



Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Association

Kia Ora from Lake Rotoiti

June 1993

Autumn is here with winter just around the corner. We are experiencing the last of what has been a most pleasant if belated summer with the lingering days now getting much shorter and cooler. The wonderful variety of colour amongst the deciduous trees has been a splendour to behold but it won't be too long before all the leaves have fallen and the warmth of winter woollies and roaring log fires is sought.

Since our last newsletter in January, we have held the AGM at which several new committee members were elected. For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the AGM, the following were chosen to form the committee:-

Lovelace Leary	Otaramarae	Chairperson
Jim Stanton	Mourea	Deputy Chairman
Mary Stanton	Mourea	Secretary
Ernie Cordwell	Okere	Treasurer
Lindsay Brighthouse	Te Akau Road	
Theo DeLange	Otaramarae	
Fred Whata	Okere	
Tai Eru Morehu	Maniatutu Road	
Michael Gill	Okawa Bay	
Dan Arrowsmith	Okere	
Betty Whata	Hinehopu	
Tu Kingi	State Highway 33	Honorary
Morrin Cooper	Howick	Co-opted
Ted Thorne	Karori	Co-opted

Shortly after this meeting, our newly elected Chairperson took ill and is presently convalescing at home. Lovelace is an old and respected friend of many and we are sure you will join us in wishing her a complete recovery. We were even more saddened recently by the untimely death of our only East Rotoiti representative, Betty Whata. Betty was proving to be a very good member of the team and we will be much the poorer for her passing. We wish to express our sincere condolences to Betty's whanau. Despite these sombre occurrences the committee has been busy tackling issues raised at the AGM and pursuing other matters which await resolution.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions have been a little slow coming in this year. Whilst your committee is 100% voluntary, there are the usual administrative costs and the not inconsiderable cost of sending out newsletters at least twice a year. A proposal at this years AGM to despatch this newsletter to as many members as resources permit was upheld. As all residents and ratepayers within the District are entitled to membership, this means we are looking at in excess of 1000 letters. As you can see, postage alone is a major expense along with setting up and printing costs. Last year, we had over 400 financial members. Only financial members are eligible to vote at meetings but, of course, the issues in which the Association becomes involved are intended for the benefit of all (the rates crisis will be well remembered). The subscription for this year is again \$10 per family which, we think most will agree, is a very modest contribution. So please, we would very much welcome your support. For those wishing to subscribe, you will find a cut-out form elsewhere in this newsletter.

Chairperson:
Lovelace Leary
Tel: 362 4635

Secretary:
Mary Stanton
Tel: 362 4690

All Mail:
c/- Happy Angler Store
Mourea

Fax: 362 4876

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

The present Council is now 6 months into its term of office. Last month was dominated by the Estimates round of meetings which are held to determine the Annual Plan setting out proposed details of expenditure for the 1993-94 year. These meetings exposed a number of rifts between several councillors. Attitudes towards where and how much money should be spent differed markedly and generated some heated exchanges which did not augur well for a balanced team effort. Whilst Councillors are, like the rest of us, only human, we should expect them to act with a certain decorum when debating important public issues. The Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association along with its composite members, Rotoiti, Okareka and Tarawera, were well represented at the meetings. We believe that our concerted presence helped to temper some of the discussion and decisions which ensued. The upshot of it all was that a projected 7% rates increase was finally pruned to 2.9% over the whole district which, although not unanimously agreed to (Mayor Hall and Crs Aubertin, Sturt and Oppatt all voted for a nil increase), has to be viewed as a reasonable compromise. Of course, it must be remembered that all rural ratepayers will face the second of the three year phase-in of rating changes decided in 1991 which means a further 9% increase with the 2.9 calculated on top of that.

To the Annual Plan itself, the major commitment and highest capital priority for the next three years will be the City Redevelopment Project. Following the reconstruction works at the Rotorua lakefront late last year, the next step involves extensive improvements in the central business district, Government Gardens and completion of the first lakefront stage. \$5.2 million is to be expended for this purpose in the coming year with \$3 million to be raised from loans. Other significant areas of capital expenditure are refurbishment of the Bath House, Okareka Water Supply and the sewerage composting plant. Once again, we see few projects or improvements for the Lake Rotoiti district.

