



The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc is a registered charitable entity in terms of the Charities Act. 2005 Registration No CC46103.

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## President's Report

Kia ora koutou katoa

Welcome to our winter newsletter that covers the last few months of the Society's news and events. And, we cannot begin without acknowledging with great sadness the death of John Edgar on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021.

John was our WRPS President for 22 years and led the Society with clarity of vision, great determination and huge energy. Many of the current achievements and successes of the Society are to a large extent due to him.

John was a tireless, dedicated and unmatched champion for the protection of the Waitākere Ranges. He was a force of nature and he will be deeply missed. It is hard to find sufficient words to thank him for his contribution. He was our Superhero with special powers in protecting the Waitākere Ranges. All we can say is a huge heartfelt thank you.

The Society's sincere condolences go to John's family and friends.



John Edgar

We have included in this newsletter an Obituary of John which is an excellent summary of John's mahi and achievements. This summary was originally written by Eva Wrassky-Bulmer, our Heritage Area Coordinator, for the successful application to EcoMatters 'Love your Place' award which was awarded to John last year.

Also in this newsletter we have included the Executive Committee's Annual Report, the Financial Report to the AGM Waitākere Ranges Protection Society Inc and the Statement of Financial Position, as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

These documents were all presented at our AGM which was held on 1<sup>st</sup> May at Arataki Centre and thanks to our members and friends who attended.

There was a good turn out for our official business and also for the excellent presentation and talk that followed. We were very fortunate to have both Raewyn Peart and Gary Taylor from the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) as our guest speakers. Raewyn spoke to the new report by EDS *Protecting the Waitākere Ranges*, co-authored by EDS Solicitor Cordelia Woodhouse, lawyer Shay Schlaepfer and EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart. This significant report examines the effectiveness of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 in protecting the nationally and regionally significant landscapes of the Waitākere Ranges and makes several important recommendations.

The Waitākere Ranges report is available at <https://www.eds.org.nz/our-work/publications/reports/protecting-the-waitakere-ranges/>

The Society is very happy to support this report and looks forward to discussing its proposals and recommendations.

Gary Taylor gave a brief overview of what is happening nationally and also with the Environmental Defence Society that will impact the Waitākere Ranges in some way. And, as Gary said "In a word, lots!". Gary spoke about the reformation of the Resource Management Act which is well overdue. He emphasised to us that it is important to ensure that the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act connection carries through into the new regime.

Gary also talked about reforms in conservation and the importance of biodiversity, landscape and recreational values in New Zealand. He also discussed DOC's engagement in the Ranges, the oceans and fisheries, and the review of Local Government and Three Waters Reform Programme. This is all happening at pace and there are huge opportunities but also risks.

# Executive Committee Annual Report

The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

Gary also mentioned two major conferences being held by EDS this year:

1. Transforming Aotearoa The Government's Environmental Reform Agenda 4-6 August Ōtautahi Christchurch.
2. Climate Change and Business Conference, 13-14 October 2021, Aotea Centre, Auckland.

Both the presentations and the robust discussion from the floor afterwards served as a reminder of the importance of the role that the Society plays as a guardian of the Heritage Area Act. Although the legislation has been passed and that battle has been won, we acknowledge the war has not. The Society is called to remain vigilant of the current threats, weeds, pests and the increasing pressure from the enormous growth of Auckland City that is right on the Ranges doorstep as well as the huge significance to ensure the WRHA Act connection carries through all the new important changes coming and into the new regime.

## Making a Stand

Our new E-Book publication *Making a Stand: the history of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act* has moved through the final stages of production with the indexing and final editorial processes completed. It has had its final sign off and the publisher will now be sending it off for E-pub conversion. Once completed we will be looking at setting a date for a celebration to mark the launch of this important publication. We have dedicated this book to John to acknowledge the work that he did for the legislation. We will notify you of the date for this event.

## Your Committee

Your 2021 Committee is Sandra Jones, Deputy President, Treasurer and Acting Secretary, Heather Tanguay, Tim O'Shea, Mike Sweeney and welcome to new member Robin Taylor. Robin's bio is included in the Newsletter.

As we move into 2021 together, we are looking forward to maintaining a steady-as-she goes stance over the next few months as we stabilise working as a team, sorting our housekeeping and getting used to our new normal without John. I am hopeful we will have some new committee members to introduce to you in the next newsletter and we are anticipating getting down to work with our strategic review later in the year.

