

## L 12 Mitigation Dollars for the Environment

One way of protecting and enhancing our environment for future generations lies submitting on a economy - based proposal in favour of an environmental spin off. So when an application for resource consent comes forward, there is an opportunity for the decision to be made to mitigate for an environmental “pay back”.

I see the following two examples as powerful tools that we can use as influence if we make the effort to get involved in submission writing or at the decision making table.

### **Example 1**

In the case of Mighty River Power (MRP) which has seven power stations along the Waikato River, the Environment Commissioners gave the company a 35 year consent to harvest water for their power generation. At the time I was a member of an advisory committee to our Regional Council and we were given the opportunity to submit and to speak to our submission at the hearings. Daunting as this was, we got a good result for the environment.

While MRP got their consent renewed, there were several provisos attached. One of these was that a large sum of mitigation money be made available every year to an organisation to be called the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust.

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (WCEET) assists organisations, agencies and individuals with projects that foster and enhance the sustainable management of ecological resources in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments. Ecological and biodiversity values in the Taupo and Waikato catchment are protected, enhanced and restored.





## **Example 2**

While I was not directly involved in the process described below, once again being a member of an advisory committee to the Regional Council meant that an opportunity to influence was available. In this case providing information to decision makers made a difference.

The Treaty of Waitangi is a founding document in New Zealand and was signed in 1840. Where the Treaty principles of cultural recognition have not been upheld, various Maori tribes have asked for compensation through the Waitangi Tribunal process.

A major spinoff for the clean up of the Waikato River has come via the financial settlement to the Waikato - based Tainui tribe. In summary, \$18 million per year will be available to environmental groups whose primary purpose is to enhance, protect and mitigate pollution in the catchment of the Waikato River and all its tributaries.

