

## Blessing of railings at site of tragedy

By Pauline Carney | 23rd June 2011



The new railings atop the concrete groyne at the Kaituna Cut. Photo / Te Puke Times.

New railings at the Kaituna Cut were blessed yesterday- five months after Atiria Raupita fell to her death from the concrete groyne.

Ms Raupita's sister Zoe Curtis, from Rotorua, attended the ceremony with her husband Anthony and father-in-law Joseph Curtis.

Rev Kotene Pihema from Maketu and Rev Brian Hamilton from Te Puke conducted the ceremony.

"I had never been here before," said Mrs Curtis, "but I can see why Atiria loved it as a favourite fishing spot."

Her 36-year-old older sister fell about 6m from the groyne on to hard sand as she was fishing with friends about midnight on January 3.

"Perhaps if the tide had been coming in as it is now, Atiria may have lived," said Mrs Curtis as she walked along the refurbished pier where about six people were fishing in the warm sun yesterday morning.

"It was lovely of Rev Pihema to ring yesterday and invite us to this blessing. It brings some form of closure now that I've seen the place. Our family are very spread out, so it wasn't possible for more of them to be here."

The women's parents were no longer alive and Ms Raupita often minded her nieces and nephews.

"I feel very sad but I know she in a better place."

Bay of Plenty Regional Council group manager of environmental hazards Ken Tarboton, who supervised the revamp of the area, plans to have a plaque fitted as a memorial.

The groyne now has a chest-high metal railing to keep anglers from the river mouth.

Two picnic tables and a barbecue have been sited to deter vehicles from driving on to the concrete area.

*Pictured: Reverend Kotene Pihema from Maketu, Rev Brian Hamilton from Te Puke, Zoe Curtis, her husband Anthony and his father Joseph Curtis from Rotorua, and Ken Tarboton, Bay of Plenty Regional Council group manager of environmental hazards, at the Kaituna Cut for the rail blessing and memorial prayers.*

