



Dr Stella Frances Scholarship 2026

Information for applicants



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Waikato

REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

Dr Stella Frances Scholarship



The Department of Conservation and Waikato Regional Council established this scholarship in 2006 for students who are enrolled or intending to enrol in the final year of their masters degree at the University of Waikato in the year of the application deadline. The Dr Stella Frances Scholarship, to the value of \$6,000 per year is available to students studying environmental issues in the Waikato region. The scholarship is intended to defray research expenses.

Dr Stella Frances

Dr Stella Frances (1948-2003) served just a few months of her third term as a Waikato Regional Councillor in 1993 when she was offered the position of Waikato Conservator for the Department of Conservation.

Typical of her humanity, Stella was at first concerned for the people who had worked so hard to get her elected to the council and for the expensive by-election her acceptance would cause. Reassured by her supporters, Stella joined the Department on International Women’s Day – March 8, 1993.

After noting through previous experience “the ability of government departments to insulate themselves from the community”, Stella made the appreciation of community perspectives a hallmark of her own work, both in the Waikato and in Auckland, where she moved to in 1997. Stella was widely appreciated for her ability to relate with tangata whenua, departmental associates and local communities.

Having earlier trained as a freshwater scientist with a Ph.D. in freshwater ecology, Stella likened her later career to that of an ‘environmental GP’, playing a role for ecology similar to that of a general practitioner in health. Her greatest passion over the last four years of her life was the Firth of Thames marine and estuarine ecosystem.

Stella Frances died in August 2003. She was a constant source of inspiration to staff and people in the community who worked with her, in both her personal and professional life. Her commitment to our environment is perpetuated in the Dr Stella Frances Scholarship, sponsored jointly by the Department of Conservation and Waikato Regional Council.

In recognition of Stella’s broad interest in the environment and conservation, this scholarship is offered to students in a wide range of academic study. Examples of eligible research themes are below.

Themes	Examples of eligible research issues
Natural or physical sciences	Management of land (for example, peatland and other intensively used land and the effects on soil and water quality); catchment erosion processes and environmental issues; biodiversity protection and enhancement (for example, the ecology and management of threatened species and habitats); marine science.
Human perspectives on the environment	Investigation of landowner, business, cultural or public attitudes and behaviours towards environmental policies and practices; evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental education programmes, studies understanding customary kaitaki.
Environment management practice or economics	Financial incentives; valuation of ecosystem services; costs and benefits of land management change; estimation of ecological footprints; cost benefit analyses of environmental or conservation management, such as soil conservation or endangered species management, integrated ecosystem management.
Technologies	Geographical information systems; internet applications; remote sensing; satellite imaging; environmental indicator development; evaluation or development of environmental monitoring tools.

Evaluation panel

- Mike Scarsbrook, Manager, Science, Waikato Regional Council
- Andrew Styche, Senior Ranger Community, Department of Conservation

Selection criteria

Applicants for the scholarships will be evaluated on the following criteria.

Proposal

- Your proposal should apply to conservation and environmental issues in the Waikato region (see map) and preferably encompass the themes referred to on the opposite page.
- Your work should be applicable in the region.
- Your proposal should be innovative and examine critical conservation and environmental issues in unusual contexts or consider new approaches to the study or management of existing conservation and environmental issues.
- Your proposal should contribute new knowledge to the study or management of the issue examined.

Academic

You must:

- have demonstrated diligence in your academic record
- show a range of skills suitable to contribute to conservation and environmental investigations
- graduate with your degree at the end of the scholarship period.

Personal

You must:

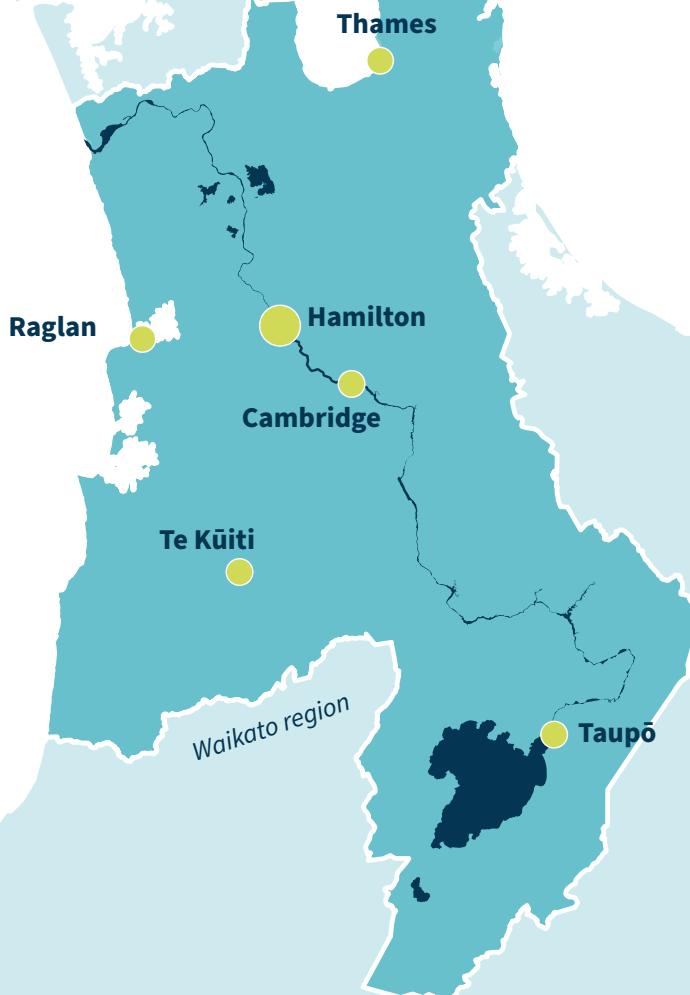
- demonstrate above-average communication skills and an ability to relate successfully to a wide group of people
- demonstrate that you can successfully manage projects to a timely completion
- be highly motivated and enjoy new challenges
- have the ability to work within a team.

Application format

Applicants should:

- submit a curriculum vitae highlighting the skills referred to above
- submit a two to four page proposal outlining your proposed study, including a timeline with significant milestones
- provide written endorsement from your supervisor
- provide contact details of a personal referee
- be available for a short interview and associated assessments
- provide certified copies of academic records if study is not undertaken at the University of Waikato.

The successful applicant will be required to present the completed research to the Waikato Regional Council and/or Waikato Conservation Board upon completion of the study.



Please Apply online

Students will need to apply online through the MyWaikato portal, which is the current process for all scholarship applications at the University of Waikato.

Scholarships Office
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
HAMILTON

Email: scholarships@waikato.ac.nz

For more information please call the Waikato University Scholarship office at (07) 838 5096.

Applications close

11:59pm on Saturday, 28 February 2026.



He taiao mauriora ▲ **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

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