



The Lonely Island Guide to

# RAKINO ISLAND



**Welcome to the Hauraki Gulf Island's hidden jewel of Rakino.** One-and-a-half square kilometres in size, there are approximately 120 properties proudly owned by approximately 20 permanent residents and many weekenders. Over the summer months, the off-shore population increases with Auckland boaties who use Rakino as a favourite stop over.

Auckland Council maintains a few roads and subsidises a regular ferry service. Spark provides service with the first solar telephone in the Southern Pacific. The inhabitants of Rakino are a fairly self-sufficient lot, each managing their own drinking and waste water and electricity supply.

For such a small place, Rakino has a fascinating history where communities have been able to try out a variety of life styles.

The island initially caught the attention of Governor Grey before he discovered the bright lights of Kawau Island. He built a house in Home Bay which still stands today, although rumour has it he never lived there.

Over the next century the island was farmed and became a communal haven of a couple of famous night club-owning psychologists in the 1960s. When that venture turned belly-up, the land was subdivided into 10-acre blocks and 5 suburbs of ¼-acre sections.

To discover more read *'The Story of the Hauraki Gulf'* by Raewyn Peart, or have a chat with any of the colourful residents to hear the untold gems.

## COMMUNITY

The Rakino Ratepayers Association (RRA) aims **"to promote and advance the interests and welfare of Rakino Island and its community in an exemplary way"** (mission statement).

The committee aims to meet monthly. Annual General Meetings are usually held on Rakino Island at Easter and Labour weekend in the Community Hall by the wharf. Other Committee meetings take place on the main land. All are welcome and membership of the RRA is \$30 per annum.

Our cultural heart is found at the Community Hall, Library and Art Centre, situated by the Ferry at Sandy Bay. Contact the RRA for door access codes. Charges may be levied for use of the Hall and the Hall must be booked to hold an event as it is often in demand.

Post Boxes were installed in the Community Hall in 2016, and private boxes for permanent residents can be arranged through NZ Post.

Regular highlights organised by the people and supported by the RRA Committee include the Family Fun run on New Year's Eve morning, followed by Dragon Boat racing for kids on New Year's Day.

You can reach the committee on-line via [www.rra.nz](http://www.rra.nz)



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

The Illustrated Rakino News is published 10 times a year. To subscribe, contact the editor, Colin McLaren on the ferry or at Rakino News, PO Box 5297, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141. It's worth the \$35 p.a. simply for the quirky stamps.

The 'Friends of Rakino' Face Book page is an active informal closed group page where local news and opinions are shared.

## GETTING THERE

Belaire Ferries runs an excellent ferry service. The full timetable can be found at [www.belaire.co.nz](http://www.belaire.co.nz)

SeaLink schedules a large passenger and vehicle barge most months and booking is essential.

See [www.sealink.co.nz](http://www.sealink.co.nz) or call 0800 SEALINK (0800 732 546).

Rubbish is removed from the island each week by a small commercial barge operated by Alistair Reynolds through Felicitare Charters and Towing; this vessel can carry a car or large portable items, petrol and bottled gas and routinely operates from Westhaven Marina, although pick-ups can be arranged from other Gulf locations according to local boat ramp facilities and tidal access.

See [www.boat-charter.co.nz/facilitator.htm](http://www.boat-charter.co.nz/facilitator.htm)

The **water tax** is in a state of flux. Steve Latham (0508 SEA SHUTTLE) on Waiheke Is is currently your best bet, and people often make good use of the Friends of Rakino Face Book page to publicise trips they have planned in order to share costs.

Helicopters occasionally drop off people on Rakino Island.

**Auckland Council** requires all cars parked on a public road to have a current WOF and be registered. Safety is a concern for everyone, with lots of kids and family pets free to roam, and drivers are encouraged to leave their city traffic habits behind and take the slow lane when on island time.

**RAKINO**  
RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

## ENVIRONMENT

Rakino Island was made pest-free at great cost and effort some 10 years ago. Please help us keep it that way by making sure you don't accidentally bring any unwanted visitors with you. More information can be found at the main points of entry to the island.

Rhamnus and other invasive plants and trees are a real threat for the native plants and birds. Products to help control Rhamnus are available on the island. You can contact the RRA to find out more or check out [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz) for helpful guides.

