

Chair's report on activity of Titirangi Protection Group, 2017-18

The Titirangi Protection Group was formed in March/April 2017 to give local people a voice about Watercare's proposal to build a new Water Treatment Plant in the Waitakere Ranges. The need for such a voice was felt very acutely because those who should have been standing up for our community were failing to do so. Since the formation of the group we have met regularly as a committee and since July 2017 have been a legal entity.

We are opposed to the use of the Woodlands Park Road site for a number of reasons. For many of us this opposition was primarily environmental as this proposal would cause significant ecological damage. There are also community concerns such as the proximity to housing and the effects it would have on the character of the community. In addition, we have become concerned over various issues related to the process through which this selection was made and the implications of that for democratic accountability.

Being a conduit for our community has been a key part of our mission. We have held public protests (5 June 2017), public meetings (June and August), market stalls and stands outside local supermarkets, we have sent out leaflets to locals and kept them regularly informed through our Facebook page and through posts on other local FB pages. We have tried to raise awareness through bumper stickers, interactions with the media and protest signs. A public exhibition at Lopdell House lead by local artists was a highly successful showcase of the issues and what will be lost if this development goes ahead. From the outset we have interacted with ecologists to get a realistic assessment of the ecological value of the site and to solicit their help. We have advocated for our community and environment with politicians, both Local and National, and organised a meeting with parliamentary candidates so that they could hear the views of our community. We have also represented our community on Watercare's Community Liaison Group and tried to feed back information from those meeting to the local community.

We have actively challenged Watercare's plans. We have facilitated submissions to Watercare and Council before Watercare's decision was made. We have twice taken Watercare to court. We have submitted a large number of Official Information Requests both with a view to keeping ourselves informed and also with a view to preparing to challenge Watercare's Resource Consent application. For our court cases and the preparation of our Resource Consent challenge we have actively engaged in fundraising activities, ranging from White Elephants to film screenings to comedy shows to Give-a-Little pages.

Our activity over the coming months will mainly be focused on challenging Watercare's Resource Consent application which is expected to be lodged in early 2019. To this end we will be launching a campaign to offer advice on submissions and will continue fundraising to meet our costs.

During our time of operation, I have served as President of the group but am now stepping down from that role as a result of other commitments. I will continue to actively support the group.

November 2018