



## Annual Report

Korokoro Environmental Group for the year ending 31 January 2020

### **Introduction**

As with many organisations, KEG has had a strange, Covid-interrupted year. It limited some of our activities. However, the lockdown brought real benefits to our local environment and community. People spent a lot more time exploring the local bush and enjoying their own back-gardens. There was also an upswing in community networking and support, particularly through the Korokoro facebook community page.

### **Local land issues**

In addition to seeing a small number of individual house-builds, Korokoro has two significant land developments in the pipeline. The proposed development at 70 Maungaraki Road has inched forward with an application being made to the council for resource consent for 13 properties in an area of land close to reserve land in which the Galbraith Gully Stream begins.

We have expressed our concerns about the potential traffic safety and environmental impacts to the developers and to council. Following the failure of the Council to inform us that the resource consent application had been made, I made an OIA request for all material in relation to the application. As a result, they provided us with significant correspondence, the application and supporting material which we need to get to grips with a view to considering making representations to the council.

In contrast, the passing of the land at Puketiro tiro from the ownership of the Puketiro Partnership (the Mansell and Allen families) to the Forster and Woodward families is a wholly positive development. The new owners, active members of KEG, intend to build on part of the land but also to maintain a large area for conservation and public amenity, placing it under QE2 covenant. They have already started work creating a new footpath and removing wilding pines.

We appreciate the many years of care that Jim and Ruth Mansell, Sylvia and Bill Allen and others have put into Puketiro tiro and have let the new owners know that KEG will be willing to help with any work on the land.

### **Belmont Regional Park developments**

This year GWRC consulted on and agreed its Park Network Plan for 2020 – 2030. In November we discussed the draft plan with GWRC councillor Josh van Lier. We

subsequently made written and oral submissions in support of the general principles of the plan (increased emphasis on conservation and combating climate change) as well as specific proposal for restoration of grazed parts of the Belmont Regional Park. The final plan tilted strongly in the direction that we and other conservation groups have been pushing. It also contains a specific commitment to exploring a new walking track into the Park from Titiro Moana Road.

We have also supported changes to the Friends of the Belmont Regional Park, to make it a more active and representative umbrella group for those with an interest in the future of the Park. Julie Haggie is part of the new Friends committee, with Jamie Stewart from Kelson as the new Chair. At the Friends AGM outgoing Chair Pete Matcham was thanked for his many years of advocacy on behalf of the Park.

### **Practical actions**

Throughout the year we have maintained our ongoing practical actions:

- **Pest Monitoring in Belmont Regional Park** – last year Julie Haggie took over where Paul Thomas left off in organising the regular (but now less frequent) pest monitoring in the Belmont Regional Park, that we carry out for GWRC in order to enable them to better understand and respond to predators in the KNE Korokoro Valley area. Julie has organised monitors throughout the year with our regular team of volunteers.
- **Inanga Love Park working Bee** – in December we worked with conservationist Paula Warrant and artist Kedron Parker to weed and mulch the site by the Korokoro Stream, with a view to further planting next year. Artist Kedron Parker has provided new artwork that is now up for all to see.
- **Annual Korokoro clean-up** – around 20 people took part in clean-up in July. We worked on the Percy Reserve, the Reserve land around playcentre and Scouts, leading down to the Galbraith's Gully and collected a lot of rubbish, all of which was removed by HCC.
- **Annual Korokoro bird-count** - several of us took part in the second annual Korokoro Bird count, organised by Danielle Shanahan of Zealandia. By doing it year on year we will start to build up a picture of the birdlife in Korokoro.

### **Education**

The one educational activity that we took part in was training in fish monitoring at the Percy Reserve. Organised by Mountains-to-Sea, it provided a clear and practical introduction to the purpose and methods of fish monitoring and the ways of ensuring and enhancing fish access from the sea.

It has led to discussions with other western hills groups about organising more in-depth training and the equipment needed to carry out fish monitoring.

### **Pest control**

There continues to be a trickle of rat-trap purchases and some people providing us with their results. We are now up to 44 known working Traps in Korokoro with 84 recorded kills (but no doubt many other not recorded).

This year we need to find a way to give our predator free work a boost.

We have had discussions with the HCC about trapping in the Percy Reserve but need to take it forward in 2021.

### **Community Engagement**

In the last couple of years have used facebook and this year connected with the Korokoro Community Facebook. This has been an effective way of communicating (as the rat traps and requests through the fb indicate). The relationship of fb with the website and the purpose of the website remains unclear and we are probably not using it as effectively as we could.

We have also been regularly posting in the Korokoro newsletter and occasionally in the school newsletter.

### **Conclusion**

During this unusual year we have continued to work effectively to protect and improve the land in and around Korokoro. In doing so we have maintained and built on strong links with others in Korokoro and the wider Lower Hutt community. In 2021 (assuming there are no further, significant, lockdowns) we could look at maintaining our regular, existing commitments but think about more ambitious plans (significantly increasing Korokoro trapping, developing local mulch and composting resources) that we had to put on hold in 2020.

Daniel Jones

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