

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views December, 2003

Check the web site to keep up-to-date with events: www.owb.co.nz or ring The Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

DIARY

-2nd Saturdays of the month i.e. 10/1/04; 14/2/04; 13/3/04; 10/4/04.
9:00am on the deck.

Tree Care work party

Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett
Meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane

Contact: Jonathan and Bronwen, ph.472-5891
Email: jonathan@kennett.co.nz

**Sunday, 28th
December.
2p.m.**

Sunday walk

A Christmas Walk.

Come along and explore for the "strangling" and climbing rata relatives of our Christmas tree, the pohutukawa.

Leader: Dr John Dawson
Book at Treehouse Visitor Centre

Phone: 499 1400
Meet at the Information Centre., Te Marae o Tane

**Sunday, 25th
January.
2p.m.**

Sunday walk

The new Wilton Walkway to the Lookout, via the Canopy Walkway.

This is a level walk, without ups and downs, but many interesting plants along the way.

Leader: Dr John Dawson
Details as above.

**Sunday, 22nd
February.
2p.m.**

Sunday walk

The Nature Trail.

Otari's main walk through the original forest reserved by Job Wilton one hundred and fifty years ago. This walk is steep in places but has many interesting trees, vines, and perching plants.

Leader: Dr John Dawson
Details as above.

Chairman's Report

On tendering his resignation from the Board on 13 November 2003, Bill Winstanley wrote:

“ The circumstances of my cancer treatment have changed. It appears the chemotherapy is not going to have lasting effects without combining them with other procedures unacceptable to me so I have withdrawn from the chemotherapy. Realistically, that means I will not be able to resume my seat on the Board. I think it is important that you keep numbers up and the impetus going, so I would like to move that John Dawson be co-opted to the Board forthwith and the Board consider what further addition to its ranks are necessary to deal with its current straits and future good heart, fill them and get a buzz on again. ----- I wish the Board well and will be happy to continue to have such input as you consider might be useful for as long as I am able. My regards, Bill ”

At the Board meeting later that day, it was with a great deal of sadness that the necessary Board resolutions were passed. At time of writing Bill is being lovingly cared for in the Mary Potter Hospice.

We are pleased to welcome to the Board, John Dawson and also Roger Crimp who has been co-opted to cover the vacancy left by the earlier resignation of Glenn Denby, whose heavy work commitments prevented his continuing as treasurer. Also, having been appointed Deputy Chairman earlier in the year, I have been confirmed as Chairman to the Board as Bill's replacement, a task I find formidable and will be happy to pass on to a younger enthusiastic successor in due course.

With the appointment of David Sole as Manager of Wellington Botanic Gardens thus filling the vacancy left when Tony Williams moved north to Hamilton in mid year, the management team for Otari- Wilton's Bush is now complete. We welcome David and are encouraged that with his input and Robyn now firmly established as Curator at Otari, the impetus will be regained for improvement and enhancement of facilities at the Reserve as well as raising its profile as a national treasure.

I would like to thank all those who helped to make Sunday 14 September - Native Plant Sale Day (Open Day) at Otari a success despite the wet and cold weather conditions. Although visitor numbers were understandably down on comparison with previous years, the Trust gained some \$600 cash benefit from the event and proceeds for plant sales were only marginally down on last year. This Open Day is a significant event publicising Otari- Wilton's Bush and provides members of our Trust with the opportunity to meet together socially thus helping to strengthen our influence and involvement.

Tasks the Board is currently undertaking include, continuation of the upper Kaiwharawhara stream revegetation project, review of the Council's Outer Green Belt Draft Management Plan, production of a souvenir Bookmark publicising Otari Wilton's Bush, investigating the viability of an expanded Education Centre facility at Otari, and production of a Brochure to boost our membership. Input from members on these would be appreciated.

Athol Swann

Gift Ideas

The Otari-Wilton's Bush greeting cards are ideal for Christmas messages and as small gifts or stocking stuffers.

These cards, featuring plants growing in Otari-Wilton's Bush, are available singly (\$2.00) or in packs of four (\$7.50).

Supplies can be purchased from the hosts at the information centre 11a.m.- 2p.m. Saturday or Sunday, or by contacting the co-ordinator of sales, Pam Howse.

Pam Howse – phone/fax (04) 477- 6610 ; email- pam.howse@xtra.co.nz

A gift of Trust membership to your friends is another suggestion. Use the membership form on the back of the newsletter. The treasurer will be happy to welcome and inform your friend that the membership was gifted by you.

The March Seminar Series

Following this year's successful series, four more very interesting speakers have been arranged for the coming year.

