

FOMI President's Report 2016 - 2017

It is my pleasure and honour to present the President's Report. Firstly, on your behalf, I would like to thank our Executive for their outstanding contributions during the year: Vice President Linda Kerkmeester, Treasurer Dick Fernyhough, Secretary Philippa Doig and Executive members Jason Christiansen, Dale Shirliffe, John McKoy and Pip Sargent, with Darlene Adams in non-attendance as Membership Secretary. John and Pip hold newly established positions in monitoring and information, and communications respectively. I would also like to thank Sue Chesterfield who resigned in March 2016 and Julie Harrison, Secretary until October. Each of these people has put in many hours and achieved great things. While Ngati Toa and DOC both have representation on the Executive neither attended during the past year.

I would like to make special mention of the newly structured financial report now called the Performance Report, which sets out in the Statement of Service Performance: what we have achieved during the year. This document is now a very interesting read rather than the dry numbers of previous years. Thanks to Dick on a magnificent effort in putting it together. For those who have taken a look you may be misled by the bottom line of the Statement of Financial Performance, which shows a deficit of \$24,612. The deficit arises from a timing issue related to the cost of the two fairy prion translocations which were incurred during the financial years 2013 to 2016, as against the OMV New Zealand Limited's (OMV) related grants which were recorded in the financial years 2013 to 2015. As at 31 December 2016, FOMI was in a strong financial position with net assets of almost \$47,000 and a commitment from OMV for further grants amounting to \$117,500 over 5 years to fund further translocation projects.

Rather than repeat what is set out in the Statement of Service Performance I will focus the rest of my report on another important strategic area. This is DOC's draft Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for which submissions have been called for by 4 April 2017.

Our local DOC liaison officer is well aware of FOMI's position on the role of volunteer organisations in the restoration of Mana Island. Last year we were asked by DOC to sign a management agreement which would have made FOMI legally responsible for undertaking conservation activities on the island. We declined to sign this document as we didn't believe DOC could sign away its statutory responsibilities and also we considered it not in keeping with the partnership arrangement that we currently have with DOC and local iwi Ngati Toa. We understand that FOMI is not alone in being asked to take an increased management role in the Wellington Conservancy. For example, local tramping clubs have been asked by DOC to take over responsibility for maintaining DOC huts in the region.

We are fully supportive of DOC's encouragement for volunteer organisations like FOMI to take "ownership" of conservation. However, we are very surprised and concerned that DOC's strategy to place increasing responsibility on us to manage the region's conservation assets does not appear in the CMS. In fact, the CMS only makes passing reference to volunteers and the major role we play. When questioned about this DOC say that the CMS is "high level". The current draft CMS focus is clearly on DOC's relationship with iwi and the volunteer groups are dismissed as not relevant at this level.

While we recognise that there is a need for DOC to set out its evolving relationship with iwi in the post-settlement phase, we believe there is also a need for DOC to be explicit about its changing strategy towards volunteer organisations including FOMI.

Rather than just make passing reference to volunteer organisations, the CMS should acknowledge the vitally important role we play in conservation in our region.

We expect to see in the CMS a clear strategic role mapped out for volunteer organisations in partnership with DOC and iwi. It seems inefficient to develop this in one on one negotiations. An alternative maybe for the volunteer groups to form an Association of volunteer organisations within the region. The aim would be to ensure we have a place in the CMS and an ongoing voice at the table with DOC and iwi.

On the ground, relationships between DOC and us could hardly be better.

I commend you to read the draft CMS and email your views to me prior to the AGM.

Brian Bell

President

Email: fomi@manaisland.org.nz with 'WnCMS' in the subject line