

## **SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT AUCKLAND COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN 2013-2014**

### **Submission on behalf of the New Zealand Radio Yacht Squadron (NZRYS) and the Onepoto Lagoon Co-ordination Committee (OLCC)**

I do wish to speak in support of this submission at a hearing.

#### **Local Board Area: Kaipatiki**

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#### **Decision Sought**

That Auckland Council provides funding in the 2013-2014 Annual Budget with a minimum of \$800,000 for de-silting the ponds at Onepoto Domain.

#### **Submission**

In reviewing its budget for 2013-2014 the Kaipatiki Local Board is considering changes which include "de-silting Onepoto Pond".

The NZRYS and OLCC are in full support of prioritising the de-silting of the Onepoto Pond. The reasons for this request are:

- Aesthetic - to regain clear water and clean smell
- Recreational - to regain the water depth for radio control yacht racing
- Ecological – restore healthy conditions for fish and birdlife
- Environmental – restore stormwater run-off capacity to hold sediment back from entering Shoal Bay.

There have been submissions and presentations on this issue to the Local Board and previously to the territorial council during the past four years at least. There has been, and continues to be, a good level of support from the community and from the Local Board for this work to be carried out as soon as possible.

The Onepoto Domain, its ponds, playing fields; playground and bush walk provide a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities that are well used by the community. It must be one of the most highly used recreational parks in Kaipatiki if not on the North Shore. On any Sunday the playing fields are in use, the playground is full and yachts are being raced in the morning by the Electrons and in the afternoon by the NZRYS. All this apart from all the family groups that come to feed the ducks, fly kites and walk their dogs and cycle the footpaths.

The ponds and surrounding grass, wetlands and bush are used by many native birds from three species of shag that feed on eels and small fish to Paradise Shelduck a pair of which one year raised five young on the grassed area. Pied stilt, white-faced heron, pukeko, grey duck, mallard, welcome swallow, red-billed and black-billed gulls abound. Tui, fantail, Australasian harriers and a suite of introduced birds can also be seen regularly.



The boating clubs that use the Onepoto Lagoon on a regular basis include:  
The NZ Radio Yacht Squadron  
The Onepoto Electron Fleet  
The Ancient Mariners Radio Control Group



The Onepoto Domain reserve management plan 1997 describes the Onepoto Lagoon as two freshwater lakes designed to function as a settling pond for stormwater which is collected through the three main drainage channels in the Domain. The lakes were designed to be 450mm deep. As drainage lakes they naturally accumulate sediment from stormwater.

Over the past 50 years the ponds have accumulated considerable silt and decayed vegetation resulting in a 1-2 metre margin around the whole of the eastern side of the main sailing pond having a depth of only 100-300mm, as measured in January 2008.

Approximately 25% of the sailing pond has a depth less than 400mm and this means the yachts cannot approach the shallow area or will run aground.

The lake bottom and entire margin has very fine black mud which is anoxic – producing hydrogen sulphide which bubbles up the fine mud on warm, still days. Permanent flushing of the lakes with salt water to kill the algal weed growth has been necessary to maintain the lakes for sailing. However, this contributes to the mud build up and anoxic conditions that produce a bad smell as it putrefies.

During the past two years, the sailing pond has silted up at an alarming rate and to the extent that both the northern inlet and the sole outlet are now mud banks.

Northern inlet



## Outlet



The high nutrient load from the sediment and warm water temperatures because of the shallow depth led to excess weed growth and stagnant water. The initiative of the former Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board of installing 2 new and very effective fountains in 2009 greatly improved the circulation and aeration of water. Oxygen saturation has ranged from 64-100% since installation of the fountains and a level of 60% saturation is necessary to sustain fish life. Unfortunately, the pump for the fountains has been blocked by silt from time to time, and since November 2012 has completely stopped working and now requires major maintenance. As a result the ponds are no longer being aerated and water not circulated; exacerbating the problem of stagnation.

We have all waited long enough and have been working to keep the pond in a reasonable state for many years with water quality monitoring, hauling out weed and adjusting the weir to regulate flows. Please let's get the ponds de-silted and restore this valuable asset back to a pleasant and useable water feature.