They are: Robyn Smith, Otari Curator – *Threatened plants of the South Coast*
Rod Hitchmough, DoC - *Lizards*
Dave Burton, SBS, VUW - *How to be Sluggish – N.Z. native slugs*
K.C. Burns, SBS, VUW - *Epiphytes and vines.*

In 2004 the seminars will be held on Thursdays. At present the order is undecided. Further information in the next newsletter.

Field Trip to Wai-nui-o-mata Catchment.

Access to the Wainuiomata catchment area has been prohibited, because its hills and valleys have been protected to ensure water quality. Recently the restrictions have been eased and the area is now open to the public through pre-arranged guided tours. The Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust has booked such a tour for Sunday, 20th June, 2004. Those Trust members whose email addresses are on file have had prior warning of this and many have already signified interest. The numbers are limited to sixty so, although it seems a long time away, it would be as well to book as soon as possible. Contact –Margaret Crimp. Phone 475 – 3263 .

Dr Jock Fleming writes of Wainuiomata –

The whole area is enormous, thousands and thousands of hectares, and within it are magnificent podocarp trees. Some of it is an outstanding example of an untouched remnant of native forest, with huge rimu, matai, miro, kahikatea, ancient rata with epiphytic plants among the tangle of rata vines.

We may be lucky and have Barbara Mitcalfe and Chris Home from the Wellington Botanical Society as guides, and hopefully Dr John Dawson will come as a guide, too. (John, by the way has another book, completed and at the publishers.)

DETAILS – we will walk about 8kms – it will take about five hours, at a wanderer's pace, with a break for a stream-side lunch – surfaces are mainly sealed service road – the gradient is 'easy'.

More information in the next newsletter, but to be sure of a place, book now.

To contact the Trust Board:

Address - Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, 160 Wilton Road, Wilton, Wellington.

Chairman Athol Swann, Ph:(04) 472 - 8417 Email: athol.swann@paradise.net.nz

Secretary Margaret Crimp, Ph: (04) 475 3263 Email: m.crimp@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer Roger Crimp, Ph: (04) 475 3263 Email: r.crimp@xtra.co.nz.

Submission by the Trust to the W.C.C. draft Outer Green Belt Management Plan

Athol Swann writes -

The Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust were invited to submit comments on this draft plan, because our Reserve lies adjacent to the hilltops that are central to this development, which extends across the ridgeline from the south coast, close to Red Rocks, right up to Colonial Knob in Porirua. Quite a walk!

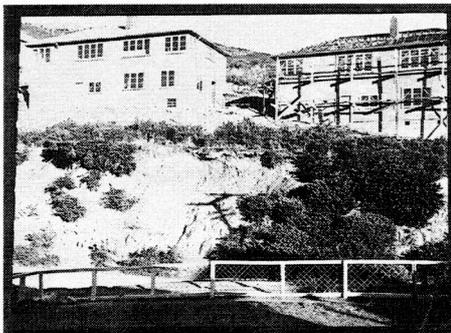
Basically, we strongly supported the concept of the Outer Green Belt, which has now been given wide publicity.

Since Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve only extends from the Kaiwharawhara Stream to about halfway-up to the ridgeline, a main focus of the submission was to ask consideration of giving Reserve status to the whole of the 'eastern slopes' - from Chartwell to Johnston Hill. We have asked that all if this land be included in Otari-Wilton's Bush and protected in perpetuity as 'scenic reserve', under the Reserves Act. It seemed timely to make this claim, since our Reserve is included in the Outer Green Belt, and is to be given 'scenic reserve' status.

Another issue has been the provision of an access track from Otari, up to the ridgeline and skyline walkway.

