

14. HEATHCOTE RIVER ESPLANADE RESERVE DEVELOPMENT RR 10028

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The purpose of this report is to present to the Community Board the facilitator's report on the Heathcote River Esplanade Reserve development and to assist the Board to make a decision on further development of the Reserve.

The Land Drainage Manager, Ken Couling, addressed the Community Affairs Committee at its meeting on 16 February 1999, updating the Committee on the current status of the Esplanade Reserve, on work carried out on the Reserve, and plans for future work. The Community Board, at its meeting on 2 March 1999 adopted the Committee's recommendations that:

- 1. A separate meeting be held with residents to seek their views, and an independent facilitator be present.*
- 2. The facilitator report back to the Community Board.*

Lesley MacGibbon was employed as the facilitator. Over the last few months Lesley has met with all the residents and her report will be distributed to the Board separately. Residents will also receive a copy of the report.

BACKGROUND

An esplanade reserve, some 350m long and generally 8-10m wide, was created on the west bank of the Heathcote River between the recreation reserve at 211 Hoon Hay Road and Rose Street when land east of Hoon Hay Road was subdivided in 1946 and 1953.

Successive adjoining owners have occupied the public reserve enjoying the land as if it were an extension of their own property.

Throughout the 1990s in-fill development occurred on only four of the adjoining properties. From early 1996 the Water Services Unit began to work with developers and residents to fence the common boundary and carry out restoration planting on the esplanade reserve as each adjoining development occurred. Generally it is the Water Services Unit which assumes the City Council responsibility for managing esplanade reserves in accordance with the purposes for which they are created in accordance with the Resource Management Act (see attached).

PRESENT SITUATION

To date restoration planting has been carried out on the Reserve between the river and eight of the 13 properties. The landscape plans were prepared in close consultation with each individual owner to ensure that their needs in respect of outlook, shelter, security and privacy were also taken into consideration.

ISSUES FOR THE COUNCIL

1. Public Land

The 350m long and generally 8-10m wide Heathcote River Esplanade Reserve is public land.

2. Boundary Fences

Some of the properties have boundary fences right to the river edge. These are illegal. At present they are blocking Council maintenance and public accessibility.

The Council has a low-key but ongoing inspection and maintenance programme for the planted areas of the reserve and it is necessary to provide access along the reserve for maintenance workers and their equipment such as wheelbarrows. To achieve this a 3m wide section of each of the eight existing fences across the Reserve will need to be removed near the river edge. A few shrubs also need to be removed. At the moment a few of the residents allow Council contractors across their land. This is not suitable access for maintenance. At present we rely on the houses not changing hands. In some cases the contractors have no access points at all.

3. Planting

To date planting has been carried out on eight of the 13 properties. Water Services Unit would like to continue the planting.

4. Public Walkway

The unformed access proposed is considered sufficient to satisfy the purpose of the Reserve in respect of public access as well. While there is a legal obligation to provide access along the public reserve on the West Bank, pedestrian traffic will be strongly encouraged to use the sealed pathway on the east bank through Centennial Park.

5. Fences

The Water Services Unit wishes to continue the planting programme and new fencing (along the common boundary where requested by the adjoining owners) along the Esplanade Reserve in consultation with the five remaining adjoining owners and the Scouts located on the recreation reserve at 211 Hoon Hay Road. Estimated planting costs total \$12,000 and the Council's share of fencing costs should not exceed \$3,000.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Board decide which of the options identified in the facilitator's report will meet the legal requirements of Council and meet the concerns of the property owners.