

## Pukerua Bay Preschool – Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Is Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association a commercial or profit making entity?

The Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association (WRFKA) is not a commercial or profit making entity. We stem from the wider national 'Free Kindergarten Movement' dating back over 100 years based on providing community support to families with young children. We are a Not for Profit organisation, any surplus funds go back in to the organisation to provide high quality early childhood education for children and families.

### 2. How did WRFKA come to be involved with Pukerua Bay Pre-School?

Over the past 10-15 years there has been a steady evolution within the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector. Today we have a sector with a high percentage of qualified teaching staff, a comprehensive national ECE curriculum, and a complex funding, regulatory and employment framework. In 2006, members of the Pre-School committee and teachers approached WRFKA to consider taking over management of the Pre-School. They felt that the level of skill and knowledge to manage a licensed service in this increasingly complex environment required specialist expertise and being a community based organisation, already existing in the community with Pukerua Bay Kindergarten, WRFKA was a good fit. Their priority was that the future of the Pre-School was secure and a collaborative approach was taken by both parties to ensure a smooth transition and future for the Pre-School.

### 3. Why is the proposed redevelopment needed?

There are community, regulatory, monetary and educational reasons why redevelopment is needed.

*Community* – It is well known that the waiting list at the Pre-School is and remains long (on average there are around 50 children on the list). The Pre-School is a relatively small service (licensed for 13 children per day) yet the numbers of young children in the community continues to grow. Our proposal to redevelop the Pre-School will provide more children with the opportunity to experience this valued community service.

*Regulatory* – The Ministry of Education ECE regulatory framework 1998 was recently replaced by the 2008 framework. We are currently within the 5 year 'transition' period given to services to comply with the new framework. The MoE is visiting each service to ensure compliance and if successful, a new license given. Pukerua Bay Pre-School is due for 'relicensing' next year. The current facility does not meet some of the new criteria to achieve relicensing under the 2008 framework, for example we need to provide separate bathroom facilities for adults and children (currently there is a shared toileting facility).

To achieve relicensing and improve the general maintenance of the building (e.g. parts of the wood work in the kitchen is rotting and the roof leaks sporadically), WRFKA will need to spend

a significant amount. To make this spend worthwhile Pukerua Bay Pre-school needs to be a financially viable service. It becomes viable by offering more places.

*Monetary* – Unfortunately the Pre-School does not cover its expenses. However, WRFKA remains committed to retaining the Pre-School. We know it has a proud and treasured history in Pukerua Bay and the numbers of children who utilise it show a high quality community service is needed. We believe we can meet demand in the community for more child places, retain the intimate nature of the small group sizes and create a financially viable service which will secure the future of the Pre-School. WRFKA is not looking to profit from the remodeling but we do need to cover the costs of providing the service.

*Education* – Children benefit most from more than one session or day at kindergarten. So another rationale for us to increase the number of places at the Pre-School is to offer more than one day or session to families.

#### **4. Why is reclassification of the reserve needed?**

It is a historical anomaly as to why the area stretching from Wairaka Road through to the back of the reserve behind the Pre-School is divided in to two different reserve types. Part of the Pre-School exists in one and part in the other (the area encompasses two land lots).

The front part of the site (where the public playground, parking area and Pre-School building are located) is designated 'Local Purpose Reserve', however the rear part of the site where the current Pre-School playground is located is designated 'Scenic Reserve' which is incompatible with our 'community use' of the area. The need to reclassify the flat grassed area (from Scenic Reserve to Local Purpose Reserve) is triggered by our plans to redevelop the Pre-School building not because of a need to expand further north of our current Pre-School fence. Our initial plans proposed using an additional 3 sqm of the reserve for playground space however it is not crucial to the success of the project.

#### **5. Is the entire Raroa Reserve being reclassified?**

No, check the following link to see what the reclassification applies to. The greater reserve area from the beach up behind the houses on Raroa Road remains scenic reserve. It is only the reserve area on Wairaka Road which is proposed for reclassification.

<http://www.pcc.govt.nz/News---Events/Public-Consultation/Pukerua-Bay---Part-Reserve-Reclassification>

#### **6. What consultation has there been with the local Pukerua Bay Community?**

One of our core values is '*In partnership with parents, whānau and community*' so any project we undertake is done with a collaborative focus as a guiding principle.

Initial planning began in 2009 and there have been several groups involved and consulted with during the interim period ranging from pre-school family groups through to residents and interested parties neighboring the pre-school, the Pukerua Bay Residents Association and the local community.

*Pre-school families* – Since the beginning of 2010 we have sent several letter/email updates to current families and those on the Pre-school waiting list. During 2010 we held a whānau

meeting at the local Scout hall informing families of our plans and inviting feedback. General Manager of WRFKA, Amanda Coulston has attended a number of Pre-School Committee meetings to consult and collaborate with parent representatives and a project steering group made up of staff representatives and Pre-School parents (who are Pukerua Bay residents), meets every couple of months.

