



# The Inlet

Newsletter for Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

DECEMBER

2015

*The Inlet is a newsletter that brings together local and regional news affecting the Pāuatahanui Inlet and its environs.*

*The Inlet comes out three times a year and current or back issues can be downloaded from our website.*

*The newsletter includes items of concern that affect the area as well as general interest topics for everyone.*

*Please contact us if you would like to contribute to The Inlet.*

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## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

In this edition of the newsletter you will see an item about the Pāuatahanui Inlet Community Trust (PICT) winding up, together with profiles of four of the PICT's Board members who have subsequently joined our committee.



I am very happy indeed to welcome Lindsay Gow, John McKoy, Philippa Richardson and Christine Stanley. Together they bring an unparalleled knowledge of local history, ecological issues, conservation and experience in advocating for the Inlet. Our organization is considerably strengthened by having them as part of the management structure.

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At our AGM in July this year Denis Fairfax finished as the Acting Secretary and was elected as a general member of the committee. In light of the bolstered committee numbers since the AGM he has now decided to retire.

Denis joined the committee in 2009 and has served as Secretary up until this year when Helen Reilly was appointed the new Secretary at the AGM. His knowledgeable and thorough approach has been a great help to me in managing committee business and meetings. We are very grateful for his contribution and wish him well as he devotes more time to his other interests, particularly researching and writing about New Zealand naval history.

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I thank all those who have served on the committee this year for their contribution to our organisation and I wish them and all our GOPI members a safe and happy holiday with their families.

**Tony Shaw**

## PICT ENDS 13 YEARS OF ADVOCACY FOR PORIRUA HARBOUR

*Most of you will have heard that the Pāuatahanui Inlet Community Trust (PICT) is winding up. John McKoy, the Chair of PICT, provides a background to this decision.*

The Pāuatahanui Inlet Community Trust was established in 2002 with the aim of encouraging the implementation of the Pāuatahanui Inlet Action Plan. This plan was prepared by community groups and local authorities following concerns about degradation of the Inlet and the way it was being managed. The Trust included representatives from the community, Porirua City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Ngati Toa Rangatira.

Over the intervening 13 years PICT has been very effective in its advocacy for matters relating to the Inlet and to Porirua Harbour as a whole. This has been done through submissions, constructive relationships with local authority staff, organisation of workshops and, more recently, support for the major educational initiative developed by Cheryl Cameron – *Living Waters (Tiakina Ngā Taonga)*. One major and very successful initiative that PICT strongly advocated for was the development of the Harbour Strategy.

In reviewing future directions for PICT over the last year the Board have concluded that the original objectives of the Trust had, for the most part, been achieved. A lot of good work is being done now because of what PICT started. We also noted that, in addition to the Harbour Strategy, several organisations, including Porirua City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, were actively advocating for ongoing protection and improvement of the Harbour. The main community-based groups which continue to campaign for the Harbour include the long established Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet and the Porirua Harbour Trust (PHACCT). The new Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee, established by Greater Wellington Regional Council, is developing recommendations for land and water management specific to local needs and values.

Many of the Trust's Board members are involved in these groups, thus helping retain a wealth of experience and knowledge in community support, but this has resulted in the dilution of the role of PICT. We decided that PICT should, therefore, end a very successful career.

The PICT Board noted, however, that there was a continuing need for advocacy specifically on behalf of the Pāuatahanui Inlet. Following discussions with GOPI it was agreed that several PICT Board members would offer their services in an appropriate way with the intention of strengthening the advocacy capacity of this organisation.

*John McKoy*

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## FOUR MEMBERS OF PICT JOIN GOPI

It is an exciting time for GOPI. While PICT has decided to wind up, as explained above, we are very fortunate that, after the aforementioned discussions, four members of the outgoing Trust committee have decided to continue their support of Pāuatahanui Inlet in an active way by joining the GOPI Committee.

We have great pleasure in introducing these new members in the following pages.



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Christine Stanley

Christine was one of the three founders of GOPI in 1991 and has remained closely involved with the Inlet since that time.

Subsequently she was an active participant in the formation of the Pāuatahanui Inlet Community Trust (PICT) and became a founding trustee in 2002. Her other local work includes co-founder of the Pāuatahanui Preschool, a past board Chairperson and librarian of Pāuatahanui School and past member of the Horokiwi Ward Committee.

