



THE OWAHANGA OBSERVER

Feb 2026

The year ahead

The board have set three main objectives for this year

- 1/ The pest management program
- 2/ The Enviroschool program
- 3/ Commencement of a pest plant program

At catchment meetings in Owahanga and lower Akitio there was strong support for these projects and quite a lot of suggestions made about how they could be enhanced.

Management Changes

Lynda Balfour, the collective's catchment co Ordinator, is leaving as her work in the health and safety area has steadily grown to the point where it needs her full-time attention.

Her last official day is March 25th, maybe as a group we could present her with a farewell gift, something appropriate no doubt.

Catchment meeting

On Friday 13 we held a meeting, a lot of the topics are covered here. However, the full minutes are attached as a separate file

Enviroschool Program

It's a separate aspect of catchment activity, run by Nichole Read with the Pongaroa and Weber schools.

Enviroschool is a national program aimed at fostering from an early age an understanding and appreciation of the environment and starting to build an understanding of how plants interact with the rest of the biosphere and how humans activity can impact it.

Pongaroa school is fortunate to be just over the road from what has been described as one of the best mixed podocarp forest remnants close to a town anywhere in the Wairarapa, the Pongaroa Scenic reserve, more commonly known as the bushwalk.

Having the school take a positive interest by using it as a natural classroom and helping with weeding, maintaining tracks, and signage is a huge boost towards helping preserve this rare example of what the district once looked like.



A reluctant group of child labourers heading back to school having completed an afternoon in the bush.



A fadge, two totes full of stinking iris, old mans beard, ivy, Jerusalem cherry and tradescantia, the work of less than half an hours selective picking.

The same weed species are also problematic in the 4 mile bush, a similar forest remnant and are spreading across the district unchecked, which is one reason for starting a pest plant program this year.

The Goose Shoot

Phil reports that it went “pretty well” with over 750 birds removed by chopper and another 200 or so by a ground shoot shortly after. He feels ground shoots throughout the year would be of benefit but that another helicopter run possibly two done late December and January to coincide with the moult would have the greatest impact especially if the flying hours can be extended, something he is working on. Surrounding areas will be asked about their control efforts and encouraged to act so we don't get repopulated too quickly.

Catchment Group Pest Monitoring program

The roll out of the pest monitoring phase has started. We have an excellent spread and number of monitor sites within our catchment enough to carry us through to April possibly longer, the interest and engagement shown demonstrates that this is an issue we all clearly feel passionate about.

John Bissel of Backblocks environmental management, who ran the two initial meetings and had been contracted to oversee the program has resigned to take full time employment with Nativa, formerly NZ Carbon Farming

As a result, the program will now be managed internally. We have the expertise within our group and can always access outside help if needed.

In February minister Hoggard announced a pilot project for the control of pest and game animals on private land. It has agreement from MPI, Beef and Lamb, Forest and Bird, Federated farmers, the Game animal council and NZ Deerstalkers. Catchment boards are considered the ideal vehicle for its delivery and two pilot projects are to be set up, to develop local wild animal management plans to balance environmental and agricultural needs with recreational hunting.

PPCC management have been following this development and have offered the catchment as a candidate for selection as a trial site.

By the time selection is made we will have data from the monitoring that should be a compelling argument to support the case for our selection.

MPI is also revisiting food safety requirements around game meats with a view of making such operations more financially sustainable.

Horizons pest management plan 2017-2037 comes out for a consultation soon. It will be interesting what they propose and how it aligns ,if at all with the above initiative.

Pongaroa Hunt

Two new categories have been added this year **Pest bird and Pest mammal**.

The catchment is sponsoring both as they complement the whole pest management program and will certainly increasing awareness of the issue.

Look for details on the Pongaroa fb page and the entry form when it comes out.

Water tests

These are the samples taken on the 26th of Jan reported on here. There had been 96 mm of rain in the week prior to the samples being taken.



Left to right they are OW 7, 5 and 3 coming down the river from the Mangatiti confluence, just before it meets the Pongaroa, and finally after mixing with the Pongaroa river at Tracey's.

The last jar is OW6, the Pongaroa sampled at Marty's, looking at it, you can see where most of the silt came from. There was enough suspended sediment that a layer of grit was visible after a minute's sitting.

