

Quarantine Island /Kamau Taurua Community Inc (previously St Martin Island Community)

Quarantine Island /Kamau Taurua Statement of management intent

Revised 29.03.16

Introduction

Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua has been leased to the St Martin Island Community, since 2015 known as the Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community, by the Department of Conservation and its predecessors since 1958. This statement outlines the Community's vision of and for the Island and briefly reviews the contribution made by the Community and others to the management and enhancement of the Island and its facilities over the years.

The Island has been designated as a Recreation Reserve since 1986.
The Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community recognises Ngai Tahu as the tangata whenua of Kamau Taurua/Quarantine Island.

CONTENTS

Introduction

1 General Information

- 1.1 Location and access
- 1.2 Legal description
- 1.3 The Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community and the Island
- 1.4 Geology, soils, erosion
- 1.5 Climate
- 1.6 Vegetation
- 1.7 Recreation
- 1.8 Historical area

2 Management Intent Policies

- 2.1 The Community's vision for the Island
- 2.2 Enhancement of natural values
- 2.3 Historical and cultural sites
- 2.4 Access
- 2.5 Human habitation management
- 2.6 Planning processes

1 General Information

1.1 Location and access

Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua lies in Otago Harbour between the Portobello Peninsula and Port Chalmers. Access to the Island is by boat from the University of Otago's Marine Laboratory facilities on the Portobello Peninsula, or from Back Beach, Port Chalmers.

1.2 Legal description

Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua comprises 14.2 hectares, more or less, being Section 31, Block VI, Portobello Survey District.

1.3 The St Martin Island Community and Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua

Dunedin in the late 1950's was a pleasant place to be, with a lively university, a solid business core, and the quiet emergence of New Zealand literature and art. Yet it was also a sleepy little provincial town. Churches were well-filled, drawing on their traditional support. Presbyterians kept to Presbyterians, Catholics to Catholics, Anglicans to Anglicans. The big questions which were to emerge in the 1960's were generally held at bay.

It was in this conservative context that two friends, the minister of Knox Church and the Old Testament professor at the Theological Hall went for a boat trip on the harbour in 1956. As they rowed around they stopped off at the old 'Quarantine Island'. It was a desolate spot, then, inhabited by goats, littered with debris from the old buildings, erosion beginning on the slopes.

They saw its potential, though, as a symbol of a more holistic world, and as a breakout from denominational narrowness. 'Every city needs an island' was their motto, inspired by the remarkable impact of Iona in Scotland. They applied for and obtained the lease of the island in 1958, and got together an enthusiastic team, including by now the dean of the Anglican cathedral, of volunteers, who built a boat, and began work-days to clear away the junk. Church youth groups and student groups swarmed over and were enchanted by the magic of the island. It became again a place of music and laughter, but also of social and intellectual challenge. From the beginning it was committed to the less privileged folk. People were always taken 'as they were'. Impatience with the old church culture was symbolized by the daring architecture of the little chapel. The name of St Martin was chosen for his commitment to the mentally handicapped, to community, and to social justice. Ever since, the spirituality of the place has been one rooted in common life, the weaving together of work and worship. The ethos has been modified over the years with growing attention to Maori origins, to the historical heritage on the island, and to the nurture of the environment. Over the decades, however, the original vision has been maintained with literally thousands of groups (and needy individuals) coming over from an enormous range of social, cultural and religious backgrounds. They have

all been nurtured by the island's peace and beauty, and many have been at the forefront of caring for its environment themselves.

In 2015, after a long period of reflection and consultation, the Community officially changed its name to the Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community.

'Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community Inc' is an Incorporated Society and a Registered Charity (CC31277). The Community celebrated its 50th Jubilee in 2008.

1.4 Geology, soils, erosion (ref 3)

Dunedin was the site of a major shield volcano which was active between about 10 and 13 million years ago (in the Miocene geological epoch). The area around the island (extending to Port Chalmers and Portobello) was right at the centre of the volcano - it was one of the main vents. The rock on the island is entirely volcanic, and consists mainly of **breccia** (a mixture of volcanic ash and rock fragments) which is cut by numerous volcanic intrusions (**dykes**) of the rock types basalt, phonolite and trachyte. All these rock types can be seen at low tide, in the cliffs and shore platform on the NE coast of the island on both sides of the wharf and below the Married Quarters building.

