

## Kia Ora

It seems ages since our last newsletter, which is largely due to my tardiness in writing it. In this exciting edition we cover a diverse range of topics including plague, pestilence, and the impending AGM.

## Plague and Pestilence

Back in May there was a localised infestation of Plague Skinks on Rakino. Luckily the skinks were quickly identified and appropriate action taken. This included establishing a cordon and fumigation of the site. Thank you to those who helped out in the eradication effort.

Like lots of horrible creatures, Plague Skinks are native to Australia. Plague skinks are able to reach high population densities in a relatively short time (the clue is in the name), potentially competing with our native lizard species for food, habitat and space. This is a link to the DoC site that has a lot of useful information on identification of Plague Skinks.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests/plague-skinks/>

Needless to say, if you see any on Rakino, please report them immediately on **0800 809966**.



Plague Skink – With distinctive large single head scale and rainbow colour



Monster Plague Skink attacking a Rakino resident



Plague Skink Eggs



There are nine varieties of skink in NZ, and the Common Skink is the one most likely to see on Rakino. Note the brown stripes.

See also:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/reptiles-and-frogs/lizards/skinks/>

We have plenty of native skinks on Rakino, and we don't want to endanger the good guys! If you sight a possible Plague skink, try to capture and hold it in a container until it can be properly identified and dealt with humanely once it is confirmed as a target pest. If the wily Aussie gives you the slip, mark the location clearly so that a trap can be set for it; we have people on the island who have been trained on how to deal with them.

We would like to thank all those who participated in the eradication activity – Well done.

## Myrtle Rust

Myrtle Rust, a fungal pathogen affecting native and exotic plants in the myrtle family, has been discovered in Kerikeri, Taranaki and more recently the Waikato. DOC and MPI are currently working on the theory that it arrived in a recent storm event in the Taranaki, and it has spread to Kerikeri and the Waikato via the nursery trade. Given that Pohutukawa, Manuka and Kanuka are myrtles that are

key species in restoration programs, DOC is closely monitoring activities so as to avoid inadvertent spread of the rust.

To cut a long story short, here in Auckland propagating and planting myrtles is still OK, as long as certain anti myrtle rust hygiene protocols are followed. Below is a link for the DoC site.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/biosecurity/myrtle-rust/>



If you suspect Myrtle rust on Rakino call DoC on 0800 80 99 66

## Roads and Cars

Rakino is less than 2.5km long. It seem odd to me that we have issues with speeding, unlicensed drivers and unlicensed cars. How about taking a nice walk? Talk to people, listen to the birds, and forget about the Auckland traffic. Relax; think of the health benefits...



Auckland

Spot the difference...



Rakino

## Signs

The damaged DOC sign at the end of Askew Ave will soon be replaced; however the one at the end of the West Bay track has been damaged in winter storms. The track itself is still difficult to negotiate since the landslides and the steps to the beach have to be replaced.

John Mackenzie will take over from Mark Lockhart as Environmental Officer. The committee would like to thank Mark for his efforts over the last few years.

John has created a very good ecological website for the island, which is also linked to the RRA web site:

<https://www.rakinoisland.org/>

John has also listed some community planting dates for your diary, starting from 23<sup>rd</sup> September (dep. on weather) – do come along and lend a hand.

<https://www.rakinoisland.org/get-involved>



## Labour Weekend

We are working on the agenda for Labour weekend. We will finalise the programme for that next week and will send out a Celebration of RRA 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This will most likely include bands, kid's events, etc.

The AGM of the Rakino Ratepayers Association will be held at 2pm on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October.

We will issue a full agenda for this meeting in the next few weeks. There will be an update on the Community Hall and the much anticipated committee nomination forms. As always, we need enthusiastic people to provide the leadership and support required to represent an eclectic group of landowners clinging to a deforested rock in the turbulent waters of the Haruki Gulf. **We need you.**

We have 72 paid up households so far - **let's get to 100 before the AGM.**

All details on the RRA website [www.rra.nz](http://www.rra.nz)

## RRA Contacts

For RRA correspondence, please contact Acting Secretary and Vice Chair, Rob Overall, on 021 996 796.

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If you want something in the newsletter, need a hug or want to yell at someone, please contact the Chair, Steve McCrone, on 027 2743 460.

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