

Makeover down under



A RAILWAY bridge underpass in Te Kuiti is in the first stages of a much needed makeover thanks to the district's youth leaders.

Maniapoto Trust Board's Environmental Team's senior project manager Ngahua Herangi says the Mangaokewa Stream underpass was desperately in need of "beautification" and should be an area for recreational use.

Instead she says the underpass, near Te Kuiti Bowling Club, is plagued by rubbish, dead trees and a "tatty wire fence".

PAINT OVER

In December, Waitomo District Youth Council members began to turn the space into a user-friendly area and have painted traditional Maori patterns on the railway foundations with help from Otorohanga artist Daniel Ormsby.

Youth members Te Hua Matehuria and Terirau Takerei designed the artwork on the underside of the bridge and middle pillar, while Mr Ormsby painted the pillar closest to the river.

"The pattern reflects



UNDERPASS OVERHAUL: Waitomo District Youth Council members organised a clean-up of the Mangaokewa Stream, which included beautifying the railway bridge underpass near Te Kuiti Bowling Club in December. Otorohanga artist Daniel Ormsby (above & top left) helped youth members including Louis Bell (left) design and paint the traditional Maori patterns.

the swirls in the river which are all connected, and represents the community," he says.

"The river is a part of the community, and what happens to one person may affect another whether they realise it or not. Much like throwing a stone and causing a ripple effect - it can have an influence somewhere else."

The collaborative effort was aided by a donation of \$800 from KiwiRail.

"I sent KiwiRail an email one day about what we were doing, and a couple days later I was in a shop buying paint with their blessing," says Mrs Herangi.

"They have also indicated they are going to donate a further \$10,000 for community enhance-

ment which we have planned to use for the underpass."

Mrs Herangi says ideas for that revamp include improving fencing and installing picnic tables and rubbish bins.

"If we got everyone involved, cleaning it all up and improving the underpass and stream, it wouldn't be such a complex situation."

KCE launches new fund

ELECTRICITY generator and retailer King Country Energy (KCE) has launched a new fund to provide financial support to community groups and organisations working to improve life for people in the King Country region.

The KCE Heartland Community Fund put back about \$15,000-\$20,000 into the community annually, with funding rounds held three times a year.

Retail manager Helen Peacock says the fund has been put in place to ensure KCE's support was being spread as widely as possible throughout the organisation's operating areas.

"Over the years KCE has supported thousands of causes that keep our com-

munities safe, healthy, beautiful and connected. The Heartland fund will ensure this support continues."

KCE also supports the Westpac Waikato Air Ambulance and is naming rights sponsor of the netball centres in Te Kuiti, Otorohanga and Taumarunui.

"It's only a small amount, but we know it makes a big difference to the communities that receive it," says Mrs Peacock.

MORNING TEA

Groups and organisations undertaking community projects that meet the Heartland fund's criteria will be able to apply for grants between \$500-\$5000.

A community morning tea for those

wanting to find out more about the fund will be held on Monday, February 10 at the Panorama Motor Inn in Te Kuiti at 10am.

Mrs Peacock says a Facebook page has been started so people can share updates, pictures and videos about how their funding is making a difference.

Applications for the inaugural funding round close on March 31.

Criteria apply and all applications must be made on the official application form.

Information events for community groups and organisations are being held across the region this month.

For more information, contact KCE or visit the website - kce.co.nz

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IN BRIEF

Matariki birthing unit meeting

A MEETING about the possible closure of Te Awamutu's Matariki Birthing Unit is being held from at the Te Awamutu Baptist Hall on Monday. Organisers urge people fighting the closure to attend.

The Waikato District Health Board has reviewed maternity services at the unit and, having found the service is not economic, is consulting the public on options for its future. The meeting begins at 6.30pm at the hall in Teasdale St.

A petition to retain a birthing and postnatal service in the Waipa dis-

trict for rural families has more than 1200 signatures.

Hillview Home to hold first gala

THE empty section next to Hillview Home and Hospital on Hospital Rd in Te Kuiti, will be a hive of activity on Saturday as stall holders and entertainers set up for the resthome's first gala.

Household manager Cathy Moran says there is plenty of support for the fundraiser with lots of food and handcraft stalls ready to go up. "We've got hangi, Indian food, face painting, a bouncy castle and music," she says. The gala runs from 9am-2pm.