Chair Report 31 March 2024

This year has seen the WDSR move to the next stage of the project. Accreditation was announced in January 2023, after many years working through the application process. We had a couple of months to enjoy the fruits of our hard work and reflect on the future purpose of the organisation.

It became obvious that the structure of WDSR needed to change to recognize the new purpose and role of the organisation and ensure it was the most appropriate for the long term operation of the Wairarapa Dark Sky Reserve. A Community Council has been established and will meet at least once a year to give feedback and answer questions our partners may have about progress or compliance. A general information sharing opportunity. WDSR concluded our key partners and stakeholders needed to be informed about the progress of projects that ensure the Reserve Status is maintained.

WDSR role and purpose is to ensure that all the Dark Sky International (previously International Dark Sky Association) reporting criteria are met by 31 December each year. A report needs to be furnished in line with the requirements to DS by 31 January. The report covers:

Sky Quality – Night Sky Quality and lighting compliance

Lighting – Outreach, Education, Media

Partnerships, Stakeholder engagement.

A planning workshop was held, and an annual plan devised to ensure all criteria are met.

Over the year we have met with various stakeholders and I think everyone understands WWDSR role and is happy for the society to be the kaitiaki/guardian of the project.

WDSR is basically a volunteer organisation, we do engage a part time administrator to ensure the plan is implemented and achieved. I want to thank Charlotte for her dedication to this role. We very much appreciate the work you do in the small amount of time you are allocated.

I want to thank all the present committee members who are always happy to meet, take light readings, speak to community groups and promote the Reserve to anyone keen to listen. In line with the rule change and ensuring there can be no perception of conflicts of interest, the current members of the committee who are operators are no longer able to be committee members. Richard, Chris and Hari, thank you for your support, work and time on the WDSR Committee. I’d like to single out Ray, Secretary, Wyatt, Treasurer and Maarten for the extra work you have done over the past year.

Thant leaves two people, Tom and David. Tom is stepping back from the committee, I’m happy to say that he is still available as our advisor. He has put hours of work into the application and the report. We are very lucky to have someone so skilled to have been part of the committee.

David, who unfortunately can’t be here today, was one of the instigators (along with Ray) of this whole project. He has devoted countless hours to obtaining sponsors for Tess meters and benefactor the organisation. He has been a fervent promotor and advocate for Wairarapa’s Dark Skies. Thank You David for your vision and determination that we would become a Reserve.

Finally I want to sincerely thank our partners, SWDC and Carterton District Councils who have once again supported the project financially and physically (changing their lighting to meet the new criteria and distributing information to new building and resource consent applicants to ensure they understand the lighting standards. MDC for jumping on their Dark Sky journey, we look forward to helping you achieve your goal.

DOC, the core is the Aorangi Forest Park, and we now have 100% of the lights compliant. We are working with you to give visitors more information about the reserve.

Thank to everyone here for your support and encouragement we very much appreciate your positive vibes.

Viv Napier

Chair

WDSR

29 April 2024