

Council

**Wednesday, 26 March 2003
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

PART B

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN,
WAITAKERE CITY, ON WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2003,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR



Last weekend, I attended the anniversary dinner of the New Zealand Forest and Bird Society, and in my speech at the table I gave a tribute to the tremendous work that they have done throughout the Waitakere Ranges and beyond. I was able to offer a little token of appreciation to Ken Catt who has pushed this organisation through campaign after campaign.

It seems that this is a year of great anniversaries for groups and organisations charged with protecting the heritage of the earth - particularly that of the Waitakere Ranges.

It is also the thirtieth anniversary of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, who at the time of writing will hold their fundraising art auction at the Corban Estate on Sunday, 30 March. I anticipate that this will be not only a great practical fundraiser for the new initiatives that they have begun recently, but also a celebration of the broad range of artists, professionals, activists, and of the whole of the community that cares about the treasure that has been left on our back doorstep for us to care for as a City, as a Council, and as a people.

There are a number of people who need to be recognised for their work in sustaining this organisation, and I will name only a few foundational members: Colleen Pilcher, Professor Dick Bellamy, the Rt. Hon. Jonathan Hunt, Dr Lucy Cranwell-Smith, Gary Taylor, Don Binney, Juliet Batten, and of course in later years, John Edgar the current President.

Here is a short summary of some of their key initiatives to date.

Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Achievements 1973 - 2002

Initiated or Assisted With Major Additions to Waitakere Parkland in the Following Areas

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| • Pae O Te Rangi | Waitakere Valley |
| • Paruroa | Big Muddy Creek |
| • Lake Wainamu reserve | Te Henga |
| • Spraggs Bush | Scenic Drive |
| • Gribble property | Karekare |
| • Craw and other properties | Anawhata |
| • Waitoru Reserve | Waitakere |
| • Matuku (F&B) | Jonkers Road Waitakere (provided legal assistance) |



Instrumental in restricting unsympathetic proposals in the Ranges

- Prevented the Development of Paper Roads
- Wooden Bridge at Karekare Retained
- No More Masts in Waiatarua
- No Mast at Pukematekeo
- No Gas Line Through the Ranges
- No Sewage Outlet Between Karekare and Whatipu
- Prevented the Establishment of a Train From Whatipu to Karekare Along the Coast
- Exotic Forestry Restricted in the Ranges
- Prevented Further Modification of the Waitakere Wetland
- Sand Mining Prevented, Te Henga, Muriwai
- Power Station at Whatipu Prevented
- Prevented Rubbish Dumps in the Ranges (potentially affecting wetlands & lagoons):
 - Waitakere Valley
 - Wipene Valley Waitakere River catchment
 - Mt Taupaki Waitakere River catchment
 - Anzac Valley Kumeu River catchment
- Defended Large Areas of Bush and Rural Land from Subdivision:
 - Titirangi
 - Oratia
 - 36 Piha Road
 - Rimutaka Place, Waima
 - Swanson
 - Henderson Valley
- Private Use of Public Land Prevented - Cascade Kauri Park, Arataki
- No Tourism Ventures at Mokora Falls
- Water Quality Standards Upheld - Opanuku
- Limited Quarrying and its Side Effects at Waitakere Quarry

It is also, as we are being well reminded throughout the course of this year, the tenth anniversary of Waitakere *Eco-City*. As one often does on the speeches given at anniversaries, I want to let you in on a little secret. It's about why I decided to protect a place called the Waitakeres, by leading a Council.

I grew up in Newton Gully before the main motorways were put in, two streets from John Banks, and my small world revolved around St Benedict's Church and the tightly packed houses of the working class. Generally Catholic, and Labour.

Like many families in those days, picnics were a big part of our lives, and for a treat the railway workers including my grandfather, held a picnic at Redwood Park in Swanson. Later, as the summer evening drew to an end, we went further into the ranges to the Cascades. I was twelve years old, and absolutely enraptured by the sound that came from the thundering water in the cascade cavern.