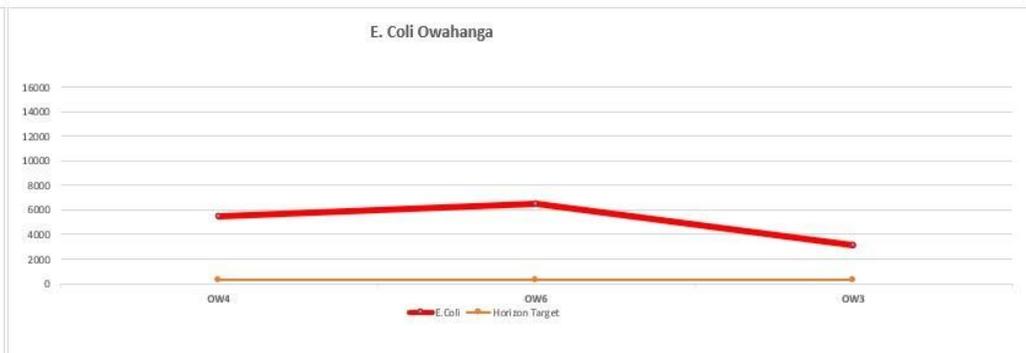
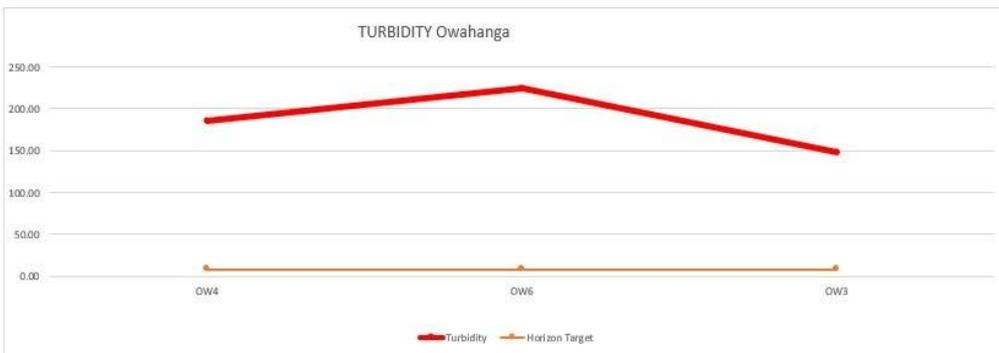
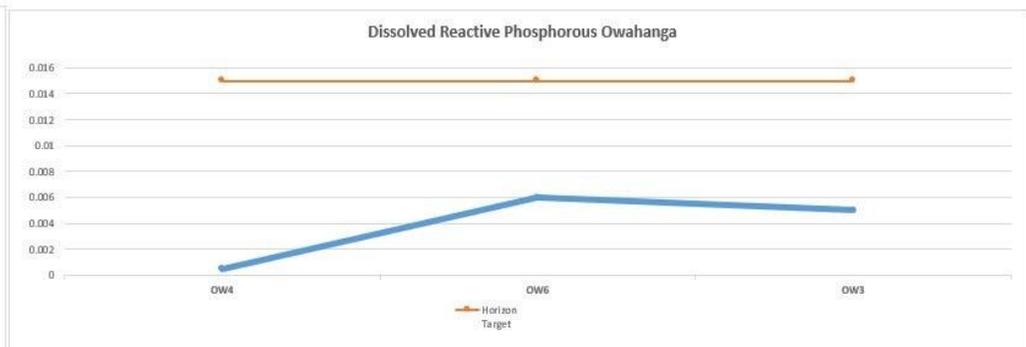
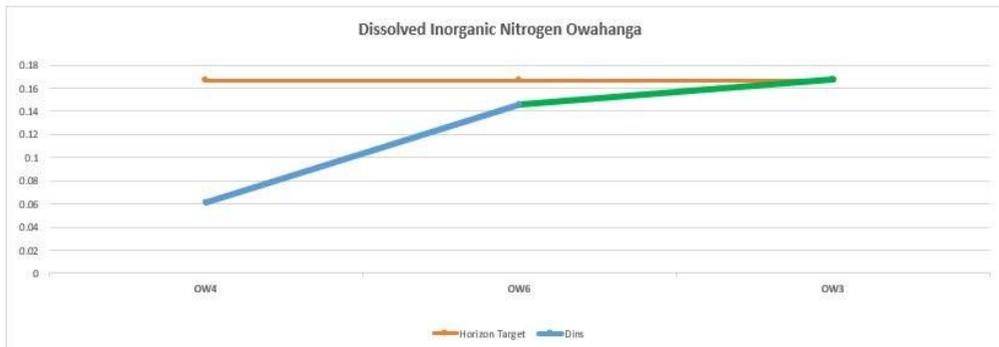
There aren't pictures of the headwater samples OW1 and OW4 showing how they start out but hopefully its of interest.

Remember the numbers arent in sequence, they were assigned as the sites were selected.

Its no surprise we didnt get a pass on clarity this time.