## And finally to quote Gary:

"John had a finely tuned moral compass and sense of environmental ethics that underpinned his long and fruitful journey with the Society and with the Ranges he so valued. Haere ra, John. We will continue that work."

Anna Fomison  
President

As presented at the Society's Annual General Meeting, held at the Arataki Centre, Saturday 1st May 2021, 4pm.

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

The 2020 AGM was twice cancelled due to Covid-19 lockdowns and was finally held by Zoom in October which was only six months ago. This Annual Report is for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Kauri Dieback continues to be the greatest ecological threat to the mighty trees in the Waitākere Ranges since logging ended 150 years ago. As you know the regenerating forest is under attack from the microscopic pathogen *Phytophthora agathidicida*.

In 2017 Te Kawerau ā Maki placed a rāhui that led to Council closing the majority of tracks in the ranges, and budgeting \$100M over 10 years for Kauri dieback management. The majority of this funding from the NETA (Natural Environment Targeted Rate) fund has gone to upgrading the tracks. There are 68 track projects in total in local parks across Auckland city. By the end of the 2021 calendar year contractors will have completed 40 of these projects with another four major projects completed early next year.

There are 14 track projects in Waitākere Ranges Local Board area. By the end of 2021 calendar year 50% of the Waitākere Ranges Local Board (WRLB) track mitigation programme will be completed.

New tracks have been opened on the Hillary Trail which is almost all open now. Te Kawerau ā Maki has gifted a new name to the Hillary Trail, Te Ara Tūhura which means Pathway of Discovery. A small amount of funding was also given to Kauri Rescue.

MPI's Kauri Research programme has been managed by the National Science Challenge and MPI's Kauri Dieback unit, after being shut down (then re-opened) it has recently appointed a new manager and has begun recruitment.

The National Pest Management Plan which - introduced by the Government last year - has opened the door to new options such as kauri sanctuaries for healthy areas, fencing off areas on private land and taking a consistent approach nationally.

A special thanks to Te Kawerau ā Maki for their strong leadership up to and following the rāhui and to Kauri Rescue who are actively involved in managing the disease.

Myrtle Rust has now been found in the Waitākere Ranges at Karamatura near Mt Donald McLean. It has spread across the West, the wider Auckland area and elsewhere across the country wherever the climate is compatible with the disease. It is caused by fungus spores that are spread by the wind.

Myrtle Rust is a serious biosecurity threat and there is the possibility that some native tree species could become regionally extinct.

A trans-Tasman research collaboration has almost completed the genome for the fungus that causes Myrtle Rust. This will mean that specific control strategies can be developed.

Information is urgently required on the whereabouts, hosts and intensity of this disease. We urge using the *iNaturalist* website to report Myrtle Rust as this will provide valuable information to researchers.

In 2019 we appointed Eva Wrassky-Bulmer to the role of Heritage Area Coordinator. Eva continues to be a great asset to the Society. She has written a number of submissions over the past year, including:

- Reducing waste: a more effective landfill levy
- National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity
- Regional Parks Management Plan
- Waitākere Ranges Local Board draft plan
- North Piha lifeguard tower
- Marine mammal submission
- Auckland Council Emergency Budget 2020/2021
- Auckland Council Annual Budget 2020/2021
- Climate Change Commission submission

The Society continues to be involved as a stakeholder in Watercare's consultation to replace the Huia Water Treatment Plant in Woodlands Park Road, Titirangi. The chosen site is Manuka Road, adjacent to the existing plant. The Society is one of the five members of the Community Liaison Group. As a group we 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 was commissioned and found the kauri dieback organism everywhere, putting the entire project in doubt due to Watercare's assumption they can contain the pathogen or that it doesn't matter if they can't as well as a flawed site selection process, all of which threaten the entire catchment.

At the reconvened Hearing held at the beginning of April the combined groups' 10 expert witnesses including Te Kawerau ā Maki gave evidence to show that the proposal would breach the Biosecurity Act, would breach tikanga and the rāhui and would have more than minor impacts beyond the site. Our thanks to the Society's legal counsel, Douglas Allen, for writing our submission and to Robin Taylor for presenting it. Council experts including the Reporting Planner recommended declining consents. We are awaiting a decision.

The Society's e-book, "Making a Stand", the history of the Heritage Area Act, is with Oratia Media, in the final throes of production. This commissioned work was 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. We are currently updating the e-book with a tribute dedicating the publication to John.