I simply just had to hear it again. And so I talked my best mate into a Saturday adventure, catching the steam locomotive from our nearest station - Mt Eden - to Swanson, and then walking up Christian road, over the ridgeline and down to the Cascades. It was a long and truly fantastic day. For two young schoolboys, our relationship with the Waitakeres and later the surf on the west coast became a lifelong involvement.



It was not unusual for people to take what must have been enormously long walks. Jack Diamond the historian used to walk from Symonds Street to Bethells and back in a weekend. Others would get off the Swanson train to view Kauri groves or to walk to Karekare and to Piha. The early members of the Karekare surf club used to walk from Whatipu after catching small motor launches from Onehunga to patrol the beach for the weekend and return to Auckland the same way.

Through the week I would dream about the Ranges, and Karekare. I have been a lifeguard there since I was 15 - in three years I will have completed 50 years patrolling one beach. In a way this dream is a decisive factor in standing for the Mayorality of Waitakere in 1992. I had no programme or policy - just a clear calling to do something.

In 2002, the Prime Minister and Te Kawerau a Maki unveiled a carving on the junction of the Cascades and the Montana walkway. I took a moment to pause, and I could hear the Cascades deep in the valley. Long ago I would have carried a schoolbag for lunch, a pair of sandshoes, and listened for the same sound. If I met that boy now, would I have been surprised?

I think for many, perhaps we would not recognise who we have become. It has been a long walk. But we still hear the falls.

Someone who has been listening to these sounds for a long time is Jack Colmar. Jack has had a concept for a conservation estate to complement the coastal settlements and the land blocks in the Waitakeres and has worked on it for the last twenty years. He has gathered signatures of just about every New Zealand icon from Sir Edmund Hillary and Tim Finn to Kiri Te Kanawa. He continually works towards this dream: to have the Waitakere Ranges a legacy and heritage for the future.

In many ways Jack's dream can be an acceptable dream for us all, providing it fits with the existing landowners, and those that will still want to live in the sanctuary and the beauty of the native bush. But it will mean that development and the "death by a thousand cuts" as the Commissioner for the Environment Dr Morgan Williams said two years ago, will certainly not be a reality. I am an unashamed supporter also of the idea. Although it will need modification and a great deal of debate and consideration, Jack's idea is not something to be ignored.

Coming also to the Ranges is the excellent idea known as Ark in the Park. Dr Peter Maddison and a dedicated team of volunteers have taken years to negotiate with the Auckland Regional Council a viable proposition, based around the cascades area and catchment area of the Waitakere Dam. This initiative is growing from strength to strength.



The view over the Lower Nihotipu Dam from the Arataki Visitors Centre on Scenic Drive.



The Ark in the Park concept is an ambitious initiative by the Forest and Bird Society to establish a "mainland island", free from all non-native predators. Similar in operation to Trounson Kauri Park in Northland, the border of the island is created by a specific and accurate grid of traps and bait stations. It is a very long term project, covering 250 hectares by May 2003, and was given approval by the Auckland Regional Council only this year. The key drivers of the project are the redoubtable Ken Catt, Dr John Sumich, Mark Bellingham, and Dr Peter Maddison. It is instructive that they have begun their efforts within a catchment area, and that in their Annual Report, WaterCare Services have stated their support for the Ark in the Park project, as I will explain later.

A stronger version of Jack Colmar's dream can be found right here in New Zealand. It is called the Karori Wildlife Centre.

Their vision was 500-years long, in which people were asked to imagine a secret valley only 2km from the city centre, 252 ha of native forest ringing with the songs of our rare native birds.



It has begun simply as a place for people, a sanctuary enabling New Zealanders of all ages to experience and learn about the natural heritage of the area in an easily accessible location.

At night, visitors to this park can return for a nocturnal tour, and guides lead them through the forest as they listen to moreporks, discover glow-worms and watch kiwi feed. Others return for the dawn chorus to hear the unique bird song.

ABOVE: A wildlife sanctuary in the heart of Wellington.

