



"If we get everyone believing in this... we've got a real chance of achieving a Predator Free New Zealand by 2050." - Next Foundation Chairman Chris Liddell

WHO ARE WE?

Predator Free Miramar is a volunteer, not-for-profit, community effort to rid the Peninsula of rats and mice, and bring back the birds and the bush to Wellington's eastern suburbs.

Since Crofton Downs resident Kelvin Hastie led the way in 2015 by leading his neighbours and achieving a Predator Free community, other Wellington suburbs have followed and set backyard traps in their thousands.

Here in Miramar, we're poised to jump on board the eco-train and take our Peninsula into the Predator Free Future. This little motu at Wellington's harbour entrance is already possum-free, and we know with energy from our community we can get it clear of rats and mustelids too.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We're creating a community of backyard trappers. We're asking people to install a trap in their backyards, keep it baited, and report their catches. Simple.

When it comes to sourcing traps, different communities have followed different models. Some have had traps donated by charitable trusts. Other suburbs have asked each household to buy their own trap for \$20. Our friends at Predator Free Seatoun have already formed a solid beachhead with some 200 donated traps in backyards from Breaker to Scorching Bays.

With such a ground swell of enthusiasm from so many communities, the waiting list for 'free' traps from organisations like the Next Foundation has grown long.

But we think - just like the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment said on May 31st - there's no time to waste. Our birds are in trouble and we need to move *now*.

So we're seeking sponsorship from local businesses - to help fund the purchase of backyard traps and help make this vision a reality.

THE PLAN

Having a rat trap in just one in five backyards, reduces the rat population to below five percent. That's what worked in Crofton Downs, so that's our target for Miramar.

With Seatoun already covered, there are still nearly 6000 more households on the peninsula. Which means we need almost 1200 backyards traps to meet the target.

That's a lot, but we're not aiming to get it done overnight. We aim to roll out the traps in waves of 200. The early adopters will tell their neighbours; they'll tell theirs, and before you know it we'll have a Miramar-wide movement.

Each trap (and the protective wooden box that keeps away prying fingers and pets) costs \$23. So to fund traps for the entire Peninsula will cost \$27,600.



But for a first wave of just 200 traps we're after \$4,600. And we're looking for project partners to help us by funding the purchase of traps and boxes.

Para Street has 90 households, so needs 18 traps. So a \$414 donation would see Para Street right.

Or maybe you can cover the entire first wave of 200 traps - which would be amazing! We'll gladly accept whatever level of commitment you're willing to offer. (If you can spring for the full \$27,600, well, we might have to campaign for a beach or a mountain named in your honour!)

We know that cash donations are not always the easiest for businesses, so we're also seeking help in other ways from businesses. Materials for building trap boxes; Refreshments for community working bees and meetings - we're looking to rally a whole community around this cause.

WHY PREDATOR FREE?

The potential benefits of a Predator Free Miramar are many.

Since becoming possum free in 2004, we've already seen increased local bird life with tui and piwakawaka or fantail having moved back in, and a breeding pair of kereru recorded at Scorching Bay last year for the first time in living memory.

In recent months the Peninsula's had regular visits from karearea or New Zealand falcon who fly over from the Zealandia mothership. Most people only ever see these treasured birds on their twenty dollar notes, but with just a little help from backyard trappers, we'll see them make their nests in Miramar.

The much-vaunted success at Polhill Reserve, the bush-clad valleys between Zealandia and Aro Street shows what can be achieved by controlling introduced predators.

After just a couple of years of attention from enthusiastic neighbours, we now have kaka living and breeding on the CBD fringe. Tieke or saddleback - once extinct, save a handful of refugees on island sanctuaries - are now breeding in the wild for the first time in more than a century!

And given "*the wild*" is just minutes from the heart of the CBD, it's not a pipe dream to think that with a little love and attention over a few short years, we'll see tieke, kaka and even kiwi, breeding and thriving on Miramar Peninsula.

With Wellington Airport, we're the gateway to the best little city in the world. And with the best beaches and the best walks we're already wild at heart. As *Wellywood* and with the best cafes in town, we're top of the list for places to show off to your out-of-town friends when they visit. And if we can bring back the bush and the bird life - we'll really have something to boast about.