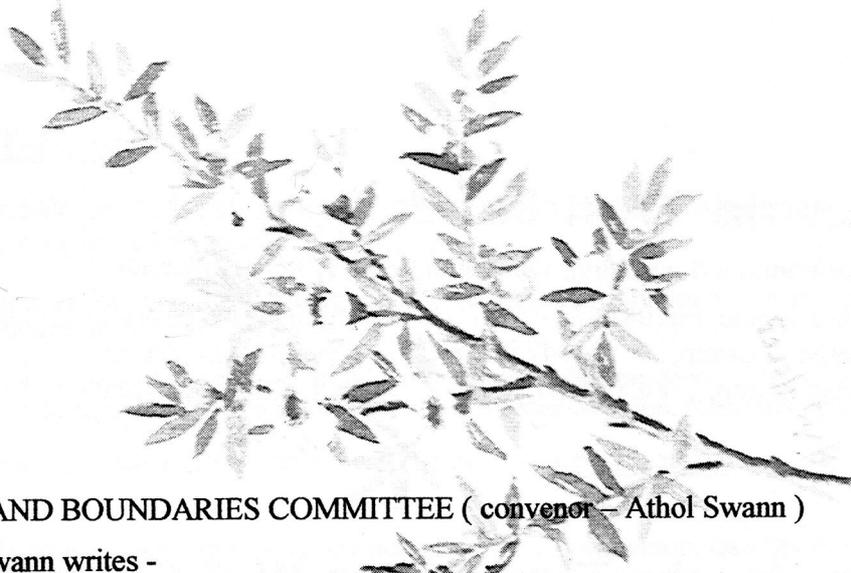
We have also expressed concern about the deteriorating condition of some of our tracks, especially the 'Red', 'Yellow' and 'Blue' trails. Their steepness, poor planning and deep, unnecessary, continuous steps in some areas exclude all but the fit and agile. Often a gentle gradient would suffice, if the track were deviated to avoid a sudden, steep incline.

The submission ran to eight pages, quite a mammoth task for the Trust Board, representing the views of all we spoke to. The Trust Board will attend a WCC committee meeting on the 11th December, 2003 to discuss salient points in our submission.



As you battle rampant verdure this
Summer, remember the families who
Moved in, on to clay banks, fifty-five
Christmases ago.

Two buses a day; the milk by horse
And cart from Archibald's farm; the
Sound of sheep and cattle from the hills
In the northerlies, but the sound of ships
And the city when the wind came from
The sou' east.



LAND AND BOUNDARIES COMMITTEE (convenor – Athol Swann)

Athol Swann writes -

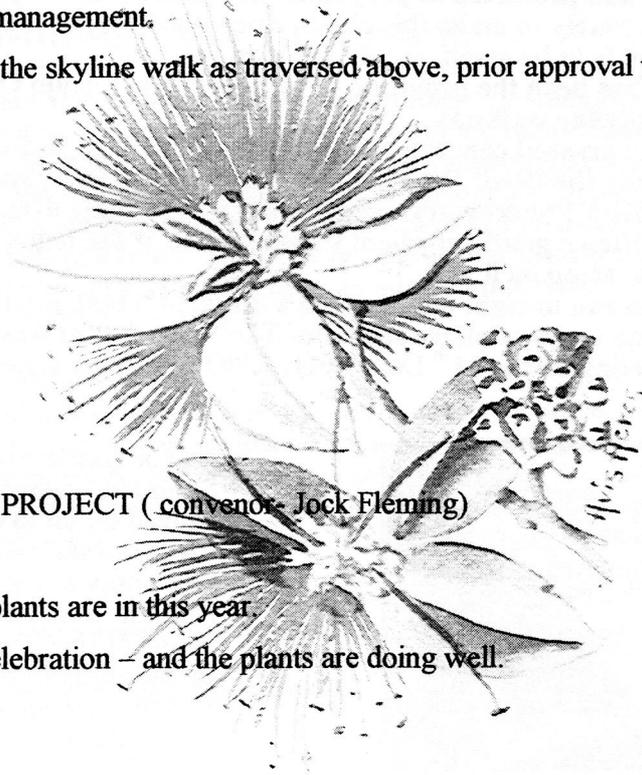
On a fine Thursday in late July, guided by Chris Horne and Barbara Mitcalfe, Bill Winstanley and I viewed the western and southern boundaries of Otari-Wilton's Bush from the hilltop.

Our tramp commenced from the sub-station led directly up the hill to the Otari peak and south along the skyline to Johnson's Hill, then down through the bush track to join the Blue Trail back to the information centre, some five hours later.

The views from the hilltop vantage points were breathtaking, emphasising the diversity of scenery available to Wellingtonians only a short distance from the city centre.

The properties adjacent to the presently designated Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve, particularly on the southern boundary extending to the Karori cemetery, have well-established native forest cover. We envisage that this area together with the land to the east of the Kaiwharawhara stream to Wilton Road, which is currently owned by the city, should ultimately be classified as scenic reserve and become part of Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve for appropriate management.

(Note – If contemplating the skyline walk as traversed above, prior approval to cross the farmland is required.)



THE REVEGETATION PROJECT (convenor- Jock Fleming)

Jock Fleming writes-

Another eight thousand plants are in this year.

We've had our festive celebration – and the plants are doing well.

All the plantings are 'cared' for during the Thursday workparties, and on the 'plant-care' gatherings held on second Saturdays .(see front page Diary). The 'care' is essential over summer, so please keep coming along.