Grants from The Trusts Community Foundation, Foundation North and from the Waitākere Ranges Local Board used to produce this work are gratefully acknowledged, as is a generous donation from the Hanna family. John had been instrumental in sourcing many of the images. So many thanks to John, to Sandra Jones for her editorial assistance and to Carolyn Lagahatau and Peter Dowling from Oratia Media.

Later on we'll show you a preview of the e-book. We intend to launch it at a later date.

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 Lawyers is invaluable. Our sincere thanks to the exceptional Douglas Allan for his legal counsel.

The Society has three patrons: Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy, the Rt. Hon. Jonathan Hunt and Lynne Pillay. The executive committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the entire Executive Committee. Last year was a difficult year for the Committee and we pulled it together as a team. Thank you all for your effort, commitment and support.

Special thanks go to our Deputy President, Treasurer and acting Secretary, Sandra Jones. I cannot thank her enough for her support and the exceptional work she does. Special thanks also to Orhan Er who has been the editor of our quarterly newsletter for several years and to Mandy Patmore. Mandy and Orhan are not standing again this year. Our thanks to both of them for their effort and commitment. We are sad to see them go and wish them well in their new endeavours.

Thanks go to Jenny Taylor who has maintained our membership database and coordinated mail-outs for many years. We welcome back Tim O'Shea to the committee and welcome aboard Robin Taylor who among other things has offered to keep the website up-to-date.

It has been my honour to be President and to chair the Executive Committee over the past six months despite the difficulties of the year. I joined the Executive Committee in 2003 and became Deputy President in 2005 and over the past 18 years have worked as Newsletter editor, Website editor, Public Relations, Oral Historian and worked on the e-book. In the process not only did I work alongside John but I gained an in-depth understanding of what the Society is about and how it works. My commitment is to work cooperatively with my Deputy President Sandra and my Committee to create a sustainable Society and to carry on

the Society's work to the high standard that John always achieved. We are planning on undertaking a Strategic Plan review in the next few months to clarify our direction and priorities. At the moment the Committee is missing a Secretary. Please consider joining the committee to help us in our work. We would welcome anyone who feels they could contribute.

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.

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

Anna Fomison, President, the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society Inc. (1st May 2021)

## Obituary John Edgar

John Edgar was on the committee of the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society (WRPS) since 1996 and from 1998 was President - making him the Society's longest-serving President at 22 years, retiring in 2020 due to ill health.

John was a long-term resident of Karekare and was a sculptor with many public works to his credit in Auckland, Waitākere and the United Kingdom.

John had dedicated his life to the preservation of the Waitākere Ranges and its significant heritage and ecological values. Many issues were tackled during his tenure as President, and he led the Society through an extremely challenging period when the Waitākere Ranges were threatened by subdivision and development.

John always had an unconditional commitment to and responsibility for both WRPS and to the protection of the Waitākere Ranges and made a long and effective contribution.

Under his leadership the Society achieved permanent legal protection for the Waitākere Ranges through the enactment of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008, a piece of legislation designed to protect the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area from further subdivision and development. It was the result of 35 years of campaigning by the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society.

In the years before the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act came into being there was a huge amount of work that John, on behalf of the Society, and with the support of legal counsel and planning experts, put into challenging a multitude of Resource Consent applications, as well as putting considerable work into submitting on Regional Parks Management Plans and District Plans.

In January 1999, anticipating the battles to come, John made an appeal for funds to fight in the Environment Court. WRPS had had a busy year in 1999, appealing eight of the 106 points of the Waitākere City Council's (WCC) proposed District Plan.

Drastic changes in subdivision rules in a Structure Plan by WCC led to the Society appealing the decision to the Environment Court. Also over the course of that year there was a project managed by WRPS in collaboration with local iwi, DOC, ARC, and Landcare scientists, which focused on invasive wasp species. This project was inspired by hearing from Dr Jacqueline Beggs of Landcare about the impact of their activities on insects in the forest.

In 2000, WRPS worked alongside ratepayer groups in Piha, Huia, Laingholm and Karekare to express concern at new Resource Consent applications which threatened to greatly change the areas in which they were proposed. The Society had a great deal of work to do preparing submissions and challenging the Council on individual issues in the appeals to the Environment Court. Millennial Medals were awarded to many members of the Society including John Edgar. The possibility of a Waitākere Heritage Park was revived at the 2000 AGM.

