



Aotea Great Barrier Local Board: Update – April 2019

Kia ora Izzy, Sue, Luke, Shirley and Jeff,

An update on the most important this month

- 1. Marine dredge spoil dumping:** We have been actively supporting conversations about this and the need for a public debate about the disposal of marine dredge spoil in the region. This is a policy and planning gap and needs to be considered as such, urgently, as there is a project in Coromandel and others which we understand may intend to use the site. We will support you as a board and the appeal process in whatever ways we can and advocate to elected members, central government and the Hauraki Gulf Forum.
- 2. Community trap library:** Based on big increases in enquiries for rat traps and boxes we became aware of an opportunity with Auckland Council Biosecurity in mid-March to grow this project. As you may be aware, we received confirmation that they will fund a big increase in traps and boxes – sufficient to ensure any property that wants to can trap for rats. Alison has worked with Shanti Morgan and Rendt Gorter on this at rapid pace to source and work out storage for these on island. They will be distributed by GBIET and the Ecology Vision project until a paid coordinator can be appointed. Please note that we are reliant on support for this project from the DOC Community Fund and private donors for coordination and trap clearing over the coming years. The board will be aware this is a key thing to get in place. A grant application has gone in to the DCF and we await a response. We are continuing to map the landowners with predator control in place island wide and can share this with the board at any point. Rendt has been in touch about this. Alison Walker will continue to work with Shanti, Rendt and the community contacts putting their hands up to distribute these. It has been a great opportunity and happened quickly, but we're looking forward to supporting more people with the increased investment.
- 3. Cat sterilisations:** it was great to see more support for this on Aotea coming from the RPMP and Auckland Council Biosecurity team. The trust has been subsidising cat sterilisations for many years in partnership with the regional Biosecurity team. We are happy to continue to promote and support this as a responsible pet ownership choice where people keep cats as pets and will work with the team on this.
- 4. Rakitu restoration and DOC priorities:** We heard back from the Minister of Conservation on 7 March after writing to her in December asking for a step change in DOC's investment in

protecting the national treasure that is Aotea, and the Hauraki Gulf. We also asked for weka not to be returned to Rakitu, and for a restoration plan to be developed. It is fair to say that the minister is in no hurry on any of these fronts based on her reply, particularly the glacial progress on finding a site for weka (which can now be seen wandering around the outskirts of Gisborne). It is frustrating when there are several hundred landowners on the Barrier managing pests, and you the Local Board and Auckland Council both investing many times more in actively protecting what we have left than DOC as the major landowner here. We look forward to faster progress in 2019.

The trust will have a stall at the Easter market and we're looking forward to lots of interest in the traps and tāonga of the island.

Nga mihi,

Kate Waterhouse

Chair, Great Barrier Island Environmental Trust

2 April, 2019