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is a protected natural area where the bio-diversity of a square mile of forest is being restored.

A predator-proof fence, specifically designed to exclude 14 species of non-native mammals ranging from possums to mice encircles the 8.6km perimeter.

The Sanctuary is at present in a degraded state. Some flora now missing from the site - including large podocarp species such as rimu and totara - are being re-established.



The Sanctuary is being developed as a major education, research and recreational site for the benefit of all New Zealanders. Karori Sanctuary is run by a charitable community trust. Twelve trustees chosen for their skills in business and conservation represent the community and various strategic partners, including the City Council and the Department of Conservation.



Eleven full-time staff are supported by a member network involving 6,000 people and families from the local community.

Other support comes from more than 40 local and national businesses and philanthropic trusts.

LEFT: Opening of the Sanctuary Trust offices 1995.

To date the Trust has raised over \$NZ 6m towards the project.

The old Karori water reservoir catchment had been closed to the public for 120 years. In the early 1990's James Lynch, then Chairman of the Wellington branch of the [Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society](#), developed a conservation vision that would see fauna, flora, habitats and processes representative of an indigenous lowland forest restored to the managed area. They know that it is a dream that will take generations to realise.

The Sanctuary Trust has a vision for the valley's restoration that spans 500 years - the time it will take to re-establish the forest emergents like rata, rimu and totara. When these giants reach maturity and the processes of death, decay and regeneration will have restarted the restoration program will be complete.



Although the time horizon is long, the most significant work is being done now in these first 10 years of restoration work.

In the Wellington area the native fauna is in general decline, with most species once found here now locally extinct or extremely rare. With the loss of seed-carrying native birds, the remaining native forests are unable to regenerate.

The effect of possums and other predators made the return of native animal species or an improvement in the native forests unlikely without direct action.

ABOVE: Lower reservoir dam.



Many people know very little about their natural heritage because they have never experienced it. Visitors have an opportunity for picnicking, walking and experiencing nature within a short bus trip from downtown Wellington. It provides for the disabled who are often "shut-out" of the wilderness experience because other such attractions are often remote and not suitable for wheelchairs.

The Sanctuary continues to greatly increase the understanding and awareness of New Zealand natural history amongst ordinary New Zealanders. Local iwi will be involved in the restoration of their natural taonga and in the interpretation and education programmes of the Sanctuary.



ABOVE RIGHT: Local iwi. Photo: www.jasonelsworth.co.nz.

No other site in the region has the unique range of features found in the Karori catchment. It is within 2km of central Wellington and is surrounded by suburbs with over 150,000 residents. Over 145 schools in the region are only a short bus ride from the Sanctuary. This is an opportunity unmatched by any other capital city in the world.

The catchment contains a range of habitats with considerable potential for the creation of wetlands. Containing rare plant species such as northern rata, swamp maire, and mistletoe, the valley is large enough to contain self-supporting populations of most forest bird species. It also has a fencible boundary. In a decade, much has been achieved:

1992-1993	Idea proposed; feasibility studies completed
1995-1996	Trust formed; fundraising begun; consents obtained
1997-1999	Fence designed and tested; fence funding obtained; construction completed
1999-2000	Pest eradication completed; first re-introductions of fauna: kiwi, weka and teal.

In August 1993 a steering committee was formed to conduct a feasibility study. It concluded that the development of a wildlife sanctuary was not only technically and financially feasible but also timely.

The proposal coincided with recent advances in removing pests and restoration methods that greatly increased the confidence that such an ambitious venture would succeed.

In December 1994 the Sanctuary Steering Committee received approval from Wellington City Council for the formation of the Trust and development of a management plan. Prior consultations showed that 90% of the local community supported the use of the valley as a sanctuary.

In July 1995 Prime Minister the Rt. Hon James Bolger officially launched the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust. Established as a non-profit charitable trust that allows the community to participate in the development of the Karori Sanctuary, the Trust and its members are responsible for the direction of the entire Sanctuary project.