Christine also headed the Pāuatahanui History Group responsible for the research that went into creating the book 'Pāuatahanui - A Local History'.

She is a trustee of the Porirua Harbour and Catchment Community Trust and has lived on a farm on the northern shores of Pāuatahanui Inlet for 36 years.



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### Philippa Robinson

Philippa has lived in Paremata, near the Pāuatahanui Inlet, for over 15 years. She says: 'On and off over that time I have had a lot of pleasure in contributing to efforts aimed at protection and enhancement of the health of the Inlet.'

Philippa's experience and interests lie in local government, particularly in environmental planning and sustainability, including working for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. While working at the Office of the Auditor-General she gained knowledge in other areas such as health, education, asset management and water management.

She adds: 'After a period of time being occupied with other things I'm really looking forward to supporting GOPI and making a difference for the Inlet.'

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## New Members cont.....

### Lindsay Gow

Lindsay has had an extensive background in public policy and strategy, especially environmental policy, working as Deputy Secretary for the Environment. He retired from public service in 2009 and is now, among other things, a part-time consultant on strategy and policy issues and related performance.

Lindsay lives in Whitby, overlooking Pāuatahanui Inlet, and is an active user of Porirua Harbour's waterways and shores. He enjoys kayaking, walking, biking and sailing.

He is passionate about improving the quality of the harbour system, the condition of the contributing catchments and public access to the harbour and its edges.



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### John Mckoy



John Mckoy is the most recent Chair of PICT. He has lived in the Porirua Harbour catchment for more than 40 years and has been an active user, particularly of Pāuatahanui Inlet, for most of that time.

John is a marine biologist with over 40 years' experience, primarily in the area of research for sustainable fisheries in New Zealand but also internationally.

He is a member of the new Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee established by Greater Wellington Regional Council to develop recommendations for land and water management specific to local needs and values.

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## TRANSMISSION GULLY MOTORWAY PROGRESS

At the recent AGM of the Porirua Harbour Trust (PHACCT) we were brought up to date with progress on the Transmission Gully Motorway. As you are well aware, I am sure, work on the project is underway with the first stage – the development of Lanes Flat - now complete. This site has been built to accommodate the staff and equipment for the construction of this long awaited new road. It is the centre of operations and currently employs 125 staff working on the motorway.

The design of the road is now 80% complete and the excavation phase has begun with the development of a four-wheel drive track along the length of the route to enable the final design work to be undertaken. As the route crosses 11 geological fault lines the next stage will focus on how to build over these features. Major earthworks will begin soon and are expected to be completed by next spring and the road will, subject to extreme weather events, be finished by April 2020.

On the environmental side water management is of major concern with plans in place to control water on, across and around the site. Detailed implementation plans are being formulated for site-specific drainage control, sediment control and vegetation clearance. Monitoring of all freshwater streams is to be undertaken from now on for 365 days of the year and a 2-year marine monitoring plan is also in place. A biannual trend-monitoring programme will begin for both freshwater and marine environments.

Some of the lizards found living on the route of the motorway have been re-located to Nga Manu sanctuary (Waikanae) for the duration of the construction period. On completion of the motorway these will be returned to their homes to ensure re-population of the species.

If you are interested in following the progress of the motorway on a frequent basis there are two websites you can visit, one for the NZTA and another specifically for the Transmission Gully Motorway project:

<http://www.tg.co.nz/>

<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/wellington-northern-corridor/transmission-gully/>

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## SEA LETTUCE FLOURISHES IN THE HARBOUR

Porirua City Council has reported that the green alga, sea lettuce, is experiencing a prolific growing season this year and can be seen throughout the harbour at the moment.

