



Great Barrier Island Trust

Annual Report of the Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust, 2011 John Ogden (Chairperson)

This year we record the death of one of our founder trustees. Tony Bouzaid passed away unexpectedly in October. Tony's vision, persistence and courage in undertaking ecosystem restoration and pest eradication at Glenfern Sanctuary was and is an inspiration to us all. As a trustee, Tony often provided critique and comment from his wide experience of governance within the Island community. He is deeply missed.

Meetings: The Trust had monthly business meetings and other informal get-togethers. During 2011 the Trust cemented good working relationships with Ngati Rehua/Ngatiwai ki Aotea, Department of Conservation, Auckland Council, Local Board and Hauraki Gulf Forum. The Trust continues to function well as board, debating contentious points and sharing responsibilities. Liz Westbrooke took over the Chair during my absence in Australia from July to October.

Mission and Vision Statements: Since the formation of the Environmental Strategy Planning Committee by the Local Board, we have debated our "raison d'être". Our role is to further our mission statement: "To protect native species through the eradication of rats and feral cats, to re-introduce species lost to the Island, and to work towards building an ecology-based economic frame-work for Great Barrier Island". So, one of our chief roles as a board is to obtain funding to further this mission. Given our enthusiasm for Great Barrier conservation, it is easy for the trustees to get diverted into other locally important projects for which funding might be obtained. It is much easier to get support for planting native trees or purchasing rat-traps than it is for gathering support for researching the idea of a permanently rat-free Great Barrier. But, our strength as a team would be diluted by taking on too many issues; our role is communicating ideas and information on "the big picture"

This year we launched, with Ngati Rehua, a new vision: "Bring back Kokako". While this campaign will focus on the northern block – Te Paparahi – it draws attention back to the problem of rats and the on-going extinction of native birds on Great Barrier, and what we, as a community, can do about it. This vision clearly addresses "the big picture".

Communication: This year we had four issues of ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS (Issues # 24-27) – a total of 64 pages. This is the chief means of communication with our membership, and most of the Trust's activities were reported in editorials. In addition we launched the "BUSH TELEGRAPH" a free 4-pager with news bites and illustrations aimed at easy reading for anyone interested in the Great Barrier environment. Dave Speirs (E.N.) and Fenella Christian (B.T.) are doing a great job with these publications, which are well received by members and GBI residents and ratepayers. In 2012 The Environmental News will change to two issues/year, and the Bush Telegraph will be quarterly. Kay Stowell continues to manage our updated web-page (www.gbict.co.nz), and Kate Waterhouse has taken on Facebook.

Publication: "Island Invasives: Eradication and Management", published by IUCN, came out during the year. This tome (542 small print pages!) comprises refereed papers from a conference held at Auckland University (Tamaki Campus) in 2010, which was attended by trustees, and at which the Trust presented a paper. The book is a wealth of information on mammalian pest problems throughout the world. Our paper "Running the gauntlet: advocating rat and feral cat eradication on an inhabited island – Great Barrier Island" (Ogden, J. & Gilbert, J. pp 464-471) contains an account of the Trust's activities and experiences in this field.

Community involvement: The trust's annual environmental awards were presented to selected pupils at all three schools. In addition I participated in the annual schools shellfish counts at Whangapoua, organised by Department of Conservation in conjunction with the Hauraki Gulf Forum, and spoke to classes about the ecology of the estuary. The Christmas period was especially busy, with the Trust participating in the Santa Parade, the Mussel Fest, and the New Year Picnic. Fenella and others manned stalls and sold soft toy kokakos and other items for the Trust.

Local Board: Our thrust in 2011 was to get community consultation about the options for pest management and the future ecology of Great Barrier included in the Long Term plan. We called on members for support. The Local Board received *more input about environmental matters than on any other issue*, and subsequently created the Environmental Strategy Planning Committee. We have attended all public meetings of this committee, which embodies several of our goals in its terms of reference. Trustees also attended most Local Board meetings. We presented a detailed report on the state of Great Barrier streams (stemming from our State of Environment Report, 2010), which was passed to Auckland Council and received a detailed response. The issue is being taken seriously at last. Scott Mabey was appointed as the Local Board representative on the Trust.

Department of Conservation: During the year we farewelled Des Casey, and welcomed Rebecca Gibson as DOC representatives. Liaison with DOC continues to be excellent. We provided input in to the CMS at the Conservation Groups Forum, and we cooperate in various ways (e.g. bird counts). One trustee (Emmy Pratt) is a volunteer (with Sue Daly – Local Board member) in DOC's new cat trapping programme on Hirakimata. This was instigated, in part, as a response to Kate Waterhouse publicising the sorry state of the black petrel population there. Here, as with Iwi at Te Paparahi, the trust is working in a hands on capacity to achieve long-term conservation gains. We continue to encourage DOC to clarify proposals for rat-eradication on Rakitu (Arid Island).

Ngati Rehua / Ngati Wai ki Aotea: Rodney Ngawaka (Chairperson Kawa Marae) is our representative at Trust meetings, and we have worked closely with him in submissions to the Local Board, developing their input into the CMS, and improving their communication system. In particular we plan to work together on the return of kokako to Te Paparahi, and instigating the long-term pest monitoring and control which will be required to achieve this.

Members and supporters: Our membership continues to grow steadily. In 2011 we sought members support in submissions and received a very good response – thank you! We now have an Email address list. Member's contributions have in some cases been very generous and we are most grateful to you all. Member's contributions are not 'tied' to particular outcomes in the way that grants often are, so they provide us with a little flexibility, especially allowing us to engage with the local community in collecting base-line data through bird counts and such-like activities. At the end of the year an informal group of supporters ("The Medlands group") came into being. In 2011 we had financial support from Natural Habitats, Kokako Coffee, Biodiversity Advice Fund (DOC), Auckland Council and ASB Community Trust.

Thank you all!
John Ogden