

New water wheel set for spin in park



ROLLING AWAY: The original water wheel is removed from its Pukekura Park dell last December.

A PUKEKURA PARK icon should be back by Christmas — enhancing its aesthetic value by producing power to run another park feature.

The park's 30-year-old water wheel was removed last summer and its replacement has already been built. But now it must wait for landscaping work at the Pukekura Park dell where it will live.

The wheel will be fed from an "innovative" new flume which, according to New Plymouth District Council parks chief Kelvin Shooter, will let it spin at an even rate regardless of the season or the amount of

water in the stream above.

It will sit out of the water to reduce drag and corrosion and the path around the dell will be changed so the best views are from in front of the wheel.

A new waterfall, using water not needed for the wheel, will also be part of the new landscaping design.

Mr Shooter says a gearbox is incorporated into the wheel, with the idea of generating energy to run another water feature, probably in the children's play area.

Tenders for the landscaping work will be let soon, he says in a report

to the council's monitoring committee. He hopes it will be finished by December but "the works schedule is very weather dependent".

The council has allocated \$150,000 for the project.

The original wheel was built by former curator George Fuller, using part of a wheel that powered the Omata dairy factory.

"Given the difficulties in the construction method and the unbalancing of the wheel by parts of it being immersed in water most of the time, it performed remarkably well," Mr Shooter says.