Rakino Island Nursery is a privately-owned not-for-profit nursery run by volunteers and funding from ACC. For those keen to get your hands dirty, join the Rakino Island Nursery closed Facebook page.

Bokashi Compost bins are a great innovation for household waste, available through the RRA. They are provided to each household at a small cost and can be exchanged when full at the nursery if not using the compost in your own garden. Compost from food waste is put to good use in the nursery.

Several groups and individuals have successfully gained Auckland Council Community grants for environmental improvement, reforestation and waste minimisation projects. Various grants open for applications to be lodged at different times throughout the year and the Hauraki Islands dwellers are encouraged to apply. Check the Auckland Council website for more info.

You can dispose of household waste and recyclables at one of the roadside rubbish collection sites on the island, and there is currently an annual inorganic waste collection.

## IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

The very cool phone booth on Ocean View Crescent is both a tourist attraction and a centre for emergency contacts. Landline calls to Auckland are free.

A defibrillator is kept at the phone booth.

**Fire** is the major hazard on Rakino, especially in summer with the dry kikuyu grass and limited water supply, and a fire ban applies through most of the year. We have a volunteer fire officer, currently Hank Postmaa, who diligently checks that all firefighting equipment remains in good order.

Fire permits can be obtained from Auckland Council by application to Rory Renwick on [Rory.Renwick@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:Rory.Renwick@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



The RRA also arranges for periodic fire training from the Rural Firefighting team, either on the island or mainland.

Many people keep the grass short around their houses or plant flax to act as a natural fire break. Local volunteers run a fire response unit and can be alerted by setting off the siren at the phone box or opening up the defibrillator storage.

The community also encourages all households to ensure that their water tanks are fitted with couplings that will connect to the three mobile fire pumps, known as Fire Lords, which you will see under covers at the roadside.

There are basic 'first responder' first aid items kept in the Community Hall, and RRA maintains a list of islanders who are medical professionals or who have received first aid training.

The Rescue Helicopter can be called upon in case of a medical emergency, and if you're in any doubt do call them regardless and they will determine if a helicopter evacuation is necessary. Make sure to give plenty of details so the helicopter can pick an appropriate landing spot, and there are portable strobe lights available with the defibrillator unit (at the phone box) to assist the pilot and crew in darkness or poor weather conditions.

## FIRE PREVENTION ON RAKINO

Here are some simple tips which may prevent a fire on Rakino. Due to the island's remoteness and lack of resources, in the case of a fire the objective is to limit the spread of a fire. Therefore, fire prevention is always the best option.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

During Winter months Rakino is in a restricted fire season so a fire permit

is always required. This includes all outside open fires including non-gas barbeques, fire pits etc.

During Summer months Rakino is in **TOTAL FIRE BAN** season which means no open fires at all. Gas BBQs are allowable but caution is recommended.

It is prudent to have full insurance of your buildings and contents so if you unfortunately do become a victim of a fire, you are fully covered.

## OUTDOORS

### Planting

- When planting out your land, why not plant out with fire retardant natives - it will both help with adding natural habitat to Rakino and may prevent a fire spreading. New Zealand Flax (Phormium Tenax) which grows well on the island is a good fire retardant native. The Rakino Nursery is currently being established in order to provide seedlings for sale, and is available to assist with advice on planting.
- Here is a list of other plants: <http://www.therural.co.nz/horticulture/native-fire-retardant-plants>
- **WARNING:** It's important to note that fire-retardant plants WILL BURN in the right circumstances. A good fire safety plan should include them but we have listed other measures you should also put in place - preferably before you need them.
- Keep grasses (especially Kikuyu grass) cut short around buildings. Fires have been known to spread 10 metres ahead of the visible fire by using the dry matter near the base of grasses.

### Machinery

- Never place hot machinery or tools, such as chainsaws, on dry grass. Make sure you allow them plenty of time to cool down.
- The same goes for farm vehicles and dry grass, sometimes a hot exhaust can be enough to spark a fire, even if simply driving over an area of tall grass.



