

Report No.	19-187
Information Only - No Decision Required	

## HARBOURMASTER'S REPORT

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the **Manawatu River Users' Advisory Group (MRUAG)** with an update on matters relating to navigation and safety on the Manawatu River and its tributaries.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-187.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no direct financial impact arising from matters discussed in this item.

### 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this to be sufficient to advise the public

### 5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. There is no significant business risk from matters discussed in this item.

### 6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. This report covers the period June – December 2019

### 7. RIVER EVENTS

- 7.1. The annual meeting and BBQ for Honorary Enforcement Officers and support **organisations** is scheduled for 5 December 2019 at the **Manawatu Marine Boating Club (MMBC)**. The meeting invitees also include members of Manawatu Coastguard and MMBC. These meetings are very beneficial in maintaining and enhancing the important relationships between the organisations and members and a great way to pass on our thanks for their support and efforts over the past year.
- 7.2. The Manawatu Power Boat Club have advised of the date for their Annual Gold Cup regatta which is 14-15 March 2020 and will again be held at Whirokino. A temporary reservation will be applied for, and supported by a public notice placed in the Manawatu Standard prior to the event. The Harbourmaster will make effort to attend part of the event as invited by the organisers. The Club have also advised of a planned 'Kilo Run' scheduled tentatively for 11 April 2020, an event where boats attempt to set new speed records over a 1 kilometre run, again which will be held at Whirokino, which will also be publicly notified.
- 7.3. The Harbourmaster has not received notification of any further events planned for the Manawatu River at this time.

## 8. GENERAL COMMENT

### Monitoring of Recreational Activity over the summer period at the Manawatu Estuary, Whirokino, and lower reaches of the Manawatu River – Involvement in Maritime NZ 'No Excuses' Campaign 2019/2020.

- 8.1. Members have been kept well informed in recent times in regard to on water recreational activities at the above locations. Those discussions have previously arisen in regard to vessel operator behavior, in particular Jet skis, over the last two summers.
- 8.2. The Harbourmaster has continued to monitor recreational activities on the lower reaches of the river and has had ongoing discussions with stakeholders over this time. Previous meetings with the MMBC Executive Committee and other stakeholders over this time have confirmed the level of comfort that exists in regard to the ongoing monitoring of recreational activities on the river and potential measures that have been adopted over recent summers where recreational activity on the river increases markedly.
- 8.3. In reviewing the measures undertaken over the past summer periods there has been general agreement that this work is contributing to an improvement in the overall behavior of recreational users, but also that we need to adapt and continue to take opportunities to encourage responsible use of this waterway and surrounding areas, and implement measures to ensure that occurs.
- 8.4. Those measures have included monitoring over the summer seasons by a number of agencies under the direction of the Harbourmaster, with the assistance of the following organisations:
  - Manawatu Coastguard;
  - Manawatu River Honorary Wardens;
  - Manawatu Marine Boating Club;
  - Foxton Beach Volunteer Beach Wardens;
  - Foxton Surf Lifesaving Club.
- 8.5. Further to the above, the Harbourmaster has also taken the opportunity over the past 12 **months** to meet with **Maritime NZ (MNZ)** officers who are involved in the now annual No Excuses Campaign as part of the Safer Boating Forum. The No Excuses Campaign, which focuses on recreational activities, and on those undertaking them, adhering to Maritime rules and local bylaws, has continued to grow and this year there are 18 Local Authorities, including Horizons Regional Council taking part. For Manawatu River recreational activities this is the next step in the path we have been on in terms of safety and control of the various recreational activities on the waterway and in encouraging the adherence of the Maritime Rules and River bylaws. The Harbourmaster is delighted to have the support of the Regional Council and Maritime NZ to run this campaign in our Region and on the Manawatu River. With this being our first involvement with the No Excuses Campaign we will have a monitoring, education and compliance focus, rather than enforcement where we will take the opportunity to utilise the various mechanisms of the campaign to educate and encourage boaties to act responsibly for not only the safety of themselves and their crew but also that of other users of the waterway. Dates for the No Excuses Campaign are yet to be confirmed but at this stage we are looking at 3 days over late February / March 2020 with the MMBC boat launching ramp at Foxton Beach providing the ideal location. These events will be well advertised and promoted with the MMBC included in the promotion and Coordination of local involvement in the Campaign. Members will be kept informed as planning for the campaign comes together.

- 8.6. The following recent Maritime NZ media release re the No Excuses Campaign is included for Members information:

*“A record 18 harbourmasters around the country are taking part in this year’s ‘No Excuses’ campaign, focusing on recreational boaties who don’t carry or wear lifejackets or whose speed on the water is unsafe. The fourth annual campaign gets underway tomorrow – Saturday, 12 October – and involves harbourmasters and Maritime New Zealand Maritime Officers working side by side for at least five random days in each region over the summer. Action will be taken against boaties who break lifejacket and speed rules, including infringement notices of up to \$300. The campaign has been steadily growing since it started in 2016, initially involving eight councils and Maritime NZ working together in each area to reinforce safety rules and regulations to recreational boaties. Maritime Officers and harbourmasters will check that people are complying with the safety rules, including those for life jackets, speed, dive flags and towing with an observer. Maritime NZ Deputy Director, Sharyn Forsyth, said it was great to see the campaign moving for the first time into the Buller, Gisborne, Taranaki and the Manawatu areas. “Harbourmasters and Maritime Officers are working together on the water to ensure boaties know, understand and follow the rules,” she said. The “No Excuses” campaign will be run for five days by each of the councils and on Lake Taupo at different times between today and 31 March 2020. “Up to two-thirds of recreational boaties who drown might have been saved if they wore lifejackets,” Ms Forsyth said. “Boaties speeding in busy areas is dangerous and can injure children, swimmers, divers and people in small craft. “Safe boaties follow the rules each and every time they go on the water. There are no excuses for breaking the rules and causing risk to yourself and others.”*

