

Hahei Beach Ratepayers' Association 2010/11 Annual Report

As the term of this Committee began, we received a glowing review of the Park & Ride scheme which shuttles visitors up the hill to the Cathedral Cove carpark during the height of the peak season. As the term of this Committee ends, we are dealing with the almost complete failure of the scheme to achieve its purpose last summer.

Our Community Board has committed to providing financial support again next year but anything short of complete success will undoubtedly result in the service being canned. With the Grange Road upgrade now being completed, the need for the service will become even more apparent as there will be no provision for roadside parking on Grange Road. We believe the Grange Road traffic issue needs to incorporate a Park & Ride service in conjunction with parking fees being charged for the Cathedral Cove carpark. DoC have thus far ignored the impacts - particularly traffic - that Cathedral Cove causes for Hahei but we remain positive that a sustainable outcome can be achieved.

The Grange Road upgrade plans did incorporate a footpath although there was no intention of providing it due to budget constraints. At our urging to promote a walkway as a priority & with recognition of the safety issues for pedestrians on Grange Road, some creative thinking by TCDC means a walkway along Grange Road is likely to be a reality sooner than it otherwise would have been.

DoC concessions at Cathedral Cove & TCDC concessions at Hahei occupied a large amount of our Committee's time. DoC were initially intransigent on the concession on the beach at Mares Leg Cove but subsequently decided to not issue a beach concession (for the retail of refreshments) due to the "closure" of the arch, as a result of geological instability, and an apparent desire to passively discourage visitors because of the arch's condition. Regardless of the reasoning, we believe a return to the earlier concessions situation was a desirable outcome.

DoC seem to recognise the importance of Cathedral Cove regionally & nationally - if not locally - but it is disappointing that more than a year down the track we are still faced with "temporary closure" of the Cathedral Cove arch. A decision on what should happen has been pending for months.

It was pleasing to see DoC swing into action following major storm damage earlier this year. However, DoC would not commit to reinstating the staircases to Mares Leg Cove, which had been torn away by slips, due to perceived budget, engineering and potential iwi considerations. Fortunately, engineering advice was that reinstatement would be relatively straight-forward & DoC undertook to do so. Special mention is due to Peter Hawley & the volunteers he marshalled to assist DoC with track rehabilitation.

Our Committee has undertaken to develop our own website to aid the storage and dissemination of information & provide relevant internet linkages. Thanks to Kirsten Dickie for her part in kick-starting this initiative.

In 2005, a Community Plan was developed by our Association. Its fulsomeness was considered a bit daunting by TCDC so we were compelled to rearrange and abbreviate it under the headings economic, social, cultural and environmental. Each section states what our community has, what we want and what we do not want. No small amount of effort was expended by Penne Clayton, David Burton & Helen Russell before the 'new' Plan was adopted by our Committee. Our Plan has subsequently been "received" by TCDC rather than "adopted" as adoption would require them to act upon it as if it were a (formal) planning document.

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint was a project devised to aid planning by TCDC, EW, DoC and Iwi for the next 50 years. For TCDC, the Blueprint outcome would feed into the District Plan Review. The Blueprint was to be implemented from January 2010 although it has yet to be formally accepted by TCDC. Regardless, the District Plan Review has begun. At a higher level, we concede the Blueprint has some purpose but we question the value of it at the local level.

Seemingly, the only issue of significance, for Hahei, to come out of the Local Area Blueprint (Mercury Bay South) - which has yet to be formally released - is a proposal to promote "greenfield growth" on either side of Hahei Beach Road as you enter the village. This is contrary to our Community's aspirations (as per the aforementioned Community Plan, 85% of ratepayers do not want development south of the existing village boundary at The Church/Jackson Place) - despite being assured that our Community Plan would be given strong consideration in formulating the Local Area Blueprint relating to Hahei.

Concurrent with the development of the Local Area Blueprint, objections were continuing against the 8 Acres Ltd proposal to subdivide an area of rurally zoned land subsequently identified as ripe for "greenfield growth" in the Local Area Blueprint. Despite the Local Area Blueprint not having been adopted - nor released - by TCDC, the draft proposal for "greenfield growth" in Hahei was used as a significant part of the reasoning by TCDC for reversing its objection to the 8 Acres Ltd subdivision proposal.

The worrying aspect is that the Local Area Blueprint has, by de facto means, been accepted by TCDC and should, as a consequence, lead to the proposed "greenfield growth" being enshrined in the new District Plan. Fortunately, the fight for proper process has not ended! My thanks to Judith Couldrey for her considerable efforts in presenting alternative development options for Hahei and sincere appreciation to Graham Harsant who has spent more time & effort trying to get us and TCDC thinking strategically on the Blueprint/future development of Hahei issue than any one person should have to.

As a community, we should be grateful for the way in which Hahei Holidays Ltd has gone about presenting its proposed Structure Plan for the campground. The opportunity for community understanding of, and input towards, proposed development rarely gets as good as this. Our Committee has lodged objections to parts of the proposed Plan and we are confident that these can be resolved directly with Hahei Holidays Ltd without the need for a formal hearing. Interestingly, the issues we have identified are almost identical to those identified by this Association in 2001 when Hahei Holidays Ltd presented a similar Structure Plan proposal which was waylaid by other issues.

Sewerage is a perennial issue in Hahei. A recent meeting with TCDC revealed that there is a "project outside the 10 Year Plan" - essentially a costing exercise - which has assessed the cost of full sewerage reticulation in Hahei at \$9m. There are around 400 properties outside the existing area-of-benefit which would undoubtedly have to fund the bulk of a figure sure to be even higher than that.

For the record, our membership exceeds 350 from a rateable property base of around 550.

On behalf of you all, I thank Penne Clayton, Judith Couldrey, Kirsten Dickie, Graham Harsant, Jeremy Lomas, Maryanne Mahoney & Helen Russell for service during the past year as your Committee members. Our Secretary/Treasurer Barb Ritchie performs a greatly under-rated roll for us all by catering very effectively for our Associations needs. She deserves a huge vote of thanks for her efforts and our condolences for the recent loss of her father, which has forced her absence today.

Bryan Fotheringham
Chairman
Hahei Beach Ratepayers' Association