Even if birds n bush don't float your boat, there are other benefits to getting rid of rats. Did you know rodents chewing through electrical wires are believed to cause eight percent of house fires?

But maybe one of the best things about the Predator Free movement is the way it builds communities. Folk working together for a common goal can't help but feel united and 'part of something'. Doing something - even as small as checking a backyard trap - gives people some skin in the game.

Conservation can be a starting point for a conversation - and a way to turn strangers into neighbours. An entire community, connected and rallying around a common goal - for less than \$30,000. We reckon that's a bargain.

WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOU?

We plan to distribute the first wave of traps at a community launch. We'll have sponsors' logos on display - and will acknowledge key funders in our welcome. We'll also have a regular newsletter for our trappers and the wider community, within which we can highlight the support of businesses.

We have a Facebook group - growing by the day - which is one of our key tools for communication. The Predator Free movement is a nationwide network of communities who share information, tips and tools, so success-stories we share online will spread far and wide across Wellington and the whole country.

We recently had a stencil made for us by a local Miramar-owned business. We shared a photo of the stenciled traps - tagging *Grayley Plastics* - and they now have new business from other community groups wanting similar artwork.



The world is already watching. The Predator Free 2050 Vision and the success at Polhill Gully in Te Aro has already made headlines in the *New York Times*. Success with a *Predator Free Miramar* will attract media attention. And we want you to be part of that success with us.

PARTNERS

The *Miramar BID* (Business Improvement District) are endorsing this project. They immediately see the merits in supporting the moves towards becoming a Predator Free community. The *Royal New Zealand Forest and Bird Society* has offered their endorsement and support also. We're working on a memorandum of understanding with them to draw on their huge pool of expertise and data.

Predator Free Miramar is working closely with *Wellington City Council*, with *Predator Free Wellington* and other helpful folks who know their stoats from their weasels. The council has been extremely helpful with mapping, logistics and technical support, and *Kelvin Hastie*, *Predator Free Community Champion* has provided invaluable guidance.

In addition to the plans for trapping in backyards, we're also working closely with other local conservation groups who do trapping work in the local Miramar reserves: *Te Motu Kairangi Miramar Ecological Restoration* has been trapping, planting and restoring bush areas for years, and *Forest and Bird's Places for Penguins* group is a passionate bunch who build penguin boxes, and trap predators to keep our little blue korora safe.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE..

As mentioned, the trap system comes in two parts. The trap itself and the timber box which protects it. Our priority is to get traps out there in backyards catching rats as soon as we can, so we'll buy the trap boxes brand new. But we plan to soon recycle old timber and build the boxes ourselves.

Why buy new timber when you can recycle? Why chop down a forest to save the bush? *Predator Free Brooklyn* held a community working bee recently and built some 60 trap boxes in an afternoon, using timber donated by the local bowling club. As soon as we have a first wave of traps out there catching, we plan to start recycling timber off-cuts and building traps - *and building communities* together, over a skill-saw and scones.

With the money saved by building our own boxes, we can buy more traps.

WHY NOT GET EACH HOUSEHOLD TO BUY THEIR OWN TRAP?

Some communities have had the householder purchase their own traps. It makes some sense - it's a not a huge outlay and it means the keen trappers get started sooner.

But *Predator Free Miramar* is in this for the long haul. With the self-funding scheme, there's a risk that as the numbers of rats caught falls away, the enthusiasm wanes, and the householder loses interest. Because they own the trap, they won't feel compelled to keep it baited. Nor will they feel compelled to continue to report catch data back to the project team.

If the trap is sponsored, and therefore owned by the community - it can be re-distributed to a household who is more enthusiastic and willing to fully participate.

It means that *Predator Free Miramar* - and therefore the community - owns the data gleaned from the catches. And if we know what's being caught, and can measure the success, we have the power to learn from it, and help other communities to share in that success.

And the vision of a Predator Free New Zealand by 2050 could become a reality.

Thanks for your time - I look forward to talking with you further about this.

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