There were two important subdivision proposals in 2000 that WRPS challenged the Council on in the Environment Court. One was a 14-lot proposal in Titirangi, the other was in Karekare. In September 2000 WRPS was able to announce an important victory concerning the proposal in Titirangi, when the Environment Court cancelled the subdivision consent. This was a major victory as it established some important principles that would be applied in subsequent cases. The second case was won when the Environment Court upheld the four-hectare rule and disallowed the Council's intention to reduce the subdivision size. It was a significant year on many counts, and by the end of the year the Commissioner for the Environment began a fruitful liaison with the Society to promote the concept of a heritage area.

The legal appeal undertaken on behalf of WRPS to the Environment Court regarding the Auckland Unitary Plan (the Auckland Combined Plan) (2016) is another important and significant example of the notable work and effort put into various achievements WRPS has had under John's leadership.

Another notable action was that John Edgar invited Morgan Williams, the then Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment to visit the Waitākere Ranges, which resulted in his locally famous description of the situation as 'death by a thousand cuts' and a study report (June 2001).

John's leadership has resulted in endless successful legal challenges to inappropriate developments or activities within the Waitākere Ranges. Under his leadership WRPS has spoken out on a huge range of issues from the national response to Kauri Dieback, fighting to reinstate general tree protection, collaborating on submissions presented to the hearings on the then proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, sharing costs of expert witnesses during the planning

hearing for the proposed replacement Huia water treatment. The countless hours which have gone into attention to detail in writing submissions and being prepared to take legal recourse where necessary cannot be underestimated.

John Edgar's willingness to give of his time and energy as well as providing the resources of the Society to those needing support has been pivotal to the success of many local conservation campaigns, whether they were about a single tree or many hectares of native bush.

In addition to all the battles the Society has fought under John's leadership, the following books were also produced:

*Waitākere Ranges: Ranges of Inspiration: Nature, History, Culture* – Edited by Bruce and Trixie Harvey 2006.

The book is a collection of essays, articles, art and writing from over 70 contributors. The book was a long-term project of 25 years that was finally realised in 2006.

*Saving the Ranges: The first 40 years of the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society* – Edited by Trixie and Bruce Harvey 2013.

The book tells of the many people who have contributed to the conservation and protection of the Ranges and makes it clear the work of the Society would not have flourished without the hundreds of members who have given their support.

*Making a stand: the History of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008* written by Wayne Thompson is an e-book format that is currently undergoing production, with publication due very soon.



John Edgar always worked collaboratively with other organisations to achieve the goals of the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society. This is exemplified by the Society's support for Te Kawerau ā Maki in placing the rāhui onto the Waitākere Ranges forest to prevent further spread of kauri dieback disease. John worked alongside Forest & Bird, the Tree Council and Friends of Regional Parks as well as scientists and biosecurity experts from around the country and a huge outpouring

of public support for Te Kawerau ā Maki to ultimately secure Auckland Council's agreement to enforce the rāhui and close tracks in the Regional Park until they are upgraded.

The legacy of collaboration, determination and inspiration to achieve permanent protection of the Waitākere Ranges left by John Edgar is something for which future generations of New Zealanders will always be grateful. John Edgar has given the Waitākere Ranges a voice.

## New Committee Member

Robin (Rob) Taylor has been a self-employed IT Consultant, and WRPS supporter, for the last 30 years.



Originally from South Taranaki, he has a BSc (Hons.) in Physics and has been a keen trumper and conservationist since his student days at the University of Canterbury.

Moving to Wellington to work in the Ministry of Energy, Rob was active in the native forests campaign and against Muldoon's Think Big projects, which led him to leave public service to work for ECO for a few years, after which he taught science at

Wellington High School, before moving into the IT industry with IBM and Apple.

Rob and his family have lived at Karekare for the last thirty years; he has been heavily involved in the local R&R, and was a neighbour and co-conspirator of John Edgar.

He was active in the Heritage Area campaign and also served two terms on the Waitākere Community Board.

He is the current secretary of the Waitākere Ranges Combined Ratepayers Association.

## 2021-2022 Subscriptions Renewal Notice Reminder

Subscription renewal notices for the period 1 Feb 2021 to 31 Jan 2022 were sent to all members in February. If you haven't renewed your subscription yet, could we urge you to do so as soon as possible. If you aren't sure, feel free to email me or phone me to check. I'd rather you did this than pay twice.

Sandra Jones, Treasurer

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# Financial Report to the AGM Waitākere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

## Statement of Financial Position, as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

As a registered charity, we submit an Annual Return to Charities Services (Department of Internal Affairs) using their template. In addition to the financial statement, this Return includes a non-financial Statement of Service Performance. The full Annual Return including the Audited Financial Statements may be viewed online on the Charities Register.