*Local community* – Over the past year Amanda Coulston has:

1. Met with the immediate neighbours of the Pre-School, once with the Head Teacher from the Pre-School and once with the architect working on the project.
2. Attended, presented and been available to take questions at several Pukerua Bay Residents Association meetings.
3. Met with representatives from the local library (who border the current Pre-School).
4. Met regularly with the Pukerua Bay School Principal to maintain a broader collaborative and holistic approach to education in Pukerua Bay (who share land with our other kindergarten).
5. Facilitated a community meeting late 2008 at the Scout hall where initial plans to extend the Pre-School were broached. We held another meeting at the Anglican Church in March 2011 to inform and seek further feedback from residents. This meeting was publicised via the village notice board, Pukerua Bay Community newsletter, Pukerua Bay School newsletter, Pukerua Bay Kindergarten and via email and notice board to attending and prospective parents of the Pre-School (advice was sought from a Residents Association member and members of the community on the most effective channels to use to inform the community of the meeting).

## **7. How will the Pukerua Bay Pre-School extension benefit the Pukerua Bay community?**

It's important to look at the proposed extension as necessary to the survival of the Pre-School. Aside from local demand, the new ECE framework and general maintenance will require significant development to the current building. Without it, the Pre-School will not achieve 're-licensing' and be forced to close. So discussion can not focus on weighing up the current versus proposed Pre-School, but rather does the Pukerua Bay community need or value this service or should it close? Our discussions with local families and research show that the Pre-School is highly valued in the community and future projections from Porirua City Council show that numbers of local children are set to increase. While WRFKA does not zone its kindergartens, Pukerua Bay families will get priority weighting on the Pre-School waiting list. A Pre-School with more child places will offer local families greater accessibility to high-quality, community based ECE.

The community will also benefit from increased play space (a common concern noted from Council submissions and family feedback is the lack of playgrounds in Pukerua Bay) because we will allow community use of our facilities outside of session times. The Raroa Reserve on Wairaka Road will have two playgrounds (the current public playground) and the improved Pre-School playground, suitable for younger children. Although the Pre-School playground will be fenced off, it will be constructed of material promoting easy visibility (like pool fencing) so that families could sight a child playing at either ground.

In terms of the wider community, another common concern expressed to us has been the lack of community space in Pukerua Bay. Our kindergartens are increasingly becoming central meeting points for community groups in evenings and weekends. We would welcome any interest from groups wanting to utilise the new Pre-School space (the current Pre-School is too small for community use).

#### **8. Would WRFKA 'zone' the Pre-School exclusively to Pukerua Bay families?**

No. The numbers of appropriately aged children within a community and wider community fluctuate. So there will be years that children from outside Pukerua Bay will be needed to fill rolls (as has been the case in the past).

However the increased places created by the new service will mean that 'prioritisation' given to local families will result in many more children accessing the Pre-School. Prioritisation means that the teachers will run two waiting lists, one for Pukerua Bay families and one for the wider community, and Pukerua Bay families will be given priority for places at the Preschool. This prioritisation is a common and effective method used in several of our kindergartens to manage the needs of the local community with those of the wider community.

#### **9. Will more families come from outside the wider area to access free childcare?**

Generally speaking, the majority of our families are motivated by the tradition of kindergarten - being community-based, supporting transition to school, working closely with families and having fully qualified teachers versus being 'free'. Most working families want a convenient location so are unlikely to travel from far away to bring their children to Pukerua Bay.

#### **10. How will WRFKA protect the small, intimate nature of the current Pre-School with the increased places?**

We are proposing to have two separate spaces of 15 children in each.

#### **11. Is the proposed building one or two floors?**

This has yet to be confirmed. Should we require an upstairs area it will be for Teachers' offices only and therefore won't take up a whole floor.

When our initial consultation with the community began we broached the idea of having two floors so that the community could have a dedicated space available at any time of day. However we did need some financial contribution from potential groups and given no committed interest was forthcoming we reverted back to a sole purpose kindergarten building which the community could use outside Pre-School session times.

#### **12. Were alternative locations in Pukerua Bay been considered and why were they discounted?**

Yes, but they were discounted because they were either structurally or geographically unsuitable. Also, some suggested venues are in-use by other services.

The Preschool has been in its current location for over 20 years and it is particularly suited to young children and their families, e.g. it's close proximity to the kindergarten and the school.

**13. How will the existing Raroa Reserve Playground on Wairaka Road be affected?**

WRFKA does not propose any change or movement of the current public playground.

**14. Will access to the library, toilets and reserve be maintained?**

Yes. We have no intention to interfere with community access to any of these community amenities.

**15. What is the likely timeframe for the development?**

We can't confirm the timeframe at the moment because it's reliant on processes such as Reclassification and Resource Consent applications. However, we are still planning to stage any building work so that disruption to the Pre-School families is minimised.

**16. How can the community stay up to date?**

- Pukerua Bay Pre-School Facebook page
- Pukerua Bay Residents Association meetings and website (meeting minutes)  
<http://www.pukeruabay.org.nz/community/residentsassociation.html>
- Pukerua Bay School Community Newsletter
- Call/email Karen Skett at Wellington Kindergartens on 232 1741 or [karens@wn-kindergarten.org.nz](mailto:karens@wn-kindergarten.org.nz).