### BBQ & Outdoor fire safety

- Before you light a BBQ or your pizza oven, please check that it is safe to do so- is there a strong wind that could blow embers onto grasses or other flammable items?
- Wet the area around your BBQ or pizza oven before you light it.
- Have a bucket of water or fire extinguisher at hand to extinguish any fire if it starts to get out of control.
- Before using a grill, check the connection between the gas tank and the fuel line.
- Do not overfill the gas tank.
- Do not wear loose clothing while cooking at a barbecue.
- Be careful when using lighter fluid.
- Do not add fluid to an already lit fire because the flame can flashback up into the container and explode.
- Keep all matches and lighters away from children. Teach your children to report any loose matches or lighters to an adult immediately.
- Supervise children around outdoor grills.
- Dispose of hot coals properly – douse them with plenty of water, and stir them to ensure that the fire is out. Never place them in plastic, paper or wooden containers.
- Never grill/barbecue in enclosed areas – carbon monoxide could be produced.
- Don't light fires in a fire ban area – you could be liable for whatever damage is caused.
- And finally, make sure your barbecue is completely extinguished when finished.

### Gas cylinders

- Always ensure there is adequate ventilation.
- Store and install cylinders in an upright position with the valve uppermost.
- Ensure cylinders for hot water heating and everyday cooking are securely attached to a building with, for example, a chain, in case of an earthquake, where an unsecured cylinder may break free from the gas pipe.
- Be careful when changing cylinders. Make sure the valve on the empty cylinder is turned off before disconnecting and do not turn on the valve of the full cylinder until it is securely connected.
- When storing, ensure that cylinders are either secured on deck away from hatches so any escaping gas disperses, or are placed in a properly designed and ventilated container above the water line.

### SMOKE ALARMS

- Hard-wired smoke alarms are preferable to battery operated smoke alarms.
- Most hardware, home supply, general merchandise stores or fire protection agencies carry smoke alarms.
- The Fire Service recommends long-life photoelectric type smoke alarms.

*In 80% of the fires the Fire Service attend; smoke alarms are either not installed or not working.*

### Installation

- There are different types of alarms for different locations within the home. Incorrectly located smoke alarms can cause nuisance alarms.  
As a guide;  
For optimum smoke detection, long life photoelectric smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, living area and hallway in the house - on every level. However, this is not always practical. That's why we suggest, at an absolute minimum, that a long-life photoelectric smoke alarm should be installed in the hallway closest to the bedrooms. This should be supplemented with other alarms as soon as circumstances permit.

### Test the batteries regularly

- A significant percentage of homes fitted with smoke alarms remain unprotected due to flat or missing batteries.
- Once a month check the battery by pressing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- There is nothing worse than searching for a 'cheeping' smoke alarm at 4am in the morning. Avoid this by replacing the battery at least once a year. Pick a time like the beginning or end of daylight savings to do this.

- Consider purchasing long-life photoelectric smoke alarms. This will give 10 years of smoke detection without battery replacements.
- You should install smoke alarms that feature a HUSH button to stop nuisance alarms.
- Keep smoke alarms clean
- Dust and debris can interfere with the alarm's operation, so vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly.

### Have an escape plan

- You will have one or two minutes from the sounding of the alarm to when your life is seriously threatened by fire or smoke.

### Prepare and practice an escape plan

- When calling 111 your address on Rakino could be obscure to the call centre. If you have a predetermined GPS co-ordinate written beside your Call 111 notice, this helps immensely. Also identify the safest place for a helicopter to land for assessment. This is also handy for a medical emergency situation.
- Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if a fire occurs.
- Identify a primary escape route out of every room, and then pick a secondary route in case the first is blocked by fire.
- Ensure doorways are not obstructed.
- Select and indicate a meeting place outside of the home (eg the letterbox).



- Call 111 and ask for the Fire Service from a neighbour's home or mobile phone. The phone box on Rakino will support free calls into Auckland to alert the fire emergency teams.

**Remember:**

- Are the kitchen appliances turned off and safe?
- Are the heaters turned off and furniture and clothes are a metre distance from the fire place?
- Has the ashtray been emptied into a metal bin outside?
- Has the TV been switched off using the power switch on the set and not the remote control 'standby'?
- Are all candles out?
- Are kitchen and living room doors closed to slow a fire spreading to bedrooms?
- Is the house secure with keys in the deadlocks?
- Are passageways clear for a quick escape?

*Do a fire check every night before you turn out the light.*

**FEEDBACK**

If you find something in the above that is incorrect, incomplete or out of date, please contact the RRA so we can update our Lonely Island Guide to Rakino Island.

**Enjoy the island!**

**RAKINO**  
RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

