



# Paremata Residents Association

## ANNUAL REPORT August 2024

### Introduction

2023/24 for the Paremata Residents Association was dominated by written and oral submissions on Council plans. The proposed Porirua District Plan was finally approved by Council in November 23, and early in 2024 it was onto the Porirua and Greater Wellington long-term plans. Surrounding all this was consultation and submissions on the proposed Northern Growth area, Plimmerton Farm fast track consent application and speed management plans.

Despite all this effort, you could say that last year was frustrating. Our time-consuming submissions generally resulted in little or no change, sensible suggestions were often ignored, and there appears to be little thought about the impact of these plans on our community.

This Association exists to provide a voice for our residents on matters of wider interest, particularly those considered detrimental to the community. So, we will continue to submit on Council and government plans and proposals, to help protect and develop this community. We will continue to identify areas of concern, raise objections where needed; and propose improvements.

But it wasn't all submissions and plans over the year. We were also involved in a mix of other tasks, such as communications for the Papakowhai shared path project, local roadworks and wastewater upgrades. We reported significant water supply leaks and missing signage on SH59. Projects included Dolly Varden foreshore and the Ngati Toa domain heritage trail.

With your support we will continue to represent the interests of this community in 2024/25.

### Key Activities 2023 – 24

#### Porirua Proposed District Plan

We provided written and oral submissions to Variation 1 of the proposed District Plan, after last year submitting on the original plan. Variation 1 was mainly about housing intensification. We questioned the wisdom of widespread housing intensification on already overloaded stormwater and wastewater systems, and of high-rise buildings on low lying land vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the Ohariu earthquake zone.

However, the District Plan was approved by Council in November 2023 (subject to outstanding appeals) with no discernible changes that covered our concerns.

We also submitted and presented to the Hearings Panel on the NZ Transport Agency's (NZTA) proposed changes to its designation covering SH59, mainly through Mana Esplanade and St Andrews Road. These changes proposed to remove many of the special provisions required by the Environment Court to protect the health and safety of residents in the area.

The Hearings Panel recommended changes to include some of the original provisions in the designation, but whether PCC and NZTA have accepted these is unknown at this stage.

## **Council Long Term Plans**

The 10-year plans were adopted by Porirua City Council and the Regional Council and rates set in June 24. The Paremata Residents Association is very concerned with this year's high rates increase and the possible impact on our residents. We lodged submissions with both Councils. Clearly, different funding mechanisms are needed because this level of rates increase is not sustainable.

### **a) Porirua LTP**

An average increase in rates of 17.5% was proposed without an option in the consultation to choose alternatives, and that level has been set, although for some households the % increase is higher. The Paremata Residents Association provided separate information to Mayor Baker identifying these concerns and suggesting other options, but it did not achieve any change.

Porirua's LTP states that water and wastewater is the priority. We agree. Water leaks need to be fixed and wastewater pipes replaced. But we do not agree on deferring the replacement of the over-capacity Mana/Paremata wastewater main (again!), especially when wet weather discharges still occur onto Mana Esplanade and contaminate the Inlet.

The consultation document included a proposal to change household rubbish collection from plastic bags to bins. The bins would be more expensive for those putting out a bag weekly, and significantly more expensive if less than weekly. Conversely it would be much cheaper for the approx. 80% of households using commercial waste bin collection. There are good reasons for changing to waste bins, but not as proposed. Our submission and presentation suggested options to reduce costs. The Council has decided to explore alternatives and consult again on the issue.

We believe the Council should have provided consultation opportunities to reduce the rates rise through options for service reduction, efficiency and increased user pays.

### **b) Greater Wellington Regional LTP**

The Regional Council proposed and approved a 19.8% regional average rates increase, but this has resulted in closer to 25% for Porirua City ratepayers. The LTP consultation document proposed high expenditure in multiple areas, including purchasing additional Centreport shares, 100 extra buses, electric charging stations, new bus depots, and purchasing 18 additional passenger trains. All good ideas under normal circumstances (provided the promised government funding eventuates), but perhaps showing a lack of restraint in tough economic times.