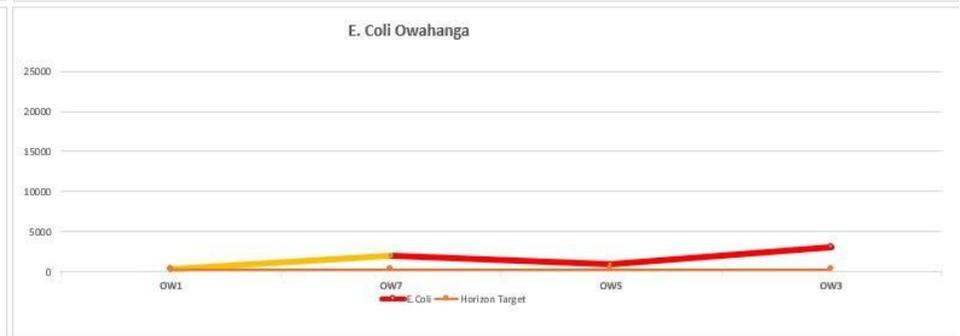
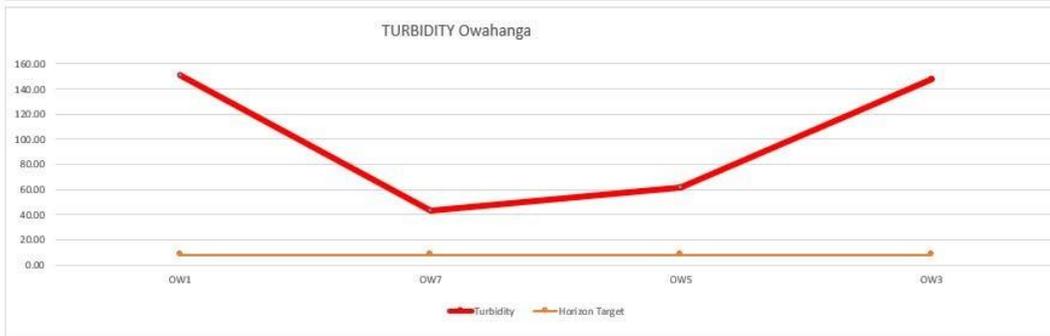
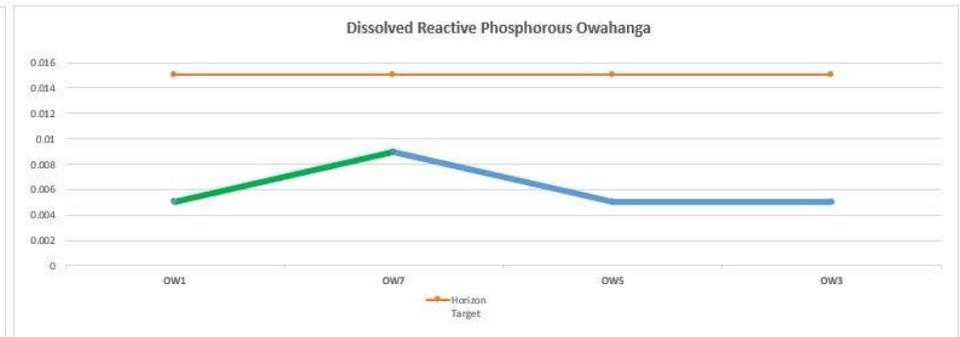
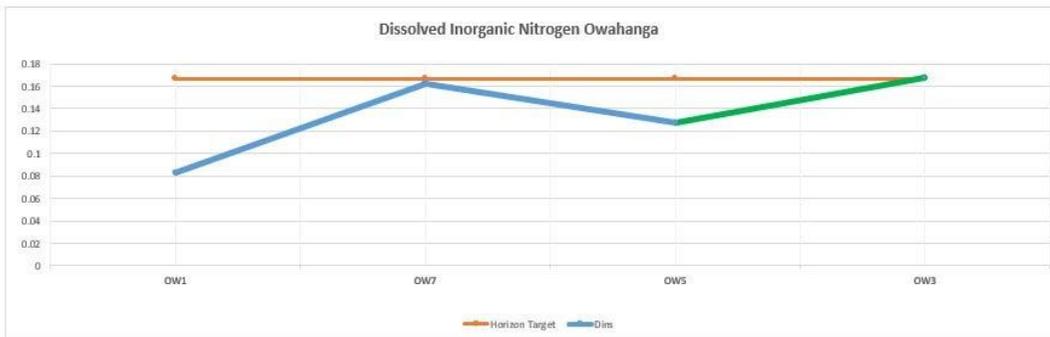
Owahanga –Testing Sites for January 2026 for OW4, OW6 and OW3