Last season the planting sites seemed to be a magnet for some groups, recruited by Bronwen and Johnathan. They had 150 members of the Mormon Church vigorously planting on a steep site in August, and international volunteers have come to lend a hand, at present clearing away choking weed growth from around the native plantings.

(These 'Global Volunteers' are young people who register to do voluntary tasks while on their travels. They love coming to Otari.)

Another group which assists is the Conservation Corps – again young people who volunteer to do conservation work.

However the volunteers from the Trust and local community are the backbone of the project. Many have been involved from the beginning, but more are always welcome.

Join Jonathan and Bronwen at the tree-care workparties, and enjoy the experience.

For the 2004 planting season, the Greater Wellington Regional Council have said they will continue to fund the Trust's 'Revegetation Project'. This means that planting will continue next year and both weed control and the plants will be paid for by the GWRC.

There are several sites yet to be planted, and a lot of filling-in to do, so this additional support from the GWRC is most fortuitous.

In 2005, Mike Oates has said that the WCC Parks and Gardens will extend their efforts by revegetating the whole of the tip-face (the northern extremity of Ian Galloway park).

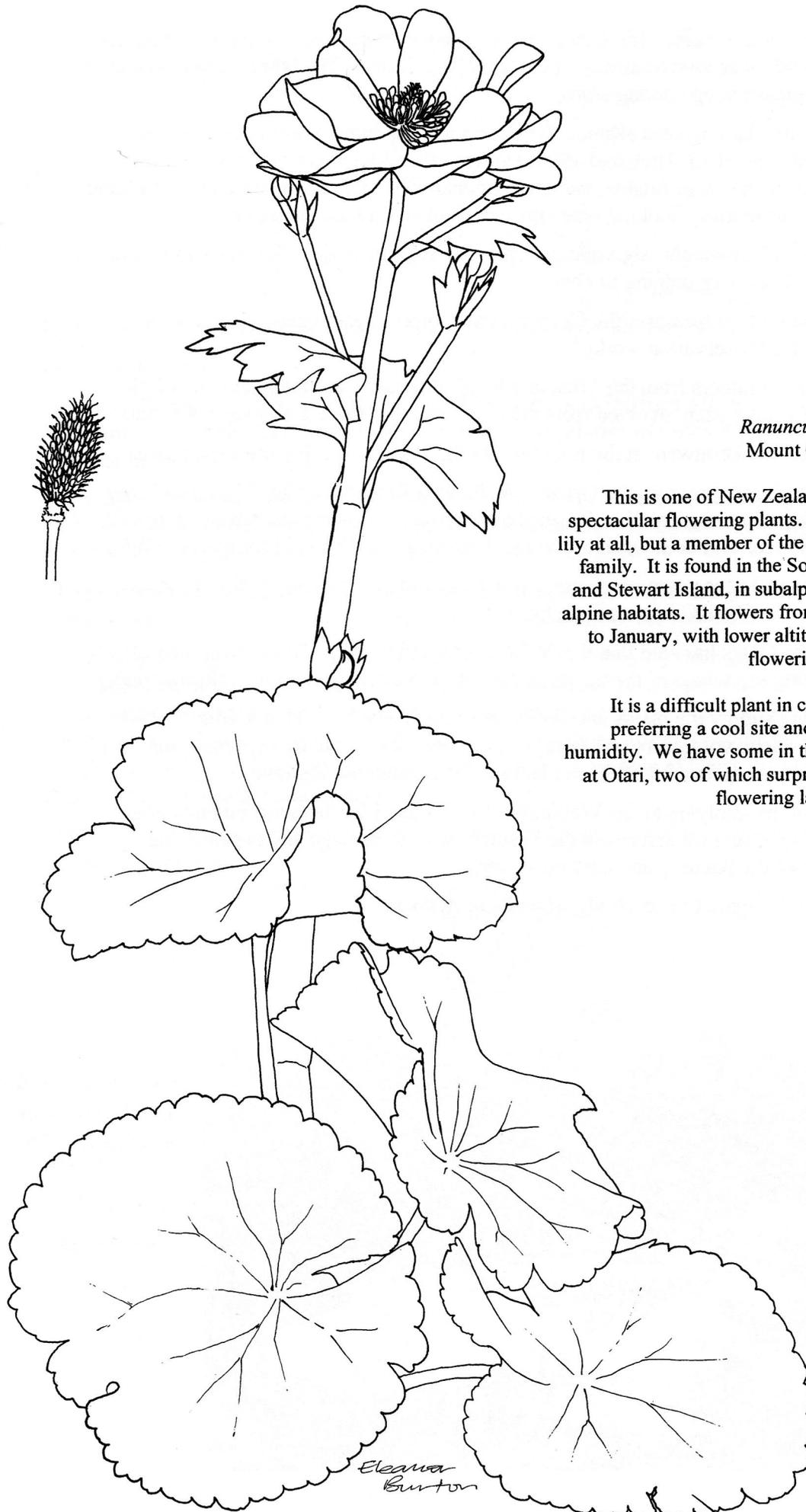
The WCC will supply the plants and do the planting themselves. That's great, but where do our enthusiastic volunteers go? Well, it is all being sorted out by the Otari Staff, who are anxious to see quite a bit of fill-in planting done within the Reserve.

