



THE WAITĀKERE RANGES PROTECTION SOCIETY INC
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Arataki Visitor Centre, 300 Scenic Drive, Nihotupu
7pm, MONDAY 18 MAY 2026

Annual Report of the Executive Committee

I am pleased to present the 52nd Annual Report of the Executive Committee of The Waitākere Ranges Protection Society Incorporated.

Our last AGM, was held on Monday 25th March 2025.

The President's Annual Report will be included in the next newsletter and will be posted on the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society (WRPS) website along with the Financial Report. The Financial Report has been reviewed by a qualified auditor, Aurora Financials, and also will be registered on the Charities Website as part of the Society's annual return.

You can also request copies of these documents by emailing or phoning us.

We acknowledge Te Kawerau ā Maki as mana whenua of this area and acknowledge the special relationship we have had with them over the years.

We would also like to acknowledge the Society's two patrons, Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy and former Member of Parliament, Lynne Pillay.

Central Government

The past year has been one of considerable activity for the Society. The current Government's proposed changes to New Zealand's environmental legislation have resulted in the "systemic dismantling of our environmental law" as Shay Shaeffler said in a press release in Aug 2025. We have been responding as forcefully as we can to the challenge that this has presented.

In February last year the Society submitted on the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill (2025) and in June and July we made submissions on the Regulatory Standards Bill, the proposed changes to National Direction Infrastructure - Development, and on the Proposed changes to National Direction - Freshwater.

Local Government

In April last year we submitted to Auckland Council in support of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Deed of Acknowledgement. In August, 17 years since the passing of Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act in 2008, the relationship between mana whenua and the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area was formally recognised in a deed signed between Auckland Council, Te Kawerau ā Maki and the Department of Conservation. I attended the signing of the deed at the Town hall which was an historic day. A new joint committee, or Forum is being set up to help develop a strategic plan for the area and will be advising the Governing Body about decisions relating to the Waitākere Ranges. The committee will include representatives of 5 members of Te Kawerau a maki, two from Council's governing body, three from the local Board and one from Department of Conservation.

We acknowledge the important role that Te Kawerau a maki has in the enactment of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act and look forward to supporting the Forum wherever we can.

We would like to acknowledge the newly elected Waitākere Ranges Local Board whose jurisdiction incorporates the Heritage Area. We are delighted that the Heritage Area has six members with such a good understanding of the conservation and protection and other issues that need to be resolved. Congratulations to Mark Allen, Chairperson, Greg Presland, Deputy Chair along with Michele Lucke, Alan Geddes, Hannah Slack and Jess Rose. We look forward to working with them in the coming years.

Over the past year the Society was involved as an appellant along with Auckland Council relating to an application for enforcement orders under s 316 of the RMA 1991. This was in response to an appeal for action from residents Lisa Young and Michael Padgett to Council concerning the unlawful clearance of vegetation within a SEA (a Significant Ecological Overlay) and the unlawful depositing of fill and waste material on their neighbour's site in Christian Rd. We were successful in the application although the enactment of the remedies seems to be very slow.

During the process Mike and Lisa both joined the Society and we were very saddened that during last year Mike passed away. The Society passes on its deepest condolences to Lisa Young and their daughters Lola and Dita.

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 exceptional legal counsel Douglas Allan from Ellis Gould Ltd is invaluable. Thanks also to James Hook at Envivo Planning who has advised and represented the Society on all planning matters.

Threats to the Ranges

Kauri Dieback

Along with developers and climate change, kauri dieback remains among one of the greatest threats to the ranges. The spread of the disease is alarming and the work by Mels Barton with Kauri Rescue who have been injecting the trees with phosphite is significant in containing the impact of the organism. Mels reported recently that Kauri Rescue returned to the Cascades to assess the health of the largest kauri in the Cascades to see how they had been responding to the large -tree treatment. She reported

they all seem to have all been responding well to treatment and will follow up again in a couple of years.

Climate change and the impact of storms and erosion and land instability also remain a significant threat.

DarkSky International

WRPS is a supporter of the DarkSky International initiative which has continued to advance over the past year. A meeting was held on 6 May 2026 which noted there have been guideline changes to the international requirements. Gareth Davies reported positive progress now on guideline development, noting that the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park has the credentials to meet the expected new International Dark Sky Park Tier 2 requirements, with a potential issues only around light dome elevation from Auckland. Data is continuing to be fine-tuned for the pre-application.

