



## Annual Report 2013

2012 / 2013 started with a changing of the guard for Whitewater NZ. At last year's AGM in Christchurch Polly Miller stepped down as president, Tony Ward Holmes resigned and Mike Birch also left. While all three have continued to be valuable resources to those that are learning to fill their shoes, their presence has been missed. A very strong core remained in the Executive and they have been invaluable in keeping us on track and achieving success against seemingly formidable opponents.

The Executive for this past year has been:

Hugh Canard - Patron	Graeme Wilson - Vice President
Matthew Bennett - President	Mike Nooney - Communications
Jonathon Hunt - Webmaster	Sarah Fawcett - Finance
Jo McWilliam - Membership	Miriam Odlin - NI Conservation
Doug Rankin - SI Conservation	Aidan Haig - Education
Sean Bellamy - Access	Evan Freshwater - Wgtn Liaison
Stu Richards - Admin	
Debbie Bloxham - NZ Canoeing Editor	

Conservation continues to be of huge importance with no subsidence in the need for water. While many prophesise few large scale hydro power schemes in the future, irrigation is increasing. Kayakers are also facing new challenges in accessing waterways and WHITEWATER NZ is finding more need to assist regional councils and land managers in the development of inclusive policies. It is also clear that issues of water quality are increasingly having a negative impact on all river users.

Really positive developments over the past year have been in events. River Safety and Rescue courses have been very well subscribed and clubs have been very active in making these happen. NZOIA played a valuable role in reviewing the syllabus for these courses and this should be publicly available soon. A number of clubs have run some very high quality events and are openly sharing what it takes make them successful. Slalom NZ has been actively engaging with WHITEWATER NZ and through various means is developing some very good resources that will promote kayaking to young people in particular.

Possibly the biggest celebration of the kayaking year has to be the opening of the Hawea Whitewater Park. This is a Scott Shipley designed venue that was funded by Contact Energy that was part of a mitigation package negotiated by a team led by Maree Baker-Galloway and Tony Ward-Holmes. Gordy Rayner and Roy Bailey were also significant players in this and the efforts of all those involved in the opening event are just incredibly appreciated. Many will agree that this is a world class kayaking facility that we are excited to have and can't wait to see the future talent it will nurture. Thank you to all the people involved along this decade long process.

Looking ahead to the next year much of the work that is currently underway will continue. We hope to have a new Safety Officer on the exec to fill a role that is currently being shared by Jo and Evan. Unfortunately Jo McWilliam has indicated that she will step down from the Exec towards the end of the year and we will be in need of a replacement for her. Sarah Fawcett is also stepping down at the end of this AGM, but has generously offered to assist 'off the exec'. Marnie Fornusek has kindly volunteered to pick up the finance mantel. Mike Nooney who has been fantastic at communicating with the members is stepping down to make way for fatherhood. These are going to be essential functions / roles to fill as we look to increase membership and improve our financial position.



## Conservation

Much of our conservation activity this year has again been largely dominated by the Environment Canterbury (Temporary Commissioners and Improved Water Management) Act 2010, enacted in April 2010, and by the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS), and work that has flowed from that. Whitewater NZ and Whitewater Canoe Club (WWCC) have been part of a series of meetings with some of the commissioners along with other NGOs and interested parties. We have retained a strong interest and involvement in this process as it may be a blue print for what occurs in the rest of the country.

The CWMS has "split" water issues for Canterbury into ten different zones, and assigned a zone committee in each zone to develop via community consultation a zone implementation plan which is intended to achieve the overall objectives of the CWMS. We need to make sure that kayaking values are understood and reflected in the plans that the committees develop – and we are making considerable effort to do so.

We've presented over time to a number of the committees, and submitted on the Zone Implementation Plans the committees have put out – many jointly with the Whitewater Canoe Club (WWCC), and then on the proposed regional plans formulated by Environment Canterbury including the Hurunui and Waiau River Regional Plan and the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan. We have also prepared cases and evidence to present to Hearings on these plans. This has been a mammoth effort by all involved. The case for the Hurunui and Waiau River Regional Plan involved a re-run of our WCO case (with some extra information included) and evidence prepared by eleven witnesses!