Transit New Zealand is to fund the continuation of kerbing and channelling from the bottom of the Mourea hill (Okawa Bay Resort) through to the Ohau Channel overbridge. To complement this, Council has earmarked \$35,000 to provide stormwater reticulation from Ngareta Road into Lake Rotoiti. This will relieve some of the problems experienced in central Mourea for many years. \$9,000 has been programmed to instal a new boatramp and jetty at Hinehopu. That's about it! Obviously, maintenance items such as roading, reserves, footpaths, street lighting, drainage, etc have to be budgeted for along with a portion of administrative costs. However, we are not convinced that this is a fair return for the more than \$1,000,000 collected in rates from 1300 ratepayers within the Lake Rotoiti Catchment. We think most would support Council's principle objectives of upgrading the Central Business District, promoting tourist facilities and assisting employment creation. Whilst the benefit of these impact on the whole community, we believe that there should be acknowledgement of the annual contributions made by the rural ratepayers of each district and a greater recognition of their requirements by way of a more equitable distribution of available funds. We intend to make Council aware of our dissatisfaction in forthcoming submissions.

BAY OF PLENTY REGIONAL COUNCIL

The proposal to build a new \$4 million HQ in Whakatane is the biggest news item to come out of Regional Council lately. Anyone who has visited their present accommodation will vouch for its inadequacies but there are doubts over whether major capital expenditure on a new building at this time is fully justified. We can surely be indignant that no public consultation has taken place when a significant proportion of the funding will come from ratepayers. We wonder if the alternative of leasing suitable premises has been sufficiently explored. Another question being asked is whether the Council should continue basing itself in Whakatane, well away from its main centres of population (Rotorua) and (Tauranga). It argues that it is geographically centred in relation to its main functions of managing land, rivers and coastline. In practice, this does

present some difficulty in maintaining satisfactory liaison. However, we should point out that they can now be reached direct by local line (RO 3494163). One of our concerns is their apparent willingness to spend a large sum of money on a new HQ when we are well aware of pleas that they lack funding resources when it comes to lakeweed control etc.

The long awaited Draft Regional Plan is due for production in June 1993. Amongst other things, this will set the seal for important management issues such as control of the geothermal field after taking into account the requirements of the Resource Management Act. The Plan will be promulgated for public consultation and submissions and it is important that we take advantage of this process because, once accepted, it becomes a legally binding document.

Council is currently developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) to enable it to meet the more stringent demands of the Resource Management Act. Part of the process of collecting data on the Bay of Plenty's environment involves the compilation of a detailed and comprehensive inventory of the state of the region's natural resources. This will be done by using a multi-spectrum scanner fitted inside a Lear Jet which will fly over and scan the region within a period of a couple of weeks. The scan will not only take aerial photographs but will also record wave lengths of energy reflected from the earth's surface which can determine different vegetation types, the health of the vegetation, changing patterns of land use and heat indicating thermal reserves. This can then be converted to a digital form and displayed on a computer screen from which detailed maps can be produced. Such are the advances of new technology.

COMBINED LAKES RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

As advised in the previous newsletter, Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association was formed at the time of the huge debate over the Rural Rates Review to provide a stronger platform for the people of Lakes Rotoiti, Okareka and Tarawera to impress their concerns and views in matters of mutual interest. Since then, this body has been constitutionally accepted and continues to act as watchdog over legislation and events which impact on our lake dwellers and users.

The Committee comprises the Chairperson plus two members from each Association. The present Chairman is Ron Marsden (Okareka) and our two members are Lindsay Brighthouse and Michael Gill. Recently, they have released press statements in relation to the Estimates meetings, reminding certain Rotorua District Councillors of pledges made at election time to strive for nil or minimum rate increases in the coming year, and expressing dismay that projected savings in fees, following Councillor numbers being reduced from 16 to 12, have not been fully realised, a matter which will be pursued to ensure a satisfactory response.

PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES

It will be recalled that we made a concerted effort in 1990 to obtain a reticulated water supply for Mourea after a comprehensive survey of local residents indicated that the majority approved in principle. Council acknowledged our request and commissioned a feasibility and costing study which was completed by private consultants in May 1991. Council then advised that the project would be placed on the Capital Works programme and prioritised in due course. The areas to be considered were Mourea (including SH33 from Te Ngae Junction), Okere and Otaramarae. We were aware that Hamurana and Okareka had priority at that time. Hamurana has now been completed and Okareka is scheduled to be up and running by December this year. Because no status advice had been received just prior to 1993-94 Estimates debate, we thought it timely to remind Council that we now expected some progress towards commencing the project. We have received a reply from Council which advises that they expect to commence further investigations into the feasibility study proposals in January 1994. This means determining the position of the major supply source(s), resolving access and possible land acquisition and firming up costing requirements. They anticipate that this phase will be completed by March/April 1994.

PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES

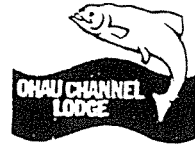
This would lead to the next important step of public consultation which will allow for acceptance or otherwise of the project design and costing estimates. It was this stage that caused prolonged debate with the Hamurana scheme due to the inability of all ratepayers to reach agreement on the design and costing proposals. It is to be hoped that any problems that we encounter can be resolved quickly and to everyone's satisfaction so that we can move to the implementation phase with a minimum of delay. Notwithstanding, present projections are that the bulk of Council funding will not be available until July 1995. We will be exploring ways to improve on this. It should be noted that current policy is for Council to provide 50% of total project costs with the balance to be a levy on consumers (either a lump sum or time payment).