The Trust will be applying to the Wellington City Council for an environmental grant again in 2004, so that we can retain the Kennett Bros. to manage and organise the continuation of the planting and care next year.

Thanks again to everybody who has been involved.



Otari - Wilton's Bush
from 26 Warwick st.
December, 1948.



Ranunculus lyallii
Mount Cook Lily

This is one of New Zealand's more spectacular flowering plants. It is not a lily at all, but a member of the Buttercup family. It is found in the South Island and Stewart Island, in subalpine to low alpine habitats. It flowers from October to January, with lower altitude plants flowering earlier.

It is a difficult plant in cultivation, preferring a cool site and disliking humidity. We have some in the nursery at Otari, two of which surprised us by flowering last month.

Eleanor
Burton

Otari-Wilton's Bush News

Staff have been working hard to catch up with the spring flush of weeds and to ready Otari for an assessment for inclusion on the directory of the New Zealand Garden Trust. If accepted Otari-Wilton's Bush would feature on the garden trust's website which is designed to attract plant enthusiasts from New Zealand and around the world to visit.

Along the canopy walkway the rewarewa is flowering and is visited daily by tui, and hinau is flowering adjacent to the deck outside the information centre. Rengarenga are at their best at the moment and there is a lovely sweep of them around the Kauri lawn. The perfume from the cabbage trees around the cabbage tree lawn is almost overpowering, as is the perfume from the hangehange, found all through the bush area.

Mick Parsons has been working on the waterfall and nature trail steps to reduce the depth of the steps.

Mick now has a permanent part-time position at Otari.

Tim O'Leary has been reinstating the Dracophyllum garden after the disruption of a new track, Wilton's Walkway, which now runs through part of this garden. New plantings of Chatham Island forget-me-nots and rengarenga will replace old tracks in this area.

Dave Bidgood works with the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington on the Kaiwharawhara Revegetation Project, which saw over 8000 plants planted along the Kaiwharawhara Stream between Otari and Ian Galloway Park last season.

Eleanor Burton has been busy with the new Canterbury collection which will include areas for Banks Peninsula plants, sub-alpine and short tussock associations and a shrublands and tall tussock area.

There has been a huge contribution to this area from all staff for rock placement and topsoiling. We are all looking forward to the completion of this project.

Plants of *Pimelea aridula* var, a rare Wellington coastal pimelea, have been picked up by Peter Griffen from Wellington Department of Conservation. A dozen plants are remaining here and will be planted in the threatened plants border next Autumn.

Raewyn Empson from Karori Wildlife Sanctuary has sighted a banded Robin on the Blue trail. Being banded means it has come from the Sanctuary to find a new home with us. Lately there have been several sightings of bellbirds around the collections by the Cockayne lawn.

A new Botanic Gardens database for the plant collections is now 'live' and our computer system at Otari is about to be upgraded. This will enable Otari to have two computers networked and should provide a faster, efficient service.

Robyn Smith

Curator Manager, Otari-Wilton's Bush.

December, 2003.

OTARI - WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

Membership Application Form

Our membership year is from 1 April to 31 March. New members joining after 1 February will have the membership accredited to the following year. Membership entitles you to receive our newsletter and receive notification of all forthcoming activities at Otari - Wilton's Bush.

I wish to join the Trust

Postal Address

Telephone ().....

(Home) E-mail.....

Billing Name and Address

(if different from above)

Subscription:	Double/Family	\$15	<input type="text"/>
	Individual	\$10	<input type="text"/>
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	<input type="text"/>

Donation: \$

Total (please enclose your cheque) \$
Payment:

The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible. We will automatically send you a receipt for tax purposes. We regret we cannot process payments by Credit Card.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please indicate the areas of interest to you from the following list:

Work parties

Weekend hosting at Otari Information Centre

Fund raising

Please send your application to: The Treasurer
Otari Wilton's Bush
160 Wilton Road