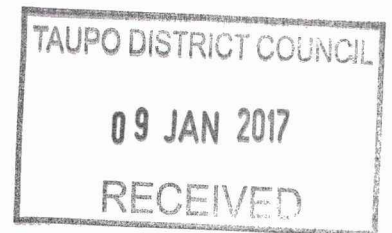


Taupo District Council
Private Bag 2005
Taupo 3330

15 Riverpark Drive
Kuratau

Postal address:
6 First Avenue
Stanley Point
Auckland 0624



5 January 2017

To: **The Property Officer**

Subject: **Objection to Road Stopping and Divestment of Walkway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street, Lot 26 DP 52469**

Dear Sir,

I object to the stopping of the road at Lot 26 DP 52469 and its divestment as proposed in council document A1787213. I am writing this in both the capacity of an occupant of Waipapa Street (through use of the property at 24 Waipapa Street) and also as a ratepayer and owner of 15 Riverpark Drive, Kuratau.

I had used the walkway regularly from 1987 to 2013 when the slip occurred, a period of 26 years. The absence of pedestrian access to the lake reserve from Waipapa street significantly reduces the amenity in this part of Kuratau.

I provide further details and commentary regarding my position under the following headers:

- 1, Cause of walkway closure
- 2, Impact of current walkway closure
- 3, Walkway reinstatement

1. Cause of walkway closure

It is understood the walkway was closed as a result of a slip in 2013. It could be reasonably inferred that the council action to remove the existing Blackwood trees in 2010/2011 directly led to the slope instability and subsequent collapse of the walkway.

2. Impact of current walkway closure

Council document A1787213 indicates an alternative lake access is available 195m to the west via the council reserve however this statement is grossly misleading as it is not possible to access the walkway from Waipapa street without walking down Waipapa Street and up Pihanga road. The actual walking distance to the lake from the closed track via the reserve to the west is 800m. Likewise the council document states the Kuratau boat ramp is 260m to the east whereas the measured pedestrian distance from the closed track is 570m.

In practice I, and other people with children, now routinely drive to the lake. This is a backwards step from an environmental and transport perspective. Increased traffic has also increased demand for parking at the Kuratau boat ramp and increased beach congestion in the vicinity of the boat ramp. Walking with children through the boat ramp area is far from safe and I would hate to think what would happen if a reversing trailer hit a child.

The council document A1787213 also infers that people do not use the embankment or closed track to access the lake. It is common knowledge that residents on the southern side of Waipapa Street do access the lake via the council reserve embankment via a network of unofficial tracks despite the

official walkway being closed. It would seem apparent the council is contributing to an unsafe environment by encouraging DIY track development through failure to provide a safe alternative.

It is also of note that Kuratau relies on a network of walkways that provide amenity together as a system. The loss of a walkway negatively impacts the overall utility of the system.

3. Walkway reinstatement

Divestment of the land is counter to the South Western Bay Settlements Reserve Management Plan (ref pg 30, para 3 Access and Circulation) which was adopted in June 2015 and states the ability to reinstate the walkway would be preserved.

Given it appears Council action to remove trees resulted in damage to and closure of the walkway it would be deeply concerning if the council is now take a course of action other than reinstatement of the walkway. I also believe there may be grounds to pursue the council and its representatives for negligence in this regard. I will consider pursuing this matter further should the walkway not be reinstated.

Council document A1787213 states it was determined in 2013, when the slip occurred, that it was "not practicable" to repair the stairway and track. Please provide further details of these investigations. It would seem reasonable to reconsider options to reopen the walkway now that three years have elapsed and vegetation to stabilise the slope has had time to take effect.

Summary

I object to the stopping of the road and it's divestment. I also request reinstatement of the walkway and look forward to your response in this regard.

Yours faithfully,



Mark Thomson