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga Testing Sites OW4, OW6 & OW3							KEY					
							Excellent					
							Good					
							Impacted					
							Poor					
Water Testing Site	Nutrients for periphyton growth						Suspended sediment			Swimming standard		
	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
OW4	0.061	0.167	Yes	0.0005	0.015	Yes	186.00	8.12	No	5490	260	No
OW6	0.146	0.167	Yes	0.006	0.015	Yes	224.00	8.12	No	6490	260	No
OW3	0.168	0.167	No	0.005	0.015	Yes	148.00	8.12	No	3080	260	No



Owahanga –Testing Sites for January 2026 for OW1, OW7, OW5 and OW3

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga Testing Sites OW1, OW7, OW5 & OW3												
KEY												
Excellent												
Good												
Impacted												
Poor												
Water Testing Site	Nutrients for periphyton growth						Suspended sediment			Swimming standard		
	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
OW1	0.083	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	151.00	8.12	No	379	260	No
OW7	0.162	0.167	Yes	0.009	0.015	Yes	42.70	8.12	No	1918	260	No
OW5	0.127	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	61.20	8.12	No	993	260	No
OW3	0.168	0.167	No	0.005	0.015	Yes	148.00	8.12	No	3080	260	No

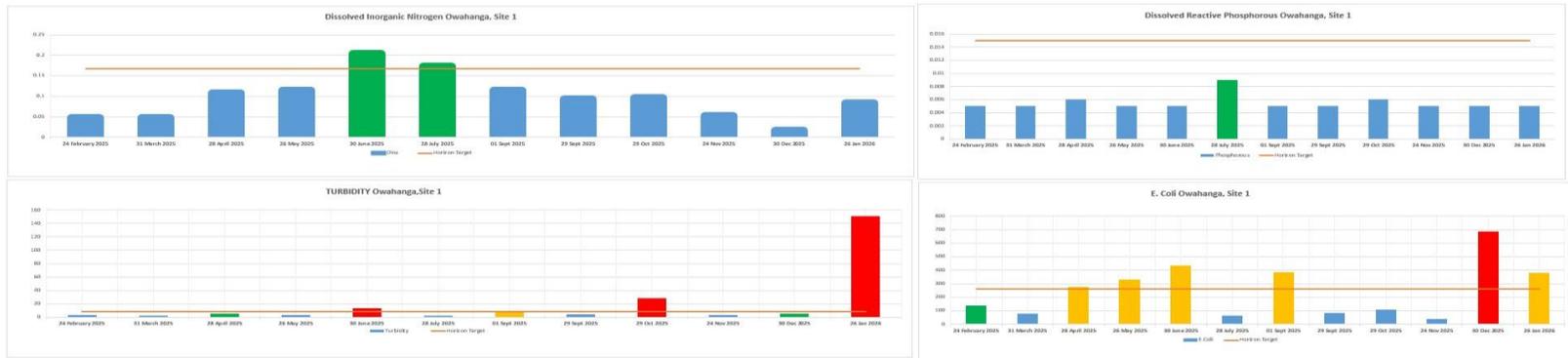


Owahanga Site OW1

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 1

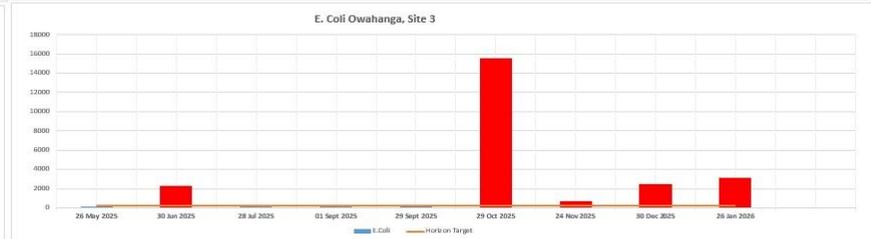
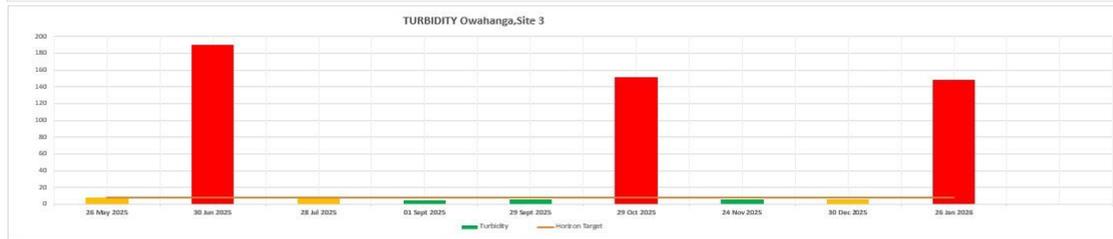
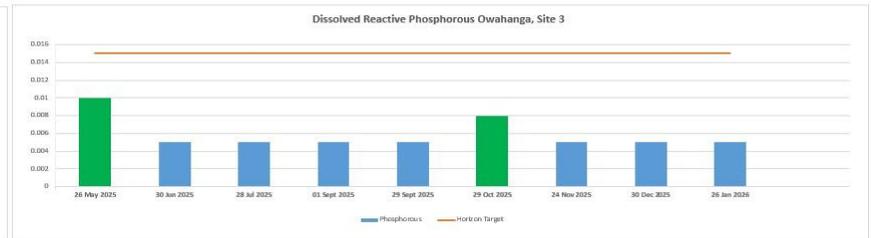
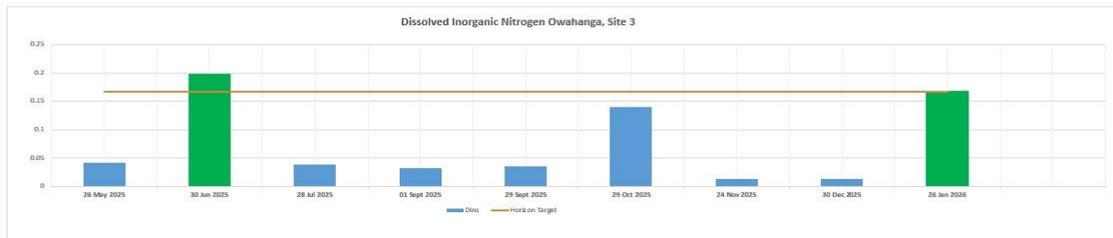
KEY	
Excellent	
Good	
Impacted	
Poor	

DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Nutrients for periphyton growth						Suspended sediment			Swimming standard		
			Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	D REACTIVE PHOSPHO	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
24 February 2025	Low Flow, Very Light, Warm/Sunny	47.7	0.047	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.14	8.12	Yes	140	260	Yes
31 March 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	56.5	0.048	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	1.87	8.12	Yes	78	260	Yes
28 April 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Sunny	438.4	0.108	0.167	Yes	0.006	0.015	Yes	5.17	8.12	Yes	276	260	No
26 May 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Sunny	477.5	0.114	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	2.76	8.12	Yes	326	260	No
30 June 2025	Medium Flow, No Rain, Cold/Cloudy	570.4	0.204	0.167	No	0.005	0.015	Yes	15	8.12	No	435	260	No
28 July 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	171.0	0.173	0.167	No	0.009	0.015	Yes	2.53	8.12	Yes	63	260	Yes
01 Sept 2025	Medium Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	620.7	0.114	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	7.35	8.12	Yes	387	260	No
29 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	80.1	0.093	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	4.22	8.12	Yes	82	260	Yes
29 Oct 2025	High Flow, Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.097	0.167	Yes	0.006	0.015	Yes	26.2	8.12	No	109	260	Yes
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Sunny	109.0	0.053	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.2	8.12	Yes	39	260	Yes
30 Dec 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	123.3	0.017	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	4.86	8.12	Yes	697	260	No
26 Jan 2026	High Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	806.8	0.083	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	151	8.12	No	379	260	No



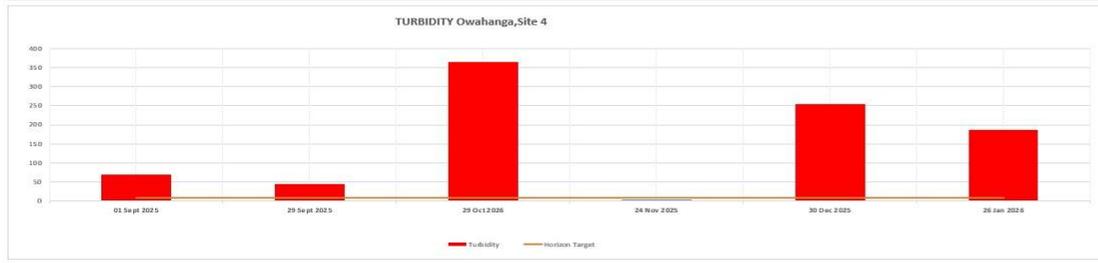
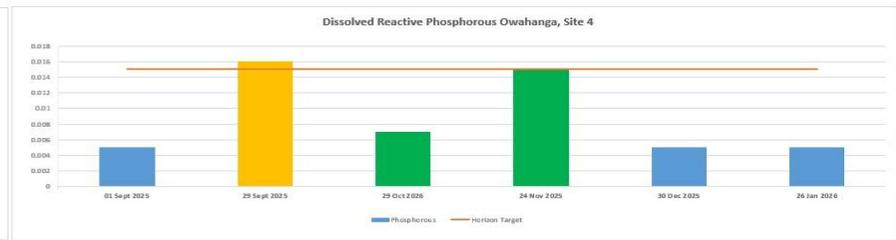
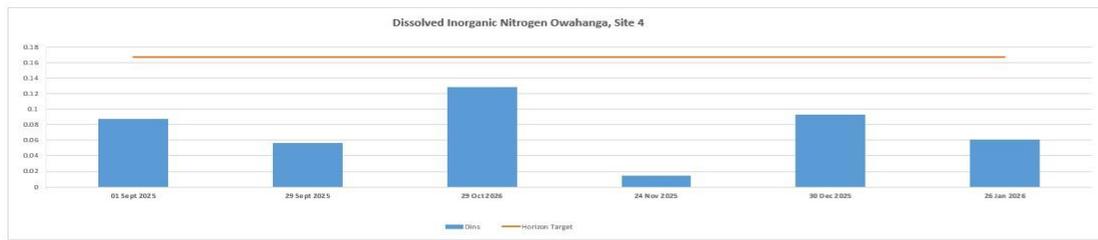
Owahanga Location OW3

