

3 August 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

LPC PROVIDES SAFE PASSAGE FOR 3300 TREES TO QUAIL ISLAND

Lyttelton Port of Christchurch (LPC) transported 3300 trees to Quail Island to support the environmental regeneration efforts of the Otamahua / Quail Island Ecological Restoration Trust.

The Trust runs an annual tree planting programme to restore Quail Island's indigenous vegetation to provide safe refuge for local, rare and endangered species. LPC donated the services of its marine staff and pilot boat, LPC Rescue, to transport plants to the island on Wednesday (July 27) for the restoration project which starts in August.

Trust Chairman Ian McLennan says 85,400 trees, shrubs and ferns have been established on Quail Island since 1998, and this year an additional 3300 trees will be planted.

"We are very careful with what we plant. All plant species are native to the local area and all the seed is sourced locally," he said. "This ensures that the gene pools are pure and the plant species are well adapted to the local environmental conditions."

The Trust was granted permission by the Department of Conservation to plant 24 hectares of the 85 hectare island. Local volunteers have supported the Trust to cover 18 hectares to date.

Quail Island is an important site for ecological restoration as it has the potential to become a safe haven for indigenous plants and animals. Since the restoration project started all mammalian predators except mice have been eradicated. A network of traps concentrated around the south-west corner of the island prevents re-infestation from the mainland during low tide.

"As a result of our planting and pest eradication efforts, native birds including kereru and korimako are now nesting on the island and their numbers are increasing," said McLennan. "Korora, Canterbury's unique white flipped penguin, also nests on the island and nesting boxes are being placed around the island to help increase the size of the colony."

Other native wildlife including the Canterbury gecko, McCann's skink and common skink are found on the island. The introduction of invertebrates such as native leaf-vein slugs and tree weta has helped build a healthy ecosystem.

LPC has supported the Trust's restoration efforts since 1999 through an annual grant and helping transport plants, nesting boxes and weed mat to the island. It's part of the company's ongoing commitment to the Harbour Basin community in which it operates.

"We work co-operatively with other users of the harbour area to ensure our valued local environment is well cared for," says LPC Chief Executive Peter Davie.

"We comply with all relevant environmental legislation and take a proactive approach to our operations to minimise the environmental impact of our business."

LPC's sponsorships range from financial or in-kind support of activities that deliver ongoing benefits to Christchurch and the wider Canterbury region. Other beneficiaries of LPC's sponsorships include the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, Ronald McDonald House, Kidsfirst Kindergarten, the Canterbury Youth Development Programme and Lyttelton's junior netball, soccer and rugby sporting clubs.

Bookings are now being taken for the Quail Island planting programme in August. Planting takes place on every Saturday and Sunday of the month.

Email volunteers@quailisland.org.nz or visit www.quailisland.org.nz for more information about the planting programme.

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For more information, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- A popular way to support the regeneration of Quail Island is to sponsor a penguin nesting box valued at \$500. This secures the naming rights to a nesting box and sponsors will receive regular updates about the korora. The funds raised from the sale of nesting boxes help to maintain the pest free status of the island.
- It will take over 100 years for the forest habitat on Quail Island to become a reasonable facsimile of primary forest. After 18 years of planting, in some areas within the emerging forest canopy, the environment is slowly changing due to the suppression of exotic grasses, build up of leaf litter and retention of soil moisture.
- LPC provides sponsorships for community and environmental initiatives in Lyttelton Harbour, organisations supporting Christchurch and Canterbury economic development and growth, and wider community beneficial initiatives in Christchurch. There are two funding rounds per annum and the deadlines to submit applications are:
Sunday, 31 July 2016
Tuesday, 31 January 2017

For more information, visit <http://www.lpc.co.nz/community/sponsorship/>

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