After the volcano became extinct, its central area was eroded out to become a long valley. When this was flooded by the sea, Otago Harbour was formed, and the tops of spurs became the islands that stretch across the harbour. The Island is about 14ha in area, rising to 58m at its highest point, with steep slopes and cliffs around much of its shoreline.

Soils on the Island are formed from the weathering of volcanic rock together with wind-blown silt and sand (**loess**). All these materials form yellowish clayey soils, with volcanic stones and boulders mixed in by down-slope movement. Soils in the fenced off W areas of the Island are frequently dry and stony, with clay soil in the pasture areas. Soils are thin on several of the steep crumbly rocky slopes and cliffs around the Island.

Coastal erosion is noticeable on the North shore of the Island, behind all N facing beaches and where steep clay or unstable rocky slopes meet the shore. Old landslips are located adjacent to the cemetery, and at the W end of the adjacent beach, with a more recent slip on the steep bank N of the Married Quarters building. Recent erosion has revealed part of a raised beach at the foot of the steep bank E of the chapel. A stone retaining wall and timber structures have been constructed to slow erosion which could affect the main access path from the jetty to the Lodge.

1.5 Climate

Dunedin's climate is a fairly cloudy maritime climate, moderate and equable with an average mean temperature of 11°C and an annual range from 19°C to 2.5°C. Average annual rainfall is about 770mm, spread throughout the year at 50 – 75 mm per month. Dunedin averages around 90 ground frosts per annum. Prevailing winds are cool

southwesterlies and northeasters with occasional mild northwesterlies. NW and SW winds can be galeforce.

The Island is generally windier than Dunedin city, and SW storms can create spindrift which damages some plantings, and uproot or damage exposed mature trees. Drought conditions can occur on the Island for several weeks at almost any time of the year, and the Island probably receives slightly less rain than Dunedin, and significantly fewer ground frosts.

1.6 Vegetation

Approximately 5 ha of the west end of the Island and most coastal margins have been fenced off for regenerating native bush, including a 1.4 ha of high quality broadleaf – totara forest which has been fenced off from stock for many years.

The flora is quite large, with 102 native and 67 ‘exotic’ species. Among the woody species there is good representation of native trees (10 spp common), vines and scramblers (11 spp) and of small-leaved, divaricating shrubs (10 spp). There is diversity too in the herbs of both wet and dry coastal sites, of rocky places and forest floor (ref 1). Most of the rest of the area of the Island is given over to pasture.

Managed weeds include gorse and broom, thistles, some barberry, and one area of white edged nightshade.

1.7 Recreation

The Island is a Recreation Reserve and as such is visited by a wide range of interest groups including walking groups, conservation groups and school camps.

There is a small network of bush walks on the W end of the Island, offering splendid views of the Otago Harbour, the Otago Peninsula and the Port Chalmers hills.

Swimming is enjoyed from beaches in several bays around the Island, and kayakers and small boat sailors are frequent visitors to the jetty and the waters around the Island.

Camping is not permitted, outside the immediate area of the buildings, due to seasonal fire risk, and waste disposal considerations.

Day visitors often picnic on the Island, and regular working bees are open to all who wish to participate.

1.8 Historical area (ref 4)

The Island was declared a Historic Area by the Historic Places Trust on 7 December 2001. Quarantine Station buildings include the Married Quarters building, and the Keeper’s cottage, with the remains of the two hospitals, the dining room and kitchen area and an ablutions block. Unexcavated Maori middens have also been located.

The buildings are owned by the Community and the area under and around them leased from DOC . The current lease for 15 years from 2008.

2 Management Intent policies

2.1 The Community's vision for Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua

We invite everyone who wishes to visit the Island to come on to the Island with respect for its spiritual and natural values.

We therefore see ourselves as kaitiaki: spiritual shepherds of the Island, rather than simply lessees/concession holders.

In all that we do, we encourage a rich and practical spiritual dimension to life on the Island following our historical motto that work and worship are indivisible, and we endeavour to showcase good practice in all aspects of Island life.

We acknowledge Ngai Tahu as the tangata whenua of the Island and welcome their involvement in the future of the Island.