Dr Megan Oliver, Senior environmental scientist—Coast, Greater Wellington Regional Council, has offered some information about this species in order to allay any concerns there might be from the general public. She says:

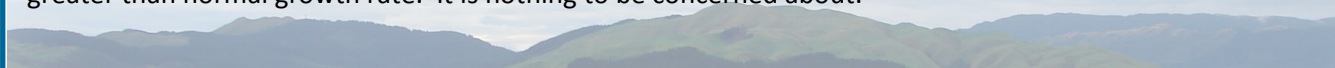
*'This green algae is a common green seaweed known as Ulva, or sea lettuce. This seaweed is found throughout the world and can tolerate a range of environmental conditions.'*

*'October to December is the main growing season for this edible seaweed and it is not uncommon to see large areas of the harbour turn bright green at this time.'*

*'When the algae begins to die, however, it releases a pungent rotten egg odour which can be unpleasant but is generally not a risk to human health.'*

*'I wouldn't want people to be alarmed or think that its presence was indicative of something bad. It is a normal member of the marine community.'*

Seasonal changes affect Pāuatahanui Inlet, as they do any other environment, and this is just one example of the natural annual cycle of events in our harbour. While this is a regular occurrence, however, it is thought that the current El Nino weather pattern is particularly favourable to it this year, resulting in greater than normal growth rate. It is nothing to be concerned about.



## INLET CLEAN-UP 2015

This year's annual Inlet Clean-up took place on Sunday 6 December, which was a little later than normal due to a very inconsiderate alignment of sun and moon. The resultant tide timetable was difficult to marry with the normally scheduled November event. There was, consequently, a concern that many of our usual volunteers would be committed to other end-of-year activities but, while numbers were down from the huge turnout in 2014, more than 50 people showed up to take part, enough, in the end, to cover the whole Inlet. This was a very encouraging level of support.

As in previous years, the clean-up was jointly organised by ourselves and Keep Porirua Beautiful, with the usual support from Plimmerton Rotary. The food for the barbecue and a lucky-draw prize were again donated by Paremata New World. In addition to these long-term supporters of the event we were once more joined by representatives of Conservation Volunteers, the GeoCache enthusiasts and a keen group from Papakowhai School.

Before the assembled volunteers set to work, a safety briefing was given by David Wilkins from Conservation Volunteers and this was followed by a quick word from the Mayor, Nick Leggett, urging everyone to have a 'good, safe and fun time collecting'.

Community co-operation such as this results not only in effective rubbish and litter removal in time for the summer visitors but also in an enjoyable social occasion for all those who take part.

Thank you to everyone involved.

The following photos have been supplied by Ray Ryan.



*John and Elliot Brook*



*The GOPI Team: Helen Reilly, Janet Ryan, Tony Shaw*



*Doug Burke, Anita Baker, Lindsay Gow, Mary Moore, Mary Dinniss, Denise Gow*



## Clean-up Photos cont...



*Appreciations*



*Drawing the Raffle*

## LAMB AND CALF DAY

As has happened over the last few years members of the Committee represented GOPI in a welcomed public appearance at the Pāuatahanui Lamb & Calf day at Pāuatahanui School on Saturday 7 November. We are very grateful to the organising committee for allowing us to have a display at this popular annual gathering because it gives us a chance to meet the public directly and talk about our interest in the Inlet.

For the visual component of our display we use images taken from our growing collection of striking entries submitted in the annual photographic competitions. It is almost always these pictures that first attract the attention of people passing the display

The event has huge support from the local community, with several thousand attending every year. It is an ideal opportunity for us to introduce ourselves and our activities. This type of exposure gradually builds the profile of our organization and a general awareness of the Inlet and the issues facing it.