This supreme effort has paid dividends. We have had a most significant "win" with the recent commissioners' decision in the Hurunui Waiau River Regional Plan, which includes a no damming provision for the South and North Branches of the Hurunui River (including Lake Sumner). The river catchment down to Surveyors Stream (just below the Maori Gully get out) has now been included in a zone from which development has been excluded. Paddlers owe a big vote of thanks to the many people – not just paddlers, but we have been a very important component - who have helped make this possible. It has been a long drawn out battle with the lodging of the original Water Conservation Order application in 2008 and the subsequent hearings in 2009; the original Hurunui Water Project consent applications; the Dambuster Hurunui protests; the re-application for the Water Conservation Order in 2010; the Hurunui Waiau Zone Committee process and finally the hearings for the Hurunui Waiau River Regional Plan in 2012.

In parallel with this plan we've submitted evidence along with the WWCC on Hurunui Water Project's Waitohi Irrigation and Hydro Scheme proposal to take water from the Hurunui below the now-protected upper section. HWP's proposed substantial takes will significantly degrade paddling amenity in the Hawarden Gap run and the lower river and adds potentially dangerous intake structures. We're seeking mitigation for the loss of flows and adding design conditions to promote safety.

We've also presented to the postponed hearing for the proposed amendment to the Rakaia WCO together with Downriver Kayak Club. The discussions we had with Trustpower suggest that there may be relatively little impact on kayaking amenity, and the impact will be in late autumn or early winter. We are still concerned that a WCO, the only tool we currently have to protect outstanding rivers, might be varied and weakened.

We have joined with Fish and Game in challenging Environment Canterbury's proposed Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan. We have prepared evidence outlining our recreation values, including flow requirements, and requested that they be specifically included in the plan. We have presented evidence to the Hearing and were well heard but it remains to be seen how or whether our values will be recognised and included in the final Plan.

We have wrapped-up our involvement in establishing consent conditions re the Central Plains Water (CPW) proposals for the Waimakariri and Rakaia. The scheme as consented has far less impact on our amenity and safety than the original proposal. Early engineering work is now underway.



In the last few months the Executive has also re-focused on some "big picture" activities. In particular, we hope to have a final version of our conservation strategy available at the AGM or fairly soon after it. This strategy discusses our values and will be a key part of our communication with decision makers at the various local, regional and national levels. In line with that we are also seeking to develop:

- a short recreational policy which describes our sport in all its varieties, and describes our requirements
- some form of inventory which identifies key rivers in each region
- flow requirements of paddlers on rivers throughout the country.

We're still working through the best way to undertake this – eg, a local expert panel in different regions or a full nation-wide survey – and we think it's up to us to identify the rivers which matter to us. If we don't, we create a vacuum for other "experts" to fill.

It's concerning in the last few months that a significant review of the Resource Management Act has been rushed through with very limited consultation. The government has indicated it wants to weaken the primacy of environmental protection that the Act currently provides and remove 'maintenance of amenity and recreational values' explicitly referred to under Section 7(c) of the Act. This potentially would be a disaster for us as we would no longer have a position where our views might be considered as relevant. There's a lot of other detail around streamlining the Act and making consenting less expensive. There are also plans to include collaborative processes as part of constructing regional plans. Our Canterbury experiences have been that although "local consultation" is desirable, "local" and "consultation" mean different things to different people, and the jury is still out on how good these processes are. We've made our concerns known in submissions. We have also noted that both the NZ Conservation Authority and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment have both stated that water conservation orders need to be strengthened and that a government agency should work to identify and protect important rivers – and that this should be undertaken before any other changes are made.

Pauline Hervey, Conservation Officer for the Nelson Canoe Club, and Doug Rankin attended a recent Environment Court mediation in Nelson. Network Tasman has appealed the Tasman District Council decision to include very limited reference to kayaking values in a Schedule of Water Body Uses and Values in the Tasman Region Management Plan. The hearing has been adjourned until August.