That year an interim lease was signed which gave the Trust responsibility for managing the Karori Reservoir while funds were raised and planning completed.

In 1997 a draft management plan was released for public submission. The Wellington City Council approved the final plan in January 1998.

In February 1998 the Trust received resource consent to proceed with the development of the Sanctuary and in 1999 signed a 30-year renewable lease with the Wellington City Council. The predator fence was completed in August 1999. With the Sanctuary site secure an intensive nine-month multi-species eradication campaign was implemented. By June 2000 the Sanctuary was declared mammal and rat free.



LEFT: Minister of Conservation, Hon Nick Smith toasts the completion of the fence, August 1999.

RIGHT: The return of kiwi, Dr Hugh Robinson releases little spotted kiwi, July 2000.

The pest-free status of the Karori Sanctuary allowed the reintroduction of one of our rarest birds, the little spotted kiwi. Twenty of these birds were released in the Sanctuary in July 2000, the first of over 30 species releases that will occur in the next 10 years.

Which leads me, somewhat indirectly, to the Painted Apple Moth. It has been apparent to me over the last few months that the Painted Apple Moth eradication programme can be compared to chemotherapy to kill bone cancer. It may or may not work, but the "cure" kills off thousands and thousands of good cells in order that the body may start again.

When I dream, somewhat idealistically, about the sound of the falls in the Cascades, that is not all I want to hear. I want to see and hear the full richness of the forest. That means the birds and the insects. What I am increasingly hearing from leading experts in the field of entomology is that the spray has caused not only the destruction of much of the Painted Apple Moth population, but also most of the others, particularly flying insect species.

The now year-long spraying programme, coupled with a cold spring and very changeable and in patches severely dry summer, has devastated the biodiversity of the Waitakere City area. With a collapse in the food-source insect populations, the bird rearing season has been particularly hard, and there are apparently far fewer chicks emerging or surviving into adolescence.

What we need to face is that one crisis and the response to that crisis, has formed another. This is not, at pains of repeating myself, to say that the eradication was and is unnecessary. It is necessary. But now the City faces another problem, that of re-establishing the biodiversity of the whole area. We cannot face this alone, but we must act.



At the same time as this perhaps unforeseen effect of the eradication programme was building up, two weeks ago the City and region had a major scare to the security of its water supply. A note was sent to the New Zealand Herald threatening to put cyanide in the water supply, stating pretty clearly how this would be achieved.

This caused in turn a heightened state of alert about the security of the water supply in the Waitakere Ranges. Considerable discussion emerged around whether the Mayors should have been briefed directly on such an issue when the national security was raised through the Police, and relevant officers met together to discuss the possibility of how we might respond as a region in future.

It simply struck me that from the point of view of Waitakere City, we were talking about the same thing from two different points of view.

We need to protect the biodiversity of the region.

We need to protect the water supply.

In Waitakere City, this in a way amounts to the same thing.



For some time there has been a broad ranging dialogue between the central government elected members throughout Waitakere City, and Councillors, on the future protection of the Waitakere Ranges.

If anniversaries are exercises in self-congratulation and nostalgia, let's just all give up and go home. If they are opportunities to set fire to the platform that we have built, and step up in a big way to the next one, they are worthwhile.

So here it is. My proposal is that Waitakere City Council initiate talks with the relevant authorities to use the catchment areas within the Waitakere Ranges as conservation estate - call it "The Four Dams Project" - for specific "mainland islands" free from all predators of native wildlife and native forest. In a sense I am encouraging an expansion of the Ark in the Park concept.



The water catchment areas throughout the Waitakere ranges are the largest, strongest and best conservation areas of the entire Auckland region. It is here that we can still hear the birds singing, the water falling, the insect life in full abundance, the uninterrupted views of forested hills without houses, or roads, or the glinting light and constant noise of the cars. We can again imagine a world before wood processing machines started, or chainsaws ripped, or axes began to swing.

