

Omokoroa Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc.
Annual General Meeting 26 June 2025
Chairman's Report

We have dealt with a number of issues in the last year. These include:

1. Council Representation Review
2. Installation of a Public Toilet in the Precious Family Reserve
3. The Kaimai Reserve Management Plan review
4. Local Water Done Well

1) Council Representation Review

Every six years Council undertakes a representation review and determines how residents of the district are to be represented in Council.

This year, the review determined:

- there would be one Māori ward with one councillor
- a reduced number of general ward councillors from 11 to 9 to accommodate the Māori ward. This resulted in the reduction in the number of Kaimai ward councillors from 4 to 3
- the disestablishment of the Omokoroa Community Board
- Omokoroa township is now part of a larger Kaimai Ward Community Board with three subdivisions (Omokoroa, Kaimai east and Kaimai west) with each subdivision having approximately the same population and two representatives each
- Omokoroa township will have 2 out of the 6 representatives on this community board.

ORRA submitted to the Annal Plan Committee and to Council against the establishment of a Māori ward and the consequent reduction in General Ward councillors.

At the 11th hour, without any consultation, Council decided to disestablish all of the community boards and to establish larger ward-based community boards.

ORRA appealed to the Local Government Commission about the proposals to establish a Māori ward, to reduce the number of general ward councillors and to disestablish the Omokoroa Community Board.

The appeal about the establishment of a Māori ward was rejected because the Māori ward is not covered by the Local Electoral Act.

The appeal against the reduction of the number of general ward councillors was unsuccessful because this reductions in councillors was necessary to maintain voting equity across the wards following the establishment of a Māori ward.

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The appeal against the disestablishment of the Omokoroa Community Board was unsuccessful because the existing community board did not object to its disestablishment.

All of the other community boards remain as their board members vigorously objected to their disestablishment.

This is yet another example of the Omokoroa Community Board not providing effective representation for this fast-growing community.

We now have to wait and see how:

- The Kaimai Ward Community Board will work and whether it will provide effective representation for this community, and
- How Council delivers on the recommendations of the Local Government Commission for Council to undertake community engagement and education on the role and purpose of community boards, and
- Whether council empowers community boards through increased delegations.

2) Precious Family Reserve Public Toilet

Council intended to install a public toilet at Precious Family reserve near the centre of the southern part of the reserve and right in the eyeline of six nearby houses. This position is contrary to that indicated in the draft management plan. There was no public involvement in this decision.

A non-notified consent was applied for and granted by Council for the toilet construction at this new location. The only affected parties considered by Council during the consent processing were council departments. This consent was used as justification for the installation despite strong local opposition.

The key issues at stake here were:

- The construction of the toilet in a location other than that shown in the draft management plan dated 2018,
- The reliance on out-of-date information when granting a non-notified consent,
- The location of the toilet near a memorial seat in the reserve and in a location that will result in it being the focal point of the southern part of the reserve,
- Ad-hoc decision making without a clearly articulated and publicly informed overall objective for the reserve.

A public survey of reserve users, which showed that there was not support for the toilet in the proposed position. ORRA submitted to the Council Projects and Monitoring

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Committee and was successful in getting any construction of the toilet delayed until the outcome of the Kaimai Reserve Management Plan review was available.

It was hoped that referring the decision on the location of the public toilet to the long-term planning for this reserve would allow public input into the decision and result in its location reflecting the long-term objective for the reserve.

3) Kaimai Reserve Management Plan Review

ORRA submitted on the management plans for the Precious Family Reserve and the Omokoroa Domain.

a) Precious Family Reserve

Planning for this reserve appears to be little more than ad hoc, relying on out-of-date information (2017), not involving present day public input and not having a clearly articulated objective for this reserve arrived at through public consultation.

ORRA submitted that:

- the ultimate use of this reserve should inform its development,
- The beach is not a viable alternative swimming/picnicking beach to the Omokoroa domain and esplanade,
- It is inappropriate that a public toilet be located in the proposed position where it will be focal point of the southern part of the reserve,
- Responses by the local community showed wide-spread opposition to proposed location of the public toilet,
- The reserve be closed to vehicles to prevent its use by itinerate campers.

b) Omokoroa Domain

A shortage of vehicle parking near the domain playground, boat club, wharf and main swimming beach are the most significant issues at the Domain.

ORRA suggested the construction of a one-way road from the existing car park to the reserve access road with parking along the northern side. If lighting were installed along this road, this area would be suitable for long-term parking for Matakana Island residents who currently park along the esplanade by the boat club and in the main carpark.

Parking in this area is an issue that needs to be resolved as it is only going to get worse as the population of Omokoroa grows.

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4) Local Water Done Well

Local water done well is a legislative requirement and is this government's replacement for 3-waters. It is essentially 3-waters without the Māori cultural overlay and allows councils to come together to form independent companies (Water Council Controlled Organisations [WCCO]) of a size that best suits them to provide water services.

Financial modelling provided by Council shows that the cost of water services will markedly increase over the next ten years and that there will be no financial benefit for consumers where a number of councils come together to form a WCCO.

The challenge for Council then, is to undertake the formation of a WCCO in such a manner that the least-worst outcome is achieved for Western Bay ratepayers, i.e. the option that poses the lowest financial risk to ratepayers.

At the moment Council appears to be pursuing a multi-council WCCO without undertaking the necessary due diligence to identify the best possible i.e. the least worst-case outcome for ratepayers.

The formation of a WCCO will be the biggest decision that councillors will ever make. Council will divest all water assets, water-related debt and control of these assets to the WCCO. Consumers will be price takers from a monopoly organisation with no recourse to council over price or levels of service.

In our opinion council should be considering a single council WCCO as it is likely to be the lowest risk option for ratepayers as the in-house costs will be well quantified and will not be taking on unquantified risks and costs from other councils.

ORRA made three submissions to council on the LWDW programme. This was the only opportunity for any submission to be made. Council will now make its decision without public involvement and scrutiny.

5) Local Body Elections and Planned Supporting Events

The Local Body elections will be held in October of this year.

In conjunction with these elections, a referendum will be held on whether we should or should not have a Māori ward in three years time. This will be your opportunity to reverse the undemocratic decision made by Council to establish a Māori ward this year.

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ORRA will be hosting a "Meet the Candidates Meeting" in August. All candidates for the Kaimai Ward councillor positions as well as mayoral candidates, Kaimai Ward Community Board Omokoroa subdivision candidates, Kaimai Ward councillor candidates and the Regional Council Western BOP general constituency candidates will be invited to this meeting. They will all present their case for election and will then answer questions from meeting attendees.

The number of Kaimai Ward councillors has been reduced from 4 to 3. This election will thus be an opportunity to vote off one councillor whose performance you are disappointed with.

On the 4th of September ORRA, in conjunction with the Katikati - Waihi Beach Residents and Ratepayers Association, is hosting a public meeting at which the Right Honourable Shane Jones will be speaking. His presentation, "Māori wards – do we need them", will discuss the history behind Māori wards, whether they are needed, or are counter to democracy in New Zealand. The Meeting will be held at the Katikati War Memorial Hall, commencing at 7pm.