

# Chairperson's Annual Report

## Presented to the AGM held Saturday 26 July 2025.

The 2024/25 year has again been one of challenges for the Society. However, as has been the case in recent years, the Society has risen to these challenges and has ended another year in a good financial position and having completed all the projects it had initiated.

Of particular note are the following:

### 1. Agreements with D.O.C.

The Society relies on the goodwill of DOC to allow the sand from the dredge tailings to be deposited onto the Mangawhai distal spit. Until now DOC agreement to allow this to occur was sought on an annual basis as part of the Society's resource consent with the NRC and approval of the annual dredging plan.

An application to obtain a **Concession Agreement** with DOC was lodged early in 2024 and after much discussion agreement was reached and a Concession Agreement was signed on 21 March 2025. This agreement is for a period of 10 years, and gives the Society the authority to deposit sand on the spit under conditions that are acceptable to both the Society and DOC.

In addition, the Society's **Community Agreement** with DOC expired on 30 September 2024 and it is pleasing to report that a new agreement was signed in October 2024 which authorises the Society to undertake its sand fencing activities as well as the planting of native grasses that help to stabilise the sand on the spit. The term of this agreement was later amended to match the term of the Concession Agreement.

The Society appreciates the support given by Te Uri o Hau and Ngati Manuhiri towards both the successful completion of these agreements as well as the on-going work on the spit that these agreements allow to be undertaken.

I would like to acknowledge the support we have received during the year from DOC for all of the Society's activities and look forward to cementing in this relationship throughout the terms of these agreements.

### 2. Dredging Resource Consent.

The previous resource consent which consented the Society's dredging operations in the harbour, had expired in 2023 and a renewal of this consent with the NRC required a considerable amount of discussion and negotiation. Finally in October 2024 a new resource consent was granted for a term of 20 years. This new consent requires the Society to undertake a bathymetric survey of the area in which the dredge operates before and after each dredging season (the previous consent only required a bathymetric survey to be undertaken every 5 years). The Society is very pleased to have confirmed this new consent as it provides a degree of certainty for the dredging operations over the next 20 years.

### 3. Dredging Operations.

The dredging operation for 2025 was the first to be undertaken under the newly agreed resource consent. As usual, a dredge plan had to be agreed with the NRC and this year the plan was to dredge out the sand trap at the north end of the shoal at Bullet Point. This location posed a new challenge as the pipeline required submerging to the bottom of the channel so that passage of boats would not be compromised. Our dredge team devised a plan on how to accomplish this which has been extremely successful (see far left in pic).



Agreement was reached with DOC on where, and how, the tailings would be placed on the spit so that the saltwater drainage would not flow back into the wetland at the north end of the spit. Te Uri o Hau were consulted on this location for the tailings and were also satisfied.

A bathymetric survey of Mangawhai harbour was being undertaken by the NRC Maritime Department, who agreed to provide the data of the area around the dredge location to be used as our “before” survey as per the condition of our consent. The Society had already taken steps to purchase the necessary equipment to undertake bathymetric surveys in the future, but the training of the dredge operators had not been completed in time for the “before” survey, hence our grateful acceptance of the NRC’s offer.

As it transpired, the NRC was unable to complete the last part of their bathymetric survey of the harbour (which unfortunately was the area critical to the dredge operation) and through a breakdown in communication neglected to inform the Society. The end result was that, our dredging operation had to be halted for 2 weeks until our own staff were trained in the use of the specialist equipment and for a survey to be undertaken. The survey was successfully completed, and the Society now has the means to undertake future surveys within its own resources.

I must mention a special thanks to John Pearson for his efforts in firstly obtaining the new resource consent and secondly for resolving the impasse with the NRC on the dredge plan.

Dredging for the 2025 season is coming to an end at the time of this AGM, and a special thanks must go to our dredge team of Mark, Grant & Brett who have always been able to overcome any obstacle placed in front of them and have successfully completed another dredge season in an extremely harsh environment. The harbour would not be what it is today without their efforts!

#### **4. Equipment.**

During the year, the Society completed a number of equipment disposals and acquisitions. John Pearson excelled himself as a trader on Trademe, firstly completing the sale of the Orca tugboat and finally the very tired Same tractor which had given many years of service in extremely harsh conditions. The Society was fortunate to be able to purchase a Case Maxxum tractor which was still under warranty and more recently

a 4 cu m scoop which is proving valuable in moving the sand from where the dredge tailings are deposited to a position behind the bund wall (pic of new tractor & scoop below).