This proposal would of course be a lifetime's work for somebody, but it reminds me of another lifetime's work, that of the bio-domes that I visited in Surrey last year. Clearly, theirs was a risky venture built upon green ideals, a likely site, and a willing tourism market. We have more: it makes good sense.

Between the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, the New Zealand Forest and Bird Society, and Waitakere Eco-City, we have together built a platform of something very, very durable.

It is time for the region, cooperating together, to seize this moment and to work together on a project that would be as substantial in the shape of the next fifty years as the formation of the Centennial Memorial Park over sixty years ago.

This initiative has three advantages for the Auckland region as a whole, as well as Waitakere City.

Firstly, it has the capacity to provide greater security for the water supply of the Auckland region.

Secondly, it will act as a biodiversity "bank" for the whole of Auckland's northwest such as when a major eradication programme has to occur in future. The twin potential threats to the City of further biosecurity alerts and threats to the water supply force us to sharpen up the shape of the problem and to act on a more confident and meaningful scale concerning the Waitakere Ranges.

Finally, it stops dead in its tracks the circular argument about the future boundaries of a park if we start from the outer limits of the City's built area.

After all, as soon as you promote any new layer of park regulation or control upon the Waitakere Ranges, you immediately get the justified concerns from residents asking: what will this stop me from doing? Can I subdivide? Why can't I be in this? Can I opt out at any time? Do not we have enough? The point of saving the Waitakeres is lost in the welter of competing private claims.

What we need to do is to establish the core of a new protective area, and then the periphery will shortly sort itself out. The capacity to do this is in the interests and fully within the power of all the relevant territorial local authorities.

On many fronts the City is acting in an increasingly large scale in order to make a really significant difference that will last for fifty years or more. We see it in the stadium, in the civic futures project, in the airport project. It is now time to do something for conservation and for the planet in a manner that makes sense, and is achievable.

The time for pulling together the whole of the Waitakere Ranges into a coordinated set of graduated protection areas - from District Plan, to Heritage, to Park, to biodiversity and biosecurity areas, is now.



MILESTONES

Formed - The Waitakere City Orchestra

Over the last few months Naomi McCleary and I with some help from the Mayoral Fund have been supporting Brigid Bisley in the formation of a new orchestra for Waitakere. It will consist mostly of local musicians, including a small number of professionals, who will be the backbone of the orchestra and be responsible for leadership and training. The Waitakere City Orchestra is holding a preliminary workshop in March, with an open rehearsal on Sunday 23 March at 4pm, in the Titirangi War Memorial Hall.

Thanked - Owen Hoskin Henderson High School Turning Around an Image

We would like to record a mark of acknowledge for the work he has done in turning around Henderson High School. As the New Zealand Herald noted on Monday, 17 March, five years after taking over a school with one of the worst reputations in the Auckland region, he has offered an example for others to follow. While Councillor Hoskin would, given his self-effacing nature, be the last one to take credit for turning a school around, he has stopped the decline in the roll, stopped teachers leaving, brought a real sense of pride back to the school, and attracted significant upgrade funding from the Ministry of Education. The school now emphasises values, standards, and a "you can do it" philosophy. After having 1200 students a decade ago and having dropped to 400, last year it grew to 484, and this year has 577. I am sure that Owen will not rest and will keep going from strength to strength.

Cleaned Up - Ted Scott's Karekare House at the Head of the Karekare Stream

A whole bunch of abandoned cars and almost a hundred shopping trolleys were found on the property of renowned photographer Ted Scott when he recently bought a property at Karekare. Shopping trolleys and other metal objects had been abandoned by previous owners on this rural property. After being made aware of this problem by Ted Scott, I contacted Jon Roscoe the Manager of the Council's solid waste facility, about this problem. Solid Waste acted swiftly to rectify the problem and were out there cleaning the site up quickly. I am sure that we will quickly get to a point where there are no more dirty little secrets lying in wait to be uncovered as potential threats to life and limb throughout the City. This was one more step in getting there. Enclosed is a photograph of the work being undertaken. Well done team.



RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY