

# GULF NEWS

15 December 2022

BEST INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER 2022

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## Trial by fire

Waiheke's latest batch of young trainees face their final test before becoming fully fledged fire fighters. Brothers Jacob (left) and Connor Coetzee (right) stand with training officer Rob Smith, with Annie Burdett, Lily Bonfield and Stephanie Sherpa in the back of the late Ron Leonard's vintage fire truck. Story Page 12. Photo Paul Mitchell

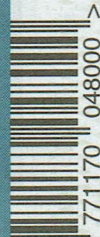
**Also this week ...** Ferry passengers stranded overnight P 8 • More helipads P 5  
• Sailing into summer P 14 • Grass with teeth P 16 • The Christmas present we don't want P 17



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# Mike Lee pushes for urgent action on growth of helipads

Waitematā and Gulf Ward councillor Mike Lee is urging swifter action from Auckland Council on the proliferation of helipads on Waiheke and across the gulf. Discontented communities are still waiting for a firm commitment on the issue, after years of lobbying, as another three pads go through the consents process.

At the Planning, Environment and Parks committee on December 8, Mike looked to table a formal resolution on helicopter landing pads but was told it was not the appropriate time by chair Richard Hills - and it would have to wait until a staff report was finished.

Auckland Council staff began working on a report on helipad consents, in response to resolutions requesting council action from Aotea Great Barrier, Waiheke and Waitematā local boards in December 2021.

Mike feels the council's response so far has been inadequate. "We have had a staff officer report and response. We have had an opinion piece from senior manager

Megan Tyler that action was on the way but that was in June or July last year," he said.

Mike said the rapidly growing numbers of helipads were very unpopular, amid community concern over the adverse effects and noise. Chief of strategy Megan Tyler said staff were doing a lot of work on the issue. "We will report back to this committee [early next year] with some options which may include a [district] plan change."

Mike hoped council could give some relief to concerns from impacted areas and that when the item finally came to the committee officially he would be happy to move it.

Quiet Sky Waiheke spokesman Kim Whitaker said it seemed incomprehensible that a plan change to address concerns about the helipads wasn't a given.

"The council has to, under the law, enact plan changes to give effect to the



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## WAIHEKE WEATHER 5 - 11 DECEMBER 2022

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	WEEKLY TOTAL	MONTH TO DATE	MONTH HISTORIC
WAI AUCK	0.0	9.6	1.0	3.3	0.0	10.0	7.0	30.9	30.9	82.5
	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	13.0	13.0	45.0	45.5	105.7
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	WEEKLY AVERAGE	MONTHLY AVERAGE	HISTORIC AVERAGE
WAI AUCK	22.0°	20.5°	19.3°	19.2°	20.0°	20.8°	20.2°	20.3°	20.7°	21.2°
	21.7°	21.6°	19.9°	20.1°	21.2°	23.2°	21.4°	21.3°	21.5°	22.4°
WAI AUCK	13.6°	14.9°	14.4°	15.0°	17.5°	17.3°	15.6°	15.5°	14.9°	14.2°
	11.8°	15.6°	16.2°	16.7°	18.7°	18.7°	15.7°	16.2°	15.4°	14.6°

Data by WeatherWise Auckland: 020-4023-0106



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New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, which has strict rules requiring no adverse impacts on threatened native species," he said. "Section 4.3 of the council's own Helicopter Planning and Guidance Note cites it as critical to helipad processing."

Kim said the Noise and Vibration Metrics National Planning Standard also prohibits using averaged noise levels as a standard when considering impacts of a helipad consent application. "Pretending that the average noise over several days is the effect to be considered, rather than the actual noise whilst a helicopter is taking off or landing, has been a key factor that has allowed consents to be granted."

However, Kim says he understands council planning officers have indicated they cannot currently consider that when processing helipad consent applications, as the district plan stands.

While the community has waited for its



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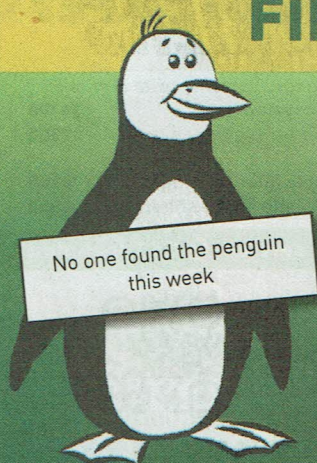
Mike Lee looked to table a formal resolution on helicopter landing pads but was told it was not the appropriate time.

concerns to be addressed, the number of helipads on Waiheke has continued to balloon. While the community has waited for its concerns to be addressed, the number of helipads on Waiheke has continued to balloon, he said.

Council staff tally 56 consented helipads on the island, including three that were granted in the past two months - two on Cowes Bay Road and another on Gordon's Road. Two more applications for helipads are currently going through the consent process.

For context, a 2016 report by international non-governmental organisation The Council for Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat ranked Busan, South Korea third of all the world's cities in terms of helipad numbers - when the city of 3.9 million people had 50 of them. • *Laura Kvigstad, Auckland Council reporter* Funded by New Zealand on Air, and Paul Mitchell.

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