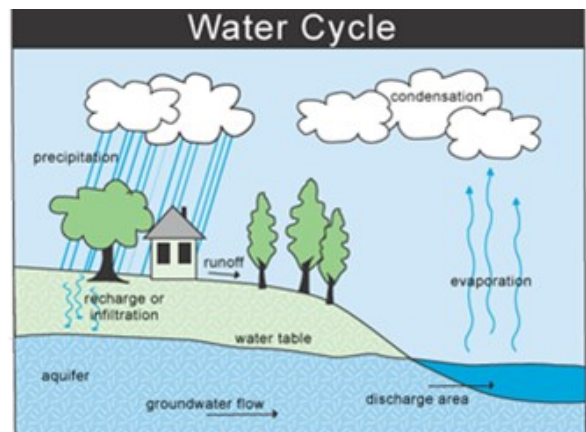
## FEATURE ARTICLE

Recent controversy has arisen as a result of the new local bylaw that places constraints on some activities (eg. car-washing on the street) associated with the City of Porirua's storm-water system. Newspaper articles and correspondence to the media have created a sense that the council has been doctrinaire in its approach to this subject and that it has been underhand in the way it established this policy. Much of the controversy has been media-hype but the council is aware that the news has resulted in a number of antagonistic responses from the general public. What has been achieved however is an increased awareness of a very important issue that many people in the local community are concerned about – the drainage of polluted storm-water into the harbour. That issue is the subject of the next two feature articles in *The Inlet*. The first article below looks at the water cycle, some problematical features of the Inlet and the types of pollutants the council is concerned about.

### Pollution in Pāuatahanui Inlet

Our harbour, Te Awarua-o-Porirua (Porirua Harbour), is the basin of an extensive catchment system that stretches from Pukerua Bay in the north to Churton Park in the south and eastwards to the heights of Haywards Hill. Its two arms, Pāuatahanui Inlet and the Onepoto Arm, together form the collection point for this catchment, meeting at Paremata before discharging into the sea. While these two arms have some features in common, the history of human progress on the surrounding hills and shores has resulted in differing environmental conditions. Of the two, Pāuatahanui Inlet, it could be said, has experienced the more favourable past.

Geographically speaking, Porirua Harbour is part of a typical hydrological or water cycle as illustrated in this diagram. Rain, plenty of it at times, pours over the hills and surrounding countryside and runs off into streams and rivers. Some soaks into the land and this groundwater works its way down through pores and cracks in the underlying sediments and rocks. Both surface and subterranean waters eventually reach the harbour and the sea. Ocean waters, largely, are the source of the water cycle, with evaporation driving moisture up into the atmosphere to cool and condense into clouds and then rain.



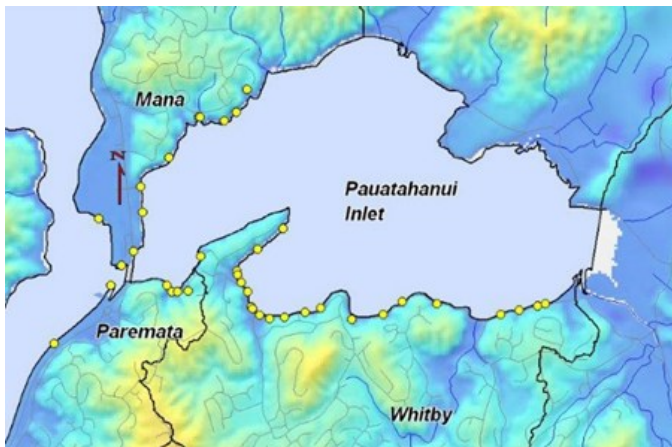
Human settlement has altered the natural landscape and affected the water cycle in several ways. For domestic purposes an artificial water reticulation system captures run-off, collecting it in reservoirs for the city's water needs. For health reasons this water is filtered, cleaned and sterilized before reaching our taps for drinking but much of it is used for other purposes such as bathing, washing machines and toilets. The resultant wastewater is conveyed by pipes to community treatment plants to be cleansed again before discharge into the sea and thus back into the natural water cycle.

Rain also falls on our houses, factories, offices and schools, and on lawns, playgrounds and roads, but much of this is surplus to requirements and has to be guided into artificial storm-water channels - a city-wide drainage system protecting homes and businesses from extreme rain events that could otherwise result in flooding. Rain water flows into gutters, into street drains and then through pipes to adjacent streams, subsequently reaching the harbour and sea.

And here's the rub. Storm-water doesn't get filtered or cleaned in any way. Everything washed down these drains goes directly into the rivers, the harbour and the sea, **untreated**.



## Feature Article cont....



In our case that means into Pāuatahanui Inlet. No less than 34 storm-water outlets from communities around the Inlet east of the Paremata Bridge drain into this beautiful estuarine harbour. This water brings with it all the by-products and residues of human activity, whether that be farming, industry, construction or transportation or, periodically, sewerage, because pipe-leakage and cross-connection between storm-water and sewer systems is also a fact of life.