Watercare

We continue to be involved as a stakeholder in Watercare's consultation to replace the Huia Water Treatment Plant in Woodlands Park Road. The Watercare Hui Water Treatment Plant meetings have proceeded with representation from a variety of community groups. At the moment the focus relates in particular to the work to be done on replacing the water pipes bringing water from the Huia Dam to the Water Treatment Plant at Titirangi. Among possible options already mooted are: running the pipes along the roadside from the dam to Titirangi; micro-tunnelling the pipes more directly, through the Ranges. It will involve making a decision on the method and route to be taken, at which point WRPS may wish to get involved.

Society Matters

Financial state

The Society remains in a strong financial position. Our total resources have been significantly increased by the bequest from Jaqui Amoamo that we received last year. The funds have been ring-fenced and invested in the

short-term while we are considering our options. If you have any ideas for the use of them that you would like to share with us, please let us know.

Financial Review

This year we changed to Aurora Limited for our financial review in order to reduce the cost of the fees. We have also had our donation of \$5,000 which was a contribution towards the costs that the Titirangi Protection Group incurred for legal expenses during the Hui Watercare Treatment Plant action. The Titirangi Protection Group no longer needed the funds as they were awarded costs.

The John S Edgar Memorial Scholarship

Last year we had the honour of being able to announce the John S Edgar Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship came about from the generous donation of \$300,000 from Ann Robinson, John's life partner, who expressed her interest to us in creating a scholarship in John's name with the focus of study or research in the Waitākere Ranges. After some discussion we entered into a formal Endowment Donation agreement with the University of Auckland Foundation and the University of Auckland to provide an annual sponsorship in perpetuity for a Master of Science degree for study or research with a focus on ecology and the natural environments.

In November, Sandra Jones, Dick Bellamy (WRPS Patron) and myself were invited to attend an evening event at the University to formally induct WRPS into the University of Auckland Chancellor's Circle in recognition of our donation and to formally announce our scholarship. The Scholarship continues to progress through the University of Auckland's scholarship process and as yet we have had no formal update on its completion.

WRPS Constitution

Further work on the constitution proceeded this year to complete the changes to the constitution to make the deadline for completion under the new *Incorporated Societies Act 2026*. A copy of the new constitution was provided to Charities Societies and lodged with the Registrar of Incorporated Societies. Many thanks to Keziah for her work on completing this work on the Constitution to comply with the new requirements.

Strategic Plan

In 2023 we updated our strategic plan and we have identified our current priorities as Effective Governance, Key Relationships and Positive Investment. We continue to review our performance against these markers. Mary Binney will be addressing the Strategic Plan and Governance review after the election of officers tonight.

Email and website restructure update

We have continued with our email and website restructure update. We have a new online functionality for database management, for the processes for joining the Society, for making donations, membership renewals and create receipts. We are looking at ways to make the most use of an app called Mailchimp to send our emails to the members and newsletters. We thank David Yates for his services which he offered at a heavily discounted rate.

We also acknowledge and thank Anko Hause who has also been hugely helpful sorting out our email and shared online file storage.

Newsletters

We produced two newsletters over the past year (197 and 198) and we give Sandra Jones our big committee thanks for putting the newsletter together. We hope our new email newsletter capacity we make this easier to do in the future.

The Committee

Heritage Area Coordinator introducing Sophie Day

In August we completed our review of the Heritage Area Coordinator role and in November we advertised the position. We were surprised by the number and high calibre of the applicants and were delighted to be able to offer the role to Sophie Day.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our new Heritage Area coordinator, Sophie Day. Sophie comes from a legal background with experience across criminal, regulatory, and public law in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Sophie was looking to transition from legal practice to a career in

conservation and community advocacy and had been studying conservation through NMIT and volunteering at the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary in Nelson. We are fortunate to have her with us in this significant and pivotal role. We have already felt the impact of having Sophie working alongside us to assist in the Committee's work. We are looking forward to working with Sophie over in the next year.

Over the past year the Committee has continued its valuable work. I acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the contribution made by Sandra Jones, Heather Tanguay, Keziah Singleton and Mary Binney. We are all volunteers and it is truly staggering how much we manage to achieve but it is only through the hours and effort that your Committee contribute.

We have had some significant changes in the Committee that will result in a new Committee structure going forward as you will have seen in the Candidate information form. Sandra Jones has now officially resigned as Treasurer after 23 years. Sandra has been an absolute stalwart, updating us at each Committee meeting and maintaining the records, filing the returns, reporting to the auditors and keeping a solid and firm hold on our finances which are as you will see in the Financial Report are in a good state. It is a huge responsibility and one that Sandra has managed professionally and with great equanimity.