We seek to:

- Encourage the use of the Island by the wider community
- Enhance as well as care for the Island
- Manage it sustainably to pass on to future generations
- Preserve its historical character

We specifically **welcome** people to the Island:

- **All** are welcomed and asked to respect and care for the Island as enthusiastically as we do
- We encourage young people to visit and participate in caring for the Island's natural values
- We build links with local communities; Port Chalmers, Portobello, Rununga Otakou
- We facilitate and encourage simple family life and values for visitors
- There is open access for all; it is affordable because we are non-commercial, do not run the Island for profit, and we use volunteer work wherever possible
- We encourage disadvantaged members of the wider community to come to the Island to gain inspiration and respite from the pressures of their normal lives
- We make information on the Island available; history is researched, information leaflets issued, and open days are held
- We build links with other organisations: DOC, Forest and Bird, Otago University, NZ Marine Studies Centre, schools, Salvation Army, Pact/Miringawhakaaro, etc

We seek to **enhance** the Island. Ongoing work in this area includes:

- Ecological restoration work
- Saving and repairing the historic Married Quarters building, and developing the Island as an Historic Area
- Researching and recording of the history of the Island
- Maintenance of existing exotic feature trees
- Upgrading the jetty
- Upgrading the Lodge facilities and the Residents' cottage
- Specific love and care for all animals
- Fostering of scientific values in our ecological work, and supporting marine studies and geological research on the Island

2.2 Enhancement of natural values

- 2.2.1 We seek to continue to protect the indigenous forest areas, working in consultation with other interested parties, in the following ways:
Maintaining and upgrading boundary fencing to enclose domestic livestock
Operating a fire prevention policy
Educating all visitors on the value of the bush areas
Monitoring and controlling pests which could damage the bush areas
- 2.2.2 We seek to restore and maintain the indigenous forest areas, working in consultation with the tangata whenua, DOC, and other interested parties, by:
Completing extending bush areas to all the scarp areas round the Island in the near future (ref 2, and note)
Doing revegetation work in a way that optimises the balance between natural, historical, social and cultural values on the Island
Ensuring that only local varieties of plants are planted on the Island, so as to maintain the original habitat as far as possible
Following strict procedures for all planting and maintenance work to ensure plants survive and prosper in this often harsh environment
Removing weeds such as broom, gorse (including by shading out), Darwin's Barberry, and garden or exotic varieties of native plants from these areas
Planning to set and achieve such goals.
- 2.2.3 We seek to manage and maintain significant plantings of exotic trees in existing areas, working with DCC Significant Trees, Dunedin Forest and Bird Society and other interested parties, to preserve historical features on the Island, such as the Scots pines around the cemetery, and a coppice for sustainable firewood supply, containing these plants within their current areas. A limited area around the buildings is designated for possible plantings of agreed garden or other non-local plant varieties.
- 2.2.4 We seek to protect indigenous fauna from domestic animals and pests, and to prevent disturbance by visitors during critical times such as nesting.
- 2.2.5 We support the introduction or reintroduction of native flora and fauna to the Island in consultation with all relevant parties, to recreate the original bush communities, or provide a sanctuary for threatened local species, as far as possible.
- 2.2.6 We seek to protect the marine environment of the Island, working in consultation with the Department of Conservation Coastal Management team, by:
Encouraging the study and recording of the Island's marine environment
Monitoring the spread of the adventive Asian seaweed *Undaria Pinnatifida* and developing procedures to control its incidence
Working to ensure that overgathering, habitat destruction, and disturbance of marine animals and plants are minimised.
- 2.2.7 We seek to manage coastal erosion in the short term by constructing and maintaining drystone wall structures in locations where access or other structures may be affected. In the longer term, however, alternative accessways may need to be developed. Elsewhere, wherever possible, slope stabilisation work is undertaken to protect existing facilities on the Island.

2.3 Historical and cultural aspects

2.3.1 History of the Island

We are interested in, and support any research into, the pre-European history of Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua.

Lyndall Hancock, a Community member from the earliest days of the Community, has researched the history of the Island. This was published in 2008 “Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua- a Short History”. This provides a definitive history of the Island. Community records will provide full details necessary to update events on the Island subsequently.

