

Removal of risky redwoods begins

Work to remove a second stand of unstable redwood trees on council land in Kerikeri began earlier this month.

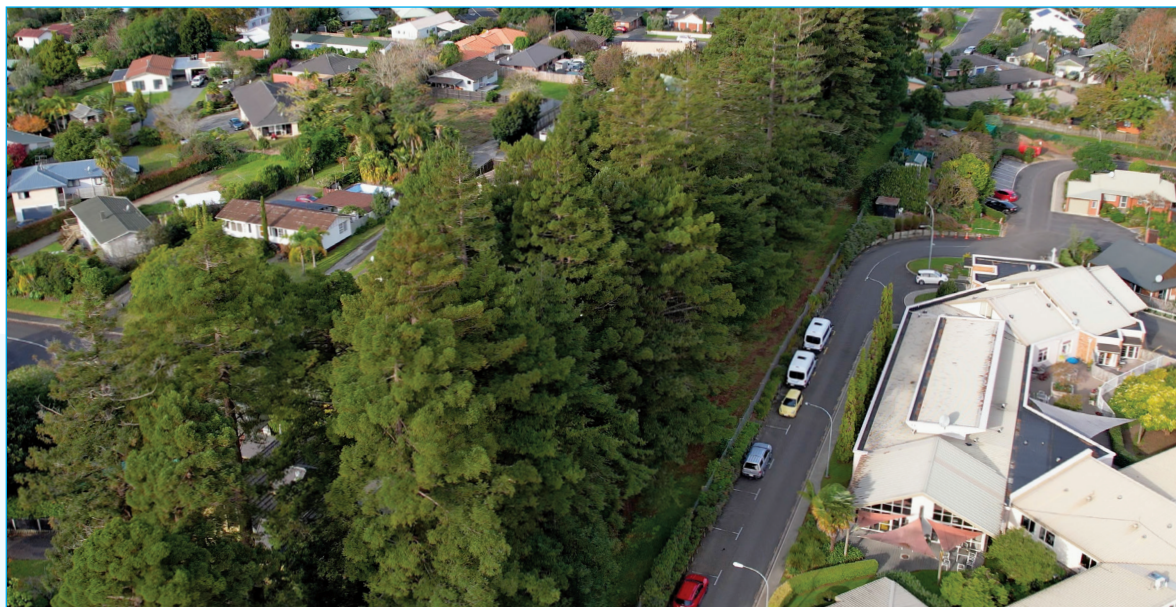
The trees border residential properties on Wendywood Lane, as well as a walkway accessing Kerikeri High School and the New World supermarket carpark.

A decision to remove the trees follows a near-miss incident during Cyclone Tam in April last year, when a 30m tree on nearby Hawkings Crescent crashed into a shed at Kerikeri Retirement Village, narrowly missing a gardener who escaped seconds before impact.

The potential for these trees to fall has been assessed as a significant safety concern because of their proximity to residential properties, pedestrian routes, surrounding businesses and community facilities.

Specialist arborist contractor OS Safe Tree Ltd is carrying out the work in a managed way to protect residents, workers and nearby facilities. The project is expected to take up to eight weeks.

Work began at the New World end of Wendywood Lane and will progress towards the school grounds. The contractor and the council are encouraging schools to use their parent alert apps, school notices or other channels to remind students and parents about the



The ageing trees, located on Wendywood Lane, were planted in the 1940s as a shelterbelt for farmland.

closure and the need to choose alternative routes.

The redwoods are being removed using controlled sectional cutting with cranes, elevated work platforms and specialised rigging equipment where necessary.

The site is fenced, and traffic and pedestrian management is in place.

For the full story go to fndc.govt.nz

How we're playing it safe



Safety comes first at well-used community spaces like playgrounds.

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to keep Far North playgrounds safe and ready for tamariki to enjoy. Every month, playgrounds across the district are checked for potential hazards, with contractors inspecting everything from sharp edges and damaged fittings to broken equipment. The aim is to pick up small issues early, before they become bigger problems. The council is about to increase inspections to weekly checks at all playgrounds as part of a preventive maintenance programme that aligns with industry best practice.

In June, contractor Citycare Property completed inspections at all 33 council playgrounds, achieving 100 per cent of its scheduled inspections.

These inspections covered 805 inspection points and identified 87 minor, low-risk maintenance issues.

Making a paws-itive difference



Qualified hearing dog Fable goes to work with her owner.

A fur-midable new addition is helping Far North District Council take the lead in making its workplace more accessible.

Fable is a qualified and accredited hearing dog who is doing a grrr-eat job helping her human, Cath Beaumont, at the council's Kaikohe office.

Cath, who is Roading Corridor Manager, is deaf in one ear and has significant hearing loss in the other. This can make it difficult to pick up sounds when people are speaking from behind her or outside her field of vision.

Enter Fable, the ear-resistible furball, to lend a helping paw. She alerts Cath to sounds, helping her to navigate her working environment with greater independence.

Fable joined the council in November last year after completing her training with Hearing Dogs NZ in New Plymouth.

Experts to hear dog objections



The panel will hear from dog owners objecting to council decisions.

Four independent commissioners with dog control experience are being appointed to a new panel that will hear objections under the Dog Control Act 1996.

At its meeting last week, Far North District Council approved the establishment of an Objections Panel and appointed four commissioners: Sue Wells, Crystal Beavis, Shelley Chadwick and Janet Gibb.

Each appointee is an accredited hearings commissioner with relevant training for regulatory hearings and previous experience in dog control matters.

Their skills mean they are well qualified to conduct hearings, assess evidence and issue fair, reasoned decisions under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Objections previously went to regulatory committees or council hearings.

