



Volunteer John and one of the new Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary signs  
 Photo: Richard Hursthouse



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### Paving Paradise

It's ironic that Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary (CBUS) signs are going up while housing intensification is rapidly altering the bay's character and ecology. Housing Minister Chris Bishop's February 2026 rethink (more development closer to Auckland's city centre, less in the suburbs) may not be in time to help our little bay. CBUS was launched 20 years ago, in recognition of Campbells Bay's unique position within, and contribution to, the environmental wellbeing of the North Shore and the wider Auckland region. The bay is a species-rich mainland island where decades of volunteer work have helped wildlife and native flora flourish in the midst of traditional residential housing. Centennial Park is the green heart of the bay, and of CBUS; the life and health of both depend on the bay's diminishing network of gardens, mature trees, hedges, berms, clifftop bush pockets and privately-owned forest remnants. Government's plans for Auckland's intensification allowing multiple three or four-storey dwellings on single suburban sections, threaten this taonga of which we are all kaitiaki. Wall to wall dwelling construction entails: truckloads of house demolition waste dumped in landfill; mature trees and hedges felled; gardens and green space bulldozed; silt runoff and paint- and concrete-laden wastewater discharged into natural waterways (Campbells Bay has six km of natural streams) and remaining ground being covered in impermeable concrete. In heavy rain stormwater pours off concrete driveways into the

stormwater system, the stream network, the park and the beach. In the park runoff scours tracks, washes plants away, undermines trees and gouges out gullies. The results are dangerous, ecologically devastating and very hard-sometimes impossible-to remedy.



Intensification in Campbells Bay is replacing gardens with fences

Good residential planning should include: mature trees for shade, wildlife and climate change mitigation, gardens for shrubs, flowers and veges and lawns for recreation. But now extra cars are clogging the bay's narrow roads and community life is blocked by high fences. CPBS volunteers have worked for 47 years to conserve nature in Campbells Bay. We've exponentially increased and widened our efforts since Richard became chair in 2003. We weed, plant trees, restore streambanks, control rats and possums baywide, maintain the park's 4.7 km track network and seats, dig and clear drains, install stormwater pipes,

remove rubbish and create community connections. Campbells Bay's lovely beach, regenerating native forest and birdlife, streams and remnant native stream-life are under threat. Please advocate for CBUS and make a submission to Council's upcoming housing intensification review.

Jenny Chamberlain

### Stream Restoration Success

When we first visited this 3,000 sqm restoration site in March 2025, it was so completely overwhelmed by towering arum lilies you could lose sight of fellow volunteers in the dense growth. Along the stream banks, honeysuckle was smothering kohekohe, tī kōuka, kiekie and putaputawētā – the very species that belong in a thriving riparian ecosystem.

Without urgent intervention, the long-term ecological consequences would have been depressing: native biodiversity gradually displaced by aggressive pest plants, which easily outcompete with our slower-growing, unique and beautiful endemic species. It was a do-or-die moment for this stream.

Thanks to the Green Your Stream project, funded and supported by Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, this waterway has been given a second chance.

Restoration began with bringing neighbours together and sharing knowledge on the identification and removal of pest plants and the protection and nurturing of native species. Luckily residents recognise the importance of caring for our local awa and the taonga species which call it home.

Since then, through working bees, friendships and conversations have flourished. There is something special about working side by side in nature and witnessing visible change.

Small fish such as kōkopu now swim in clearer channels and overhead pīwakawaka dart and flit – small yet meaningful signs the ecosystem is responding.

Importantly, this project is grounded in science as well as community effort. Environmental DNA (eDNA) water

samples were taken before restoration began and will continue to be collected annually. These will allow us to measure changes in species diversity over time, providing measurable evidence of ecological recovery.

We are also monitoring water quality quarterly. As planting establishes and shade increases, we expect to see improvements in dissolved oxygen levels and reductions in water temperature – both critical for aquatic species survival, particularly during hot summer months.

Viv Walker

Restore Hibiscus & Bays Stream Restoration Advisor



Towering arums (left)... now replaced by flood resilient *Carex lesssoniana* and *Carex secta*, which will eventually cover the stream bed, providing shade and species habitat. Photos: Viv Walker

### Predator Control Update

Predator control is a vital component of the CBUS initiative. The Predator Control Team currently numbers 40 volunteers who trap possums using 58 traps, run 258 rat baiting stations and operate 60 monitoring tunnels – a total of 376 pest control devices spread through the park and the surrounding urban area.

You may have seen our volunteers, with their branded hi-vis yellow vests, out and about with bait buckets and wondered why you see them one month and then not again until a few months later.

This is because we work in “pulses” – one month on and two months off. It's a cunning plan to prevent rats developing bait shyness and resistance, to ensure high uptake of bait when they're hungry and avoid bait degradation and waste.