Copies are also available on request from the Treasurer Ph: (09) 817 2788, Email: jsandra378@gmail.com

Auditor: Forbes Audit + Accounting, Chartered Accountants.

### STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

#### 'How we were funded?' and 'What did it cost to run WRPS?'

OPERATING RECEIPTS (Money in)	<u>31.1.21</u>	<u>31.1.20</u>
	\$	\$
Donations	3,560	11,175
Subscriptions	3,643	3,698
Sale of goods	735	773
Interest from investments	5,795	5,611
Other	23	
The last year closing bank balance trivial error	285	
<b>Total operating receipts</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>21,257</b>
<b>Operating payments (money out)</b>		
Buying goods for sale		
Donations made		8,000
Other operating payments	20,304	15,152
<b>Total operating payments</b>	<b>20,304</b>	<b>23,152</b>
<b>Operating surplus or (deficit)</b>	<b>(6,263)</b>	<b>(1,895)</b>
<b>Bank accounts and cash at start of F/Y</b>	<b>206,413</b>	<b>208,308</b>
<b>Bank accounts and cash at end of F/Y</b>	<b>200,150</b>	<b>206,698</b>
Cheque accounts	12,898	31,427
Savings accounts		
Term deposits	187,252	175,271
<b>Total bank Accounts and cash at the end of the F/Y</b>	<b>200,150</b>	<b>206,698</b>

### STATEMENT OF RESOURCES & COMMITMENTS-

#### "What WRPS owns" and "What WRPS owes" SCHEDULE OF RESOURCES

	<u>31.1.21</u>	<u>31.1.20</u>
	\$	\$
Bank accounts	200,150	206,698
GST receivable	201	38
<b>Other resources</b>		
Inventory on hand at cost ( <i>consists primarily of stocks of 'Waitākere Ranges'</i> )	*5,731	18,877
Office equipment		2
Plant and equipment		15,555
<b>Total resources</b>	<b>206,082</b>	<b>241,170</b>

Note by Treasurer: \*The significant drop in Inventory recorded this year relates to stock and equipment which has been fully

depreciated and has no future value.

## ***Thismia rodwayi* (fairy lantern)**

A rare new find in the Waitākere

*Conservation status:* At Risk Naturally Uncommon

The Waitākere Ranges' flora has been continuously surveyed by botanists, both amateur and professional, since the mid 1800s, although a list of plants was not published until 1871 by T.F. Cheeseman.

Because of this, new finds are very rare. They may be of a species known to occur in other areas in New Zealand but never recorded in the Waitākere Ranges before, or they may be plants that are familiar to us all but are re-classified when taxonomists take a fresh look at them.

A recent example of the latter is the revision of kanuka by Peter de Lange in 2014, which recognised that, within New Zealand, there are ten separate species of what we used to lump together into one species *Kunzea ericoides*. Two of these new species occur in our Ranges (*K. robusta* and *K. amathicola*).

An example of the former – a species never before recorded in the Waitakeres - is the discovery of *Thismia rodwayi* (fairy lantern) in the southern part of the ranges by Tim Stevens in 2015. The closest previously known records of this species are on Hakarimata Range and Mt Pirongia.

This tiny plant is a saprophyte (feeding on decaying organic matter from dead organisms) and feeds through fungal

threads connected to nearby tree roots). So because it doesn't need chlorophyll, there is no need for it to come out from under the cover of the litter on the forest floor where it lives. But its tiny single flower does need to pop out into the open air in order to spread its pollen and seeds.

And what a bright beauty the flower is, usually red or yellow/orange.

Sandra Jones



*Thismia rodwayi* (fairy lantern),  
Waitākere Ranges, 4 Dec 2015.

Ignore the green leaves that surround the flower;  
they do not belong to the *Thismia*.

(ph: Sandra Jones)

## **YOUR COMMITTEE**

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<b>Deputy President:</b>	Sandra Jones Phone: 09 817 2788	jsandra378@gmail.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Position vacant	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sandra Jones Phone: 09 817 2788	jsandra378@gmail.com
<b>Committee Members:</b>	Mike Sweeney Heather Tanguay Tim O'Shea Rob Taylor Susie Vincent	mikesweeney41@gmail.com heathertanguay@slingshot.co.nz tim.oshea@outlook.co.nz rob@taylored.co.nz susannevincent@outlook.com





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