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 3													KEY		
													Excellent		
													Good		
													Impacted		
													Poor		
DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Nutrients for periphyton growth					Suspended sediment			Swimming standard				
			d Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?	
26 May 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	477.5	0.041	0.167	Yes	0.01	0.015	Yes	7.8	8.12	Yes	91	260	Yes	
30 Jun 2025	Medium Flow, No Rain, Cold/Cloudy	570.4	0.199	0.167	No	0.005	0.015	Yes	190	8.12	No	2362	260	No	
28 Jul 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	1710	0.038	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	6.52	8.12	Yes	115	260	Yes	
01 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	620.7	0.032	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	4.48	8.12	Yes	114	260	Yes	
29 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Sunny	80.1	0.036	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	5.61	8.12	Yes	86	260	Yes	
29 Oct 2025	Medium Flow, Very Light, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.14	0.167	Yes	0.008	0.015	Yes	152	8.12	No	15500	260	No	
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	109.0	0.013	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	5.83	8.12	Yes	707	260	No	
30 Dec 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	123.3	0.013	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	5.9	8.12	Yes	2420	260	No	
26 Jan 2026	Medium Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	806.8	0.168	0.167	No	0.005	0.015	Yes	148	8.12	No	3080	260	No	



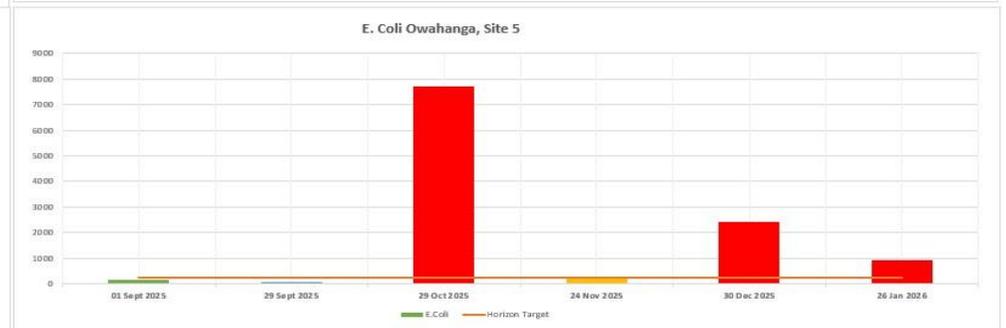
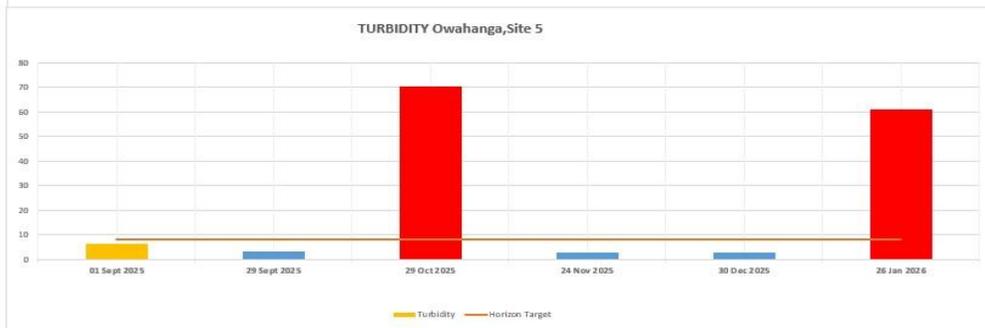
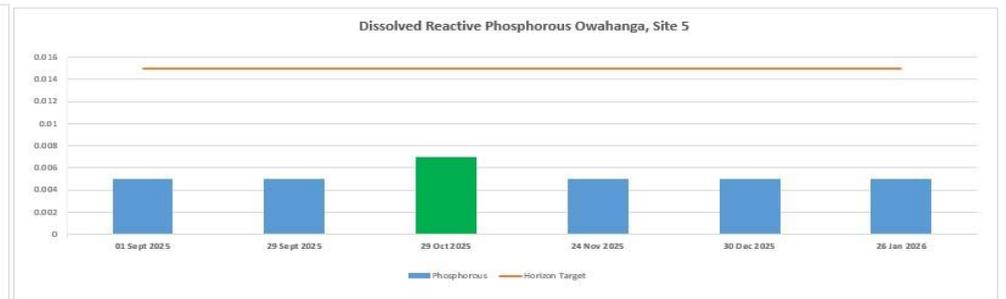
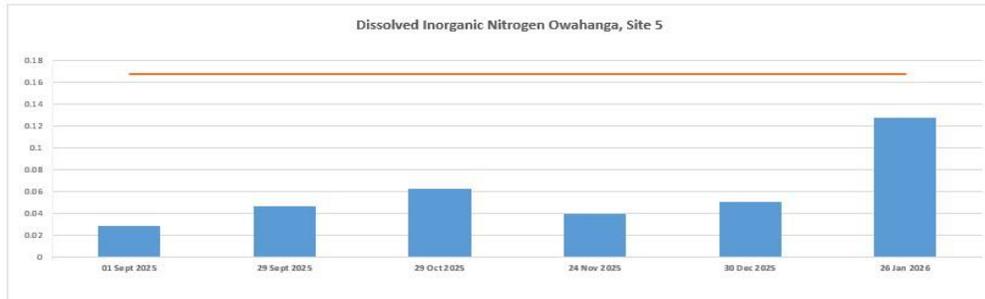
Owahanga OW 4

