



Arts Council meet and greet



Aroha (Jenny Lyn Walker) shares examples of her work with Larissa Dunn, left, at the Arts Council meet and greet. Photo: Anita Peters.

ANITA PETERS

Golden Bay Community Arts Council recently held a meet and greet at their vibrantly refurbished home base.

The event, at 24 Commercial Street, was accompanied by tasty platters donated by delicatessen neighbour De-Lish.

The community invitation was to meet the new board members, arts worker Claire French and chair Anna Dean, and to connect artists, some of whom provided work and furnishings for the jazzed-up space.

Claire is available on Wednesdays to meet anyone interested in the arts, encourage creative ideas, advertise events and share funding information.

Upcoming events include Matariki – this year minus the parade due to uncertainty around Covid – and the annual Bay Art competition and exhibition. Amidst the buzz

of other new ideas is a Chris Finlayson mural soon to grace the exterior wall of the building.

Anna explained three separate surveys designed to help inform and address some of the misconceptions about what the Arts Council provides, what kind of information is needed and how the Arts Council space can be used.

The Creative Communities funding focus has changed, and is now focused on arts/culture and creativity in the broadest sense, designed to target everybody, not just artists.

Within each survey is a spreadsheet link to a Google sheet, which will exist as a free community resource, listing all activities that are arts, culture and creativity-related. The onus is then on whoever lists their artwork, club, group or service to keep it updated. People are requested to first identify which of the three surveys applies to them.

Survey 1: For people living in the Bay with an active art practice but not necessarily selling their work (eg choir members). “We’re trying to get a handle on who’s around, what their involvement is – it’s really about perception and opinions of the Art Council and what their function is here in the community.”

Survey 2: For those who are active and engaged audience members, such as in reading groups and book clubs; they might want to attend workshops, join in and participate but might not know where to go.

Survey 3: For people living outside the Bay, like homeowners here just for summer, but who still have a relationship with the Bay. Their perception of the Arts Council and arts community activities is also valued.

For more information contact GBCAC arts worker on 022 672 1018, and/or sign up to GBCAC newsletter for regular updates.

Penguin fence hearing

JO RICHARDS

Little blue penguins nesting at Port Taroakohe will gain additional protection if a hearing panel’s recommendations are backed by Tasman District Council.

At a hearing, held last Wednesday, the panel recommended that two new fences – one each on the western and port arms of the harbour – should be constructed to safeguard the growing penguin colony, while still allowing access for anglers. Dogs, however, would be banned from the protected areas.

The outcome represents something of a compromise that restricts access to a popular location, but does not prohibit it altogether.

Submissions received during the recent public consultation on the Mohua Golden Bay Penguin Trust’s original fence proposal reveal that, although a majority of the 108 submitters were in favour of using fences to restrict access to the penguin colony, almost 40 per cent were not. Some of those against the proposal cited concerns over increasing restrictions governing access to Golden Bay’s public spaces.

In his written submission, Duncan Cavaye criticised the proposal, calling it a “folly”, and argued: “Such changes to public use should never be considered, based merely on the whim of a pressure organisation making council feel it must be the ‘right thing to do.’” He added that it failed to acknowledge the community’s positive attitude towards conservation. “It sets a precedent that residents are seemingly incapable of responsibly co-existing with any of our wildlife species despite this being the case for decades.”

On the other side of the fence, Dr John Cockrem of Massey University advocated strongly for the additional protection measures in his submission.

“Port Taroakohe has the largest breeding colony of little penguins in the Nelson Tasman region and is a nationally [significant] location for the species.

“Unfortunately, the penguin nest boxes are currently subject to disturbance from people and dogs, and the other birds that use the breakwaters and that breed there are also vulnerable to disturbance.”

Duncan and John were two of seven submitters who made oral presentations at the hearing chaired by councillor Chris Hill.

Golden Bay Community Board member Grant Knowles, who sat on the hearing panel, said the issue was not “black and white” and noted “both sides were...”

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Taonga Te Ra a hidden treasure



Master weaver Ruth Port explains the task of recreating the ancient sail Taonga Te Ra. Photo: Anita Peters.

ANITA PETERS

An ancient woven sail, Taonga Te Ra, was the subject of a recent library talk given by Ahipara master weaver Ruth Port. Held and laid hidden in the British Museum in London, the sail is over 200 years old, the only one of its age known to exist.

Ruth first saw Te Ra in 2010 when she visited London to attend an exhibition.

In 2019, when she and two other dedicated weavers revisited the museum, their quest was to renew a relationship with that taonga according to the wishes of prominent New Zealand artist Dr Maureen Lander. They wanted to work out and retrieve the skills and techniques used and uncover its secrets to bring back home, but had only five days to examine, measure and document the sail in copious notes, photographs, drawings and videos.

"It was like nothing we had ever seen before," explained Ruth. By observing, touching and recreating the weave, the visitors not only gained new knowledge but also developed a relationship with the ancient weavers.

The four-metre triangular sail was believed to have been used for coastal rather than Pacific voyaging due to its size

and fineness. Unique features like three-dimensional zigzag patterns of holes (puareare) were likely designed for wind diffusion and aerodynamics. The weaving threads are very fine, only 2-3mm wide. Six-ply muka fibre (rather than two-ply) was used to make many metres of rigging ropes. Attached are thousands of kereru feathers, carefully notched to respond to movement and wind. Kaka feathers and dog skin added indications of prestige.

In 1922, Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck) challenged a replication of Te Ra, suggesting it might be "quite simple". Ruth says it was not. While there are still secrets to figure out, through hundreds of hours of hard work to complete a first trial sail, Hine Marama, the weavers have however gained enough confidence and knowledge to pursue their final goal. One hundred years after Te Rangi Hiroa's wero (challenge), the latter day weavers hope to complete a full-sized rendition of Te Ra by this December.

Ruth says that, along with whānau, weaving is her life.

"I feel very honoured, blessed and privileged to be part of this amazing journey. I consider Te Ra a dear friend, a kuia, an ancestor – I'm in absolute awe of this teacher."

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PENGUIN FENCE HEARING

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...passionate and had good points to make". He explained that the panel members read all the submissions, heard the presentations and listened to the experts.

Following the formal session, panel members reconvened at Port Tarakohe to inspect the proposed fence locations. "We went on a site visit, which helped a lot to visualise it," said Grant. "It helped anchor what we needed to do."

After deliberating, the panel agreed to recommend fence protection, but with modifications from the original

proposal; instead of one continuous structure, there should be two shorter fences spanning the base of each of the two port arms. The panel also recommended that fishers should enjoy controlled access to the fenced areas but with restricted hours.

Grant acknowledged that there would be "people on both sides who are not 100 per cent happy" but hoped the compromise would be broadly acceptable.

The panel's recommendations will be considered at TDC's full council meeting next week.



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