

How can we stop Auckland being smothered by more invasive weeds?

- Here is a suburban garden in Glenfield covered in a species of knotweed - well away from a biodiversity focus area
- It has spread down a waterway to Wairau Valley and is hard to control
- This Knotweed was an LIPP but it has now got out of hand. Council is reviewing its policy on how to handle it.
- Question: if the RPMP focuses only on high value BFAs, how can communities protect the native biodiversity in their gardens and local reserves?

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- **You probably haven't seen this invasive pest plant - yet!**

Draft for Deliberative Democracy panel

Auckland Invasive Weeds Group | 25 July 2026

Overview

1. Who we are. What do we do?
2. Why we support the RPMP aims
3. Why we want it to achieve more
4. How to cope with the weeds tsunami despite a low budget
5. What is fair & reasonable
6. Breakout sessions & recommendations
7. Widespread weeds need coordinated solutions.
8. What we encourage you to recommend



Louis Foot
UWEN.org.nz

Carla Gee
EcoMatters.org.nz

John Williams
CommunityWaitakere

Phil Simpson
UrbanArk.org.nz

Sharleen McClay
PestFreeSouthAuckland
4 local board areas

Te Ara Hiikoi -
Conservation in Franklin
tearahikoi.nz

All weeds: 40468 instances



Controlled growth: 8898 instances (22%) with yellow or green status

Tim Armitage
RestoreRodneyEast.org.nz
29 sub groups

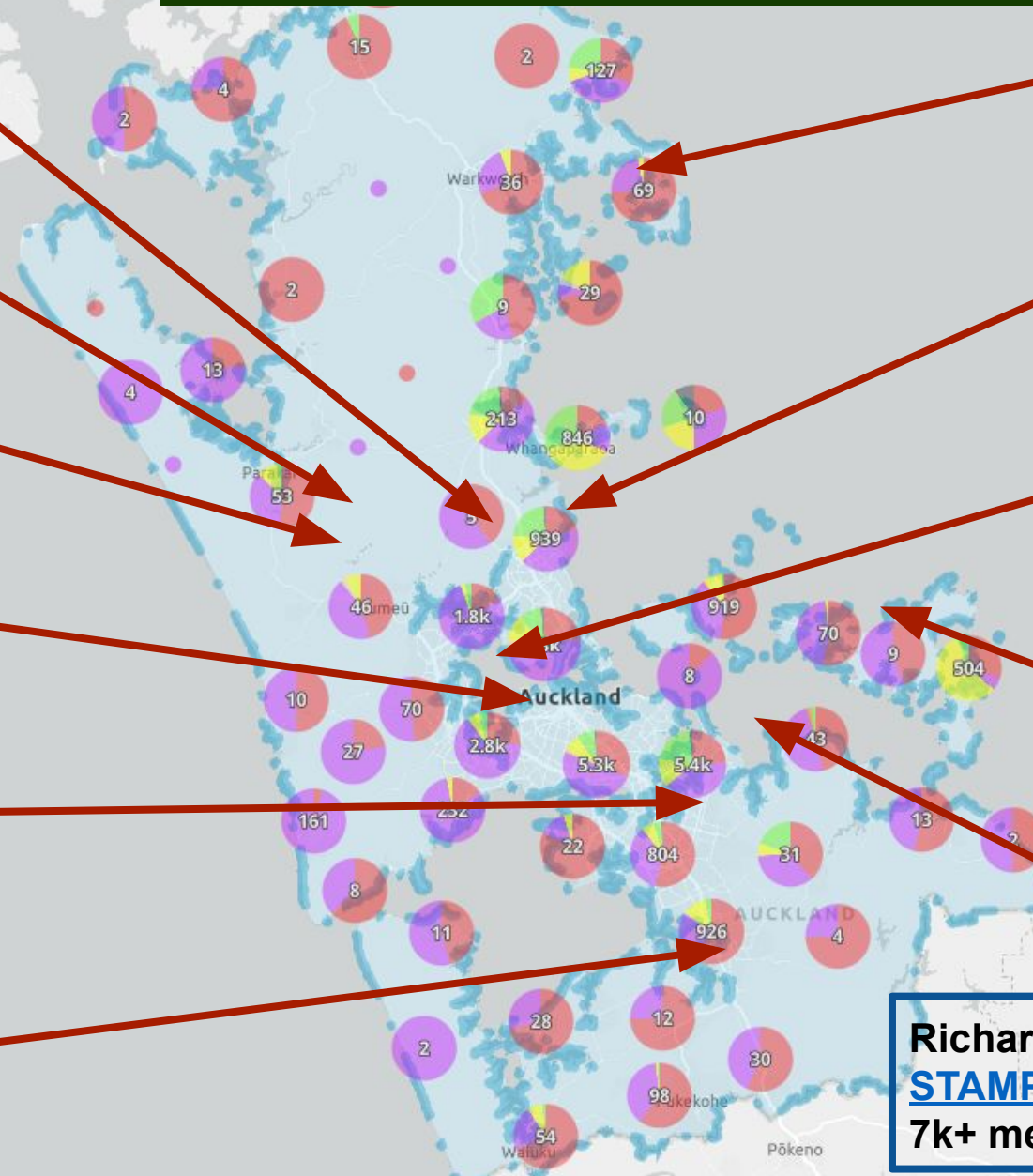
Restore Hibiscus Bays
RestoreHB.org.nz

Keith Salmon
PestFreeKaipatiki.org.nz
40 sub groups

Rose Roice - Waiheke
S.W.A.M.P.

PestFreeHowick
pestfreehowickward.org.nz

Richard Henty
STAMP - region wide
7k+ members on FB



What do our groups and volunteers do?

- Community weeding & planting bees (planting reduces ongoing weed growth)
- Pest plant competitions: engage and educate young people and their families
- Bush restoration groups: work round bush reserves and neighbouring land - especially SEAs where owners are required to protect bush
- STAMPers: visit sites listed on Facebook or the Weeds Map
- Hit squads: door knocking in properties backing on to bush
 - Most people welcome our visits
 - If no one home, we leave a flyer - such as this handout
- Some groups (eg EcoMatters) coordinate council contracts
 - Notes: We don't weed for its own sake - we aim to help make our region a better place by protecting our native biodiversity
