



**Newsletter #4 ♦ December 2008**

**Notes from the Chair**

*Thank you to all those who were able to attend the SGM called to ratify the Society's rule change to conform to the Charities Commission's requirements. The Commission has issued us with a Certificate of Registration as a charitable entity. This means that donations to us will now be tax deductible: we are still trying to establish how far this can be back-dated.*

*The SGM also received news that, after a slight misunderstanding and some letter writing by committee member Joan Forret, we have been granted free postage by New Zealand Post under their Community Post scheme. Thank you to Joan for organising this, and to NZ Post for their generous and very practical sponsorship. This newsletter has been distributed using the scheme*

*– Stephen Hamilton, Chairperson*

**Winner of the Kowhai Award**

Our hard work for the local environment, in particular the restoration of Hammond Bush, has been rewarded by our receiving a Kowhai Award, a HCC sponsored awards scheme run by the Environment Centre. The \$100 prize will go to further our work.



**Subscription renewal**

A year has passed since our society was incorporated. We hope you will agree that our society has been of great service to the community and that it is worth renewing your membership. We ask for a donation of \$20 per household.

Our successes to date:

- We worked hard to ward off Blacktop Construction: a fantastic success if there ever was one!
- In order to prevent 'dirty industry' establishing in Riverlea Road, we are lobbying Hamilton City Council to change the way the road is zoned in the Proposed District Plan. Due to the complexities of the Plan, this is a slow process,

but HCC have acknowledged the need for change and we will continue to work towards making the change happen.

- We made a submission to the HCC on the Peacocke development (Variation 13). We argued that a proposed road along the river frontage was inappropriate and this has led to an alteration in the latest version of the design plans. (Other submitters also asked for this change.)
- In recognition of the special ecological significance of Hammond Bush, we have organised a series of working bees to clear the weed plants from this important bush remnant and replant with eco-sourced native plants.
- We have made a name for ourselves as a powerful lobby group in this area. Our president was recently approached by a property developer who owns land on Riverlea Road who said he would only progress with his plans if our society would agree with them! (Be assured that you will receive any concrete information on this.)

Please forward your \$20 tax-deductible donation to the address at the bottom of this page.

**Peacocke Update**

Under its Urban Growth Strategy, Hamilton City Council has indicated that while it is committed to Rototuna being the preferred residential growth cell, 900 sections will be made available in Rotokauri and a further 500 sections will be opened up in the Peacocke subdivision from 2009. HCC has also indicated that Stage Two of the Peacocke development will be given priority over Rotokauri from 2023.

The Society will continue to monitor this development, which will have an impact on the parts of Riverlea along the Waikato River, including Hammond Bush.

### ***Hammond Bush Rejuvenation***

RES members have so far cleared around 800m<sup>2</sup> of introduced vegetation, and soon HCC will spray to destroy the bamboo which is already regenerating. Once the bamboo is properly killed, which could take up to a year, the area can be planted out in natives.

A big thank you to Gerard Kelly from the Hamilton City Council who has overseen our work. His skill, guidance and enthusiasm is much appreciated.

We will continue our working bees on the last Saturday of the month from 1-3pm, and clear northwards with the aim of eventually having the whole area planted in eco-sourced natives. The next working bee is 20th February. RES is also arranging planting of more natives on the private properties adjoining Hammond Park with the help of a \$2000 Envirofund grant received from Hamilton City Council.

Our work in Hammond Park should help to increase habitat for tui and other birds. During winter and spring Riverlea residents saw and heard tui in Hammond Park, and in private properties several streets away. This is a very exciting change in the area. At least one Kereru (native wood pigeon) has been seen regularly in the park during spring.

It would be particularly thrilling if tui were in our area between December and February, which is their breeding season. If they were to breed in Hammond Park they would become 'residents' instead of visitors who come to feed at certain times of the year.

Tui sightings can be reported via an on-line form at the Hamilton Halo website (<http://www.ew.govt.nz/Projects/Hamilton-Halo/>). The Hamilton Halo project works to monitor and bring back tui to Hamilton. Their website also contains information about tui-friendly plants for your garden.



On 9<sup>th</sup> December a survey was started, to try to again locate the native bats which live around the Hammond Bush area. Unfortunately some of the trees which used to host the bats have fallen, as they were rotten. If you see any bats, please let RES know, and we'll pass on the information to the people involved.

### ***Our new computer***

The Society has taken possession of a recycled computer for maintaining our database and communicating with members. The computer was refurbished by Easy Technology from components recycled during the recent eDay organised by the City Council in partnership with Mainfreight and Easy Technology. It was one of several offered at minimal cost to local community groups.

### ***Graffiti***

Good use has been made of the City Council's free Graffiti Busters service in the last month or so. Graffiti on a white painted concrete block wall at the corner of Chesterman and Hudson was removed within 48 hours of the Council being notified. Because tagging is about territory, ignoring it attracts more as the taggers compete for attention. If you know of graffiti in public spaces that you would like removed, please ring the tagging hotline 0800 TAGBUSTERS or HCC directly on 838 6699.