

THE WAITAKERE RANGES PROTECTION SOCIETY INC.  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
By Zoom 14 October 2020

Annual Report of the Executive Committee

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Executive Committee of The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated.

The AGM for 2020 was twice cancelled due to Covid-19 lock downs and levels that did not allow for gatherings of people. Hence this AGM is being held by zoom to afford any further delays. This Annual Report is for the year ending 31 March 2020.

As you well know, 150 years ago logging of the mighty trees in the ranges was the greatest ecological threat. Since the logging ended, the forest has regenerated. Now the greatest threat is kauri dieback, caused by a microscopic pathogen *phytophthora agathidicida*. There is no cure - every infected tree will die. The five-year survey results released in 2017 showed that on average 18% of kauri were infected, almost doubling since 2012. In some areas of the ranges, for example the Piha catchment, up to 60% of trees are infected.

The Rahui placed by Te Kawerau a Maki in 2017, led to Council closing the majority of tracks in the ranges, and budgeting \$100M over 10 years for Kauri dieback management. The Society has worked with Council, Waitakere conservation groups and local communities to see that this fund is used to ensure that tracks are upgraded to dry foot status before they can be opened again. Two audits of track conditions in the past six months have been carried out by volunteers organised by the Tree Council and the results have been forwarded to the Auckland Council. Special thanks to Te Kawerau a Maki for their strong leadership up to and following the rahui. The Labour and Green parties have independently proposed funding for a National Pest Management Plan, which will give a much-needed boost to kauri dieback research should they be elected in the October Parliamentary elections.

Following our successful High Court appeal in 2017 regarding prohibited activity status in the ranges, parties who had submitted on this matter to the Proposed Unitary Plan Topic 75 were able to appeal to the Environment Court. Only three parties did go to the Environment Court where court assisted mediation lead them to drop their appeals in 2019, so now we have prohibited activity status in most areas of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area.

We appointed a new Heritage Area Coordinator, Eva Wrassky-Bulmer in April 2019 and Eva has been a great asset to the Society writing a number of submissions over the past year that include Action for Healthy Waterways, New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, A Resilient Piha & A Resilient Karekare

documents, Maui and Hector's dolphins Threat Management Plan, Walking Access Act 2008 Review, AC New Policy on Dogs and Dog Management Bylaw, Proposed Speed Limit Changes around Auckland, Kauri Dieback Consultation Round Three, Phasing out the Waitākere rural sewerage service and targeted rate, Waitakere Ranges Track Plan, Proposed Freedom Camping in Vehicles Bylaw, Predator Free 2050 discussion document

The Society continues to be involved as a stakeholder in Watercare's consultation to replace the Huia Water Treatment Plant in Woodlands Park Road. The chosen site is Manuka Road, adjacent to the existing plant. The Society is a member of the Community Liaison Group. As a group we have tabled a mitigation package to offset some of the damage to native flora and fauna on the site should the project proceed. The resource consent application has been notified and is currently before the commissioners. A survey of kauri on the proposed treatment site has been commissioned.

The Society has commissioned a history of the Heritage Area Act written by journalist Wayne Thompson who was a senior environmental reporter for the New Zealand Herald at the time leading up to and after the passing of the Act. The manuscript has been delivered to the publisher, Oratia Media, and is with the designer and will be published as an e-book which will be available free to members and friends. Grants for this work from The Trusts foundation, Foundation North and the Waitakere Ranges Local Board from are gratefully acknowledged, as is the donation from the Hanna family. Deputy President Anna Fomison has worked with Oratia Media and has been responsible for finding the historic images that were needed.

The Society relies on professional consultants to prepare submissions and evidence for us on a range of legal and planning matters. The pro bono publico contribution of our legal counsel Douglas Allan from Ellis Gould Ltd. is invaluable.

Thanks go to Jenny Taylor who has maintained our membership database and coordinated mail-outs for many years. Anna Fomison keeps our website up to date and it is working well to disseminate information and allow people to purchase merchandise and join the Society. Orhan Er is editor of our quarterly newsletter and we always welcome contributions from members. The executive committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Special thanks go to our deputy president Anna Fomison, and treasurer Sandra Jones. The Society has three Patrons; Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy, the Rt. Hon. Jonathan Hunt and Lynne Pillay. It has been my honour to be President and to chair the executive committee for the past 22 years. I want to thank Society members and my family and friends for their support that has enabled me to better serve the Society.

During my hospitalisation in March 2020 and subsequent recuperation, the Society's affairs have been handled by Anna, who is the Deputy President, and by Sandra filling in as acting secretary in addition to her elected role as Treasurer. I cannot thank them enough for the exceptional work that they have done.

Sadly, during the year four members passed away. Ron Bennett who maintained the membership database for many years died in 2017. David Jenkins died on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019. An early secretary of the Society, Marjorie Newhook died in May 2020 at the age of 98. Marjorie was the mother of Judge Laurie Newhook, the Environment Court Judge who was also on the early committee). Dick Scott died 1 January 2020. Our condolences go to their family and friends.

To the members and friends who were there when the Society was founded in 1973, and the many others who have since joined we would like to express our thanks for your support. The Society has a proud history, but our work is not done. Your support in the coming years will be more important than ever.

After 22 years as President I will not be standing again. I will remain on the committee to ensure an easy transition to the new committee.

Thank you. I move that the Annual Report be received.

John Edgar ONZM  
President, The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.