

Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association

President's Annual Report - AGM 2024

Dear Members

I am pleased to present my report to the 2024 AGM. As can be appreciated road recovery and maintenance matters again dominated what proved to be another busy and demanding time for your Committee.

As a voluntary group we should have been left miles behind on any number of technical and complex issues. That we were not, is testament as to both the skill base of, and the way your Committee have worked so very hard on road recovery and road maintenance matters at both an operational and policy level, as well as managing to continue with other KCSRA business.

In terms of the governance and other statistics, the Committee met formally eleven times. The core road group had six operational roading meetings with Council/Marlborough Roads staff, several field inspection meetings, lots of phone calls and pre-meetings, some 13 President Chatlines to members to keep you informed as well as implementing the recent public media response to inform the wider public of our concerns over the Council's road repair funding proposals. We also engaged with our local MPs. At MP Stuart Smith's suggestion we have written to various Ministers of the new Government over roading matters. We have informally met with the Chair of the Select Committee of Transport and Infrastructure via the good efforts of MP Jamie Arbuckle.

I now touch on various aspects of the Committee's activities below.

Kenepuru Road Recovery Saga

As you will recall, Council decided to deviate from the usual process of having Marlborough Roads speedily prepare a funding application to New Zealand Transport Authority/Waka Kotahi (NZTA/WK) for road repairs the road following the August 2022 storm event.

Instead Council engaged engineering consultants Stantec to carry out a wide-ranging Sounds Future Access Study (FAS Study). We were not happy that this meant that repairs to Kenepuru Road effectively halted and it was left in a fragile state while this study proceeded.

Strategically we took a two-pronged approach going forward.

This was to engage as much as possible in the FAS Study process and, separately, continue to engage with Council and MR on operational road repairs and maintenance. Pretty daunting, but we were heartened by the strong support from members via contributions to our Road Defence Fund. This enabled us to obtain expert professional advice as required.

Mid year Council and Stantec released the large (350 pages) suite of Engagement documents backing up their preferred road recovery options for the Kenepuru. We duly made a detailed submission. In due course, Council and Stantec then finalised and released a massive and complex (over 500 pages) Marlborough Sounds Future Access Study Programme Business Case document. (FAS PBC).

Upon review we were disappointed to find that the FAS PBC was not a funding application, Council was merely using it to seek indicative agreement as to what NZTA/WK would fund via the Council's "assumed" Financial Assistance Rates (FARs). In mid January 2024 Council advised it had received that indicative support from NZTA/WK as to its assumed (and reduced) FARs) but, unsurprisingly, NZTA/WK required the usual funding application supported by more detailed design, specification and costings before it would firm up on funding particular road repair and improvement works. NZTA/WK would not be finding the proposed \$40 million spend on improved marine infrastructure.

Given the reduced FARs indicatively agreed by NZTA/WK and Council, the Council's share of the cost, even just for the work stream of road repairs, is considerable. Council is now engaged via the Long Term Plan consultative process as to exactly how Marlborough Ratepayers will fund their share of essential Sounds Road Repairs (\$42 Million), Road Improvements (\$24 million) and Marine Infrastructure (\$40 million).

As you will be aware, the Committee has already actively and publically engaged in this consultative process.

Whatever the Council's LTP consultation outcome we are very keen to see properly supervised programmes of repair work get underway ASAP. It has been well over two and half years since the storm of July 2021, so I say – Council, enough prevaricating just get the Kenepuru road fixed!

Roading Operational Matters

Notwithstanding the significant demands of engaging with the FAS PBC, the core road group, led by Vice President Alistair Cameron, met regularly with Council and MR to press for essential repairs and maintenance and better outcomes. The long overdue culvert replacement work (25 in total) was one successful outcome. The Committee welcomed two new members, Scott Watson and Richard Stewart, whose ideas and contribution to the work of the roading operational team were much appreciated. Alistair's Roothing report gives more detail on this core work stream.

Marine Subcommittee

Trevor Offen and Hanneke Kroon have kindly prepared a more detailed report for the Marine Subcommittee but I would like to briefly mention the Southern Scallop Work Group of which I am the KCSRA representative.

Industry has now largely accepted that the top of the South Scallop resource will not recover quickly any time soon. The down side is they may be less inclined to engage

or fund research. Upon reflection, I think an enduring contribution of the Working Group has been the advancement of less intrusive resource assessment methods (eg the use and assessment via cameras, AI and divers). We have a number of research projects on the table and we will continue to pursue those for so long as MPI is willing to continue to support the work of the Working Group.

Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) – Round One

The wash up of various Court supervised mediations concerning some of the big MEP appeal points on matters such as Biodiversity and Natural Character is progressing. We are not substantively involved in these matters but continue to maintain a watching brief and support the likes of the appeal of Friends of the Nelson Haven as appropriate. As noted in my report last year it was my view that the MEP process had got into a bit of a mess with the decision by Council to hold back the aquaculture sections of the MEP. After the mid year release of the Hearing panel's decision on MEP Variation 1 (marine farming) the process of lodging appeals, mediations etc. is underway. Hopefully this administrative mess will now start to sort itself out but still a bit of catching up to go!

As noted in my report of last year another MEP mediation matter was still unresolved. This involved aquaculture interests arguing, by way of an appeal against the decision of the Hearing panel, for a particular approach to the levying of any coastal occupation charges. This approach would have commercial interests paying on a per hectare basis and non-commercial owners of jetties, moorings, ramps etc. paying on a square metre basis. KCSRA has disputed this methodology and rationale since 2014. We also decided it was timely to obtain legal and expert economic advice to rebut such an obviously inequitable approach now being championed by the appellant.

Mediation was unsuccessful and we are working through the process to a Court hearing date, exchanging expert evidence and so on. An interesting twist is that the economic expert now retained by aquaculture interests agrees with our expert that the approach and rationale formally adopted by Council, and now aquaculture interests, is not correct. However, he has managed to find another approach to arrive at the desired aquaculture outcome on the matter! Hopefully a Court hearing should be set down for the latter part of the year.

Sounds Advisory Group

Ross will present a short report on this Council convened group separately.

Other Work Streams

We also did not neglect our long involvement in our other work streams- for example:

we prepared and presented a submission to Council on their Annual Plan proposals advocating (again) for an in-house road engineer – the need is now greater not less,

successfully facilitated some refurbishment of the memorial plaques at the Torea Saddle war memorial, and

concluded our resource consent discussions with a forest owner wishing to harvest a woodlot in Mills Bay with a number of useful environmental safeguards around timing of harvesting operations and mitigation of sediment flows.

Conclusion

Tom Wright is stepping down from his Vice President role but has kindly agreed to remain as a Committee member. Many thanks Tom for your sterling efforts around the need for the Committee to communicate with members via our Chatlines and your willingness to implement initiatives to recruit new members.

As always, my thanks to Stefan for his excellent work in keeping up our website and communication to members re Chatlines and newsletters and keeping track of the numbers as well as operating our virtual meetings.

A big vote of thanks from me to the Committee. The Committee's work ethos has been determined, persistent and a professional, evidence based effort.

Finally, I would like to **thank you, our members - all 300 plus of you**. It's your support that helps make us the effective group that I believe we are.

Andrew Caddie
President KCSRA