



Chairs Report to Taranaki Equestrian Network Inc

Annual General Meeting 17 October 2023

New Plymouth

Tēnā koutou,

It is my pleasure to present this, my 13th report as Chair of TEN. I want to pay tribute to the 2023 TEN committee members - my co-chair for the past year, Sharon Robinson, Halina Sarten, Sarah McIntyre, Neil Florence, Dinky Wynyard, Vernessa Cook. Your ongoing volunteer efforts are greatly appreciated, especially Halina who has acted as Treasurer *and* Secretary since our very special member Karen Peters passed away early this year. I spoke at Karen's funeral on TEN's behalf honouring her generous spirit, wisdom and help on TEN.

TEN's birth-child, the Taranaki Equestrian Facilities Plan has just been born!

The stars aligned in early 2022 with the 3 Taranaki District Councils, the funding bodies (mainly TET, TOI and NZCT), Sport Taranaki and Sport NZ deciding they needed an overall strategy for equestrian sport and recreation. TEN put together a project working group including the key horse groups and facility operators to work with the consultant, Visitor Solutions, on their \$35,000.00 investigation. It kicked off in August 2022 and the report has just been released.

It provides a roadmap for regional facilities and trails. It recommends an Advisory Board be created to sit under TEN's umbrella and the Boards job will be to take the Plan forward. Sport Taranaki and NPDC will help us with that process. The Plan contains awesome information about our sport, our clubs, our economic value to Taranaki (\$53.8 million per annum) and will be very useful for decision-making for clubs, councils and funders in the years to come.

Without TEN's many years of liaison with NPDC and Sport Taranaki building a credible reputation with sound submissions, the Equestrian Facilities Plan would not have happened. We can be very proud of this achievement. Thank you to Sharon as Co-Chair for her attendance at the Project Working Group meetings and help with the various issues that arose along the way.

For the record, the Project Working Group was myself, Sharon R, Sharon Stevens, Maree Collins, Emily Perrin, Dale Mosely, Wendy Hamerton, Zac Bingham, Jen Blyde, Celine Filbee, Phil Waite. The consultant was Andy Adams from Visitor Solutions. Very involved behind the scenes were Renee Davies (NPDC Open Spaces Planner), Michael Carr (CEO Sport Taranaki), Zanta Jones (Sport NZ) and holding it all together throughout- Marina Healey from Sport Taranaki, Spaces and Places Planner.

Taranaki Tracks and Trails Trust

One excellent outcome of the Facilities Report is the recommendation that TEN be given a place on the Taranaki Tracks and Trails Trust. That introduction has already happened. The

first project off the rank were 18kms of trails around Waitara. With the prospect of horses becoming part of the plan, the shutters went down but then I found the Trekking Club and Waitara riders already use a lot of the trails. So, I will be advocating hard for horses to be allowed to continue on the trails they already use – obviously we are such a benign presence that the Taranaki Regional Council and others didn't appreciate horses regularly use the area! This is such a common scenario.

TEN's appeal to Environment Court against NPDC proposed District Plan

In 2019, on TENs behalf, I submitted for horse-riding to be included in the NPDC proposed District Plan. We achieved 3 out of 4 requests but no inclusion of horse-riding for consideration in the Open Spaces Plan. Pedestrians, cyclists, wheeled recreational devices and mobility devices can be considered, but not horses. This is on places like Public Access Corridors, Shared Paths and Esplanade Strips. The Waitara Loop mentioned before includes all of those things.

We'll need to fund a planner to give us assurance, and ultimately evidence, in the Environment Court, prior to attending mediation – date for that yet to be advised. This appeal will improve things for all NZ riders.

TEN features in Horse & Pony - January 2023 edition- "Reclaiming the Great Outdoors"

The article highlighted the equestrian advocacy groups that have sprung up around the motu and the riding places we are all losing. I talked about how groups find out about all the threats to existing riding places that are proposed by councils.

Please make sure you all follow NZ Equestrian Advocacy Network because they are joining all of us together as a strong and united voice.

TEN Autumn 2023 newsletter

We achieved our second TEN newsletter. Woohoo! Once again, the colourful pages looked fantastic. Next year we should approach different groups like Western and Trekking to ensure wide coverage. Plus, we need to make it pay for itself with advertising. It cost us around \$1,000 – that's only 10 x \$100 ads. Let's try to make that happen in the next Newsletter.

Our longtime supporters (the Tack Shack, Saddlery Warehouse, Highfields Equestrian, and Energy Vets) received free advertising – they always give us free stuff for our Quiz Nite. Please take note of these businesses and support them where you can.

Lake M Bridle Zone – our jewel in the crown

A particular thank you to TEN member, Neil Florence, for organising Bridle Zone maintenance. The forest is undoubtedly a rare treasure, as riders from outside Taranaki tell us. We haven't done a working bee this past year – individual users seem to be clearing tracks on their own, which is excellent. Chris and Roger Dobson and Julie Fleming and Gavin must be particularly noted.

