

## **Best Regional Remediation Project**

Thank you. It is an honour to be here tonight and to receive this award.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge Jemena for their efforts and being finalists this year. I'm sure the judges had a tough time selecting the winner.

Regional remediation projects often struggle to get off the ground due to a lack of funding. When development driven funds aren't available, we turn to government to fund historical contamination clean-ups. In these situations, I think that we need to be mindful that we are spending taxpayer and rate payer money and ensure that the project outcome meets community needs without incurring excessive costs. In my view the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project is a good example of getting this balance right. The selected remediation method encompassed cultural aspects, community concerns, flood management, and clean up targets protective of fish tissue consumption exposure pathways. We were challenged to come up with a method that provided full containment during extraction and transfer of sediment, and to use locally developed enhanced natural degradation methods to reduce contaminant levels.

We got there in the end with the help of a committed team of project staff, consultants, and a supportive community. There are many individuals and ALGA affiliated organisations that contributed to making this project a success. GHD for their support with Stakeholder engagement and fulfilling the roles of Independent Monitor, Tonkin and Taylor for Engineer to Contract, Golder for Environmental Monitoring, and the team at EnviroNZ for completing the physical works.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of two individuals who didn't get to see the project completed. Joe Harawira who campaigned on behalf of the community to get dioxin health risks recognised and Arch Delahunty who served the Bay of Plenty Regional Council as an Engineer for many years.

So, I am honoured to accept this award on behalf of everyone involved in the project. I would especially like to acknowledge and thank the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, its elected officials and its staff members for their commitment to addressing this legacy issue which has affected so many within the Whakatane community over the years.

Thanks to the judges for selecting this project and to ALGA and the award sponsors for supporting this event. It certainly is nice to be acknowledged for the work you do.

And lastly to all the members of the Whakatane Community, the Community Liaison Group, the Project Steering Group, thank you for your trust and support. We did it for you. Thank you.