Whitewater NZ will be joining and supporting the Ngaruroro WCO application that F&G are orchestrating. The application should be submitted this year.

West Power is continuing with its investigation of their proposed power scheme on the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River south of Ross. They are aware of our intense interest in protecting the outstanding values of this 'Everest' of rivers gorge. Andy England is spearheading kayakers objections to this plan and along with a strong team from the Westcoast. Collectively they are keeping in touch with developments and communicating with Whitewater NZ when additional support or publicity is required.

Maree Baker-Galloway and a team of Whitewater NZ witnesses appeared in front of Judge Jackson and two commissioners in late October and presented evidence on the kayaking values of the Nevis River that flows into the Kawerau down in Central Otago. The case was presented alongside that of Fish and Game, who initiated the change to the Water Conservation Order, and was well received. We await the Court's decision.

Hugh Canard, our hard working Patron, has recently completed a lengthy river journey in the corridors of government as a representative of recreation interest groups in the Land and Water Forum, looking at future options for fresh water management in New Zealand. He will be continuing in a similar role in another advisory group looking at a National Objectives Framework for freshwater management throughout the country.

Meridian finally withdrew from their Mokihinui project and so the Environment Court hearing planned for September last year was cancelled. We owe a significant debt of gratitude to Tony Ward-Holmes and many others including Hugh Canard, Robin Rutter-Bauman, Graeme Wilson, Bill Parks, Dave Kwant and Debs Martin from Forest and Bird who orchestrated this massive case, with everything from



evidence on the kayaking values at the first Tribunal Hearing through to making a film showing alternative power schemes in the area that were far more viable and less destructive, and organizing publicity and visits to the river to raise awareness of its outstanding values. DOC are now looking at including this river in Kahurangi National Park. This is a fitting testament recognizing the values of this river. Tony Ward-Holmes was also awarded the Canard Cup Canoeist of the Year Award for 2012 by Whitewater NZ for his outstanding contribution to river conservation in recent years, which is very justly deserved.

## **Treasurers Report**

### **Financial Performance**

Operating deficit of (\$5,106) was down \$6,741 on the previous year profit of \$1,405. Revenue levels were similar to last year with a reduction of just \$137.

Annual subscriptions were similar to last year with a reduction of \$280. Donations were up \$7,365, however this included \$10,798 from Meridian Energy for payment of legal & witness costs for the Mokihinui Appeal.

Revenue from publications was down on 2012 by \$1,394 mainly due to a reduction in advertising for NZ Canoeing. Other income was nil down \$4,797 on last year (due to income from Mokihinui DVD sales and royalties).

Expenditure was up some \$6,374. Portfolio costs remained stable, with costs of \$2,625 for the conservation portfolio. Net cost of publications was down \$1,488, mostly due to reduction in number of newsletters and sourcing lower cost printing. Legal costs amounted to \$7,211 which was mainly due to the Mokihinui appeal (noting that this was refunded by Meridian Energy). Travel for the executive and general costs saw a minor increase of \$218 compared to 2012.

Stewart Richards was employed to complete essential administration tasks throughout the year at a cost of \$500, however the 2013 financials also include a catch up for Jo Mair's time of \$640.

### **Financial Position and Movement in Equity**

Net wealth was \$46,512 at the end of the financial period. Assets decreased by \$11,130, made up by a decrease in cash of \$9,423, accounts receivable of \$1,708 (all for newsletter advertising). The decrease in the bank balance was mostly due to unspent Water Safety NZ funding of \$6,900 at the 31 March 2012. Liabilities decreased by \$6,024 due to all of the Water Safety NZ grant money being paid out during the year. Whitewater NZ equity decreased by \$5,106 from \$51,618 at 31 March 2012.

### **Annual Audit of Accounts**

The audit of the 2010/11 and 2011/12 accounts have now been completed at a cost of \$460. Accounts for the 2012/13 year are due to be sent to our auditor Z R Colville by the 31 May 2013.

