



Mahurangi East Residents & Ratepayers Association

Chair persons Report

INTRODUCTION

This has been an unusual and testing year. Over the past year MERRA Committee have worked to keep our community well informed and we expect this will be achieved through our Website and communications through our Neighbourhood Support network.

PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Local Historical (Walking) Trail and Seating in Public Spaces

Thanks to Jude Nye and Alan Seelye, we now have completed the design of these bench seats. These will echo both the Scotts Landing sign and the bus shelter by incorporating corten steel ends featuring the distinctive 'telltale' logo. The first seat is proposed for the historic cemetery up the steps opposite the macadamia nut farm. We have drafted the first of the historical commentaries that will go on line. The idea is that visitors to each bench can access the relevant historical commentary on their device and read about the history of the area as it relates to the particular view in front of them.

We are procuring the materials for each bench and will advise members once the first location is completed and invite your feedback regarding other possible locations.

Animal Pest Control

MERRA's efforts to control animal pests in the past year have moved us closer to our goal of being predator free by 2022. Our mustelid trapping programme started in January 2019 saw a rapid decline in populations to the point where from November 2019, no mustelids were being trapped. Also the rat poisoning programme has seen those populations also decline as evidenced by a reduction in bait uptake in the bait

stations around the peninsular. On the positive side, many of you will have noticed a significant increase in the bird populations, particularly ground based birds like Quail. On the negative side, populations of mice and rabbits, who are predated on by mustelids and rats are on the rise. Possums are also rare although several have been trapped in the year and there are ongoing reports of possum activity.

While not in the year being reported, it is worth mentioning that during the COVID-19 lockdown, mustelid populations have started to refresh with several sightings and trappings occurring illustrating how important and ongoing this work is to protect the local fauna and flora.

MERRA thanks and acknowledges the tireless work of the volunteers who tirelessly manage bait stations and doc200 traps for the community and the support of Auckland Council who provided baits during the year.

If you want to join the effort to make our part of paradise animal pest free. contact us via the MERRA website. A little effort by everyone is all it takes.

Plant Pest Control

The last year saw a number of projects undertaken on Council Reserves, public spaces and walkways. Under the guidance of Larissa Cherrie our resident Auckland Council Park Ranger, we were involved with the clearing of plant pests, mainly escapees, for example Jasmin, Agapanthus, Ginger and Pampas Grasses from residential gardens. Doing revegetation with native plants, spraying and maintenance.

We remind Scott's Landing residents the importance of all of us doing our bit to control plant pests on our own properties and surrounding areas like reserves and berms etc.

MERRA can offer advice, printed material and a small quantity of chemical supplied courtesy of the Auckland Council to assist to ultimately making Scott's Landing environment plant pest free.

We are always looking for good keen people to help even if only from time to time to make this goal a reality and target a working session with the Ranger and volunteers the last Friday of each month.

Finally we would like to acknowledge the help, support and guidance from both Larissa Cherrie and her predecessor Beckie Trigg from the Auckland Council Parks Department.

A big thank you to all our volunteers who help with these projects.

Roading and Walkways

MERRA has been in recent contact with Auckland Transport on four matters with outcomes as follows:

Slip on Ridge Road above Baileys Cottage driveway. AT now has engineering design and plans in place but its plans have been further delayed as they are now required to go through a full resource consent process. This could add a further frustrating 12 months to the process while they work through the process of giving themselves consent ... this will involve iwi consultation and commissioning an Assessment of Environmental Effects. MERRA will continue to pursue the matter with AT. MERRA understands that the last section of Ridge Road will be sealed as part of this work, along with the carpark

Clearing cliff-side drains above this slip to avoid further damage. This request was made by both phone and email but is yet to be actioned.

Establishing a designated disability park near the jetty. MERRA made this request on the suggestion of a resident. It is likely to follow the sealing noted above

Recontouring the new roadside drains cut on Ridge Rd just above Charles St. Residents have expressed concern about how they risk undercutting the road and have left no place for walkers to avoid traffic on the tricky corner. This request was made by both phone and email but is yet to be actioned.

Waste by Rail

MERRA express their appreciation to Stuart Windross and Barry Mein for their tireless efforts to complete the work required to lodge our substantial submission to Council now that Waste Management has applied for resource consent for its new Regional Landfill in the Dome Valley. MERRA's 14 page submission prepared by Stuart and Barry includes 6 detailed Appendices. We are sure you will find it powerful reading. It...

- supports other groups who will submit with concern about the potential ecological impacts of the landfill
- pans the traffic assessment contained in the application which concludes that an extra 740+ vehicles a day along SH1 and through the Dome Valley (a 60% increase in heavy vehicles) will have "no more than minor" effect.
- makes a strong case that Auckland's waste should be transported by rail not road to the landfill if it is approved. MERRA's case references the further \$109m upgrading of the rail line announced in January, the prospect of a 65% reduction in fuel burn and CO2 emissions, and a 95% reduction in accident risk. It notes that rail passes within 2km of the site and underpins its case with reference to both council and government policies that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, road fatalities and traffic congestion.
- We invite you all to read the document which is posted on the MERRA website (www.scottslanding.org). We also invite you to lodge a submissions in support of MERRA's case. The instructions for doing so are also on our website.

Broadband:

Our request to provide an interim service upgrade for residents north of 103 Ridge Rd (by connecting to the Charles St cabinet like everyone else) has been declined again due to the costs involved in upgrading the cabinet. MERRA has sought a review of that decision - and this is being considered - again. If that fails we are scheduled to get fibre to the door commencing January 2021 with first connections available within a couple of months of starting. So a lot better than waiting until previously informed Dec 2022.

Neighbourhood Support

Thanks are expressed to Anna Friend who has managed the role of Neighbourhood Support Co-ordinator until recently, and the wonderful group of dedicated Street Coordinators managing the MERRA communication tree and keeping all residents in contact with each other. Peter Seers has temporarily merged the two roles Neighbourhood Support and Community Response Groups through the Pandemic, and we now seek a replacement for Anna to manage the Neighbourhood Support network.

Community Response Group

It has been noticeable that during the current 'Pandemic emergency' there has been no contact nor support from Auckland Emergency Management so we have been largely left to our own devices. Communication channels are open and tested, and hopefully our community has felt well guided and included.

Website

The website continues to be a source of information for residents and visitors of matters concerning the peninsula, plus upcoming and recently staged events. There is also a treasure trove of information relating to the history of Scotts Landing, updated again this year as new information came to hand. MERRA Committee member profiles have been added to the website. Pandemic articles were added to ensure that information was available to residents in one location.

Mahurangi Cemetery

MERRA has representation on the trust that owns the cemetery and as such we have an interest and a voice there. We plan to have our first Heritage Trail and Seat located at the cemetery which can be our trial for residents opinion.

New Events

Fishing Competition

The inaugural MERRA Scotts Landing Fishing Competition was delayed due to the Covid lockdown, however during the Level 3 Lockdown an informal and unofficial competition was run through the "Beer O'Clock" group and was entirely land based and Lockdown compliant. Entry was by donation and the prize was the winners name engraved on the trophy. Please watch the Website for the declaration of the winner (not yet released).

Photo competition

During the lockdown level 3, a photo competition was born from the need for the fishers to photograph their catch. This extended into a wonderful community photo fun event which we intent to continue over the coming years, and possibly extend to include a bottled produce swap. Please see the website for the photos.

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<https://scottslanding.org/>