

FRIENDS OF THE TAPUTERANGA MARINE RESERVE CHARITABLE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2016

I think that this 12 months has been a very good one for the Friends. We've had a very dynamic and hard-working group of Trustees with a wide range of skill-sets and interests on the Board and, with more money in the bank, this has led to a very productive year. I have to say that this Board is probably the most cohesive, hard-working and enjoyable of all the ones I have been on – and I've been on a few.

Although I took over the Chairmanship at the last AGM, we have been very fortunate that my predecessor, Murray Hosking, has stayed on the Board. Murray continues to do much of the grunt work behind the scenes and he and his wife, Patsy are at all of our events and working parties, while I grab all the glory.

It's a common saying that "you can't do much without money." That's not quite true as the Friends have achieved a lot in earlier years with piddling amounts of cash, but life is definitely a lot easier with money in the bank. Thanks to Dave Drane, we received some proceeds from a couple of fish auctions (one in the previous financial year in and the other in September 2015), which have made a real difference. Dave has also been the point man on the snorkel trail with the continuing need to replace buoys after major storm events.

We were also fortunate to have received a major grant from the Wellington Community Trust so that we could continue to support the very impressive Experiencing Marine Reserves programme for primary school children. Its combination of education and citizen science is an approach we would like to foster and support, and already we have contributed to a pilot for a monitoring programme for secondary schools. A class at Wellington East Girls School recently presented their findings to several Trustees, and we will be using some of their material in future work. We are currently investigating other initiatives, mostly suggested by Julian Hodge and new Trustee, Sara Neighbours, using the same approach.

Our relationship with the Department of Conservation is obviously the key one. It has statutory responsibility for the Marine Reserve's management and we have worked closely with it to ensure that we add worthwhile value to their work. For our part, we have taken some positive action to assist, including the Painted Pavements project to delineate the land boundary of the Marine Reserve, an Asian Language brochure, some radio advertising and, of course, the very successful Coast Watch group and Callout Crew. For its part, we really appreciated the Department again committing one of their rangers, Dave Wrightson, for more policing work in the Reserve over the summer. Dave did a fantastic job, not only in performing his core function, but also through providing a friendly, positive and helpful DOC presence.

We've been discussing the vexed but crucial issues of monitoring and compliance in the Marine Reserve for some time with the Department. These discussions have been full, frank and unambiguous. I am pleased to report that some small but positive progress has been made to address our concerns and that both parties have agreed to establish a more structured dialogue so any incipient issues can be identified and hopefully resolved earlier and therefore more effectively. I would personally like to thank our relationship manager in DOC, Matt Barnett, for his support, patience and diplomacy.

We've continued with our public outreach and community events to raise awareness amongst Wellington people and visitors about the value of the reserve and how to look after it. The PPP

project noted above, led by Jen Howe and her team, had the primary purpose of reminding people using the South Coast footpaths of the existence and dimensions of the marine reserve, noting that the marine life within is fully protected. The project attracted media coverage, and has been backed up by the expansion of material on our website www.taputeranga.org.nz about compliance and the need to look out for poachers. Our Facebook group too has been kept humming with news and events. We are presently undertaking a mail drop to residents on the fringe of the reserve of bumper and mailbox stickers and other material to emphasise the Coast Watch messages as we approach another summer of high visitor numbers. One recent event in which Friends played a small part was the annual South Coast Clean Up exercise, which covers the coastline between Owhiro Bay and Breaker Bay. This project has been organised annually by Helen Kettles of Lyall Bay for the seventh year now, and she deserves great credit for her commitment and ability to marshal support and clean up the coast of an amazing amount of rubbish, large and small.

One of the benefits of being a Wellington-based Trust is that we have several Trustees with senior public sector policy and marine ecology backgrounds. This is very useful when we make submissions on issues affecting the marine reserve or the wider marine environment. Thanks largely to Ann McCrone and Murray, we made our usual large number of high quality submissions across a wide range of matters. Most important of these were the Government's consultative document on a Marine Protected Areas policy and the proposed Airport extension. I think that we will be involved in more work on these two issues soon.

The success of any group like ours depends on the calibre and energy of the Trustees and their willingness to get stuck in and get what I call "the boring stuff" done. Over the years we've had some exceptional Trustees come and go. While we lost Steve Meads, one of our invaluable local "go to" guys, this year, Sarah Neighbours, Anne Wietheger and Nicci Wood joined us, each with their own unique array of skill-sets, attributes and interests.

All the activities mentioned above depends on a solid foundation of people paying the bills, doing the accounts, taking the minutes, drafting the Newsletter and so on. If a group relies on one or two people to do all these mundane tasks, then its long term sustainability is in doubt. This is not the case with the Friends. Because everybody does their bit, between us, we can make a difference and enjoy ourselves in the process. That's what it's all about as a volunteer.

Thank you, everyone. We have another big year coming up, so keep looking out for the Newsletters.

Colin Ryder
Chair