BZ workons:

- a digital solution (ie mobile phone app) to avoid riders getting lost,
- build some shortcuts so we enhance winter riding tracks,
- install some culverts on the tracks worst affected by mud,
- the log-jumping lanes and increasing tobacco weed need attention.

NPDC is non-responsive arranging a meeting with the mountain biking club to organize sharing the trail from Hydro Road right through to Lake Access Road, in return for us getting Hornsby Hill back. We've got to make that happen so we can prove trail-sharing with bikers can work and gives us an opportunity to train them.

Our Feb 2023 meeting identified there is a lot of misinformation about how the BZ is funded and maintained ie people think NPDC does it. This needs to be corrected.

We have 'stuck' donations sign project which needs completion to increase our income. Jasmine Harrison of Primowireless has offered to fund a sign. NPDC have said we can't stop other groups hosting fundraising events at the BZ because it's a public facility.

Neil organized a traffic monitor in Feb/ March 2023 which established an average of 101 rider per week through the BZ.

Quiz Nite 22 August 2022

Our annual Quiz Nite at The Good Home raised \$4,010.00 This was \$835.00 down on last year. Probably a sign of the times. 65 people attended again. We need to think about whether we do it again? If not, how else do we raise \$4000 to \$5000 per year?

Horse-riding at Pukeiti

This project started in 2019 under former Taranaki Regional Councils' Gardens Manager, Greg Rine, who was enthusiastic about a bridle trail.

After some initial work, we discovered there are some track access obstacles and café patronage expectations are 200 per month. The project currently lacks any TEN member keen or able to progress the idea.

Taranaki Animal Emergency Management Scheme / Animal Welfare

The Taranaki AWSG has collective oversight of welfare services for all animals during emergencies. It provides collaboration and coordination between agencies that work together in response to emergencies to deliver animal welfare services.

Halina has attended two meetings (18 October 2022 & 30 August 2023). Key takeaways are the Lifestyle block emergency planning book, Management of animals at evacuation centre, Proactive evacuation planning, and the Taranaki AWSG Contact & Capabilities list.

Taranaki horse riders will be very pleased TEN represented them when there's a tsunami, earthquake, or eruption. Without us, there wouldn't be such good information about what horses need.

Membership Drive

We need a proven database of members and a more professional mailout format. So TEN has, together, developed a draft, free, membership-gathering form. This project has also become a bit stuck, so I hope we can finish it in the next few months.

District Speed Review

This relates to Waka Kotahi's 'Road to Zero' strategy.

In 2019, TEN created a list of 'horsey' roads (local rural roads) after consulting with equestrians in the district. We said horsey roads should have speed reduced to 80 kph. Halina attended the 11 October 2023 Taranaki Speed Management Workshop hosted by the Taranaki Regional Council.

Waka Kotahi presented an overview of the Speed Management Framework covering what they are doing and why it is important. We were then given an outline of the draft speed management plan for New Plymouth, South Taranaki, and Stratford district local roads.

Thank you for your time on this project too, Halina.

Update on Hickford Park

We have long wanted a bridle trail here. In 2019 it seemed about to happen, but NPDC pulled back probably because there are land confiscation issues to be addressed with Puketapu hapū on the Mangati E block. TEN supports the need for resolution.

I have spoken with Dinnie Moeahu (his brother is the CEO of Puketapū) about the use of māori land for horse-riding and we have agreed it must be for mutual benefit. This kaupapa should be followed by all horse-groups when looking to ride over māori land.

The NPDC lease to Peter Cowley is up for renewal in 2024. This needs notice to NPDC we expect a correct process to be followed.

Next TEN Summer Party

Neil and I would like to host another summer ride across Smart Road properties with a BBQ to follow this summer.

The wrap-up

Thank you to my Co-Chair, Sharon, who has been a great support on the Project Working Group but is now standing down.

Our financial position is good- we have \$9,935.87 in the bank and no liabilities. This financial viability helps us to buy in operational, I-T, and design assistance where needed.

I feel what TEN needs to do is grow awareness of everything we do with councils and funders and equestrians in general.

Also, a big thank you to John Billing, our financial reviewer, who has agreed to continue in 2023. And to all the volunteers out there who run horse events, horse groups, treks, and riding facilities. They are not small things, and you all deserve a pat on the back.

Looking ahead:

TEN needs to establish the Advisory Group under its umbrella with the help of Sport Taranaki and NPDC- no mean feat. This group will take the Facilities Plan forward which involves strategizing for the future of key facilities such as Waitara Pony Club, Stratford Park, and Egmont A&P.

We need more committee members please:

- a secretary
- a Track and Trails rep
- a digital marketer
- someone to push the Hickford Park issue
- a fundraiser for the Appeal and in general (I have lots of easy ideas 😊)

I still love leading our wonderful TEN team, leading you to take on a project of interest where you can, and fronting TEN's causes where needed.

Tēnā koutou katoa

I am open for questions. **Megan Gundesen** Co-chair Taranaki Equestrian Network

