

UPDATE FROM PROJECT DIRECTOR CAMPBELL LECKIE

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It's been a busy time for the Predator Free Rakiura team for the past few months. I know many of you in the Rakiura community will be keen to hear what's been happening.

I've met a few of you already, and some of you will have heard about me and the team through the bush telegraph. I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know the Rakiura community even more in future. For those of you who I have connected with, or who have heard me talk about Predator Free Rakiura, you'll have heard me say that our project is all about people.

I'm keen to catch up with as many people as possible, so please don't hesitate to stop for a chat next time you see me, or reach out to any member of our team! If you have a group you would like me to talk with about Predator Free Rakiura, I'm happy to do so, and I'm out on the Island fairly regularly.

Hei konā mai,

Campbell.



INTRODUCING THE TEAM!

In the past 12 months, Predator Free Rakiura has been growing, with the establishment of Te Puka Rakiura Trust, and the Predator Free Rakiura Engagement Advisory Group (PFREAG). PFREAG includes people from the Rakiura Community and interested groups and helps to create the connection between the project team, the community, and the Trust.



Earlier this year, we began building our project team. Island residents Bridget and Kevin Carter have been appointed to the roles of Assistant Project Director and Operations & Research Manager respectively, while Executive Assistant Kathleen Peterson and Communications & Engagement Manager Hannah McLeod are both based in Invercargill.

FUNDING

Predator Free Rakiura is absolutely delighted to have secured funding of \$1 million per year for the next four years from the Department of Conservation. You've probably also heard about the partnership we've formed with Maanaki Whenua - Landcare Research. This partnership means a combined \$2.8million will be available over the next four years for Predator Free Rakiura to investigate, research, and start trials on the Island.

There's a lot of information we just don't know about the predators here (like how many feral cats there are and where we can find them), or what the most effective tools in our kete might be for eradication. Our funding partners will help us establish some of this key information and allow us to start a range of pilot trials and research activities. You will hear more about these and how you can get involved as our team will learn by doing!

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR ... AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

It's vital that Predator Free Rakiura is connected to and working with groups which are already doing some fantastic work on the Island. We've been catching up with some of those groups in the past couple of months, including Rakiura Māori Lands Trust, Mamaku Point Conservation Trust, Rakiura Titi Island Administering Body, Rakiura Titi Committee, and SIRCET. We have been talking about how we can work effectively together to get a better result for each of us and the Island as a whole. There are lots of people already doing great work.

We know we have lots more to do to create connections with the Rakiura community, and to understand what Predator Free Rakiura means to you. You're welcome to reach out, and we can assure you we'll be in touch soon with more updates.

Similarly, we've been building relationships with some organisations beyond Rakiura. These naturally include government organisations like DOC, but our team has also been connecting with other Predator Free projects throughout the motu. We know there is plenty we can learn from those who have already been working towards becoming predator free in other places.

A FINAL NOTE...

While you might not have heard a lot from us in the past few years, and many of you will have lots of questions, our team is keen to hear from you!

You can get in touch via the website, email us at info@predatorfreerakiura.org.nz, or as mentioned earlier, stop for a chat any time. As things get moving, we'll be introducing regular email updates, and we're planning a few different opportunities to meet us in person over the next few months.

You can find out more about our Trustees, PFREAG members, and project team members at www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz.

Restoring our natural haven
Rakiura, mauri ora