2.3.2 Historic area

The Island was declared an Historic Area by the Historic Places Trust on 7 December 2001, and the Community intends to make as much information as possible available to all those visitors interested in the history of the Island (ref 2).

2.3.3 Married Quarters building preservation project

The Community has undertaken to preserve the historic 2-storey Married Quarters building, which is the main focus of the Community’s heritage work on the Island, and is supported by the NZ Historic Places Trust. Funds have been raised and the building stabilised, made watertight, and unsound materials replaced so it can be preserved for posterity. We gratefully acknowledge major contributions from Lotteries Heritage, the Community Trust of Otago, and other sources, without whom this building would have been lost.

Specialist contractors and voluntary labour have both been used to good effect on this project, which will also provide interpretative signage for the Married Quarters building and the several other buildings and remains of historic significance and interest. The intention is to meet the standards for a hall (<100 people; single storey).

2.3.4 Maori presence on the Island

We acknowledge the Ngai Tahu iwi and Te Rununga Otakou as the tangata whenua of the Island.

There is clear evidence of a Maori presence on the Island in the form of an unexcavated midden (ref 2).

2.3.5 Cemetery

The cemetery is not included in the current lease, but the Community has taken on the maintenance of the cemetery and its picket fence constructed in the 1990s by the Conservation Corps. Extensive research by Lyndall Hancock has established the definitive record of those buried there, which the Community makes available for public inspection.

2.4 Access

2.4.1 Access policy

The Community maintains open access to the Island for all visitors. We facilitate sea transport for visitors as required, and are grateful for the continuing support of the NZ

Marine Studies Centre in allowing parking and access through their facilities on the Portobello peninsula when necessary.

2.4.2 Jetty

The Community rebuilt the jetty in 1988 and has continued to improve ease of access and safety for visitors using it over the years. The Jetty is owned and maintained by the Community. It was upgraded in 2007. The Jetty is certified by the Otago Regional Council.

2.4.3 Accommodation

The Lodge can be booked by both community groups and private individuals or parties wishing to stay on the Island, subject only to their undertaking to respect and care for the Island and its facilities.

2.5 Human habitation management

2.5.1 Island resident Keepers

Since 1984, the Community has maintained resident Keepers on the Island to welcome visitors, care for the animals, and maintain the facilities in good order. This was initially a voluntary unpaid position, but has been funded as a part-time (20-30 hrs p.w.) position from grants and income from the Lodge and donations for approximately 10 years. This substantial commitment by the Keepers and the Community has contributed greatly to establishing the Island as a place of special value and interest to many in the wider Dunedin area, and beyond. The Community intends to maintain resident Keepers on the Island as the key to the successful implementation of this management plan, and other Community objectives.

2.5.2 Water and sewage

There is no significant water source on the Island, so rainwater is collected and stored for use by residents, visitors and livestock.

A composting toilet suitable for a group of 20 people has been in use since 1999. This has reduced the use of two existing long drop toilets, one of which will eventually be replaced by another composting toilet. Fully composted waste from this toilet is used in the revegetation programme on the Island.

The Community's policy is to manage the Island's limited water resources carefully, to release no pollutants into the harbour, and to dispose of greywater in an environmentally friendly way.

2.5.3 Farming

The Community runs a small number of sheep on the Island, to control the grass on the open areas maintained primarily for access and scenic purposes. There are currently about 40 sheep. We endeavour to operate sustainably and organically.

Free range poultry may be kept by the Keepers with the approval of the Community.

The presence of farm animals is a major attraction for the many children who visit the Island.

Previously, there were a couple of delightful donkeys on the island, but it is hard to restrict their grazing, which leads to health problems for them; sadly, we no longer keep donkeys.

2.5.4 Domestic animals

It is our policy that no cats or dogs will be allowed on the Island. This is consistent with DCC bylaws and DOC rulings.

2.5.5 Health and Safety

A detailed Health and Safety plan has been prepared for the Island; see Appendix 1. The Community has a trained Health and Safety representative and we try to work in consultation with DOC Health and Safety staff whenever appropriate.