As well as the storm-water system Pāuatahanui Inlet also has the most extensive road perimeter of any harbour in the country. For the 10.8km of coastline, 8.9km is roaded, which is over 82%. Run-off that washes residues from tyres, brakes and exhaust into the Inlet is therefore very significant.

Crucial to any estuarine habitat is the twice-daily tidal cycle that flushes water out to sea. This helps remove pollutants and excessive nutrients thus maintaining a hospitable aquatic environment. However this process is poorly exhibited in Pāuatahanui Inlet which has a 2½ day flush period. Unlike many estuaries around New Zealand a large proportion (60%) of the harbour remains under water at low tide.

It is obvious, therefore, that many features of this location place demands on the aquatic habitat that are contrary to its health and for these reasons we should all be concerned about what we do in and around the Inlet. This is why the council has chosen to introduce a by-law that focuses on reducing all forms of pollution affecting the harbour as a whole, with car-washing only one aspect of this.

So, what does go into Pāuatahanui Inlet and what are the pollutants of concern?

There are of course all the natural by-products of the diverse ecosystems around the Inlet: leaves, flowers, small fruits and seeds; insects and other small creatures (dead or alive); pollen, fungal spores and bacteria, etc. There will also be organic and inorganic particles from a variety of natural sources and the water will carry a range of minerals both in solution and bonded to particles in suspension. This is all just part of the cycle of life and has existed for centuries.

But added to this are the results of human activity that give great concern and threaten to pollute the Inlet. The most worrying of these pollutants are heavy metals, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), pathogens, nutrients and sediment.

The specific constituents, their sources and importance to the environment, will be the subject of the article in our April issue.

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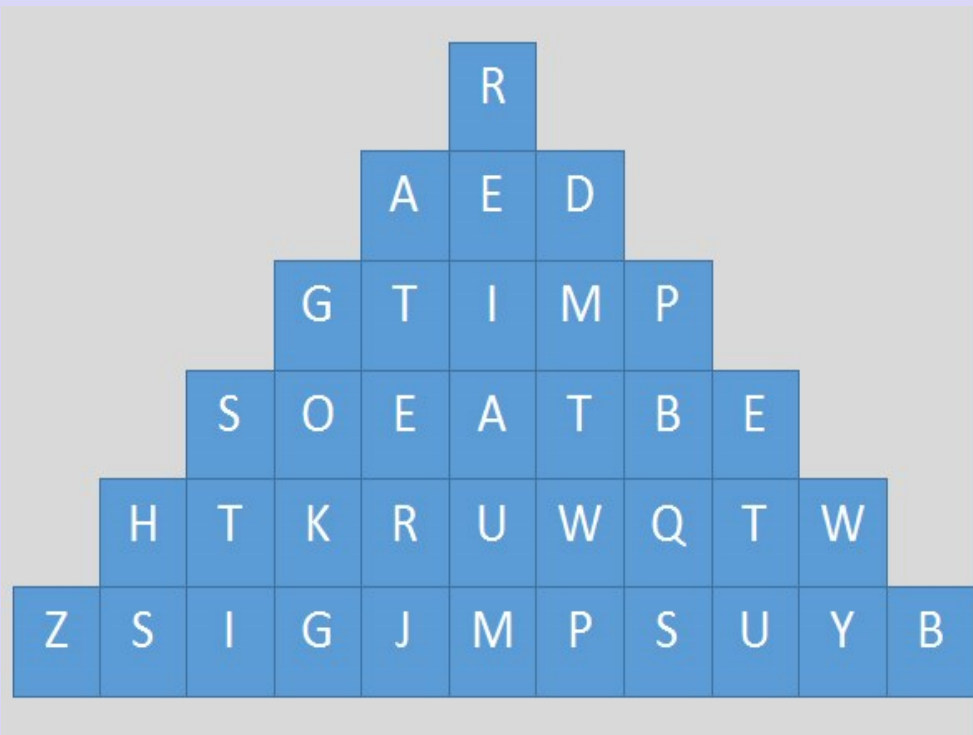


## FAMILY CORNER

## Pyramid Word Find

*H*idden within the pyramid below is a word that has been used at least once in this issue of the newsletter. Can you find it?

