

Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua Committee Members



RICHARD COOK

Richard has a Bachelor of Forestry Science and has worked in the Australian, Irish and New Zealand Forest Industries for the last 10 years. He is the Southern North Island Branch Manager for PF Olsen Ltd. In this role, Richard and his team work with the Porirua community and its environment. Richard also has experience in retail and dry stock farming.

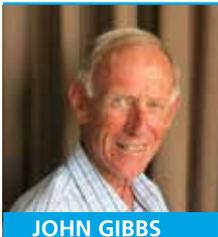
In his current role and as a member of the Southern North Island Wood Council, Richard is well placed to provide a link between the forest industry, the local community and the environment.

“I am an avid believer in productive and sustainable land management to ensure a clean and dynamic environment in the future.” Richard says.

Richard steadfastly believes that finding solutions is a two-way street.

“Improving the quality of water to a state where the aquatic environment thrives and we can swim safely and harvest healthy seafood, is imperative if future generations are to prosper.

“We need to make the effort to understand the goals, methodologies, issues and constraints that people work under to find common ground and an outcome that suits everybody.”



JOHN GIBBS

As a chartered professional engineer and former manager of strategic assets for Porirua City Council has an in-depth knowledge of the workings of the Te Awarua o Porirua catchment and the infrastructure that supports its urban areas.

A long-time resident of Porirua catchment he is a member of Mana Lions Club, Maararoa Conservation Group and Friends of Mana Island. He is also a keen wind surfer, kayaker

and whitebaiter and he says that while over the decades he has seen the negative effects of development and land use, he has also seen how the quickly the environment can recover once problems are addressed.

“It’s wonderful to see the harbour and coast being used and enjoyed and to see the community involved in its protection. Catchments work on gravity so it’s always better to solve problems at their source than wait until the downstream effects overwhelm.”

“Because the Whaitua committee will be working with the three local authorities and will involve the community all the way, it has the potential to influence the way we care for our waterways.”

John believes the success of the committee will be seen in the way it works with the community to set the agenda, produces tangible measures of progress and communicates how to get things done.

“Ultimately we will see the disbanding of the committee when we have finished the Te Awarua o Porirua chapter in the Natural Resource Plan,” says John.



DR JOHN MCKOY

John has lived in Porirua since 1973 and has played in and used its coastal waters for most of that time. As a marine scientist, consultant in fisheries research and management and Chair of the National Rock Lobster Management Group he spends time overseas and throughout New Zealand.

When at home John enjoys boating, fishing and working on community projects such as the Pauatahanui Inlet Community Trust and the

Plymerton Residents’ Association.

“All sorts of things influence the health of our coasts and harbours. The whole idea is to involve the people who live and work in the catchment as they are the ones whose actions have impact. The committee will have strong support from local authorities, strong technical support from the regional council and firm links in the community. It also has a really good basis from which to work, with many issues identified, planning and development options in place and possible solutions floated by the Porirua Harbour Strategy and Action Plan,” says John.

“I am looking forward to contributing what I can to help manage and restore the resources of the catchment in an ecologically sustainable way.”



STU FARRANT

Stu is an ecological engineer with an interest in integrated water management and designed solutions that use natural processes to support tangible outcomes for the environment and stakeholders.

As a youth he spent his free time roaming the upper farm tributaries, streams and headwaters of the Porirua catchment and this sparked his early interest in the natural environment and what he

now understands to be hydrology. More recently he has lived in Pukerua Bay on the upper tributary to Ara Harakeke (Taupo Swamp).

As a keen diver and spear fisher his perspective on water reaches beneath the surface and as an active participant in community conservation projects he understands that engaging the community at a deeper level is key to success.

“I am excited by the unique approach being taken by this process. We have an opportunity to work as a community to understand and encourage people who live in the catchment particularly our young ones, to determine what they want for the future.”

Stu regards Te Awarua o Porirua as a regional asset to be enhanced and protected. His passion for ecology, and understanding of the existing demands and pressures on the catchment, will be valuable when it comes to finding a way forward.



WARRICK LYON

Warrick grew up in Mana, fishing and sailing on the harbour. He continues his close association with Te Awarua o Porirua through his work as a NIWA scientist and is currently studying for a Ph.D. in marine biology. This involves tracking Rig sharks in the harbour and undertaking bio-security, and marine life surveys and studies. Talking to people in the community and school children is part of his work and he enjoys hearing what they are interested in and sharing what he knows about the marine ecosystem.

Warrick believes the committee has a unique opportunity to listen, learn and communicate.

“There is still a lot we can learn about what people want from the land and water in the catchment. If we want business and industry to prosper and the harbour to flourish the way to achieve this is to listen and talk to each other. With all the different skills available to us we should be able to reach a better understanding of what the community wants and achieve better outcomes for all.”

“As a local I feel that the harbour is mine and it is my responsibility to care for it. I am looking forward to working with others who feel the same way,” Warrick says.



JENNIE SMEATON

Jennie is a lifelong resident of Takapuwhia, Porirua. Her grandfather was baptised in the harbour and she and her siblings grew up with whanau stories based around the land and harbour and the recreation and sustenance it once provided. This history continues with her family still enjoying kayaking and waka ama, and fishing together.

Jennie works for Te Runanga of Toa Rangatira in communications and resource management. She is also a certified Resource Management Hearings commissioner, a member of Te Tau Ihu Fisheries forum, Te Waka a Maui Fisheries forum and the Plymerton School Board of Trustees.

“The establishment of this committee is important to the harbour revitalisation work that has been done. It adds as an additional forum and strives for positive outcomes as our community changes and impacts on Te Awarua o Porirua,” Jennie says.

