

# DONKEY SERENADE

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Editor - Lou Bartlett



Another great turnout with stunning weather.

## Good old fashioned fun for Donkey Day!

See more  
Donkey Day  
photos on  
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**We were blessed with a beautiful Autumn day on March 9th, to celebrate Donkey Day as part of Auckland Parks Week.**

There were numerous people that commented on how wonderful Highfield Garden Reserve is, and having access to a beautiful community space where they can come any time.

As well as locals, there were families who came up from west, east and south of Auckland, to visit on Donkey Day and immerse themselves in this magical place.

The reserve played host to so many smiling kids, with families happy to wait in queues for donkey rides, guided by our great team of groomers and carers.

In true tradition, Donkey Day played host to some good old fashioned games for the kids (and adults) including the egg & spoon race, sack race and tug of war.

The prestigious Roberts Challenge Race went to A'marni Henderson who was there with her Gran, Denise Carter of Warkworth. The trophy was presented by Jane Kelsey, Chairperson for Highfield Donkeys Inc.



The Dad's sack race.

Special thanks go to Dan Marrow, our local Park Ranger from Auckland Council for spending the whole day with us, pitching in with the work and bringing the zero waste bins. Auckland Council for supplying the BBQ and supplies and Hire Works Snells Beach for the portaloo. And of course a massive thank you to all our volunteers that made the day a great success.



## Donkey Day Cont.



Feeding the donkeys.



Free sausage sizzles.



Donkey rides.



Jane Kelsey with winner of the Roberts Challenge Race, A'rmani Henderson.



Pin the tail on the donkey.



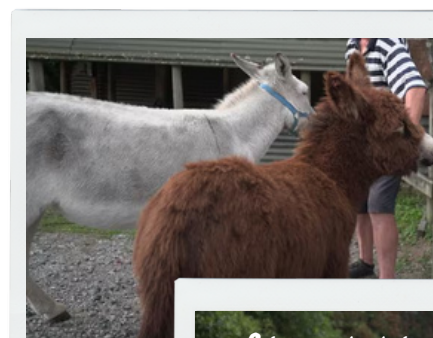
Tug of war.

## SEVEN SHARP: LET US BRAY

On 26th March, the Seven Sharp team from TVNZ, arrived onsite at Highfield Garden Reserve to film for an upcoming episode on national TV.

The 'Let us bray: Loved donkeys living their best life' story went to air on Thursday 5th April. Highfield was beautifully captured, with reporter Sacha McNeil delving into the history of the land with family representative, Jenny van der Mespel, granddaughter of Ted and Alison Roberts. McNeil was interested to know about the Roberts' legacy, how the donkeys came to be there and why they are so special to the community. 'Let us bray' highlighted the fantastic work that goes on at Highfield, to make sure the donkeys have a home for generations to come.

The full story and episode can be found online at: <https://www.1news.co.nz/2024/04/05/let-us-bray-loved-donkeys-living-their-best-life/>



Photos source: Seven Sharp



JENNY VAN DER MESPEL  
Granddaughter of Ted and Alison

### What's in a name?

Many houses that Alison Roberts lived in were called High-something, such as Highcroft in Titirangi and Highpines (in England). But they were all because Alison's father had a house built along a ridge road on the outskirts of Fielding, which he called Highfield. When Alison moved to Algies Bay, the property was just a field... so she called it Highfield.





# Highfield Track Renewals Works

**Highfield Garden Reserve track improvements got underway, starting late last year.**

The work was to be done in two stages with the first stage completed before Christmas. Stage 2 started this February. On 20th February, the public were notified that a helicopter would be used to fly in materials to various sections of the track network. Track access was closed in these areas where the work was taking place.



Out with the old.. in with the new. Boardwalks and stairs were all replaced in the process.

## UPCOMING CLOSURES

The main driveway and top car park at Highfield will be closed from Monday 29th April for three weeks. The main gate will be locked. The rest of the reserve and donkeys will remain accessible during this time.

Contractors will be preparing the surface then concreting this area. For Health and Safety reasons the walking public are asked to keep well clear of this area as heavy machines will be working. There will be safety signs posted, so we ask that you please adhere to them.

For any enquires, please contact the Organizing Council officer, Aaron Pickering: [Aaron.Pickering@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:Aaron.Pickering@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



The main driveway and top car park will be closed.

## SECOND CHANCE SHED

A request went out via Facebook that we were in search of an unused shed for the reserve. A member of the Mahurangi West community, Debbie Clarke, reached out, offering up a free shed that was once used to house chooks. Unfortunately, all her chooks had passed and the shed was sat vacant. We arranged collection of the shed, gave it a spruce up and now it sits perfectly in position (see before & after). Many thanks go out to Debbie for her donation of the shed.



Before (left) and after (right).



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