#### **5. Spit Activities: Sand Fencing and Spinifex planting:**

The Society was again fortunate to be awarded another grant from the Mangawhai Community Opportunity Shop Trust, which covered the cost of the raw material required to erect another 200 metres of sand fencing. This fencing gives the spinifex plants shelter from the strong winds that sweep across the spit, and helps to achieve a better survival rate for the plants. In 2024 a total of 4000 plants were planted and in 2025 we are planting approximately 3300. This planting is essential to help stabilise the sand on the spit.

Again, the Society has benefited from the generosity of our community volunteers who willingly give up their time to assist us in fencing and planting work. We currently have a list of some 60 volunteers, with new volunteers joining weekly. Without this community involvement the Society would have difficulty undertaking this work. A very big thanks to them all.



Sand fences being erected – 2025.

## **6. Topographic Mapping of the Mangawhai Spit:\**

In mid-2024 the Society assisted Mangawhai Matters in funding a topographic survey of the Mangawhai Spit. This survey was undertaken by the University of Auckland under the leadership of Prof. Mark Dickson. The results of this study provided an accurate mapping of the spit showing the areas most vulnerable to future coastal inundation during major weather events and also quantified the volume of sand that is contained on the spit.

Following a study of the survey's results, the Society engaged Prof. Dickson to undertake a further study on a more operational level. This survey identified the locations on the spit which are most vulnerable to a potential breach during a major weather event and quantified the volumes of sand that would be needed in order to shore up these locations and so reduce their vulnerability. These very valuable studies have greatly increased the Society's knowledge of the spit and its relationship with the harbour, and they provide a benchmark against which future surveys can accurately assess the changes that are occurring to the spit, and the quantity of sand that is being lost each year. A special thanks must go to Phil McDermott for his work on "translating" the data from these studies into a more user friendly format that we were able to understand!

One of the Society's objectives in the coming year will be to use this information to develop a operational plan to make the spit more secure to potential breaches. This work will have to be undertaken with the involvement of DOC, the NRC and Te Uri o Hau.

## **7. Mangrove Management:**

The control of the re-growth of juvenile mangroves in the areas of the harbour which were cleared of mangroves a decade ago, continued during the year. This work is undertaken within the conditions of the

resource consent that the Society was granted by the NRC. It is an on-going task which is very necessary in order to prevent the mangroves from both invading the recreational areas of the harbour and affecting the tidal flows that are so important in keeping our harbour functioning efficiently.

#### **8. Communication:**

One of the goals set by the Committee at the start of this year, was to provide more frequent and informative news about the Society and its activities to the Mangawhai community. Under the guidance of Stephen Owles, and with the assistance of Sue Clayton, the Society is posting news items in the Mangawhai Focus on a regular basis as well as having revitalised the Society's website and Facebook pages.

The Committee is now receiving activity reports on visits to the website and it is pleasing to see that there has been a positive trend in the number of visits during the year. In addition, there has been a steady stream of community members requesting their names to be added to our list of volunteers for our spit activities.

It is well known that the vast majority of the Mangawhai community place a very high importance on having the harbour maintained in a very good condition but many are unaware of the role that the Society has in ensuring that this, in fact, happens. We hope that our endeavours to lift the Society's profile in the community will go some way in rectifying this imbalance.

#### **9. Committee:**

The Society's committee has achieved a great deal during the year and I thank them all for their efforts. Each member of the committee is a volunteer and I am always impressed by the amount of time that each member sacrifices in order to help keep the harbour in a condition that can be enjoyed by both the community at large and the many visitors that visit during the summer season. I would also like to pass on a big thanks to Judy Just our Secretary/Treasurer, who hugely contributes to the efficient running of the Society.

Unfortunately, our Tern Point representative, Jonas Budelmann, resigned during the year but we are looking forward to new members to represent Tern Point being appointed at this year's AGM. We thank Jonas for his contribution during his time on the committee.

#### **10. Life Member:**

It was a sad day in February when we learnt of the passing of Jim Wintle. Jim was a legend in Mangawhai and was one of the key players in the famous "Big Dig" of the early 1990's. He was also one of the founding members of the Harbour Restoration Society and was granted Life Membership some years' ago when he stepped down from active duty with the Society. Jim leaves a legacy that few will ever match, and we pay tribute to the work that he undertook to keep the Mangawhai harbour in the condition it is in today. RIP Jim.

In conclusion, I thank the Mayor and elected members of the Kaipara District Council for their interest in the Society's activities and for the contributions they have made at the committee meetings when they have attended. Likewise, the elected member for our ward on the NRC has also kept involved with the Society and assisted in some of the issues that have arisen during the year between the NRC and the Society.

As this year concludes I believe the Society in good health, has achieved the objectives it set at the beginning of the year and will be able to capitalise on the work and information it has accumulated during this year through the projects it undertakes over the 2025/26 year.

**Peter Wethey - Chair, Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society Inc.**