

Case Study – a Student’s Experience with Publicity

This page was prepared by Arla Kerr, a past student of Kamo High School. It mentions some of the challenging aspects of publicity, from the point of view of someone without previous experience and new to the marine reserve campaign, and gives some examples of successful local avenues.

I was a Year 13 student in 2002, the final year of the proposal. Part of my involvement was in the area of publicity. The proposal had been in the making for ten years and subsequently had received considerable media attention through those years, however, we had come to a crucial time and there was a significant lack of interest or knowledge in the community.

The hard job of informing the public of the proposal was over; however, we still needed their support through submissions. There is a wide range of avenues of publicity; however, for a school group (as opposed to a large organisation like Forest & Bird) these can be somewhat difficult to tap. We targeted local radio stations that were willing to give us a small amount of air space; particularly in Seaweek and local newspapers who were very helpful and gave us a weekly spot to keep the public informed of any new developments. I received the task of writing these, which turned out to be difficult as there was no record of the previous publicity. This reinforces the message that it is vital to keep records of everything that happens throughout the process for both legal requirements and practical needs.

Another aspect of the publicity area is organisation; the time it takes to plan events and notify appropriate people can be easily underestimated. An event that demonstrated this to us was the notification evening; the combination of notifying interest groups, iwi, public officials and the wider public proved to be both difficult and time consuming. My advice to any future applicants in the area of publicity is to get both local radio and newspapers on side and to plan for any important events well in advance.