CBUS volunteers in branded hi-vis. From left: Jill, Andrew, John, Christine, Richard, Mark and David Photo: Richard Hursthouse

We have a highly dedicated team running the programme, with a few gaps, but there are times when someone is away or relocates. Our plans to expand the programme are limited by volunteer numbers. We'd love your help! If you'd like to know more about predator control volunteering please get in touch by emailing [bushsoc@gmail.com](mailto:bushsoc@gmail.com)

Mark Woodward

Predator Control Coordinator

### Happy Birthday Hōhepa!

Joe Greig, known affectionately as mātua Hōhepa, is 90 on 21st April. HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOE! CPBS's longest-serving member, Joe has been weeding, planting and sharing conservation wisdom in Centennial Park for more than 35 years. His personal kaupapa is: "Preserve the bush and plant to expand our native cover in perpetuity. Native habitats are the lungs of the earth." Kia ora Joe! Thank you for everything. We think volunteering for nature in Campbells Bay has kept you young!



Mātua Hōhepa inspires the next generation at our March 2026 Family Bush Camp Photo: Victoria Morris

### Rockpool Shock

In recent years some people have been stripping our seashore bare of wildlife. Hopes of protection for rockpool sea-life were

dashed this February when Government imposed a two-year ban on taking shellfish from reefs on Whangaparāoa Peninsula and further north but leaving Auckland's beaches vulnerable to exploitation and ecosystem collapse. The ban began on 12 March 2026. Campbells Bay's reefs remain unprotected. New Zealand's unique coastal species – seaweeds, sponges, starfish, anemones and small shellfish – are millennia old and were once abundant on our beaches. They are absolutely integral to coastal ecology and deserve guardianship and legal protection in perpetuity.

### Best Ever Bush Camp



Photos: Victoria Morris

Our hugely successful 2026

Family Bush Camp took place 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March. It entailed 59 parents and children getting close to nature by tenting overnight in the park... but only after they'd enjoyed: bushcraft with Om from Craftlab NZ and Harry from Barefooted NZ, bush walking with Auckland Park ranger Anna Baine, a stream exploration, a predator control demo, a torchlight bug hunt, BBQ dinner and campfire donuts. After all that fresh air and activity there wasn't a peep from any of the tents!

CPBS held the inaugural overnight camp in 2017 and since then several Auckland parks have followed suit. Huge thanks to our wonderful volunteers and to Auckland Council for supporting this important and fun enviro/community activity. (And yes, our camps really do keep getting better!)

### 2026 Sustainability Leader of the Year Semi-finalist

On 11 December 2025, CPBS chair Richard Hursthouse became a semi-finalist in the 2026 Kiwibank New Zealand Sustainability Leader of the Year Award. Richard's prestigious placing

alongside nine other semi-finalists marked over three decades of commitment to community-led environmental protection in Auckland including: chairmanship of CPBS since 2003, eight years as chair of North Shore Forest & Bird, the establishment and chairmanship of EcoNet charitable trust for conservation technology, chairmanship of Restore Hibiscus & Bays, co-founding Pest Free Kaipātiki and ongoing leadership of Tuff Crater Restoration Project, a unique extinct volcanic habitat in Northcote. Richard’s leadership, commitment and infectious energy are legendary and his placing is well-deserved.



Richard Hursthouse and Karen Brook at the 2026 Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards on 26 March

Credit: Kiwibank

**Diary Dates**

**We would love to see you at our 2026 AGM!**

Date: Wednesday 17th June. Venue: Pupuke Golf clubrooms, 7pm for a 7:30pm start. Our promise to you: a warm welcome, minimal business, an interesting speaker, conversations and refreshments. What’s not to like?

**Seeing Stars Again – Matariki 2026**

Watch out for details of this year’s Matariki celebration on Friday 10 July. As always, we will meet before sunrise in Morton Meadow, a few steps from the Rae Road entrance to Centennial Park. We’ll talk about the Matariki stars and share kai. Sunrise is at 7:33am on that morning, so no problem getting up in time this year.

**Contact Us**

**Chair:** Richard Hursthouse 021 216 1296  
**Secretary:** Jenny Chamberlain 021 057 6167  
**Treasurer:** Andy Pitcher 021 660 611  
**Committee:** Liz Goodwin, Joe Greig, Victoria Morris, Vivienne Walker, Mark Woodward and Max Thomson  
**Centennial Park Bush Society Inc.**

Email: [bushsoc@gmail.com](mailto:bushsoc@gmail.com)

Find out more and **sign up to our mailing list** at

<https://campbellsbayurbansanctuary.org.nz/>

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**We acknowledge the support of:**

**THANK YOU!!**

**A special thanks to our supporters:**

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