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 4														
KEY														
Excellent														
Good														
Impacted														
Poor														
			Nutrients for periphyton growth						Suspended sediment			Swimming standard		
DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
01 Sept 2025	Medium Flow, Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	620.7	0.088	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	70.3	8.12	No	155	260	Yes
29 Sept 2025	Medium Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	80.1	0.056	0.167	Yes	0.016	0.015	No	45.6	8.12	No	727	260	No
29 Oct 2026	Medium Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.128	0.167	Yes	0.007	0.015	Yes	364	8.12	No	15500	260	No
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Warm/Cloudy	109.0	0.014	0.167	Yes	0.015	0.015	Yes	3.43	8.12	Yes	1996	260	No
30 Dec 2025	Medium Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold Cloudy	123.3	0.093	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	255	8.12	No	10500	260	No
26 Jan 2026	High Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	806.8	0.061	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	186	8.12	No	5480	260	No



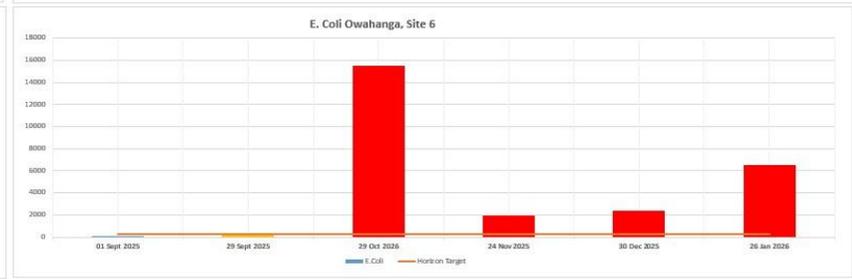
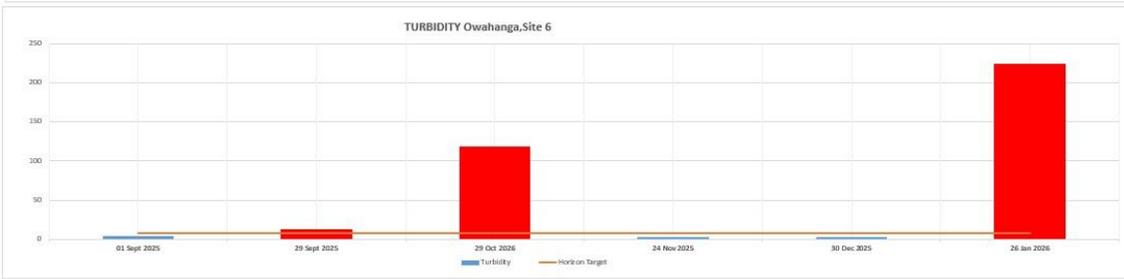
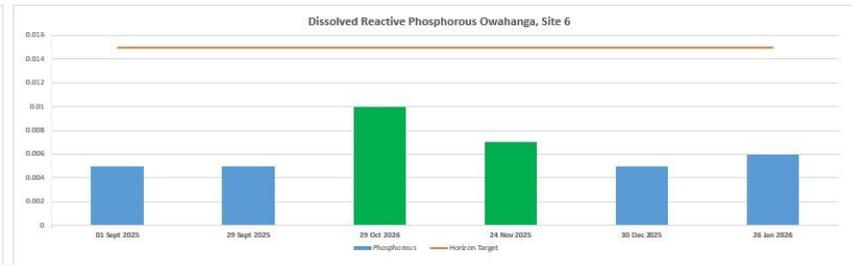
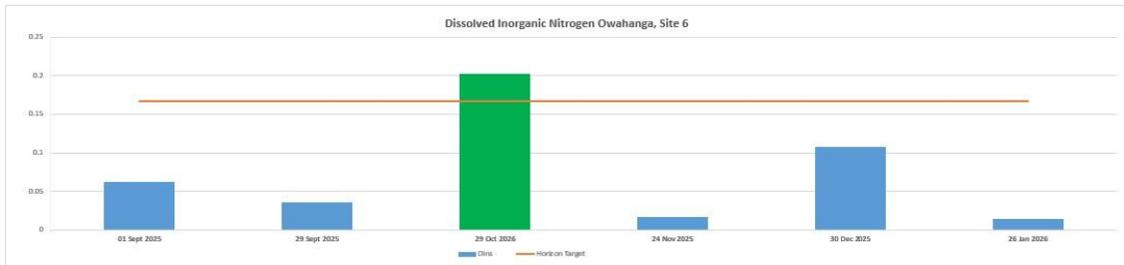
Owahanga OW5

