

## Auckland Dragonboat Regatta (*Erin Petuha*)

Anyone who was at the Auckland Viaduct on Saturday would say it was an exciting day at the Auckland Dragonboat Regatta! (I was, I did, Ed.) With the draw for Finals based on the sum of each teams' race times, not placings, every race was hard and fast. Environment Waikato presented strong competition for the Corporate Social teams, and set a high standard.

In the first race Environment Waikato worked hard to keep up with the Open team and did well beating the other Corporate Social teams, placing second. We were up against three Auckland councils in the second race, the all important Council Race. Environment Waikato made the region proud taking out the race and the award from the Auckland Councils. Rosco steered us a little off track in this race by taking the oar out of the water but we didn't crash into anyone and it could be what gave us the extra edge to win. Nice move Rosco!

In the third race Air Force, who presented stronger competition than they did last year, took us out clean making a very convincing win and Environment Waikato came in second place. We were against our arch rivals, the Auckland Regional Council "ARC Angels", in every heat and outperformed them. As the day went on we got more and more tired but presented consistent race times which put us above the Corporate Social Final and into the Corporate Championship Final.



Competition was tough in the final as we raced again against Air Force, ARC, Lion and USU. Environment Waikato made a convincing start, driving hard the whole race. Airforce took the race out again, with ARC and Environment Waikato close behind. Just a couple of metres before the finish line ARC surged forward making a close finish which called for a video referee. ARC came in in front and beat us by just 0.12s! But we were still stoked with our efforts of the day and proud to come in third. We were taking no fourth placing this year!

The night's celebrations were great with the after party based at the wharf of the Viaduct. Auckland knows how to throw a party! Environment Waikato made the region proud once again being the first ones on the dance floor and pulling up any innocent person close-by to groove and celebrate the day's efforts. It wasn't long before we had the dance floor full and a party going on! We found that Environment Waikato and ARC may be arch rivals on the race course but can sure groove together on the dance floor! Our day's races have set us in good stead to present competition in Christchurch Nationals this coming weekend and we will do our best to make the region proud again. Go Environment Waikato!

## Eco-Warriors kick Dragon-Butt

From a landlubber's perspective Dragonboating "can" be a bit boring. Sure, the individual races can be fun (providing you have a team in the race to support) but unless you really know what's going on it can all seem a bit strange, especially when boats come in down the track mysteriously claiming they have won.....

Well, at the Auckland Regatta I made a bit of an attempt to follow the day's proceedings and Damn! What an exciting day. Here's my perspective of the most exciting day of the year, blow by blow.

The aroma of potatoes and guinness wafted gently on the breeze as did, for some completely unexplored reason, the sound of bagpipes. All of which had nothing whatsoever to do with the Dragonboat racing but it generally helped add atmosphere.

ROUND 1: (Ting) ... Sounds like a boxing match.



Race 10 was EW's first (if you don't count the warm up round which, obviously, I don't) and they were to win with a blistering time of 1:16.39 .... OK they didn't 'actually' win the race as they were narrowly beaten by the 'X Paddlers' (by less than half a second). However, the 'X Paddlers' are an open class team and in terms of the Corporate Class (in which EW were racing) this was quite clearly a win (See, one of those occasions where the boat that came 2nd can claim a win). EW's time of 76.14 seconds was the second fastest (Corporate Class) time of Round 1, plus EW trashed ARC. It was looking like being a very, very exciting day of racing.

**"This Dragonboat goes all the way up to 11" Nigel**