Visiting groups are advised of the hazards and suggested risk management strategies contained in the Health and Safety plan. These are made available on our website (quarantineisland.org.nz) prior to visits and posted in the Kitchen in the Lodge.

2.5.6 Fire safety

Fire safety is included in the Health and Safety plan, and we are in regular contact with the local fire service to ensure that fire prevention equipment and procedures are fully functional.

Adequate levels of stock are maintained on the Island to keep grass areas cropped to minimise fire risks. Grass is mowed around the buildings.

2.5.7 Building maintenance

The Community organises regular working bees to facilitate routine maintenance of all buildings on the Island, to complement specialist contractors used on particular projects beyond our capabilities.

2.5.8 Visitor facilities

The Lodge has been developed to provide affordable backpacker-style accommodation for up to 28 people. A leaflet for visitors details items of interest, and visitors are provided with a Health and Safety information sheet to ensure they are fully aware of potential hazards on and around the Island. A large part of the work of the Keepers is to try to ensure that visits by all such groups are both rewarding and enjoyable.

The Community intends to maintain the Lodge accommodation at the standard of a modest tramping hut, in the interests of affordability for the benefit of local community groups and families, and in accordance with our vision for the Island (2.1 above).

Bed numbers will remain limited in order to minimise the impact of visitors on the Island and its facilities, and to preserve the peaceful nature of the Island and its feeling of wildness.

The proceeds from the hire of the Lodge are entirely used for the upkeep of the Island and its facilities, and not for commercial gain, in accordance with our constitution. Camping on the Island is also discouraged to minimise visitor impact in areas away from the existing buildings.

2.5.9 Sustainability

The Community values the concept of sustainability. We try to ensure that the residents and visitors on the Island follow the guidelines established by the NZ Sustainable Households project supported by the Ministry for the Environment. The Community also hopes at some stage to install appropriate solar and wind energy equipment, partly to encourage interest in these technologies by allowing visitors to use them, as well as to improve our own energy management. Wherever possible, the Community purchases goods which are produced using sustainably managed resources. The Island is currently the only certified 'Trade Aid' island in New Zealand.

2.5.10 Scientific values

The Community recognises the value of the Island as a unique location for the encouragement of scientific interest, and actively supports scientific research on the Island in such areas as the ecology of the Island's flora and fauna, geology, marine ecology and energy management.

2.5.11 Education

The Community recognises the potential of the Island as a valuable local resource for learning outside the classroom in subject areas such as environmental education, biology, marine studies, and geology; and for special education groups, and school camps.

The Community has welcomed various local school and tertiary student groups who use the Island as an educational resource.

The Community is seeking to expand the educational use of the Island by developing resources to support the Ministry of Education's Guidelines on Environmental Education in conjunction with EnviroSchools, NZ Marine Studies Centre, The University of Otago, Otago Polytechnic, and others.

2.5.12 Spiritual values

Underpinning all the work carried out on the Island is a strong and inclusive sense of spirituality. The Island provides a unique and highly valued retreat centre open to all spiritual traditions, largely because of the traditions of the Community and their daily interpretation by the residents in all aspects of the life of the Island.

2.6 Planning processes

The Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community Council meets monthly to supervise the activities of the Community and the running of the Island.

We follow our Management Agreement with DOC and agreed Revegetation, Visitor and Heritage Plans.

Maintenance and project work is discussed and agreed by the Council at its monthly meetings. The Keeper may also identify work that needs to be carried out and draw it to the attention of the Council, particularly the Management Committee. Finally, the Keeper, Treasurer, and Chair present reports on the year's activities at the Community's Annual General meeting.

These processes ensure that the management and other objectives of the Community on the Island are routinely monitored and controlled.

References

- 1 Geology of Quarantine Island; Jane Forsyth, Geological and Nuclear Sciences CRI, Dunedin. Private communication 2.5.05.
- 2 Quarantine Island Otago Harbour: Botanical Report; PN Johnson, Botany Division, DSIR, Dunedin; March 1987.
Note: the extensions to the fenced off areas proposed in this report (fig 2) have been completed and further scarp areas are also now fenced off; see attached map.
- 3 Historic Area Assessment, Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua; Historic Places Trust, Dunedin, 2001
- 4 Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua – a short History, Lyndall Hancock, 2008