

NEWS UPDATE

MEI TE VAI KI TE VAI – RESTORING THE HEALTH OF OUR LAGOONS RAROTONGA NEWS UPDATE, MARCH 2018

AT A GLANCE

- March 22 is World Water Day!
- Water experts build local capacity

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

March 22, World Water Day 2018

World Water Day is a United Nations (UN) initiative held on 22 March every year, to focus attention on the importance of water. This year's theme – Nature for Water – explores how we can use nature to overcome the water challenges of the 21st century.

UN Water, the UN's coordinating body for water related challenges, says: "environmental damage, together with climate change, is driving the water-related crises we see around the world. When we neglect our ecosystems, we make it harder to provide everyone with the water we need to survive and thrive."

Infrastructure Cook Islands (ICI), alongside the MTVKTV and [Te Mato Vai](http://www.tematovai.com) (www.tematovai.com) projects, is calling for Rarotongans to use water wisely and care for our natural waterways by trying some simple tips:

Try these ways to conserve water at home:

- ✓ Turn off the water while you brush your teeth = save up to 15 litres a minute
- ✓ Check for leaks – one drip a second = up to 18 litres a day
- ✓ Shorten your shower by one or two minutes = save up to 560 litres a month

Try these ways to protect our waterways:

- ✓ Don't dump toxic substances on the ground – e.g. insecticides, weed killer, pharmaceuticals, paint, motor oil
- ✓ Avoid burning vegetation and rubbish in waterway channels
- ✓ Use phosphate-free laundry soap
- ✓ Use nontoxic household cleaners.



Water experts build local capacity

The Mei Te Vai Ki Te Vai (MTVKTV) project is committed to building local capacity to contribute to the sustainability of the project.

Last month, water and waste management specialist Astrid Modrow (pictured below holding testing equipment), shared her skills and knowledge with local staff from Infrastructure Cook Islands, Ministry of Marine Resources and the GHD project management team. Astrid is a project manager with New Zealand-based DCM Process Control.



Above: Water and waste management specialist Astrid Modrow (on left holding testing equipment) pictured on site with local staff.

Astrid led a one-day training workshop to up-skill local staff on how to deploy, gather data from and maintain the portable water quality station currently set in Muri Lagoon. She says data collected from the portable water quality station will add to the overall picture experts are building of the Muri environment as part of the MTVKTV project.

The water quality station can be used in both the lagoon and streams in the Muri area. It collects data on nutrient levels, changes in the water quality after rain and other vital information. This adds to the project's overall investigations into how agricultural activities, on-site septic systems and other activities contribute to Muri Lagoon's water quality.

The PMU expects to share interim findings from their extensive environmental monitoring and testing programme later this year.