*This word can start anywhere and change direction one or more times.*



The answer is to be found on page 11

## ON THE HORIZON

### Seaweek

Seaweek is a national programme of events headed by the National Association for Environmental Education with support from a number of central and local Government organisations including DOC and Greater Wellington. GOPI will be marking the 2016 Seaweek by gifting to all pre-schools in the local communities a copy of one of Gillian Candler's books, either 'At the Beach' or 'Under the Ocean'.

The dates are 27 February to 6 March 2016 and information on the coming event can be found on the website: <http://seaweek.org.nz/>.

### Photographic Competition

Always at this time of year we remind our readers and the wider community that our photographic competition takes place in April and May. This is the time, leading up to summer, when opportunities for the creativity that this competition engenders become increasingly frequent with long days and, presumably, good weather. So out with the cameras and lenses, tripods and filters and start exploring the Inlet in an artistic way to bring this beautiful landscape to life. Categories for this year's competition are: Nature, recreation, human impact and artistic.

Good luck to all contestants.

## ANSWER TO FAMILY CORNER

STORMWATER

If you cannot see how it is done the solution can be found on our website at the following address:

<http://www.gopi.org.nz/assets/Newsletters/Pyramid-word-pdf.pdf>

## PLEASE SIGN UP A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

Sign up a neighbour, friend, or another family member. Just explain to them that membership numbers really count in giving us a strong voice to argue for what we all value about the Inlet. Membership forms can be downloaded from our website <http://www.gopi.org.nz/assets/membersForm/Membership-new.doc> or copied from the one at the back of this newsletter. Better still, if you've received this newsletter by email, just forward it to others with a note encouraging them to join.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS FOR THE PĀUATAHANUI INLET

**Pollution:** Discharges of contaminants to air, land, storm-water drains, streams, rivers or sea and for after hours consent enquiries: Greater Wellington 0800 496 734 (24 hours)

**Boating infringements:** Greater Wellington 384 5708 (24 hours)

**Illegal fishing activity:** Ministry for Primary Industries 0800 476 224 (24 hours)

**Pāuatahanui Wildlife Reserve:** Department of Conservation 0800 362 468

Let us know what you have reported so we can keep an accurate record and follow up if necessary.

233 9391 (Chairman, GOPI) or [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com).





## Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet

[www.gopi.org.nz](http://www.gopi.org.nz)  
[pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com)

### Membership Form: new members

To join the Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet, you can pay your subscription either online or by post.  
**IF YOU ARE PAYING ONLINE, PLEASE REMEMBER TO FILL IN THIS FORM WITH ALL DETAILS, AND EMAIL OR POST IT TO US.**

#### Online payment

1. Pay your sub via e-banking into our Westpac account 03-1533-0009387-00. In the 'Particulars' or 'Reference' columns, **YOU MUST** write your surname **AND** initials **AND** the period of your sub (1-yr or 5-yr).
2. Then fill in this form and either email it to us at [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com) or post it (see next column for our postal address)

#### Postal payment

1. Write a cheque made payable to 'Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet'.
2. Then fill in this form and send it, along with your cheque, to: Membership Secretary, Guardians of Pāuatahanui Inlet, Box 57034, Mana, Porirua 5247.

Please fill in your details for our records. If you are filling in this form electronically, **click** at the beginning of a dotted line and then type.

Name: .....

Address: .....

E-mail: ..... Phone: .....

Please put  next to the subscription you are paying (electronic completion – **highlight** the box and type lower case x.) We are also very grateful for donations. (We are a registered charity for tax purposes: registration number CC47523.)

One-year individual (\$12.00)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Five-year individual (\$50.00)	<input type="checkbox"/>
One-year family (\$15.00)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Five-year family (\$60.00)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donation: \$ .....	Do you require a receipt for your sub? <input type="checkbox"/> or your donation? <input type="checkbox"/>		
Date subs paid: .....	Reference appears as: .....		

*(e-banking only)*

We'd like to send you newsletters and notices via email. May we do this?

Please tell us which of our activities you would like to be part of.

Annual Clean-up day	<input type="checkbox"/>	Submissions to local bodies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three-yearly cockle survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	Our educational programmes for schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website and video clips	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	

**NOW EMAIL OR POST THE FORM. THANK YOU AND WELCOME**