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 5														
KEY														
Excellent														
Good														
Impacted														
Poor														
Nutrients for periphyton growth														
Suspended sediment														
Swimming standard														
DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
01 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	620.7	0.028	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	6.45	8.12	Yes	142	260	Yes
29 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	80.1	0.046	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.27	8.12	Yes	86	260	Yes
29 Oct 2025	Medium Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.062	0.167	Yes	0.007	0.015	Yes	70.4	8.12	No	7700	260	No
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Warm/Cloudy	190.0	0.039	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	2.61	8.12	Yes	308	260	No
30 Dec 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	123.3	0.05	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	2.76	8.12	Yes	2420	260	No
26 Jan 2026	Medium Flow, No Rain, Warm/cloudy	806.8	0.127	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	61.2	8.12	No	933	260	No



Owahanga OW6

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 6														
KEY														
Excellent														
Good														
Impacted														
Poor														
DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Nutrients for periphyton growth			Suspended sediment			Swimming standard					
			Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
01 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	620.7	0.063	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	4.05	8.12	Yes	52	260	Yes
29 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	80.1	0.036	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	13.2	8.12	No	326	260	No
29 Oct 2026	Medium Flow, No Rain, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.202	0.167	No	0.01	0.015	Yes	119	8.12	No	15500	260	No
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Warm/Cloudy	190.0	0.017	0.167	Yes	0.007	0.015	Yes	2.37	8.12	Yes	1966	260	No
30 Dec 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	123.3	0.108	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.51	8.12	Yes	2420	260	No
26 Jan 2026	Medium Flow, No Rain, Warm/Cloudy	806.8	0.0146	0.167	Yes	0.006	0.015	Yes	224	8.12	No	6493	260	No



Owahanga OW7

I know the graph headings say OW3 but trust me its OW7

Water Quality Analysis - Owahanga, Site 7												KEY		
												Excellent		
												Good		
												Impacted		
												Poor		
DATE	Context	Flow rate (L/S)	Nutrients for periphyton growth			Suspended sediment			Swimming standard					
			Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen	Target	Below Limit?	DISSOLVED REACTIVE PHOSPHOROUS	Target2	Below Limit?	TURBIDITY	Target3	Below Limit?	E. Coli	Target 4	Below Limit?
01 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Cold/Sunny	620.7	0.108	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	14.9	8.12	No	299	260	No
29 Sept 2025	Low Flow, No Rain, Warm/Sunny	80.1	0.033	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.81	8.12	Yes	105	260	Yes
29 Oct 2025	Medium Flow, No Rain, Cold/Cloudy	343.2	0.086	0.167	Yes	0.006	0.015	Yes	87.6	8.12	No	3650	260	No
24 Nov 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Warm/Cloudy	190.0	0.027	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	3.32	8.12	Yes	18	260	Yes
30 Dec 2025	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Cold/Cloudy	123.3	0.037	0.167	Yes	0.005	0.015	Yes	5.2	8.12	Yes	68	260	Yes
26 Jan 2026	Low Flow, Very Light Rain, Warm/Cloudy	806.8	0.162	0.167	Yes	0.009	0.015	Yes	92.7	8.12	No	1918	260	No