In addition, we understand the \$45 million of debt carried due to previous under-recovery of passenger transport costs will add 1.5% to rates over the next 10 years.

## **Northern Growth Area and Plimmerton Farm**

In September 2023, Paremata, Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay Residents Associations participated in a presentation by Kainga Ora on the Northern Growth Area, covering land from Plimmerton to Pukerua Bay. Kainga Ora was considering implementing a Specified Development Project (SDP) on behalf of the Council, which would bring all development by separate landowners under a common project masterplan.

The Paremata Residents Association strongly supported the concept of an SDP, with a masterplan that includes all amenities and community facilities needed for a cohesive liveable suburb. The alternative would be piecemeal development that risks ending up as a disjointed housing area. At the same time, we raised concerns about impacts on neighbouring communities.

With the Government's recent change to Kainga Ora's focus, we now have concerns that Kainga Ora may no longer be involved in managing developments like the Northern Growth Area.

In June this year, we provided a submission to the Environmental Protection Authority on the fast-track consent application for Plimmerton Farm. Our submission covered the usual issues related to wastewater, stormwater, and traffic. We also stated concerns that early development may limit the benefits of an SDP and we stressed the need for Council's sign-off of development proposals.

## **The Future of State Highway 59**

It is now 18 months since the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) carried out consultation on the future of SH59, as required by the designation. A consultation that we call a sham, because NZTA confirmed their decision to make no changes, despite all parties to the consultation (Paremata and Plimmerton Residents Associations, PCC, Greater Wellington and Ngati Toa Rangatira) identifying items needing immediate or fast action to improve safety and reduce road over-capacity.

The need for safety improvements and changes to the road through Mana Esplanade and St Andrews Road was outlined in an independent road safety audit report commissioned by NZTA. The last 18 months have clearly demonstrated that this section of SH59 is over-capacity and the clearways are not needed. NZTA justified their position on the need to complete a strategic review of SH59 before any changes would be considered. However, we understand this is still far from completion.

As I reported last year, Mana Esplanade and St Andrews Road remain dangerous, and vehicles and some trucks continue to use the clearway lanes even when officially closed, making legal parking unattractive for residents and visitors, and continuing the existing and often insidious health and safety risks.

## **Complaint to Ombudsman**

In November 2021 we laid a complaint with the Ombudsman's office about our issues with the NZ Transport Agency (communication difficulties, failure to honour previous commitments and lack of enforcement of designation conditions). That complaint was updated in February 2023 to include our concerns about NZTA's "consultation" and inaction on safety concerns raised by submitters and NZTA's safety audit report

In May this year (2.5 years later), we were informed by the Ombudsman that our complaint "did not establish an interest that is greater than that of the general public in the agency's proper discharge of its functions and therefore does not appear to meet the threshold for investigation". As the representative of residents affected by NZTA's actions, we have disputed that conclusion and are now waiting for a proper evaluation of our complaint.

## **Village Projects**

### ***Village Planning Programme***

Despite many resident associations and community groups in Porirua submitting to the long-term plan to keep this award-winning programme (paused, if necessary, until funding allows), the Porirua City Council decided to close it down.

This is really disappointing. The programme has resulted in numerous improvements to Porirua's communities that otherwise would not have occurred. Closing the programme is a loss for Porirua.

As a result of that decision, a number of resident associations and community groups are planning to meet to discuss options for the future.

- ***Dolly Varden Foreshore Erosion Control***

Due to Council funding constraints, the project to combat erosion of the Dolly Varden foreshore was reduced to upgrading the ramp path from the top walkway to the beach, reshaping the top walkway and planting the area. This was completed in the first half of 2023.

- **Ngati Toa Domain Heritage Trail**

Our target this year was to complete the Heritage Trail before Council funding for the project expired at the end of June 2024. But once again the target was not achieved. So, how far did we get and what happens now that the Village Programme has been closed down?

