

Dear Sustainable Neighbourhood Participants,

I am writing to inform you of changes to the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Programme resulting from a proposal to cease all regional (non-Local Board) funding for the programme from 1 July 2015.

You will no doubt be aware that Auckland Council is currently consulting with the community about the Long-term Plan (10-year budget) proposals. The regional (non-Local Board) funding component of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Programme has been identified as a proposed area for savings through this process (Note – the bulk of the funding for this programme has been through regional funding from Auckland Council. There has also been a significant contribution from the Waitakere Ranges Local Board and funding from the Whau Local Board).

This means that there is no regional funding confirmed for the programme beyond 30 June 2015 and the support provided to the programme will reflect this. In practice this will mean supporting neighbourhoods to complete activity to a suitable end point between now and the end of June 2015 or supporting neighbourhoods to develop plans to continue their work in the absence of regional Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme funds from 1 July 2015.

We would like to acknowledge the many positive outcomes that you have all contributed to over the duration of this programme. One of the core drivers for the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Programme is to help support the community in its aspirations to contribute to environmental outcomes. To this end there has been a significant contribution from the neighbourhoods to the local environment. Below are some facts and figures highlighting some of the annual achievements of the programme (figures are based on data for 2013):

- Around 60 neighbourhood groups, representing close to 500 active residents
- Around 540Ha of land under care
- Over 10,000 trees supplied by council and planted
- Over 73,000 tonnes of weeds removed

With funding for the programme only confirmed until the end of June 2015, we will be working with the neighbourhood facilitators to help provide as much assistance as possible through to June 2015 with a focus on:

- Supporting existing plans for planting/weeding through to the end of June 2015
- Supporting neighbourhood groups to develop a plan to continue independently beyond the funding (should they wish to). This will include, but is not limited to:
 - Ensuring you have the knowledge about any vegetation to be removed or replanted

- Are informed of other funding sources that you may be able to apply for (both from Council and other sources)
- Are informed of other resources (expertise, equipment, etc.) that you may be able to access (both from within Council and other sources)

We will also be working with the Local Boards over the coming months to explore how they will support the community in the environmental space beyond June 2015 of this year.

Once again we would like to acknowledge the contribution you have all made to protecting and enhancing our environment with support through the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Programme. We realise that for many of you this reflects a long-standing commitment to the environment and your community. We hope that many of you will continue (in whatever capacity possible) to utilise the skills, knowledge, and or community connections that you have developed through the programme to contribute to positive environmental outcomes for Auckland.

Regards

Brent Bielby
Environmental Partnerships Team Manager
Auckland Council