- 8.7. One of the main concerns that has come to the Harbourmaster over recent times has been speed of boat and jetski’s in particular, when transiting through the section of river adjacent to the boat launching ramp at Foxton Beach. A 5 knot speed restriction applies through this section of river 200 metres upstream and downstream of the launching ramp and is sign posted at both ends on the Foxton Beach side however the restriction is often ignored by users entering that section. Over the coming summer months the Harbourmaster will be installing speed restriction buoys (**please note image below**) in middle of the river at the points 200 metres upstream and downstream of the boat launching ramp to clearly depict and encourage adherence of the speed restriction within this often congested section of the waterway. Compliance of the speed restriction will be monitored and will inform further actions that may need to be taken to ensure compliance in this area in the future.



## 9. NEW MANAWATU RIVER BRIDGE BUILD – UPDATE

- 9.1. Members will be aware of the construction that is now nearing completion on the new river bridge across the Manawatu River, and the replacement of the old Whirokino Trestle bridge across the adjacent Regional Council Floodway.
- 9.2. As members will also be aware Navigation Safety measures have previously been adopted by the implementation of a 5 knot speed restriction on the river, 200 metres upstream and downstream of the bridge construction site, with all river users, including all known river user groups, advised of both the speed restriction on the impacted section of the river and of the hazard to Navigation Safety. Brian Perry Civil (new bridge builders) also installed an information board at the Whirokino boat ramp on Matararapa Road to inform river users in that area.
- 9.3. As the new river bridge construction is near completion the focus will soon turn to the removal of the existing river bridge. Preliminary discussions with the Brian Perry Civil have centered around the necessity to leave all current speed restrictions in place until the works to remove the old bridge are completed. Further discussions will also need to be had

around further safety implications and measures that may need to be taken during the operation to remove the old bridge and bridge piles etc. Members will be kept informed of further restrictions and/or river closures as these decisions are made.

## 10. MANAWATU GORGE SLIP – CLOSURE OF RIVER

- 10.1. This item is brought to members for the purpose of an update.
- 10.2. Members will recall that at the December 2017 MRUAG meeting, an item was brought to outline actions taken in regard to the risk to river users in the Manawatu Gorge from rock fall due to cliff instability, with the potential for a large slip to occur in an area known as “Kerry’s Wall”. This was highlighted by the **NZ Transport Authority (NZTA)** which resulted in the road through the gorge being permanently closed.
- 10.3. Whilst the risk in the area of Kerry’s Wall had been quantified by NZTA in terms of size, the gorge is some 9km long and the potential for large slips to occur in other areas also exists, particularly following a major earthquake. This could potentially result in a complete blockage of the gorge creating an extreme upstream flood risk, and a downstream risk, if there was an uncontrolled release of water from behind a resultant dam created by a slip.
- 10.4. Actions taken at the time included:
  - Closing the gorge to on-water activities via public notice under the navigation and water safety bylaw. Whilst we cannot police the gorge 24/7 we can control those wishing to hold specific on-water events in the area;
  - Advisory to all known river user groups of the issue;
  - Erection of signage at strategic river entry points warning of the danger;
  - Engagement with key stake holders (Horizons, Department of Conservation, Palmerston North City Council, Tararua District Council, Kiwi Rail, and New Zealand Police) to develop a response plan on notification of a slip affecting the river occurring.
- 10.5. As a result of the slip potential identified at Kerry’s Wall by the NZTA **GNS Science (GNS)** were subsequently engaged by Horizons to try and quantify the actual risk through the entire gorge, not just in the area highlighted by NZTA. The following methodology was used by GNS:
  - A literature review of all relevant documentation/reports associated with slope failure within the gorge;
  - The production of a report on the possible associated flood hazard effects arising from slope failure within the gorge to determine the level of risk; and
  - Upstream flood modelling based upon the risk scenarios and flood modelling outcomes using a simple ‘bathtub’ approach.
- 10.6. The report from GNS has now been received and after consideration of the findings the decision has been made to uplift the advisory of closure of the gorge to on water activities to an advisory of caution in regard to the potential of rockfall through the gorge at any time. At the time of writing of this report relevant signage is being developed which will replace the current advisories at the two locations being Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge carpark, and Ferry reserve at the Balance bridge on the eastern end. While an image of the new signage is not currently available it will be consistent in design with the existing signs and will incorporate the following wording :

*“Due to the risk of rock fall within Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge from the roadbridge downstream of Ferry Reserve to the confluence of the Manawatu River and the Pohangina River, river users are advised to exercise caution when using this area”.*

- 10.7. The installation of the new signage will coincide with relevant stakeholder engagement and media (incl social media) advisories.
- 10.8. Review of current Navigation Safety Bylaw – aligned with legislative requirements the current Bylaw is due for review in 2020. The Harbourmaster will be looking to the MRUAG to provide input into this process.

## 11. SIGNIFICANCE

- 11.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Ross Brannigan  
**HARBOURMASTER**

Ged Shirley  
**GROUP MANAGER REGIONAL SERVICES  
& INFORMATION**

## ANNEXES

There are no attachments to this report.