I am happy to announce though that Sandra is not leaving the Committee. Special thanks to Sandra for her sterling work as Treasurer and setting us up with the new auditors.

Please join with me in showing our appreciation for Sandra as Treasurer.

The second change I have to announce is that Keziah is resigning at Secretary. Keziah has been in this role for the

Keziah has made a huge contribution in her role as secretary over the past 4 years

Her work on the online membership forms, the constitution and the strategy document has been invaluable. Not to mention her contribution as Employment lawyer to the updating and processing of the Heritage Area Coordinator contract and as well as to our merchandise which has

transformed it into a fully operational professional enterprise. Keziah's son Anthony Singleton deserves special thanks as well for his amazing contribution to the merchandise sales and marketing. We are very grateful for all they have done. I hasten to add that Keziah is not leaving the Committee and as you will see from our form, she has put her hand up for the treasurer role for which we are very grateful

Please join with me in showing our appreciation for Keziah as Secretary.

It is with sadness and gratitude that we announce that Heather Tanguay is resigning from the Committee after 8 years. We understand that it is time for Heather to move on and focus on the other important community and political work that she is doing. We are extremely grateful for the contribution Heather has made especially with her thoughtful feedback and suggestions and the work she has done in the past on funding applications. We wish her well in her future endeavours Heather.

Please join with me in showing our appreciation for Heather.

And really last but not least I would like to thank Mary Binney for her invaluable contribution to the Committee. Mary's work on central Government submissions and WRPS strategy has been outstanding. It give me great pleasure to report that Mary is standing again this year the Committee.

The Executive Committee meets every second Wednesday of the month both actual and online and our meetings are always well attended. Society Members are welcome to attend and bring matters to our attention.

It has been my honour to be President and to chair the Executive Committee for the past 6 years. I want to thank the Committee Members and my family and friends for their support that has enabled me to better serve the Society.

Could I ask the outgoing Committee to stand up please?

These people are your elected executive who have given the Society so much of their time over the past year.

It has been a pleasure to work with you all and I would like this meeting to join with me in showing our appreciation for your efforts on our behalf.

The Society goes into 2026 in a strong position. In the 53 years since its inception we have gained the respect of the communities we serve and the politicians and professionals with whom we work with constructively for the ranges.

We have the ability and the resources to contribute to Local Government and the Government in a positive and useful way. The committee has developed resilience and is ready for the challenges of the coming years ahead knowing we have a strong membership who will support us and do everything in our power to ensure the objectives of the Society are fully realised.

However, it remains a significant issue that we are such a small Committee. Although we are totally punching above our weight, it is a vulnerability for the Society, and it is unsustainable in the long-term. It is remarkable what we achieve which speaks to the commitment and ability of our Committee but our task is rarely easy, and often the demands on committee members are quite daunting so to have so few people is a problem, we need to resolve urgently. If we have more Committee members, we would be able to achieve even more.

We are open to people joining us in for one-off projects or for campaigns or being co-opted on the committee for a particular issue. If you would like to consider putting your hand up in a restricted capacity, please let us know. This is really crucially important now. Burnout is always a possibility

But it is our love for the ranges and the support of our members that sustains us and despite our current issue, we are confident that the Society is in a strong position to face the challenges that lie ahead.

“This place is a treasure that needs our ever-vigilant guardianship” said ex-president, the late John Edgar in 2006.

It seems that is truer than ever now. Recently we were alarmed to see that neither The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 nor the Hauraki Gulf bill have been included in the proposed changes to the RMA. The public

rally meeting that was called by Greg Presland and Te Kawerau ā Maki was well attended at the end of April and has resulted in a petition to Parliament that was officially handed over to local MPs yesterday and a letter-writing campaign to Members of Parliament. At the moment I have only had one reply from the 15-odd emails I sent and that was from Chris Bishop who acknowledged that they are going to take it into account. For the last 18 years we have largely managed to avoid a political focus on The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act but this year we have become afraid this may end. After the successes of all the battles we have already fought and won, we are nervous and asking the question, is there another real battle for Protection of the Ranges about to begin? We can hope that the protective measures in place will be sufficient but having such hope could also be misleading. Instead, we may need to focus on our purpose, be active and have the energy to make a strong response working alongside our friend and allies so we create a united loud voice for the protection of the environment and of course our beloved Ranges. We must remember there is always a tipping point.

Thank you for giving the Ranges a voice.

Thank you.

I move that the Annual Report be received.

May 18th 2026

=====

Anna M Fomison