### **Access**

Sean Bellamy joined the Exec at the 2012 AGM and took on the role of Access. He has continued to maintain a very positive relationship with a number of water suppliers, most notably Genesis who continue to be incredibly supportive of kayaking. Their latest move is to recognise that there is industrial debris downstream of their power stations that represents a hazard to river users and are setting the standard by committing to remove it.

That is the enjoyable part of the access role. Sean has also been diligently working away at getting the Mangahau release back on the calendar and to have kayaking represented in a realistic way in the Waikato Regional Councils 'Safety Navigation Bylaw'. The latter has been a thankless task and it has reach a point where we have to be realistic and consider taking legal action against them. If this is the case we will need to develop a funding plan which will most likely include calling for donations from kayakers.



## Communications

Mike Nooney has been chewing up his bandwidth and ensured that Whitewater NZ is looking up to date on Facebook and Twitter along with support from Jonathan Hunt. You can find us at:

<http://www.facebook.com/WhitewaterNZ>

<http://twitter.com/whitewaternz>

Mike has also been working hard to get a regular email to everyone on the mailing list. Apart from keeping everyone in touch with what is going on it has also been of great value to the membership database as we have been able to purge expired addresses from the system.

## NZ Canoeing

The editor's role was passed on from Miriam Odlin to Debbie Bloxham at the AGM last year. Debbie has a solid background that made her ideal for the role and her only request was to not be a part of the Exec. It was a small sacrifice as she has been very good and has published one edition and is getting ready to produce her second. Her request now is "I NEED CONTENT". So if you have a story, please send to her: [editor@rivers.org.nz](mailto:editor@rivers.org.nz)

## Webmaster Report

Jonathan Hunt, [webmaster@rivers.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@rivers.org.nz)

It's been a quiet year for the website, with minimal content being added. Traffic is down year-on-year, due to lack of compelling content. General kayaking news and the forums (especially, Buy, Sell & Swap) remain popular.

The migration to Drupal 7 has begun, with particular emphasis on the River Guide, but progress is slow due to lack of resource.

The website remains a primary channel for many WHITEWATER NZ members and stakeholders but needs additional resource, specifically content curation, to realise its full potential.

## Non-website

Most time in the past year has been involved with general information technology consultancy for the Exec, administering email, files etc.

- Drafted Whitewater NZ's submission on RMA and Freshwater reform (with Doug Rankin).
- Started update to Guide to the Whanganui River.
- Migrate WHITEWATER NZ email and document storage to Google Apps.
- Assist with IT services such as Paypal, Xero, Google Apps, CiviCRM.

## Future work

- Continue Drupal 7 upgrade.
- Complete Whanganui Guide update.
- Further develop online River Guide to function as national river inventory.
- Integrate with CiviCRM: link website accounts with membership management.
- Trial paid advertising on key pages (eg. home page, forums).
- Offer pages formatted for mobile devices.
- Pursue NIWA flow data.



## Safety

Jo McWilliam has been filling the safety function for the past year and has been successful in ensuring more funding for the River Safety & Rescue courses from Water Safety Council. A challenge in the past has been to use all this money however in the summer just gone it is very satisfying to say that we have easily used all the funding up. What is even better to report is that there have been no kayaking accidents of note over past year.

## Membership

Also Jo's portfolio, membership is a crucial role. Over the past two years we have been undergoing a migration to a new membership management system in order to better communicate and stay in touch with those who support Whitewater NZ. This has not been an easy process and while it is almost complete it still has some significant final details that must be worked out. The goal is that this will be complete by July. An unfortunate reality is that the membership numbers of WHITEWATER NZ has dropped to 514 members.

If you have any comments or feedback for Whitewater NZ, or if you'd like to volunteer your time and expertise to help us advocate for river conservation, access and safety, drop us a line at [whitewaternz@rivers.org.nz](mailto:whitewaternz@rivers.org.nz), we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you very much for your support. May the rivers flow for you!

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