

Karekare Beach Access

It has been challenging mounting surf club patrols this season. The stream depth has prevented us from accessing the beach around the foot of the Watchman as we were able to do in the 2023/24 season.

Dave Markham (Principal Ranger), Chrissie Sidwell (Club Chair), and I, met at the beach in October 2024 to explore solutions. From that the initiative to create a new 'ford' access to the beach across the shallower part of the stream beside the carpark was mooted, agreed, and then implemented. This new access for vehicles has enabled the patrols to get necessary rescue equipment to the beach on every patrolling day so far this season, but it is not easy or quick. To minimise the vehicle use of the southside track to the beach, various inspired clubbies have designed, developed, improved, and delivered the 'Karekare Lagoon Ferry'. This allows patrolling members to get to and from the club quickly to eat lunch, shelter from the relentless wind, and go to the loo, all without the lengthy trip back by vehicle via the carpark. It also means that guards at the club are available to get back to the beach much more quickly in the event of a rescue.

So, in the indomitable way of our club, Karekare's lifeguards have risen to the challenging situation so that we can continue to effectively patrol the beach, and the horde of new eager young members in the club can still have fun and learn the craft of lifesaving.

All that said, the Shangri-la of finding a way to make the stream shallower remains one of the biggest topics of discussion that I am aware of amongst beach goers. And that is a conversation that enjoys as many lively and interesting ideas as there are people taking part in it. Whether that will lead to a practical and agreeable solution remains in the balance at time of writing.

Ngā mihi

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