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## **Annual Report – Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust – November 2011**

### **Introduction**

The challenge facing the Friends Trust two years ago was to establish a presence and credibility with the Department of Conservation, Wellington local authorities and with the public as a viable force to support the work of the marine reserve and to see that the benefits of the reserve would be appreciated and enjoyed by the region. The highlights of our short history are:

- Trust established, October 2009
- Trust policy statement and involvement in opposing seaweed removal from Island Bay beach, December 2009 - January 2010
- Public Launch of Trust at Island Bay Festival, February 2010; Catchment Care pamphlet distributed
- Taputeranga Island Clean Up with Wellington Sea Kayakers Network, March 2010
- Concept Plan for Snorkel Trail developed and Submission on Review of Foreshore and Seabed Act, April 2010
- Submission on National Consultation on the Mining Stock Take, May 2010
- Facebook Group set up, July 2010
- Marine environment survey for Trail and trial buoy deployed; Submission of WCC Stormwater Discharge Consents, August 2010
- Beach clean up with Lions/Ricoh and South Coast Clean Up participation, September 2010
- Consents for Snorkel Trail received from DOC and GWRC, October 2010
- Design and content of Trail sign and brochure completed; funding approval from Wellington Community Trust; strategic planning commenced, December 2010 – January 2011

- Official Opening of Snorkel Trail March, 2011
- Website [www.taputeranga.org.nz](http://www.taputeranga.org.nz) goes live, April 2011
- Green Party Event at the Snorkel Trail to celebrate the marine reserve, May 2011
- WCC Environmental grant for webcam and brochure approved; May 2011
- Board approved Strategic Plan 2011-12, May/June 2011
- Working group for education project established; participation in South Coast Clean Up, August/September 2011
- Webcam ready to be installed, October 2011

The major activity for the Friends has been the Snorkel Trail project, for which acknowledgements must go to Project Manager Tim Walshe, the support of the Harbour ranger and the excellent design work from Morphological. The Wellington Community Trust deserves our thanks for recognising the novelty and value of the project, which has yet to realise its full potential. Tim and Stephen Journee carried the load of the diving for buoy placement and fine tuning, assisted by volunteers from Island Bay Divers and The Dive Guys. Our thanks to them all. We await the installation of a webcam to cover the Trail and the Bay when Steve and Julian get the pieces all lined up.

As well the Friends have been involved in outreach to other community groups as well as advocacy on behalf of the marine reserve in national and regional forums, especially the WCC Stormwater Discharge consents process.

Island, beach and coastal rubbish removal has loomed large for hard working Trustees and members and will remain a priority for the Trust Board – hopefully to advocate as much at the sources of rubbish which pollute our marine reserve as on clearing up the beaches and the sea.

The initial establishment of ourselves as an active presence and advocate on the South Coast has been completed, and we now move to a more strategic approach to our work across a number of themes. Key developments in the short term may be expected to be the further support for the Trail in educational and interpretative resources, as well as projects in compliance, further outreach and advocacy. We are looking for synergies with other coastal care groups both on the South Coast and those connected to marine protection elsewhere.

### **Liaison and Assistance**

The Trust has appreciated the interest and support of the Department of Conservation in our establishment. It has especially appreciated briefings on the compliance work of DOC and has a respect for the value of this work in deterring poaching. The Trust has yet to determine fully how it can make a contribution to the support of this work but there is a keenness to do so.

Equally, Forest and Bird has been supportive throughout, with encouragement, advice and assistance with meeting facilities. A big thank you to Forest and Bird.

We are grateful to funding from the Wellington Community Trust and the WCC Environmental Grants as well as member donors, the continued interest of WCC Parks and Reserves managers and staff, and the good work of the GWRC staff on the stormwater discharge consents. While the outcomes for stormwater may frustrate some who would wish cleaner discharge and no waste water contamination of the stormwater network, good liaison has started and it will be a challenge to all to keep up this impetus.

The residents of The Esplanade and environs have been so supportive – of the marine reserve and the Snorkel Trail. They are also active in passing on information about marine reserve miscreants to DOC and Fisheries, at the front line of marine conservation. Thanks guys!

### **Trust Board**

I want to acknowledge the work and support of the Trust over the past two years. The Board began with a 'membership of the willing' two years ago. Our grateful thanks go to the contributions from Rachel Anderson-Smith, Jim Baltaxe and Andrew Cutler who have moved on in their busy lives. I want to make special note also of the support, wise counsel and continued interest in the Trust from Celia Wade-Brown, both as an inaugural Trustee and now as our Patron since election to greater glories.

I am particularly grateful for the reliable experience and wisdom of the other inaugural Trustees, Colin Ryder, who leaves no part of the environments of the Wellington region outside of his scrutiny for the protection and fulfilment of its natural promise, and Tim Walshe, who has been the giant of the Trail initiative.

We have been fortunate to attract willing new Trustees to replace those who left and to add dimensions to the skills and experience overall. These are Stephen Journee, Dr Malcolm Francis, Rochelle Finlay, Dr Sophie Mormede, Julian Hodge and Zoe Studd. I believe that we now have marine science, diver experience, community liaison and marine education well-covered in our current Trust Board. Special acknowledgement too to Kirstie Knowles and Blue Wellington, a most worthy collective of Harbour and South Coast use, conservation and recreational groups and interests dedicated to marine and coastal protection. Let's give Blue Welly our fulsome ongoing support.

I am especially grateful that Rochelle has undertaken to Chair the Trust Board now that I have stepped down from the role; I know the Board is in safe and experienced hands as well as now blending a good range of age and experience in its membership. I will stay on as Trustee as long as I can add value.

My thanks also to Patsy who accompanies me to Friends events and always collects more clean up rubbish than me!

### **Final word**

The present level of Government support for marine protection and conservation is lamentable. The conservation estate and our seabeds are expected to be able to be drilled or dug up for foreign profit and the Department of Conservation decimated and choked off through lack of funds. When economies themselves choke, environmental sensitivities are the first casualties for those who believe that markets solve everything. The dreadful experience unfolding in the Bay of Plenty must surely demand a hard look at our collective willingness to accept disaster without strategic forethought and preparation. Given that the oil and debris from Rena are carried south and east on the East Auckland current onto two marine reserves and the relatively unsullied marine environments of White Island and East Cape, the damage is immense for nature let alone the human dimensions.

The load is thrown onto the community to help remind those in charge that the precious places and biota of New Zealand are not for sale at any price. Our apparent national definition of environmental sustainability needs a radical overhaul. A consequence of all this is that people need to be prepared to shoulder part of the burden of both advocacy and action. We in the Friends are blessed with a small but active membership prepared to help where needed. A challenge will be to grow our support base, both active and passive, and try to show by practical action on the South Coast the marine reserves and marine conservation is vitally important to society and economy whether you are a marketer or not.

I am grateful for the support I have enjoyed in chairing the Trust for its first two years, most especially from the Trust Board itself. I have enjoyed a rewarding career in New Zealand's natural places, but there is nothing quite like the reminder one gets of what conservation is all about until one has grubbed around the base of South Coast taupata bushes to find and remove the human detritus that spoils one of the best places on earth.

Murray Hosking  
Retiring Chair  
Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust