

# **Warkworth Area Liaison Group**

## a local forum

Secretary: Steve Haycock

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Hi all,

See below the minutes for our meeting last night

Steve

### **Minutes for Warkworth Area Liaison Group**

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

**Meeting Opened:** 7:30 pm

**Chairperson:** Hueline Massey

**Attendees:** 18 Present

**Apologies:** Richard Papworth, Maury Purdy, Michelle Carmichael, Bill Foster, Alan Spicer, Noeline Walsh, Tim Holdgate, Jackie Stott, Ox Whiteman, Hueline's voice

**Guest Speaker:** Sydney Curtis – marine scientist from LegaSea

- LegaSea's raison d'être is to get more fish in the water and it uses this ethos to inform all its decisions. Its focus is the sea inside the twelve mile limit. LegaSea is not funded through the public purse and relies entirely on private donations for its funding. This takes the shape of everything from one-off donations, to regular payments, to commercial backing from companies like clothing company Barkers who do a range of branded merchandise. This independence allows them to challenge government policies and gives them freedom to voice their own opinions on issues.
- The Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill is currently before parliament. This proposes two marine reserve extensions, twelve High Protection Areas and five Seafloor Protection Areas. However LegaSea, along with the NZ Sport Fishing Council feels their actual objective; 'to enhance biodiversity within the specified areas' is too vaguely worded. There should be actual defined objectives so the marine protection areas will actually be measured as actually doing something.
- LegaSea advocates marine management for the Hauraki Gulf area that treats the Gulf as a special management area but also addresses areas adjacent the Gulf too, so the whole area achieves a more long-lasting result.
- LegaSea and the sports fishers also want a complete ban on mobile bottom-contact fishing methods which end up destroying the ecosystems that exist within the seafloor and which nourish other marine inhabitants. They also support extending an initiative called Ahu Moana which is already in place in two locations in NZ. The idea behind this is that local groups with a common interest put their heads together to solve a local issue themselves rather than look to government to do so. An example of this is in Napier where a successful artificial reef was created after consultation with all concerned parties, from the port authority to local iwi.
- LegaSea supports an initiative called Sea Change that advocates various protection methods fishing restrictions and encompasses customary takes on a case by case basis to provide sensible management of the gulf's resources. Ahu Moana would be part of this plan too.
- Sydney was asked if the recreational catch in the Gulf was heavier than the commercial catch, as this has been suggested over the years. She said that the Hauraki Gulf is an unusual case in that there is a very large population on its doorstep and a lot of these people like fishing. And as the Gulf offers

a very sheltered fishing environment, this attracts recreational fishers from other places with less sheltered areas. While this means the recreational fishing take is very high, probably on a par with or maybe a bit higher than the commercial take, the methods used by a lot of commercial fishers are a lot worse on fish stocks and the environment.

- Mushy flesh fish have been caught for quite a while but this has become a much worse problem of late with it first being noted in any numbers in December 2022. MPI have done a report on it and findings point to malnutrition being the cause. However it is not known exactly why the fish are malnourished. It's not just snapper that are suffering this condition, with trevally, gurnard, kahawai and dory also affected. Also confusing is that sometimes a high proportion of fish caught on one occasion have mushy flesh, then the next time the proportion is much lower. Work is continuing, with Sydney and others undertaking research on this, to learn more about what's causing the malnourishment and what the long term prognosis is. So far it's not known if the fish actually recover from this condition. It has been established that there is no parasite involved in this condition and the meat is safe to eat.
- Another issue affecting snapper at the moment is a parasite called *Benedenia Sekki*. This parasite is common and naturally occurring on snapper, but when a fish gets weakened it can cause real problems and the fish will go downhill fast. It is not suitable for eating.
- Sydney's very interesting presentation was well-received by the meeting and she was thanked warmly.

### **Councillor Greg Sayers**

- Greg advised that submissions on the Mayor's budget have closed and the task of analysing the feedback has just begun. The main points of interest that have emerged are; what to do about the port and whether to lease it out or not; whether or not to sell off the airport shares and invest the money so the returns on it can be utilised for other things; what to do with North

Harbour Stadium; and what level of rate increase will be struck. It could be anything from 5.5% to 14%.

- Greg told us that the issue of unsealed roads has a much higher profile within council now as the Mayor has put it out for comment. This will force councillors to formulate an opinion on this issue. Greg also presented a petition to Council on the state of unsealed roads in Rodney comprising a very impressive 1,300 signatories. This good level of support will also help to galvanise attention on this problem. Greg mentioned that he has been lobbying hard on this issue, but is up against it with some of the Councillors not even being sure where Rodney is.

### **Local Board report – Ivan Wagstaff**

- The Local Board are developing a capital plan for next year's expenditure but this is difficult as they don't know how much money they will be allocated by Council yet. Hopefully they'll be given a decent budget to work with. There is a lot of worthwhile projects that have been submitted for consideration.
- The go-ahead has been given for a two year trial of a loop bus service around Warkworth. A full size bus will run in a circuit comprising the Warkworth library, the medical centre, Pulham Rd, Mahurangi College, Summerset, Pak'n'Save and then back to the library. The service will operate every 20 minutes for the whole day. It will cost a flat fee of \$2-60 to ride it and will be free for kids under 12 years old. Ivan is confident that the need is there for this service and that it will be well patronised. Please support it.

### **Roger Williams - Local project**

- Roger and Dave Stott were the only oral submitters to the 10 Year Plan and they are very pleased with the response they got to our submission. We now just need to wait to see the outcome.
- Roger will be giving a presentation to the Local Board at their meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> April on his proposal for work to be done on the Falls Rd Reserve. This reserve is at the western end of Falls Rd and includes the ford and

nice stands of trees. Roger proposes some small works to make it a more usable space. Work has already been done clearing away weeds from the riverbank and replanting natives. Roger wants to remove a couple of cypress trees and put in a small culvert to allow level access from the carpark towards a lovely, mature grove of redwoods. Roger also proposes that a small viewing platform be built that will offer a nice outlook over the confluence of the Mahurangi River and one of its tributaries. Roger will be seeking funding to assist this work being done.

### **Dave Stott – Watercare**

- Three weeks ago Dave, Murray Chapman and Bevan Morrison again met with Watercare regarding plans for the sewer line from the north linking with the pump station at Lucy Moore Park. Watercare's plan is to do the pipeline in two stages, with the first running from the showgrounds through to Hill St. With a proposed upgrade of the Hill St intersection being also due sometime there would be a big advantage to both projects if they were done at the same time. Thus there is some hope that this might bring about an early beginning of the Hill St intersection reconstruction (hang-on, was that a pig I just saw fly by my window?), but we'll just have to see. It is expected that the earliest that work will start on the pipeline is the end of this year, and the whole line is to be finished in four years. In the meantime, once house construction starts at the Warkworth Ridge subdivision (it's expected to start in October this year) there will be tankers running through Warkworth delivering sewage to the new Lucy Moore Park pump station right up until the pipeline opens.
- The Watercare representatives have always been very keen to have the new sewer line run through Queen St to get to the pump station. It seems like the main reason for this is that the existing water main runs through Queen St, and it is nearing the end of its lifespan. So they are wanting to do both these jobs at the same time. They are thus very keen on this route option. If they do insist on this option our focus may have to switch to how best the work can be

structured to minimise disruption. Watercare have been asked to go away and come back to the next meeting with other options. Murray has vowed to fight against the Queen St option if it is shown that Watercare is only doing it for financial reasons. The potential for businesses along Queen St to be wiped out if the road is dug up is high.

- An infrastructure meeting was held a couple of weeks ago and a lot of the developers with sites around Warkworth were invited. This gave them an opportunity to voice any of their concerns and to give their perspective on how things are progressing. Issues with Watercare seem to be a common problem with all the developers. Watercare's communication with developers has not been good, and they are unwilling to take on suggestions from them as to how issues could be solved differently. Megan Tyler, the chief of future strategy for Auckland Council attended for the first time. This proved very helpful as she wasn't aware of many of the issues being faced up here. Greg Sayers is organising another meeting for our group, along with some of the developers, this time with Dave Chalmers, the CEO from Watercare. Hopefully this time we will get clearer answers and an understanding of how things can work better.

### **Murray Chapman – One Mahurangi Business Association**

- The Meet-the-Police meetings held recently for both commercial and retail businesses in Warkworth to air their concerns were a success and another one for commercial business owners is planned soon. The police really found these meetings helpful too.
- The recent women's event was not well attended as many women never booked in early enough. Murray commented that it is important that people support these events otherwise they won't be held.
- A survey of local retailers will be held to find out what businesses really need. Murray said that it's obvious that retailers will be hurting

with the economic times being so difficult and he wants to dig deeper into what can be done to improve life for them.

- Warkworth does get a fair number of international visitors as the passing buses are tending to stay a bit longer in town these days. Murray often comes across these visitors and always hears positive feedback from them. Warkworth is an attractive place to visit but there needs to be ongoing efforts to keep improving the visitor experience.

## **General Business**

- Robert commented from the floor that he hoped lessons were learned by emergency response groups from the weather events that caused so many problems last year. Ivan told the meeting that there has been a review carried out and the system is a lot better. This query did bring up a good point though and we will look for more details as to what changes have been made to ensure future events are dealt with better.
- WALG has a bank account that has been rendered unnecessary by our move away from printing and letter correspondence. \$333.41 has sat in this account for many years now and as it won't be needed it was suggested that the Warkworth Emergency Response Group may be able to make good use of it. I will approach the group to see what they can propose and get a report for our next meeting.
- This was Hueline and my last meeting as chairperson and secretary. I know I can speak for Hueline in saying that we have enjoyed our roles a lot but the time has come for us to move on.

**Meeting Closed:** 9-30 pm.

**NOTE** Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May at the winter time of **7.00pm**