In the same 1990-91 period, we expressed concern to Council over septic tank problems being experienced by many of our residents, especially in Okawa Bay, Mourea, Hinehopu and Gisborne Point. A number of reports had indicated that this matter needed to be addressed with some urgency. We are encouraged to note that Council have included the need for sewerage some lakeside localities as a strategic issue within the latest Draft Annual Plan. Whilst recognising that considerable expense is involved, there has been some thought given to providing local systems in the worst affected areas, and we will be pursuing the matter accordingly.

RURAL REFUSE SKIP SITES

Many will be aware of a Council proposal to establish Rural Refuse Skip Sites. Briefly, this involves creating facilities for various locations within rural communities to cater for the disposal of refuse and rubbish which presently can only be legally deposited at the Atiamuri Tip. Council accepts that Atiamuri is located too far away to be a practical option for the majority of rural residents. The two pre-determined boundaries suggested for our

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region are Hamurana/Mourea/Otaramarae and Rotoiti/Hinehopu/Rotoma. The concept is to provide a concrete pit capable of holding several large skip bins at or below ground level with concrete surround to enable vehicles to back in and discharge refuse. The site would be manned during agreed opening hours and subject to user charges in a similar manner to the Atiamuri Tip. The site would be secured and landscaped to achieve suitable aestheticity and prevent misuse. Council is committed to fully consult community and users prior to any implementation. We, the Committee, welcome the proposal in principle and have already had some discussion with the Council which has highlighted at least two problems,

a. finding suitable sites and

advised consumers that the original Draft Plan had been amended to allow for a 49% share giveaway with 51% going to a Community Trust. This seemed to at least ensure a controlling interest at local level. However, since having subsequently obtained a copy of the quote 'acceptable final plan' unquote (at a cost of \$15), we find to our dismay that several important aspects of the proposal, which completely alter the apparent intent, have been concealed. This Final Establishment Plan proposes to retain 26,500,000 shares (44.2%) under the control of the Directors for future allocation at their discretion. The Community Trust

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would be allocated 51% of the remaining shares which, in effect, means that the Trust are unlikely to achieve a majority shareholding. There is also unlikely to be any safeguards to ensure that the Trust maintains its shareholding level. Furthermore, ordinary consumers would now be allocated 600 shares each rather than the 1000 shares as in the original proposal. We have written to MP, Max Bradford expressing our disappointment and concern but we believe the outcome will be almost a fait accompli with little hope of further concessions.

INCIDENCE OF THEFT

This District, like any other, has always had its share of crime, especially thefts from residences, many of which are vacated for lengthy periods. There has been some alarm though over the recent spate of thefts in the Okere area where a number of valuable items including a boat and boat motor have been taken. Concerns have been expressed to the Police by both this Association and individual residents. We have requested a greater police presence in problem areas particularly at weekends and holiday times and suggested that they may need to review community policing arrangements which currently sees our Rural Community Constable stationed at Rotorua HQ. We are aware that the Rotoma District has asked for Community policing to be situated in their region and there could be a case for a similar facility based at the north-eastern end of Lake Rotoiti. We are seeking an audience with Police authorities to discuss these matters. In the meantime, a meeting has been held between Police and Okere residents to discuss the setting up of Neighbourhood Support Groups. Anyone interested in finding out more about this should contact Dan Arrowsmith Ph 3624477. We have also requested that Rotorua District Council improve street lighting in the Okere Road area and survey the rest of the District for inadequate lighting. Like other facilities though, any progress will be governed by priority and the availability of finance and manpower.

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DOG CONTROL

We mentioned in the last newsletter the ongoing problem of dog control or lack of it. Pressure from various groups such as our own has resulted in Rotorua District Council formulating a new Dog Control Bylaw which, amongst other things, stipulates ownership restrictions and responsibilities, and designates areas where dogs may be exercised off a lead. A flyer detailing the new laws has been sent out to all registered owners and will be included in the next round of rates demands. RDC has also stepped up patrols in problem areas. We believe that everyone should feel encouraged to promptly report any incidents regarding dogs straying or causing a nuisance directly to RDC. Our co-operation is essential in dealing with the small minority of irresponsible owners.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

There have been attempts over a great many years to have a 'street numbering' system implemented for rural communities to enable visitors and, more importantly, emergency services to be clearly directed to our properties. RDC have recently devised the Rural Address Property Identification System which is currently being trialled in the Reporoa District. Rotoiti is a little way down the priority list but along with other Associations, we will be endeavouring to improve on present progress.

