

## Dam Discussion Dominates MDCA Meeting

“The truth is there is just not enough water. If there is a no dam, then water rationing will come in earlier and more severe,” asserted Mayor Richard Kempthorne at the MDCA’s October meeting. “There is just no other way to meet the demands of our community.” “Without the dam,” continued TDC Chief Executive Lindsay McKenzie, “in 9 years out of 10, there will be constraints on water use by households and businesses. I started out as a cynic and as a result [of looking at the alternatives], I became an advocate.”

But Mapua meeting participants would not allow the TDC reps to pitch the \$75.9 million dam proposal without some hard questioning. One resident insisted there is a cheaper option: “make every resident responsible for their own water supply then you don’t have to worry about the lady next door hosing down her car.”

Another resident questioned the intelligence of positioning the dam so near an earthquake fault line potentially releasing 13 million cubic metres of water if ruptured. But Engineering Services Manager Richard Kirby responded: The dam will be built to significant standards with “concrete facing on the inside; designed to withstand a 1 in 10,000 earthquake.” In case of a severe earthquake “the dam is likely to settle rather than anything else.” It will be very unlikely to collapse and release a torrent of water. “If there was a rupture of some sort, it would leak very slowly and down the river.”

Along with Kempthorne, Kirby and McKenzie, Deputy Mayor Tim King, Council Water Scientist Joseph Thomas and Councillor Anne Turley turned out to answer the concerns of local residents at Mapua Hall.

The dam is project to cost \$75.9 million with the council’s share at \$26.8 million, with a P95 estimate, meaning there is a 95% chance the cost will be less than projected and a 5% chance it will cost more. One Mapua resident asserted he had “no confidence” in the TDC’s cost estimates stating: “A quote from the engineering committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August – the budget then for the Higgs Road footpath and Aranui Road improvements was \$175,000. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, they added in \$70,000 for the Seaton Valley footpath. Total then had gone up to \$404,000. Last week it went to tender for \$612,000. More than 50% more. I’ve got no confidence.” Councillor Tim King responded that any increase may have been due to “scope creep.”

Another resident asked why the river is in poor health, then answered her own question: “Because the water has been over allocated to the irrigators.” Tim King gave a brief history of the water allocation by stating decades ago, there was no limit. Once they started measuring river flow, customary water allocation amounts were already in place. Kempthorne added: “Yes, we are over allocated on the Waimea plains, but to claw back the amount of water needed to bring the river to proper flows would devastate horticulture.”

Kemphorne emphasized the dam will provide “water security for 100 years and ‘future proof’ the community.” It will be capable of providing unrestricted water for every year except the 1 in 60 year drought. The dam will take 3 years to build and 3 months to fill.

Public consultations closed on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Hearings will be held from December 11 to 15 with a final decision likely in February.

The TDC’s presentation to the MDCA can be watched on video at the MDCA’s Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/MapuaCommunityAssociation/](http://www.facebook.com/MapuaCommunityAssociation/)

For complete detail on the Waimea Dam proposal, go to: <http://www.tasman.govt.nz/policy/public-consultation/waimea-community-dam-governance-and-funding/>

In additional Mapua Community Association news:

Picnic tables are ready for assembly in Waterfront Park. The concrete pads were recently poured. Mapua Landscape is depositing the top soil and concrete pipe for the children’s play area, plus log rounds have been cut to create the graduated log step path. Next in the plan will be fundraising for a permanent barbeque.

The Mapua School art project, dedicated to the memory of the Touch the Sea aquarium, has been completed by the children and is scheduled to be installed in early December in the park. The art work involves two large wooden structures adorned with a variety of painted sea life images.

The AED subcommittee reported Wakefield’s AED management system might be a model Mapua emulates. The Wakefield Health Centre Trust owns and manages all 11 AED’s across their region. Volunteers are assigned an AED to monitor and the Wakefield Pharmacy is tasked to act as the hub. If AEDs are used they get returned to the Pharmacy for a new battery and pads. The Health Centre Trust funds this cost. Councillor Turley offered to speak to the Mapua Health Centre Trust regarding their possible involvement. It was also announced the Four Square store has installed an AED on the front of their building which they will manage, bringing the total number of outdoor AED’s in Mapua to 3.

Councillor McNamara encouraged submissions on the Nelson Tasman Pest Management plan which can be found at: <http://www.tasman.govt.nz/council/media-centre/public-notice/draft-regional-pest-management-plan-open-for-consultation/>

And congratulations to Mapua native and activist volunteer Pat Perry, who was unanimously affirmed as this year’s recipient of the MDCA Lifetime Member award and will be honoured at the December 11 meeting. All are welcome to enjoy our holiday celebration and Pat’s honour.

Tim Hawthorne, MDCA Executive Committee