

I'm here to talk a little bit about **the** Section 42A report on open space - paragraphs 144, 145, and 146 as they relate to Matai-Moana on Te Motu Kairangi, otherwise known as the Watts Peninsula. So weirdly, I'm in agreement with the conclusions in the report, which might make you wonder why I'm here today.

I thought a little background might help, so I'd like to tell you a little story. Don't worry, it's short.

As you can tell, I'm not exactly a born and bred kiwi, although, I'm super happy to say that I've gone fully native, I have citizenship, a passport, gumboots, stubbies the whole lot.

I arrived here twenty some odd years ago for a six month stint, and then accidentally got stuck. You see, I had this horrible unexpected thing happen: I fell in love with this land and it's peoples.

You see, there were rich these rugged coastlines and sparkling temperate rain forests, and people who were warm, welcoming, and friendly to the point of suspicion for this city kid. And somehow in the middle of this was the space called Matai Moana or Mount Crawford which I discovered while working with a local kid named Pete, who was doing a big art project there at the time.

Because I was now stuck, I watched, sometimes in amazement at the changes in mood that swept the land – from insane but strangely wonderful full-scale southerlies complete with sideways rain to stunning clear and warm summer days which would cause you to fall asleep in just under 20 sec.

And then there were the birds. This one was a surprise. In retrospect, it shouldn't have been a surprise given the work to eradicate possums, which happened in 2006, then to the great and amazing all-volunteer work of Predator Free Miramar which now sees the entirety of Te Motu Kairangi free of stoats and rats.

Because of their efforts, birds started returning. First that I noticed I think were the pīwakawaka, which flit around you like little wood spirits. Then the tūi, who delighted in zooming like missiles from tree to tree. Other species followed. The kererū are in many ways the most fun, as it seems like they are the worst aviators in the world, and frequently seem to crash into trees rather than land in them.

But the best return story in my mind, was the kārearea. This little falcon, which is rarer than a kiwi bird showed up right at the moment that government contractors were clear-cutting trees on the peninsula. Now I get the argument about exotic tree species, but in the absence of a native canopy, these mature trees were and are doing the job of the canopy superbly. And apparently the kārearea though the same thing. They planted themselves right in the way of the clearcutting, stopping it dead in its tracks. They've been there since 2018, and that wonderful little patch of forest is their whenua now, a place they let us visit on occasion. They feel a bit like family, even if they get a touch grouchy when they're in parenting mode. But then, that's pretty much every parent, eh?

Matai Moana is also home to kākā, Morepork or ruru, Native skinks, Velvet worms, and of course, the infamous Weta. It has one of Wellington's healthiest streams complete with kōura, longfin and short fin eels as well as giant bush dragonflies.

Then, others returned as well. A community garden was established, which has brought more members of the public out into the natural space of Watts Peninsula. In a rare example of community action, one member became many, and now there are over a hundred regular users of the community gardens. This is an amazing achievement, all of which happened with no coordination from central or local government.

It is also a recreation place for walkers, bikers, and nature lovers, as well as a place of learning and exploration for local students, even if it isn't technically a park yet, it's treated as one.

**Lance Lones: Submission on
Te Motu Kairangi / Matai Moana / Mt Crawford open space**

We have in the Watts Peninsula one of the most unique opportunities in the modern history of Aotearoa. We have the nascent beginnings of a Zealandia without fences, an ecosystem with deep history and potential for recovery.

SO you might still be wondering why I'm here today? Why tell this little story? Well, when last I appeared before this panel, there was a bit of concern that the open space, significant natural area, hilltop, and other environmental protection was going to go away, that there were forces at work who wanted to turn the space into a concrete jungle with some 700 houses.

And yet, magically, with consideration and foresight, the report delivered noted that there might be interests beyond a commercial developer, that a plan change without wider debate isn't in the best interests of the wider world, particularly relevant as the forces attempting the change do not own the land they were submitting on, and the current land owner was not asking for the change.

In the meantime, I've also discovered that I'm not alone in this foolish quest. I discovered, that there are others, within the community and further afield who are keenly interested, folks such as Friends of Miramar Peninsula, an ad-hoc community group formed to support preservation of Matai-Moana as a Zealandia without fences, some of whom have joined me here today in support of preservation, conservation, historical and ecological restoration.

I mention Friends of Miramar Peninsula in particular, as I was one of a number of folks invited to a series of 3 hui last winter which included iwi, community groups, cultural, environmental and heritage organizations, and punters such as myself, from all walks of life, all brought together to think about what a future for this space might look like.

Aside from the unique ecological placement, the space has an incredible wealth of maori sites – from pa sites to urupā and gardens, not to mention the more recent unique military and farming history. All this could be lost if the open space were to be removed.

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And amazingly, even though there were many visions on what could happen, every single one of them wanted to retain the zoning of Matai Moana as open space.

So really, I just wanted to reiterate my concerns, to support the conclusions in the section 42A report, and to support keeping the space zoned as open space, a conclusion that is fitting given the vast majority of the land has been slated to become a National Heritage Park.

I'd like to think that we can proceed cautiously, with collaboration and consideration of all voices over what is really important in the long run, both for us, and for the ecosystems that we are borrowing from our children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.