SNIPPETS

We are sure you will join us in congratulating our former Mayor John Keaney, and his wife Judy, who were awarded the CBE and QSO respectively in the last New Years Honours list. We believe that these bestowals were richly deserved in recognition of many years service to the community in wide ranging capacities. John, of course, is now re-directing his energies as one of our BOP Regional Councillors. We wish them both every success for the future.

Residents of Okawa Bay will be pretty happy with an offer by Tasman Forestry to assist in transforming the hillside above Okawa Bay Road which is presently covered in mainly thick gorse.

Tasman, as part of a venture to afforestate this area have proposed to provide resources to clean up the lower reaches of the hillside including the road edges and plant smaller tree species which will help to eradicate noxious plants and increase the attractiveness of this locality. Tasman, whilst having a large vested interest around Lake Rotoiti have been most generous in supporting a number of local projects such as this.

Although there's been stories of lots of big trout caught this year and even some limit bags - fishing has generally been patchy. "Johnny on the Spot" was applied. This last month of the season is expected to be good.

On the assumption that hatchery bred trout tend to stay around locality they are released as fingerlings - fisheries officers have been persuaded to stock each end of Rotoiti this year. Previously it seems stocking only took place at Hinehopu.

This summer we've had the cleanest lake for years. The cooler, windier October to April did not let water net get started. Even though some new oxygen weed beds have been noticed it seems the early season spray programmes were very successful.

STOP PRESS!!!

The long running worry over damage to the Ohau Channel and Delta by the "Scat Cat" came to head on 30 May when this Association called a public meeting. Owner/Operator Brian Colman was left in no doubt that ratepayers want the operation to stop. The RDC has already tried to stop the trips but a loophole in the Resource Management Act has enabled Colman to disregard the Abatement Order. The meeting, after giving Colman a very fair hearing passed a almost unanimous resolution telling RDC to stick to it's guns and stop the trips - the next 8 - 10 weeks is the critical trout spawning time up the Ohau and the totally irresponsible passage of this boat, which is quite clearly too big, could have a devastating effect on future trout stocks in our lake.

So if you see Scat Cat on Rotoiti why not make it clear in some way that she is not welcome? Public pressure can work wonders.

WEST ROTOITI VOLUNTEER FIRE UNIT

Rural fire administration and funding is undergoing considerable change. One of the developments is that local authorities such as Rotorua District Council are now Rural fire authorities. As such they have a major role in fire administration and funding. Under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, volunteer fire units can register with a Rural Fire Authority. This gives the volunteer units access to the national rural fire fund to recover costs, and also provides some legal status and protection for volunteers at fires. Many volunteer units have registered (80 out of 200), including Lake Okareka.

The fire unit committee is currently considering registration with Rotorua District Council. There are potential benefits in registration (mainly in funding and legal protection), and some possible disadvantages (for example the unit could be seen as just another part of RDC). The unit would continue to be a volunteer group, and would also continue to need community support. RDC would not provide all funds.

There are many issues which need to be discussed and resolved. One issue is the ownership of equipment, much of which has been donated to the unit. The committee has been considering registration for several months. A final decision would have to be made at an AGM or at a special general meeting.

Anyone wishing to comment or express their concerns should contact the Chairman, Willie Shaw Ph 3624546 or write to the Unit C/- Okere Falls, RD4, Rotorua.

SCAT CAT

Many of you will have seen this large catamaran plying the Ohau Channel on its daily tourist run from the Rotorua lakefront through to Lake Rotoiti. This is a most worthy venture but unfortunately, its passage through the Channel has not been without incident. It's size allows little leeway between both the Lake Rotorua control gate and the Mourea overbridge. It has already caused damage to the gate and on another occasion, grounded just inside the channel which caused it to churn up spawning areas as well as discharging oil in attempting to break free. It has also been the subject of complaints from channel dwellers because of the effect of its wake on the banks and private jetties. Furthermore, it has not been able to navigate the Delta without gouging out a path with its own keels which could ultimately have a significant bearing on flow patterns into Lake Rotoiti and also fly fishing activities. Just recently, Rotorua District Council have issued a notice prohibiting the craft from using the Ohau Channel until consent has been requested and granted. This consent has now been sought and the application promulgated for public comment. Submissions close on 18 June 1993. Anyone wishing to express their views can do so by writing to RDC before the above date. We understand that the owner has further applied to BOP Regional Council for approval to dredge the Delta to facilitate its path. This has not yet been published but would be subject to normal consent procedures also.

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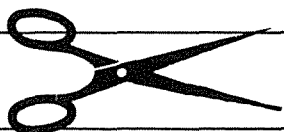


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