

Dumped fence gets attention

BY **TODD WARD**

THE lack of safety fencing between Te Kuiti's Skate Park and nearby railway tracks has come under fire from resident Inia Johnson.

Erected in 1999, the fence currently surrounds only part of the park's basketball court leaving more than 50m exposed to private KiwiRail-owned land.

Originally the entire area was fenced off, but over time a number of damaged panels have been removed by the Waitomo District Council (WDC), but not replaced.

Unhappy with the situation, which he says is unsafe for children and young people playing

there, Mr Johnson took two pieces of fence that he says were already broken and left them outside the Waitomo District Council and *Waitomo News* buildings on February 26.

Following an article about the incident in the *Waitomo News*, a week later Mr Johnson admits taking the fence panels, but denied vandalising them.

"I simply took a broken fence that after years of neglect collapsed in on itself.

"I then placed it in front of your faces so that you could not hide from the matter.

"I took the most direct path, sparing me the energy of arguing."

TO P4



RAILING FOR SAFETY: Te Kuiti man Inia Johnson wants the Waitomo District Council to erect more safety fencing between the Te Kuiti Skate Park on Carroll St and the nearby North Island Main Trunk line.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism John Key painted a positive picture for North King Country tourism leaders last week. China is our biggest growth market with a quarter of a million visitors arriving last year, 35% up on the previous year.

NZ tourism market positive says Key

BY **ROBBIE KAY**

PRIME Minister John Key was in a buoyant mood when he spoke to North King Country tourism leaders last week.

Wearing his Minister of Tourism hat, Mr Key painted a positive picture for the group gathered at HUUH Cafe in Waitomo Village.

He said there were 2.9 million visitors to New Zealand in the year to January 2015 - 4.3% up on the previous year.

Statistics show almost 705,000 visitors arrived in December and January alone.

"Christmas is usually the busiest week, but over the Chinese New Year (February 19) I believe only nine South Island motels had any vacancies," said Mr Key.

"These are phenomenal numbers and the growth curve is really steep."

He said while about half the country's tourists come from Australia, the biggest growth market is China at a quarter of a million visitors and growing at about 35% per year.

China Southern Airlines and Air NZ are both increasing their flights to service this growth.

TO P3

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Bread tops the chuck out list

A NATIONWIDE campaign to prevent millions of dollars worth of edible food being wasted each year has gained strong support in the North King Country.

The wastage was discovered when an audit of council rubbish bins throughout the country was undertaken by Waste Not Consulting Ltd last year to find out exactly what foods Kiwis were throwing away and why.

Highest on the list was bread (10%), followed by leftovers, potatoes, apples, poultry and bananas.

As part of Love Food, Hate Waste's National Food Waste Prevention Project supported by WasteMINZ, 17 councils throughout the country surveyed 1365 people and investigated 1402 rubbish bins, to find out why food is being wasted and what can be done about it.

The results found that the average NZ household throws out \$563 or 79kg worth of edible food waste per year.

For the Waikato region, that means more than \$84 million worth of edible food is tossed out annually.

For the Waipa district the average is \$476 per household or \$22 million for the district per year.

WasteMINZ sector group co-ordinator Jenny Marshall says eliminating this from landfills would have the same effect as reducing CO2 equivalent emissions by 325,975 tonnes – equivalent to planting

130,390 trees or taking 118,107 cars off the road for a year.

"What came as a surprise was the amount of food that's being thrown away which is still edible," she says.

"Whole loaves of bread, unopened yoghurts, uneaten apples are just some of the foods that have been found in audits across the country."

To help reverse the trend, Ms Marshall says there are some simple steps that can be done to reduce food waste and stretch household budgets.

- Store your bread in the freezer instead of on the counter to stop it going mouldy or drying out.

- Stew excess fruit that might be going soft or blend into a smoothie.

- Check your fridge before you go shopping to see what needs using up.

- Turn your leftover vegetables into a frittata, or make fried rice.

COUNCIL SUPPORT

Otorohanga District Council engineering support officer Robyn Hodges, who manages the district's refuse contract for kerbside collections, supports the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign and believes most North King Country residents will too.

She works closely with Waitomo District Council as Otorohanga's kerbside waste is disposed of at the Waitomo District Landfill



WASTE NOT: Love Food, Hate Waste is urging New Zealanders to be more diligent when throwing away food following a recent study that showed the average New Zealand household throws out \$563 or 79kg worth of edible food per year. PHOTO SUPPLIED

in Te Kuiti.

"Having an evening where you use up your surplus foods in a quiche, an omelette or a stir fry is not only a cost-effective way of feeding your family but it also reduces food waste," she says.

"And composting all other food that isn't edible goes a long way to keeping it out of landfills."

Ms Hodges says reducing the amount of discarded food goes hand-in-hand with other North King Country recycling initiatives such as kerbside bins and drop-off stations

(for paper, plastic and glass) which have been well embraced in both districts.

"When it comes to surplus food waste I think it's just about educating people and informing them of the benefits not only to the environment but also how it can make their money go further.

"So I think the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign is a great initiative and we should all get in behind it."

For more information on how to reduce food waste, visit [facebook.com/lovefood-hatewastenz](https://www.facebook.com/lovefood-hatewastenz)

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Dumped fence gets attention

FROM P1

He believes had there been sufficient fencing, it would have prevented the death of Te Kuiti teen Ngaremu King who was hit and killed by a train in October 2014 as he attempted to cross the Main Trunk Line adjacent to the Carroll St Skate Park to get help for his injured brother (*Waitomo News*, October 30).

"My message is just about safety.

"Why isn't there a boundary fence that separates the skate park from the clearly hazardous railway tracks?

"And why has it taken years for the council to honour basic safety principles?

"This tragic accident shouldn't have happened in the first place."

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

WDC chief executive Chris Ryan says \$23,000 has already been allocated by the council to completely replace the skate park fence with higher, more robust security barriers and work is expected to begin in six to eight weeks.

In relation to Mr Johnson's concerns, Mr Ryan says if he had approached the council and asked what was being done, he would have freely been given the answers.

"If he had taken the time to make a genuine enquiry he would have found out that quite a bit is being done and, has been done, by the council to try and work with KiwiRail to make their

private property safe by improved boundary fencing.

"That's what we're talking about here KiwiRail's private property, which only becomes dangerous if people trespass onto it.

"And to date, two new sections of boundary fencing have been completed to stop people from accidentally entering there.

"It's no secret what we're doing so there is no need for grandiose messages to convey a concern.

"The whole idea that the council is not doing the best it can with a neighbouring landowner to try and put boundary fences up is just not correct. We are committed to making that area as secure as possible."

ONGOING WORKS

Following the fatality in October last year, WDC and KiwiRail have spent \$70,000 (50/50 share) to improve safety measures along the rail corridor in Te Kuiti.

In December, two sections of new boundary fencing were completed opposite Te Kuiti Primary School and from King St East to behind the i-SITE building on Rora St.

Work will soon begin on completing one more section from the Ward St intersection to King St East.

WDC has also recently spent more than \$2000 repairing damaged fence panels and posts directly behind the Japanese Gardens which borders the Main Trunk Line.