 - Volunteers are more likely to bring owners and occupiers on-side



Why we support Council's RPMP aims

Auckland has many areas of beautiful native bush and foreshore that are valued for their

- Native biodiversity that needs to be preserved for future generations
- Their amenity value for bush walks and views

Auckland Council's RPMP (Regional Pest Management Plan) is an important tool to

- minimise the risk of new weed species entering our region
- protect our biodiversity focus areas on gulf islands, the Hunua and Waitakere ranges and other high value reserves
- equipment for community and volunteer groups



If your neighbour's garden looked like this and was invading your local reserve or your place, what would you think was reasonable?

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Why we would like the RPMP to achieve more?

If Council and government doesn't have the resources to control all invasive pest plant species, there is a serious risk that our local reserves, private bushland, gardens, productive areas will be subject to an **exponential increase in weeds**.

Council can't control pest plants on its own; it needs a new paradigm of community engagement

The solution is to enable local areas to improve low cost support so that

- property owners and volunteers can be more effective through education and engagement
- community competitions can foster reporting and control

The big barriers to community led control are:

- absentee & negligent land owners (esp land bankers)
- lack of coordinated reporting and updating
- transport corridors out of bounds to volunteers
- reinfestation at scale from “weed factories”



How to cope with the weeds tsunami despite a low budget

Carrots for caring citizens and good neighbours:

- An integrated reporting system for the public
- Low cost friendly reminders to property owners
- Access to assistance for people in need
(eg age, disability) funded by large fines or collaborative working bees for big infestations

Collaboration with bush groups:

- Info shared between contractors and volunteers
(to reduce overlaps, gaps and health risks)

Sticks for absentee / negligent landowners:

- The threat of more effective compliance penalties that scale with size of the problem
(eg higher penalties for a hectare of broken glass houses with no weed control so it is not cheaper for the landbank to let weeds spread)

What is fair and reasonable?

