

## 2020 Hawksbury Lagoon Inc. Annual Report

Due to the extraordinary circumstances related to the pandemic, this AGM is being held online.

I'd like to begin my report by acknowledging the loss of two friends and supporters of our work during the past year. In July 2019 Les Pullar died after a short illness, he was our unpaid auditor for many years and also quietly undertook work at the lagoon as required, a wonderful colleague and friend. The other champion Joel Vanderburg died suddenly over the new year. An enthusiastic conservationist who helped organise the Ki Uta Ki Tai days and often took part in the clearing and planting at the lagoon. Both men are greatly missed.

Last April we began a project in collaboration with Ngai Tahu, which for the first time will see consistent water monitoring of the lagoon. Matt Dale (senior environmental advisor - Freshwater Management Ngai Tahu) and Greg applied successfully to the ORC Ecofund for just over \$22,000 to fund this project. The monitoring equipment was purchased and has been available since February. Greg and his daughter Becky will install the monitors as soon as conditions allow.

Also in April Dick Martin removed the fencing around the trees on the Inverary Reserve as they were of a height to survive without this protection. Jenny continues her work in this area and her plantings are doing very well.

May saw a family kayaking on the lagoon illegally. This resulted in an addition to the DOC noticeboards and on our website. Our KUKT planting day saw 380 plants in the ground below Aaron's place and the removal of some of the gorse in the area.

Derek organised a group of volunteers to carry out bird counting at the lagoon. They have met several times during the year. This information will help to inform the water monitoring project as a before and after view of the range of birds and the effect of any changes consequently made to water management in the future.

The ditches at the corner of Stewart St and Beach St were cleared out by the DCC, but this work seems to have come to a halt, plastic now lines the ditches held in place by sandbags. The work so far does appear to have helped with better water flow and less flooding.

In September our planting day saw 300 plants purchased using the Ron Greenwood fund and 20 flax knives purchased thanks to the KUKT fund. The plants were planted just over the bridge and a lot of gorse and broom regrowth was removed.

Waterways around the lagoon edges became a focus due in part to dumped rubbish. A map of these waterways has been located and we hope to work with landowners to clear and plant these areas.

The beginning of 2020 saw gale-force winds spread broken branches, from the Poplars lining the road below the railway line, all over the road. The WCCB were contacted in the hope that they can see the removal of these dangerous trees. The hosting of our website was sold and the new charges were unaffordable for us. Emily negotiated on behalf of the committee and we now retain ownership of the site. A couple of positives was the work carried out by DOC to erect fences around parts of the reserve which had

been unfenced for many years, and much to the delight of visitors, a Kotuku has visited several times over the summer.

Recent events on the lagoon have seen five road cones thrown into the lagoon and fortunately removed by Greg. There has also been a number of dead birds around the lagoon, which led to a flurry of concern, and rumours within the town, some birds were sent for autopsy and we are still awaiting a response. More birds have since died, including a Spoonbill unfortunately. There is a possibility that it may be a result of the Botulism toxin but this is not yet confirmed. Several of us also met with Craig Wilson and Lorena Smith (DOC officers) in March and showed them around the lagoon, they appeared very positive about the work we have done and are requesting that we complete a Management Plan. We are waiting for the template they said would be sent to us. There will also not be a KUKT day this autumn and possibly not all year.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all of you who volunteer on the committee as well as others who freely give their time to maintain the lagoon environs ie John Ollerenshaw (lawn mowing) and Russell Jenkinson (trapper) in particular.

These are difficult days, but we can only manage as best we can given the circumstances and hope our world returns to what we consider to be 'normal life' soon.

I ask that my report be accepted.

Shirley McKewen  
Chairperson  
Hawksbury Lagoon Soc. Inc.