The only tasks left to complete are the layout design of text, graphics and photos on the history boards, production of the history boards and installation onto foundations already laid. Council staff (with input from Ngati Toa) are continuing to complete design of the history boards. I have been assured that funding to complete this project is secure and installation of the history trail is planned for October.

## **Local Activities and Issues**

### **Papakowhai Shared Path**

I'm sure everyone who uses Papakowhai Road or Paremata Crescent will be well aware of this project to construct a shared pedestrian and cycleway from Whitford Brown Avenue to the Rail Station overbridge. And if, like me, you are getting tired of the disruption and endless sea of road cones, you will be wondering how much longer will it last. It was originally intended to be finished by the end of June but is now likely to be late September, and focused more on the northern end. We were pleased to note that the project team and Wellington Water have worked together to also arrange replacement of a water main in Paremata Crescent.

The finished sections of the shared path look well done. Fortunately, NZTA are paying for this project, since it would be difficult to justify the expenditure on our rates bill. I hope the path gets the use it deserves.

The shared path stops short of Whitford Brown Avenue, but we are told that this section will be completed as part of the Papakowhai Road/Whitford Brown intersection upgrade in 2025/26 (again subject to NZTA funding).

### **Porirua Speed Limits**

In May 2023, Porirua City Council consulted on a proposal for 30kph speed limits around the CBD, schools, maraes, and some villages (such as Plimmerton), and reducing the current 70kph speed limit along Papakowhai Road and parts of Titahi Bay Road. We lodged a submission supporting speed reduction around schools at school start and finish times; identifying issues with the 30kph proposal around parts of the CBD; and against the reduction of the speed limit on Papakowhai Road to 50kph since it is not residential between Brora and Tweed Roads.

Council passed the proposal in August 23 but some of these speed limit reductions have not yet been implemented.

### **Network Discharge Consents**

In October 2023, the Paremata Residents Association was involved in arranging a presentation by Wellington Water on a proposed community engagement framework for stormwater and wastewater planning and discharge consents. The presentation was attended by local residents and representatives from Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay.

The presentation included Wellington Water's proposal to establish a global community engagement group (i.e. covering all 4 cities in the region) to provide local input into the planning process. This group of 6 representatives has been established and initial meetings held. Porirua is represented by Michael Player (Porirua Harbour Trust) and myself. As the planning develops, I will provide information and advice to our local communities and seek feedback.

## Paremata Crescent Chorus Cabinet Mural

Chorus has continued to partner with PCC to paint murals on Chorus roadside cabinets. This year it was the turn of the Chorus cabinet outside the Mobil service station on Paremata Crescent. The mural, depicting two birds flying over water (on a sunny Paremata day), was painted by a local artist, Bruce Freestone.

The cabinet sits in front of Mobil station's shabby looking concrete block wall. We suggested painting the wall, but unfortunately Mobil staff were not keen to do that.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Executive Committee for their input this year that enabled your Association to continue representing the residents of Papakowhai, Paremata, Mana and the southern part of Camborne. The current committee includes:

President	Tony Shaw
Vice President	Russell Morrison
Treasurer	Luke Waghorn
Secretary	Frank Moes
Social Media	Coralie Morrison
Committee	Ian Barlow, Lorraine Taylor, Mark Morrison, Judi Jones, John Nichols

I want to recognise the involvement of our Pāuatahanui General Ward Councillors, particularly Nathan Waddle and Josh Trlin, plus, Greater Wellington Councillor Chris Kirk-Burnnand. Thank you all for your representation and input at our committee meetings.

And even though the PCC Village Programme was "paused" by the Council, and is now cancelled (despite the protestations of most Resident Associations and Community Groups), Bill Inge (PCC Village Planning) continued to push ahead with completing our unfinished projects until his retirement in August.

And finally, I would like to thank Euon Murrell and Tommy's Real Estate for again providing support with the printing and supply of our newsletters.

### **Tony Shaw**

President, Paremata Residents Association