- You were asked in the last workshop whether it's fair to fine a pensioner with woolly nightshade? or dandelions?
 - But: Is it fair for a community to suffer the nuisance and/or environmental impacts of large “weed factories” that regrow year after year?
- If we do nothing, is it fair to future generations to carry the burden of kicking the can down the road?



If your neighbour's garden looked like this and was invading your local reserve or your place, what would you think was reasonable?

Breakout sessions and recommendations

1. **Integrated pest plant strategy - BIG PICTURE PLANNING** (Keith)
 - a. Reduce waste & provide focus with integrated strategy across all agencies, groups and communities
 - b. An integrated strategy across Council, NZTA, KiwiRail and other stakeholders
 - c. Consistent communications and reporting that allows all stakeholders to collaborate
 - d. Integrated & rationalised collaboration between contractors and community groups
2. **Community motivation: how to get communities informed and engaged - LOCAL LENS & REWARDS** (Sharleen)
 - a. Coordinated engagement and education planned with volunteer and community groups
 - b. Pest plant competitions and school programmes
 - c. **Support and reward the good work - funding for projects and acknowledging participants**
3. **Lower-cost wide-spread pest plant management eg “Community Initiatives” - AFFORDABLE WIDER SCOPE** (Carla)
 - a. A good-neighbour RPMP rule or nuisance bylaw for widespread weeds
 - b. Enable local boards to manage the species that matter most - using community volunteers and events
 - c. A wider range of weeds with a greater boundary distance for some species
 - d. Introduce progressive rules to give owners more time to manage problems
1. **Improved compliance - COMPLIANCE FOR MAJOR OFFENDERS** (Phil)
 - b. Support practical enforcement of RPMP duties especially for landbankers & other absentee landlords
 - c. **Significant fines for ongoing non-compliance. An expectation that sites will be routinely inspected.**
 - d. Improved controls and compliance across other aspects of Council operations eg currently a developer can avoid weed control that's part of the consent until they start work; garden waste dumping.

**Any
questions
before the
breakout
sessions?**



Debrief: What we encourage you to recommend

- 1. An integrated pest plant strategy - BIG PICTURE PLANNING**
 - a. Reduce waste & provide focus with integrated strategy across all agencies, groups and communities
 - b. An integrated strategy across Council, NZTA, KiwiRail and other stakeholders
 - c. Consistent communications and reporting that allows all stakeholders to collaborate
 - d. Integrated & rationalised collaboration between contractors and community groups
- 2. A focus on community education and engagement - LOCAL LENS & BETTER REWARDS**
 - a. Coordinated engagement and education planned with volunteer and community groups
 - b. Pest plant competitions & school programmes
 - c. Support and reward the good work - funding for projects and acknowledging participants
- 3. Lower-cost wide-spread pest plant management eg “Community Initiatives” - AFFORDABLE WIDER SCOPE**
 - a. A good-neighbour RPMP rule or nuisance bylaw for widespread weeds
 - b. Enable local boards to manage the species that matter most - using community volunteers and events
 - c. A wider range of weeds with a greater boundary distance for some species
 - d. Introduce progressive rules to give owners more time to manage problems
- 4. Improved compliance especially for “weed factories” - COMPLIANCE FOR MAJOR OFFENDERS**
 - e. Support practical enforcement of RPMP rules especially for absentee and grossly negligent owners
 - f. Significant fines for ongoing non-compliance. An expectation that sites will be routinely inspected.
 - g. Improved controls and compliance across other aspects of Council operations eg currently a developer can avoid weed control that's part of the consent until they start work