge those stepping down this year. We will miss Ashley Cheeseman's leadership and James Rae's advocacy. Doug Rankin and Jonathan Hunt have put in a considerable effort into Whitewater NZ over a very long period of time and we acknowledge and thank them for their generous contribution and positive difference they have made to whitewater paddlesports.

Regional Ambassadors

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WWNZ Board 2017/2018

Nigel Parry - President	Ashley Cheeseman - Vice President	Rachael Moore
Dan Kirkman	Robin Rutter Bauman	Justin Venable
Jonathan Hunt	James Rae	Doug Rankin