We need to reach full consensus in our decision making processes. This means that committee members must stay abreast of all aspects and impacts to the Harbour and work with a unified approach to achieve outcomes. A proactive committee open to exploring and seeking out positive environmental outcomes will create flow on effects such as beneficial social outcomes.”

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DIANE STRUGNELL

An occupational therapist and farmer, Diane has lived on Moonshine Road since 1976 and currently runs a 650 acre 'working farm'. This farm is the starting point for tributaries of the Moonshine and Pauatahanui Streams. Diane is very conscious of the impact her activities can have on the water and the impact that water has on her life.

"I want to understand more about the relationship between the impact of our activities on the

water because how we treat it and the benefit it provides is a two way relationship," Diane says.

She is a member and Treasurer of the Pauatahanui Residents Association executive committee as well as a member of the Large Rural Landowners group, the Moonshine Valley Residents' Association and was a founding member and Chair of Preserve Pauatahanui.

"Now that I live on the farm I am very conscious of its role in Te Awarua o Porirua. Over the years we have lived in Pauatahanui and used the harbour and its environs recreationally – cycling, walking and sailing. I want to ensure others will be able to do so in the future."



COUNCILLOR MALCOLM SPARROW

Wellington City Councillor Malcolm Sparrow is a long-time resident of Tawa and an active participant in the community. He was elected to the Tawa Community Board in 2005 standing down for a couple of years to fill the position of Tawa Community Centre Co-ordinator before returning to the board as Chair in 2009. This is Malcolm's first term on Wellington City Council. He is on the Environment Committee and also represents the council on the community board and on four Porirua community committees.

"Tawa has an obvious geographical link to the Harbour through the Porirua Stream but there are many connections that are not seen, like stormwater and sewerage that flow from the highest points and small or piped waterways that also flow to the Harbour. The whaitua committee boundaries are shaped by the contour of the land not by local authority boundaries and this is different to what we are used to," Councillor Sparrow says.

"We all have a lot to learn but we have very good support from scientific and environment staff of the regional council and city councils. There appear to be some extremely talented members on the committee and I believe we can all make a difference in our own way."



COUNCILLOR BRONWYN KROPP

Bronwyn Kropp is in her second term on the Porirua City Council where she is Chair of the District Plan and Te Awarua o Porirua Joint Committees, deputy chair of the District Licensing Committee and a member of the Wastewater and Landfill joint committee.

Bronwyn believes it is important to get as much cross-over as possible between the various groups working in and around our harbours to avoid duplication and ensure continuity.

"We are tackling issues on many fronts and much work has already been done. It is important to communicate and coordinate activities in order to gain as much as possible from our efforts," Councillor Kropp says.

"The biggest challenge for us as a community is to accept that what we do in our own backyards has a direct effect on the environment and everybody else in the catchment - to see the connection between tipping soapy water down the stormwater drains in the upper catchment and seeing bubbles in the Harbour in Porirua."

"The challenge for the committee will be to understand and accept differing perspectives and to find common ground. If we can achieve this it will lead to a better result."

"We are working across political boundaries. Iwi, the regional council and Porirua and Wellington City councils are working together and I am really excited to see what can be achieved by working this way," she says.



LARISSA TOELUPE

Larissa came to live in New Zealand from Samoa three years ago seeking greater opportunity for her family. She chose to live in Porirua because this had been her home for several years while she studied at Victoria University.

"I looked at other areas to live but when I came back to Porirua I could easily identify with the people and the environment and I immediately felt at ease and at home," Larissa says.

Larissa brings skills that are both academic and practical to the committee. She has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies and Geography and was formerly project coordinator for an EU- funded Independent Water Scheme project in Samoa. She is also a trustee for the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust (PHACCT) and was instrumental in the development of the Samoan documentary on the Porirua Harbour.

"I had experience with water management and community planning and development in Samoa, and I understand how important it is to be familiar with the perceptions of the people you work with. It is vital to choose communication tools that are appropriate to them."

"It is very rewarding when you see a connection between the community and the subject begin to develop and that is what I hope to achieve in my time on Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua Committee," says Larissa.



SHARLI-JO SOLOMON

Sharli-Jo was chosen to Represent Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira because of her lifelong passion for the environment. She is animated when she speaks of her life growing up in a playground from Kaitoki to Reikorangi.

"The relationship our whanau have with the land and sea helped shape the people we are today and provided the basis of our commitment to the environment. I am pleased to have the

opportunity to represent our iwi," Sharli-Jo says.

Sharli-Jo Believes it is the environment, our harbours, coast and rivers, that make Porirua and the region so beautiful.

"We need growth and development for our future wellbeing and it is up to us to find a way to balance this need with that of the environment. I hope this committee, with the help of the community, can take a big step towards doing that."



COUNCILLOR BARBARA DONALDSON

Barbara is a long-time resident of Porirua and has always been active in the community. This is her third term as a regional councillor and she holds the position of Deputy Chair, Chair of the Strategy and Policy Committee and Environment Management Portfolio Leader among other responsibilities. Barbara believes whaitua committees are an important part of the planning process as their decisions will affect the future of the environment.

"This is a new way of doing things where we involve communities in making the rules for their area," Councillor Donaldson says.

"We have strong political backing, expert technical support and a variety of skills and expertise on the committee. It will still be a big learning curve for all of us and will take a lot of hard work and commitment for us to ensure the wider Porirua community is part of the process and we are able to reach a consensus."

"Ultimately we may have to change the way we do things, but undoubtedly we do have to regulate what we do on land in order to protect our water," the councillor says.