

Pohangina Valley Community Committee (PVCC) submission to Council 18 April 2017

Re Future Development Plan in support of the Pohangina Recreation Reserve

History

The Pohangina, township and surrounds is set in a unique valley landscape with quite remarkable natural features. Set in the middle of this landscape is our Pohangina Recreation Reserve, the subject of this submission. You will note appended with this submission is the map and the documented rich history of the Recreation Reserve going right back to 1896. In order to avoid confusion, the land as shown in the map will be referred to in this submission as the Recreation Reserve although it is sometimes also known as the Domain.

In more recent times the Pohangina Recreational Reserve had continued to deteriorate up until 2014, where, after many complaints the reserve land (approx. 9 ha) was ploughed, re-sown, tile drainage restored and water supply reinstated. As a consequence the Reserve as whole now provides good grazing land.

Since then the MDC engaged in a Pohangina Valley Community Action Plan (2014) which amongst other things noted the need to develop specific action planning in support of an Arboretum proposal, public walkways, community planting and improvements to the Recreation Reserve generally. Importantly the community before and after this process have continued to investigate all the options. The most recent being a community survey in 2016 which solicited 74 respondents with a very consistent voice seeking far greater support for improved recreational use and utility within the Recreation Reserve itself, than simply pastoral grazing.

Present

This Recreation Reserve is set in amazing landscape at the end of a mature English tree lined avenue all of which is a wonderful natural asset not only to the immediate village but the region as a whole. However it currently lacks its own sense of place, you would not know it was a reserve if it wasn't for the sign and a dilapidated pavilion shed. There is no obvious car park and the public would be reluctant to walk through an operational farm. The old cricket ground is not maintained (mowed) and is grazed just like the pastoral land. The last tree planting of any note dates back to the last millennium.

Future

The survey respondents have clearly voiced preferences for more tree planting to sustain the current landscape, walking tracks, toilets, upgraded pavilion and picnic area and a resorted domain field which can support a multitude of uses including cricket. Please refer survey results appended. Importantly none of these ideas compete with any of the existing uses in the village itself. In fact it is likely to drive more complimentary utility from the likes of the Pohangina County Fayre, post activities and walks.

The PVCC invited survey respondents and convened a meeting at County Fayre 7pm Wed 12 April 2017 with 18 respondents in attendance and MDC representative Carl Johnstone Parks and Property Team Leader. The meeting felt the case for change was very apparent and the meeting agreed the priorities as set out in the survey findings and the need for a community consulted blueprint with a range of options to take the Recreation Reserve forward.

Next Steps

Annual Plan 2017/18

Funding is requested in support of the following:

1. A council sponsored landscape and recreational plan for the Recreation Reserve in support of the community vision to enjoy this Reserve as both a parkland farmland landscape and a place for recreation set amongst specimen trees.
2. With immediate effect the council works with the current lessee to return the Reserve to recreational use through MDC rolling and mowing being that area known locally as the cricket ground (approx. 1ha+)
3. The opportunity to look at public toilets this year is seen as a priority and the Recreation Reserve location with 24/7 access has broad level support, not unlike what has been achieved at Raumai Reserve. This is to support recreation not freedom camping.
4. Input into the 10 year plan revisions (year 3) to incorporate the Pohangina Recreation Reserve blueprint
 - a. Arboretum planting programme along the northern slope face
 - b. All weather walking tracks over the entire reserve
 - c. Options for double fencing to protect pastoral land use and limit the labour to maintain the parkland
 - d. Toilet facilities are not dependent on the blueprint but do represent significant cap-exp so may need be noted here too
 - e. Upgraded pavilion and picnic area
 - f. Options for a low cost all weather cricket surface
 - g. Signage and designated parking area

We request to speak to this submission

Yours sincerely

Liz Besley

Pohangina Valley Community Committee Chairperson