

# DONKEY SERENADE

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Some of the new Committee practicing for the sack race. L-R: Jane Kelsey, Maxine Vitali, Peter Caccia-Birch, Ox Wightman and Lou Bartlett.

## Donkey Day is back!

**Donkey Day is back for the first time in two years after cancellations due to Covid - with only the uncertainty of the weather preventing it from happening!**

The annual Donkey Day at the Highfield Garden Reserve will be held on **Saturday 3rd December, commencing 11am.**

At 11.30am, there will be a Health and Safety briefing, especially regarding feeding the Donkeys. As well as seeing the donkeys, a traditional programme of games will take place.

Santa Claus will be making an appearance, drinks and barbeque will be provided - and of course there will be donkey rides.

Cancellation will happen if it is raining at 9am - please check on Facebook and listen out on your local radio for any announcements. We hope to see you there!

### Fun for the family

- Pin the tail on the Donkey
- Running races
- Sack races
- Relay races
- 3 legged races
- Egg and spoon races
- Roberts Trophy Race
- Lolly scramble
- Tug of war



*Steady as you go!*

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**Truffle, our lovely brown donkey**, has gone to spend time with Ted who lives offsite, for a 'holiday'. She will be gone until the new year. We are hopeful that the union will result in a sister or brother for Toby and Tilly II, to add to our existing herd next year. **Watch this space!**

# New Plantings at Highfield

*A Cherimoya, that was donated by Sharon Clark, has recently been planted.*



*Two Persimmon trees have been added to the orchard.*

## New structure and Committee as a result of the AGM decisions

The Highfield Advisory Committee and the Highfield Donkeys Inc. Society have decided to merge and this was supported by the Auckland Council.

The first meeting has been held and clarification of responsibilities and tasks have been discussed.

### The new committee is:

- **Chair** - Jane Kelsey
- **Secretary** - Maxine Vitali
- **Treasurer** - Marion Jones
- **Membership** - Liz Duhs
- **Representative of the Roberts family** - Jenny van der Mespel
- **Responsibility for Highfield Garden Reserve and related activities** - Steve Luketina
- **Responsibility for Donkey care and related activities** - Ox Wightman
- **Responsibility for communications** - Louise Bartlett
- **Member at large** - Peter Caccia-Birch
- **Observers** - Community board members

A sub-group of the committee will liaise with Council, with the Chair as the contact point.

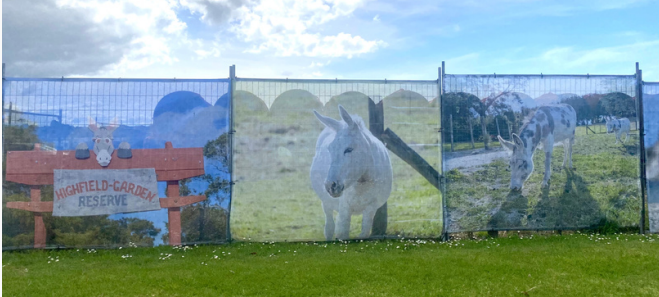


*Peter, Brian & Mike planting flaxes at locked bollard above Bush Block.*



## Watercare scrim on Dawson

Watercare have lined their site on the road side in Dawson Road with scrim to reduce the dust from the site. They commissioned a photographer to take photographs of various features of the area. It is lovely to see Highfield Garden Reserve and the Donkeys acknowledged as a centrepiece of our community!



**Meet Jill from Aussie's Northern Territories**

On a recent visit to the Outback of Western Australia and Northern Territories, our Editor Chris, bumped into Jill the Donkey. Jill is the last survivor of a Donkey Cull in the Northern Territories where 20,000 Donkeys were culled. The cullers took pity on 4 foals - two of which went to El Questro Station Camping Ground and Lodge (Jack and Jill) and two went to Wyndham Caravan Park (Fuzzy and Billy). Jack and Fuzzy have now passed on but Jill and Billy live on in their respective camping grounds.

*Pictured is a fellow tour member feeding Jill carrots.*

## History of the feral donkey in Australia



**Donkeys were brought to Australia in the 1860s to be used as pack animals but due to a lack of fencing many escaped. The escapees started breeding and by 1949 the population was so large the WA government declared the donkey a pest. There is now an estimated 5 million feral donkeys in Australia.**

### Effect on Environment

Feral donkeys have a detrimental effect on the Australian ecosystem, they spread weeds through seeds in their feces and hair, foul watering holes and overeating vegetation.

One of the more disturbing effects the feral donkey has on the Australian flora and fauna is the destruction of watering holes, especially during drought. Donkeys will foul a watering hole and damage the ground around it with their hard hooves ruining the watering hole for other animals and plants. As a result of this native plants and animals that rely on the water can become extinct from the area.

Donkeys can graze for 6-7 hours a day and will eat anything from grass to shrubs to tree bark. The only significant threats to donkey populations are drought and bushfires, as the donkey doesn't have any natural predators and it is estimated that left unmanaged their population can increase by up to 20% per year, that is up to 1 million donkeys a year.

### Behaviour

In the wild, feral donkeys form groups usually of one jack (male) and a few Jennie (females) and their offspring or a bachelor group. They will produce 1 foal a year and reach sexual maturity around 2 years of age.

*An extract from Huntshack.*



For all the latest news and up to date information, please follow us at: [facebook.com/donkeyshighfield](https://facebook.com/donkeyshighfield)