

## **Saving the Maui Dolphins**

Each year Community Waikato distributes funds from the Tindall Rural Community Event Fund. This fund was developed to support community-led events, and is targeted toward small rural-based organisations that provide events for families, children, and their communities. This year, one of the recipients of this fund was Whaingaroa Environment Centre, for their annual event to save the Maui Dolphins.

Whaingaroa Environment Centre is based in Raglan, and works to create a sustainable environment. They run a range of eco projects with the support of a valuable group of volunteers. One of the projects they are involved in is the annual Maui Dolphin Day.

Raglan loves Maui Dolphins! Whaingaroa is known throughout the country for being a community that cares about Maui Dolphins. For the last 13 years the community has come together to celebrate our environment, our community spirit and show what communities can do to save one of New Zealand's most endangered species.

The Maui Dolphin is the world's rarest marine dolphin with less than 55 adults remaining. Most threats to their survival are caused by humans. Now Maui Dolphins are found only on the West Coast of the North Island and Raglan is right in the middle of their limited range. Their survival depends on how our coastal communities change their behaviour to reduce these threats and bring back our iconic dolphin.

Numerous Raglan Community groups have worked together to support the dolphin. These have included Harbour Care planting over 1 million trees, fencing over 600kms of harbour and stream edge, Xtreme Zero Waste preventing leachate from old landfill and installing and servicing enviropods in all storm water entering the Harbour, Whaingaroa Environment Centre conducting water quality advocacy, implementing the Catchment Plan and general dolphin advocacy, and KASM assessing and submitting on sea bed mining applications. These projects have had a major positive impact on the Harbour and coastal environments with a radical increase in biological abundance and diversity .

Maui Dolphin Day celebrates the work all these groups have been doing and shares the latest information about the dolphin and what's next in terms of its recovery plan. Those working for Maui Dolphin took part in the event to answer questions and discuss the latest Maui news. Waikato Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, the World Wildlife Foundation and Forest and Bird were among the agencies who attended the event. One of the highlights of the annual event is the Xtreme Waste Recycled Raft Race. This annual community event provides an opportunity for not-for-profit groups to raise funds with a food stall or an activity. Timebank Raglan showcased community skills we can all share like harakeke weaving.

Māui Dolphin Day is a zero waste event and took place this year on Saturday March 12.

