

## The green keeper

Transparency, that's all Aaron McConchie is asking for. As Chair of Save Te Arai, Aaron is frustrated by the lack of trust that has developed between the community of Te Arai, Auckland Council and Te Arai North Limited (TANL), the developer behind the Tara Iti golf course and the associated housing project. "When you have Auckland Council prepared to repeatedly grant resource consents, without public notification, for work on public land, and without any specific management plan, there is no trust."

Save Te Arai formed in early 2016 in response to an application by TANL to move a public carpark at the end of Pacific Road (off Black Swamp Road) inland by approximately 450m. While that application has stalled for now, another non-notified resource consent was issued by Auckland Council which allowed the developer to start moving sand around as part of the proposed realignment of the accessway. Aaron says, "The council keeps backing them by granting these applications, against the wishes of the local community and without public notification."

Pacific Road is the only other access to Te Arai beach between Te Arai point and Mangawhai and is actually part of the Te Araroa Trail. "We just want to future-proof this access for the current community and for generations that follow," explains Aaron.

Save Te Arai clashed with TANL again last year over the raising of an existing ford across the Te Arai stream to create a dam, facilitating the removal of water for use at the Tara Iti golf course. Having built the dam in public land, without consent, the Council served a notice on the developers to either remove it or apply for retrospective resource consent.

While the retrospective resource consent is still being fought over, Save Te Arai was astounded to discover that the developer subsequently applied for, and was granted, resource consent for a 30m long concrete vehicular bridge, just 10m upstream from the dam. Says Aaron, "Three government departments, local or central, have been usurped by a private developer without any penalty at this stage. This is inside public reserve land and, yet again, there was no public notification of the application."

There is, however, some ray of light as Aaron explains. "There has never been any holistic overview of the area and its issues. This is why we have some hopes for the beginning of the Regional Park Management Plan which Council initiated just before Christmas."

The area including north Te Arai, Te Arai point and south Te Arai have a range of reserve areas, designations and uses that require rethinking, reorganising and formalising, and that is why the process to formulate an official management plan has begun. Save Te Arai will be submitting to the first stage of the consultation, which closes on 26 January 2018, and they encourage everyone who is interested in the area to get involved. There will be ongoing consultation over 2018 and beyond so there is ample opportunity to contribute.

I asked Aaron what his hopes were for the future. "The ideal situation is that the developers present a coherent plan that states specifically what they want to do, how they intend to do it, explains the impacts, and what is occurring on private and public land, and they ask what we think. We want a proper public submission process. Save Te Arai is concerned for what is going to happen in the block owned by the same developer to the south of Te Arai point. This is a stunning area but it needs to stay that way and not be overrun by development that is insensitive to the environment and the community. Development does not always equal progress."